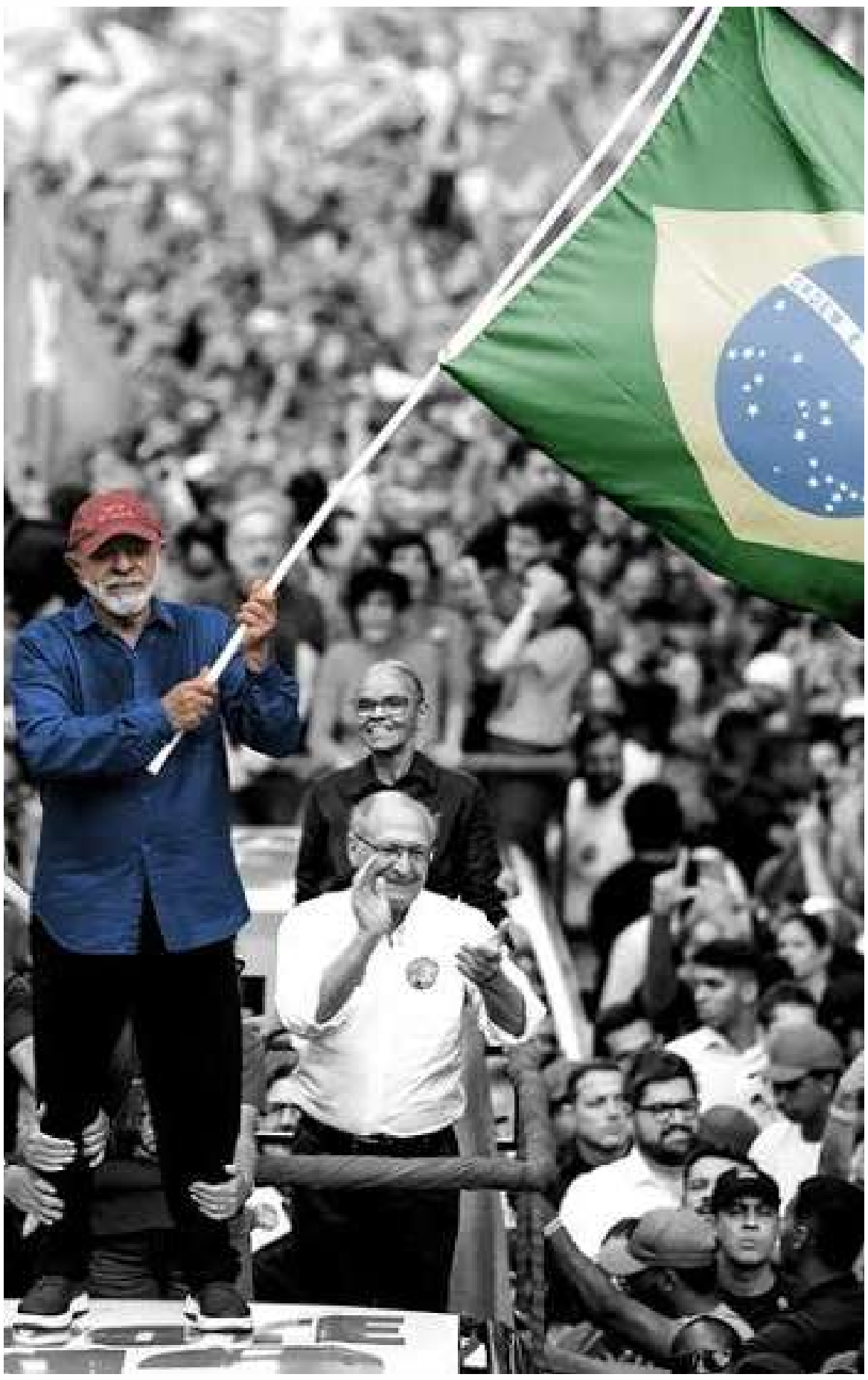
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Editor's Note

In a week of significant developments, Brazil has elected a new president, Ladakh has become India's first fully organic Union Territory, and Nepal has received support to address the devastating losses caused by the 2026 flash floods. Today's edition of Pala Civil Times explores these diverse developments, highlighting key aspects of national and international affairs.

The National page examines Ladakh's achievement in becoming India's first fully organic Union Territory. The Editorial Decoder analyses Brazil's presidential election and its implications for the global order. It also explores the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage and its role in supporting Nepal's recovery following the devastating floods. Meanwhile, the Science page examines efforts to strengthen NavIC, India's regional satellite navigation system, and its significance for the country's technological self-reliance and developmental goals.

Together, these topics offer a well-rounded understanding of the day's important developments and their wider implications. We hope our readers find this edition informative and use it to develop a clearer understanding of the issues shaping our world.

Happy reading!

P7. SCIENCE



How ISRO's new satellite could restore India's regional GPS alternative

Explains India's regional satellite navigation system, its technological challenges, and efforts to strengthen its reliability and strategic importance.

Editorials Decoded

THE HINDU



Old values, new avenues: On India-Poland ties

Analyses Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's historic electoral victory, the challenges facing his government, and the implications for democracy and the global order.

The Indian EXPRESS

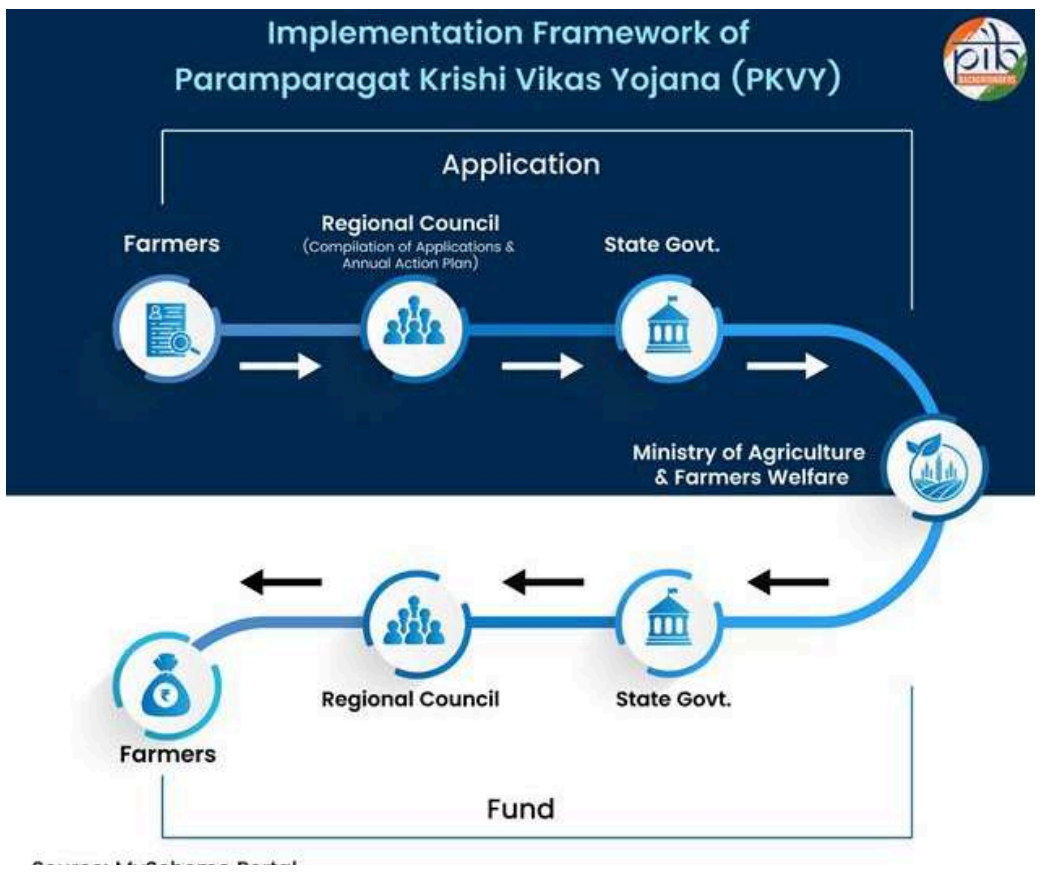


Climate justice needs quicker compensation

Explores the role of the international climate fund in supporting Nepal's recovery from devastating flash floods and the challenges of climate finance.

Ladakh Becomes India's First 100% Organic Union Territory

Ladakh's declaration as India's first 100% organic Union Territory marks an important step towards sustainable agriculture and ecological conservation. The achievement reflects the region's transition towards chemical-free farming and connects with India's broader efforts to improve soil health, conserve natural resources and enhance farmers' incomes through organic farming policies.



How is India promoting organic farming?

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY): Launched in 2015 under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, PKVY promotes organic farming through a cluster-based approach, farmer training, certification and market linkages.

Cluster-based implementation: Farmers are organised into groups, traditionally covering 20 hectares, to adopt organic practices collectively.

Financial assistance: Under PKVY, eligible farmers receive ₹31,500 per hectare over three years, allocated towards organic inputs (₹15,000), marketing and branding (₹4,500), certification and residue analysis (₹3,000), and training and capacity-building (₹9,000).

Large Area Certification (LAC): This approach facilitates organic certification across contiguous areas, including regions where chemical inputs have not traditionally been used extensively. It has supported organic farming initiatives in Lakshadweep, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Sikkim and Ladakh.

Digital market access: The Jaivik Kheti Portal connects organic farmers with consumers and buyers, supporting direct sales and reducing dependence on intermediaries.

What makes Ladakh's achievement significant?

Policy intervention: In July 2026, Ladakh's Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, ordered a complete prohibition on the procurement, distribution, sale, marketing and use of chemical and synthetic fertilisers for agricultural practices across the Union Territory to protect its organic status.

Ecological conservation: Reducing chemical inputs can protect soil fertility, water quality and biodiversity in Ladakh's fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

Traditional and sustainable agriculture: The transition reinforces traditional farming practices suited to Ladakh's geographical conditions while promoting environmentally responsible food production.

Livelihood opportunities: Organic certification can improve the market value of locally grown apricots, sea buckthorn, buckwheat, barley and vegetables. Better post-harvest management, processing, branding and market linkages can help farmers secure improved prices.

National significance: Ladakh's achievement demonstrates how region-specific agricultural practices can contribute to sustainable development. Sikkim, meanwhile, is recognised as India's first fully organic state.



PYQ COMPASS

Q. Sikkim is the first 'Organic State' in India. What are the ecological and economical benefits of Organic State? (GS III - 2018)

What are the major benefits of organic farming?

Environmental: Improves soil health, conserves water and supports biodiversity by reducing dependence on synthetic agricultural inputs.

Economic: Can lower dependence on purchased chemical inputs and create premium-market opportunities for certified produce.

Social and health-related: Promotes safer food production and preserves traditional agricultural knowledge.

Institutional: Farmer collectives, certification and digital platforms can improve bargaining power and market access.

What are the major Challenges of organic farming?

Transition costs: Farmers may face temporary yield uncertainty, additional labour requirements and difficulties replacing chemical inputs.

Certification: Certification and residue testing can impose costs and administrative burdens, particularly on small farmers.

Market limitations: Premium prices are not guaranteed without reliable buyers, consumer awareness and traceability.

Infrastructure gaps: Inadequate storage, processing, packaging and transport can reduce the value of organic produce.

Regional constraints: Climatic conditions, soil characteristics and farming traditions differ, making a uniform national approach unsuitable.

Implementation risks: Fertiliser restrictions must be accompanied by affordable organic alternatives, technical guidance and effective monitoring to prevent disruptions to farm productivity.

Key takeaway: *Ladakh's organic farming achievement illustrates the potential of combining regional initiatives with national policy support. The long-term success of organic agriculture depends not only on eliminating chemical inputs but also on certification, productivity, market access and reliable farmer incomes.*

Way forward

Provide transition support: Strengthen farmer training, access to organic inputs, soil testing and locally suitable pest-management practices.

Strengthen value chains: Expand storage, processing, packaging, branding and direct links with domestic and export markets.

Ensure credible certification: Improve certification access, traceability and quality assurance to maintain consumer confidence.

Protect farmer incomes: Monitor yields, production costs and price realisation to ensure that ecological gains translate into tangible economic benefits.

Adopt region-specific strategies: Expand organic farming according to local agro-climatic conditions rather than imposing a uniform model across all regions.

PYQ COMPASS

Q. Which among the following is/are the objective(s) of the Rainfed Area Development (RAD) initiative under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)? (2026)
1. Encouraging monoculture in rainfed areas
2. Increasing rice cultivation in irrigated regions
3. Enhancing productivity and minimising climatic risks through Integrated Farming Systems (IFS)
Select the answer using the code given below:
(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2
(c) 2 and 3
(d) 3 only

Q. In, India, markets in agricultural products are regulated under the (2015)
a) Essential Commodities Act, 1955
b) Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act enacted by States
c) Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, 1937
d) Food Products Order, 1956 and Meat and Food Products Order, 1973

A final surge: On Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's triumph in Brazil

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva secured a historic fourth term on October 25, 2026, defeating right-wing challenger Flávio Bolsonaro with 51.79% of the vote against 48.21%. Lula's victory overturned his first-round deficit and bucked a regional trend of right-wing electoral gains in Latin America. The result reflects effective voter mobilisation, welfare-oriented campaigning and concerns over democracy and national sovereignty.

How did Lula turn the election around?

Voter mobilisation: Lula's campaign focused on increasing turnout among young voters, working-class communities and those who had abstained or supported other candidates. Nearly three million more Brazilians voted in the runoff, reducing abstention from 21.08% to approximately 19.2%.

Digital campaigning: The campaign used selfie videos, social media and the WhatsApp channel Lula's Army, which reportedly attracted 11 million followers, to mobilise supporters and circulate campaign messages.

Welfare and economic promises: Lula promised expanded cash transfers under the Bolsa Família programme, debt relief and measures to support entrepreneurs. His government's record of economic growth, falling unemployment and wage growth also strengthened his appeal, despite mounting household debt.

Protection of democracy: Lula highlighted concerns over Flávio's pledge to free his father, former President Jair Bolsonaro, who is serving a 27-year prison sentence for attempting to overturn the 2022 election result. Flávio's proposal to impeach Supreme Court judges further mobilised voters concerned about democratic institutions and civil rights.

Expansion beyond traditional strongholds: Lula retained all nine northeastern states, his traditional base, while gaining support in municipalities that had backed Bolsonaro in the first round. He also overturned Bolsonaro's first-round lead in Minas Gerais, a crucial electoral battleground.

What is the significance of Lula's victory?

Historic electoral reversal: Lula became the first candidate in Brazil's presidential elections since the restoration of direct elections in 1989 to finish second in the first round and subsequently win the runoff.

Resilience of welfare-oriented politics: His victory demonstrates the continued electoral importance of social protection, employment, wages and economic inclusion amid political polarisation.

Democratic institutions: The campaign placed concerns over civil rights, judicial independence and the legacy of Bolsonaro's attempt to overturn the 2022 election at the centre of political debate.

Regional implications: Lula's victory interrupts a sequence of right-wing presidential victories across Latin America and preserves a left-wing government in the region's largest economy.

National sovereignty: Lula has resisted US President Donald Trump's efforts to expand Washington's influence in Latin America. US tariffs on Brazilian goods and sanctions against a Brazilian Supreme Court justice became part of the broader debate over foreign pressure and sovereignty.

PYQ COMPASS

Q. With reference to the election of the President of India, consider the following statements: (2018)
1. The value of the vote of each MLA varies from State to State.
2. The value of vote of MPs in Lok Sabha is more than the value of the vote of MPs of the Rajya Sabha. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Climate justice needs quicker compensation

The UN climate convention's Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) has earmarked financial assistance for flood-hit Nepal, marking its first emergency allocation to a disaster-affected country. Although the assistance is small compared with Nepal's recovery needs, it represents an important step towards climate justice, under which vulnerable countries seek financial support for climate-related losses despite contributing little to global emissions.

What is the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage?

Origin: Established at the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) in 2022 and operationalised in 2023, the FRLD addresses the long-standing demand of developing countries for financial assistance to cope with climate-related loss and damage.

Purpose: It supports developing countries facing the economic and non-economic consequences of climate-related disasters, including extreme weather events and slow-onset processes such as glacial melt, sea-level rise, biodiversity loss and desertification.

Climate justice: The fund recognises that countries with low greenhouse gas emissions often suffer disproportionately from climate change while having fewer resources to recover.

Not merely humanitarian aid: Unlike conventional disaster relief, the fund is rooted in the demand for climate-related compensation and raises questions about responsibility for global warming.

PYQ COMPASS

Q. Discuss how the contradiction between 'rapid infrastructure development' and 'disaster-risk reduction' in ecologically-sensitive areas of India can be managed, with suitable examples. (GS III - 2026)

Why is Nepal's allocation significant?

Climate disaster: An ice-and-rock avalanche triggered flash floods in Nepal's Bhotekoshi and Trishuli river systems, causing extensive loss of life, destroying villages and damaging hydropower infrastructure.

First emergency allocation: Nepal received an exceptional allocation of around $20–21.6 million, despite the regular application window having closed and 119 countries having submitted funding requests. The allocation still required procedural formalities before release.

Large funding gap: Nepal's estimated recovery and reconstruction requirements were approximately $4.75–5 billion. The allocation is therefore only a small fraction of the amount needed.

Emergency response precedent: The decision demonstrates the possibility of providing faster financial assistance after major climate disasters. However, developed countries insisted that Nepal's allocation be treated as an exception rather than an established rapid-response mechanism.

Broader development needs: Loss-and-damage funding can support infrastructure reconstruction, restoration of essential services, livelihood recovery, early-warning systems, institutional capacity and psychosocial support.

What are the major challenges facing the fund?

Inadequate finance: The fund has received pledges worth approximately $822 million, while official reports records $2.8 billion in requests from 119 countries. Pledges also do not necessarily translate into money already delivered.

Delayed disbursement: Lengthy application procedures and competing funding requests can delay recovery, increase reconstruction costs and prolong hardship in disaster-affected communities.

Uncertain contributions: The fund has no fixed resource-mobilisation target, and countries are encouraged to contribute voluntarily. This limits its ability to meet growing demands.

Disagreement over responsibility: Developed countries have historically resisted arrangements that could raise questions about their responsibility for climate change, slowing progress towards establishing and financing the fund.

How ISRO's new satellite could restore India's regional GPS alternative

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is scheduled to launch NVS-03, a next-generation navigation satellite, on October 30, 2026. The mission aims to restore NavIC's standalone positioning capability, which has been disrupted by satellite failures, malfunctioning atomic clocks and the end of satellite mission lives. NavIC is strategically important for India's navigation needs, technological self-reliance and national security.

What is NavIC and why is it important?

Indigenous navigation system: Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC), formerly known as the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), is India's regional satellite-based positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) system.

Coverage and accuracy: Designed around a seven-satellite constellation, NavIC covers India and approximately 1,500 km beyond its boundaries. Its intended positioning accuracy is up to 10 metres for open civilian services, with a more restricted service for authorised users.

Strategic significance: Development began in 1999 following the Kargil War, when India could not access US-owned Global Positioning System (GPS) support for its armed forces. NavIC reduces dependence on foreign navigation systems.

Practical applications: NavIC supports transportation, disaster management, military operations and location-based services. It can help track approximately 12,000 trains, of which around 8,700 were already equipped with the system according to the supplied material.

Regional advantage: Its satellite configuration is designed to provide better coverage over the Indian landmass than GPS signals in certain difficult terrains, including valleys and forests.

Why has NavIC's positioning service been disrupted?

Atomic clock failures: Navigation satellites require highly precise atomic clocks to calculate position using signal travel time. Defective imported clocks rendered several early satellites ineffective.

Satellite and launch failures: Of the 11 navigation satellites launched since July 2013, six reportedly failed. IRNSS-1H could not reach orbit because its protective heat shield failed to separate, while NVS-02 reached a transfer orbit but could not complete the manoeuvres required to enter its final orbit.

End of mission life: Most first-generation satellites were designed for a 10-year mission life, limiting the availability of operational satellites as they aged.

Delayed receiver development: A 2018 Comptroller and Auditor General of India report noted that development of consumer-end receivers began only in 2017, even though the first satellite was launched in 2013. This delayed the wider use of NavIC.

Insufficient operational satellites: According to the government's statement, only three satellites were available for positioning, navigation and timing services, below the minimum of four required for standalone positioning. Timing services remained functional.

PYQ COMPASS

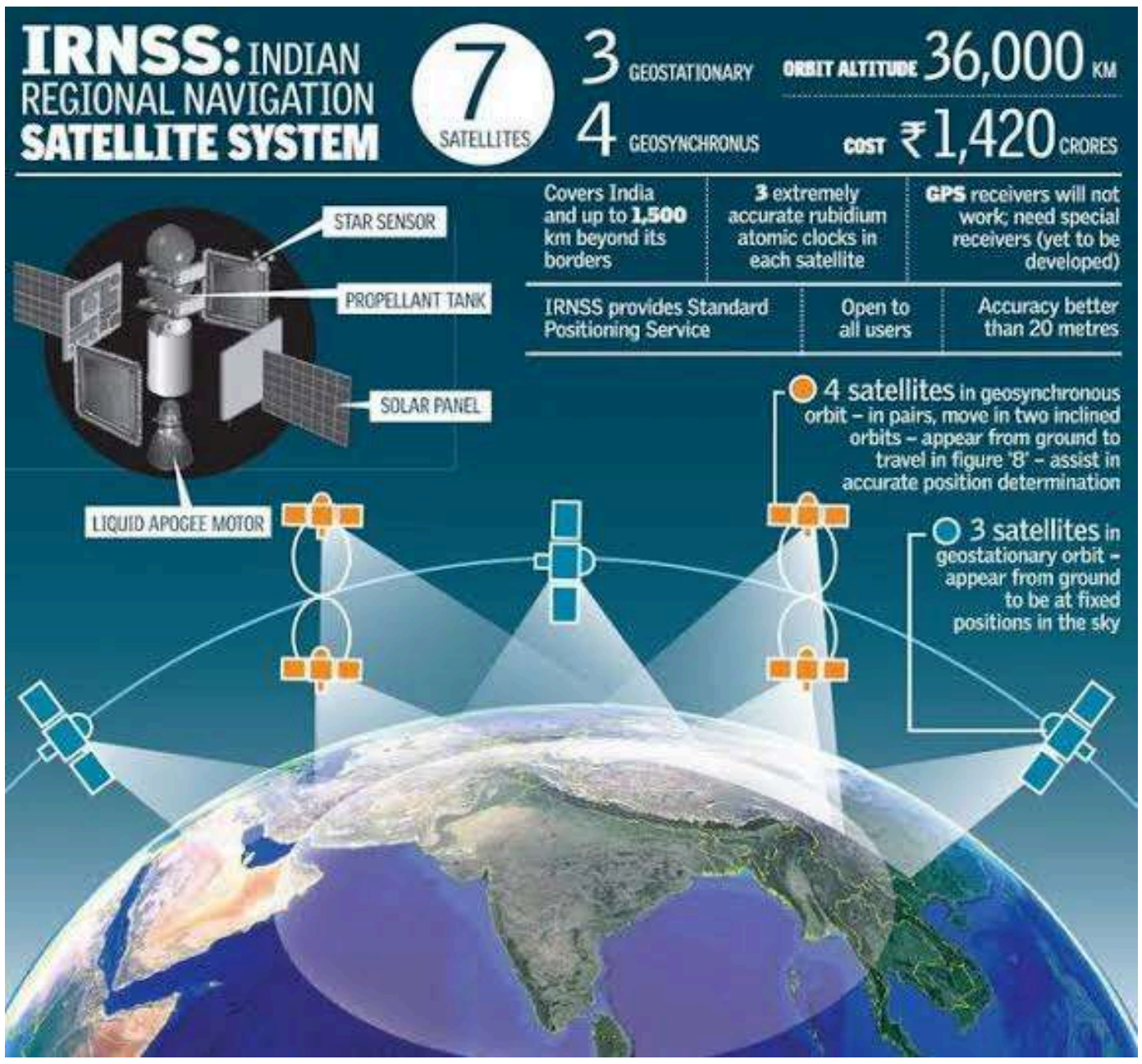
Q. With reference to the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), consider the following statements: (2018)
1. IRNSS has three satellites in geostationary and four satellites in geosynchronous orbits.
2. IRNSS covers the entire India and about 5500 sq. km beyond its borders.
3. India will have its own satellite navigation system with full global coverage by the middle of 2019.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) None

What improvements are being introduced?

NVS-03 launch: The satellite is intended to help restore the minimum constellation needed for standalone positioning services.

Indigenous atomic clocks: Second-generation satellites use domestically developed atomic clocks designed for a longer mission life of 12 years, reducing dependence on imported components.

Improved propulsion reliability: Following the NVS-02 failure, additional checks have been introduced to reduce the risk of propulsion-system malfunctions.

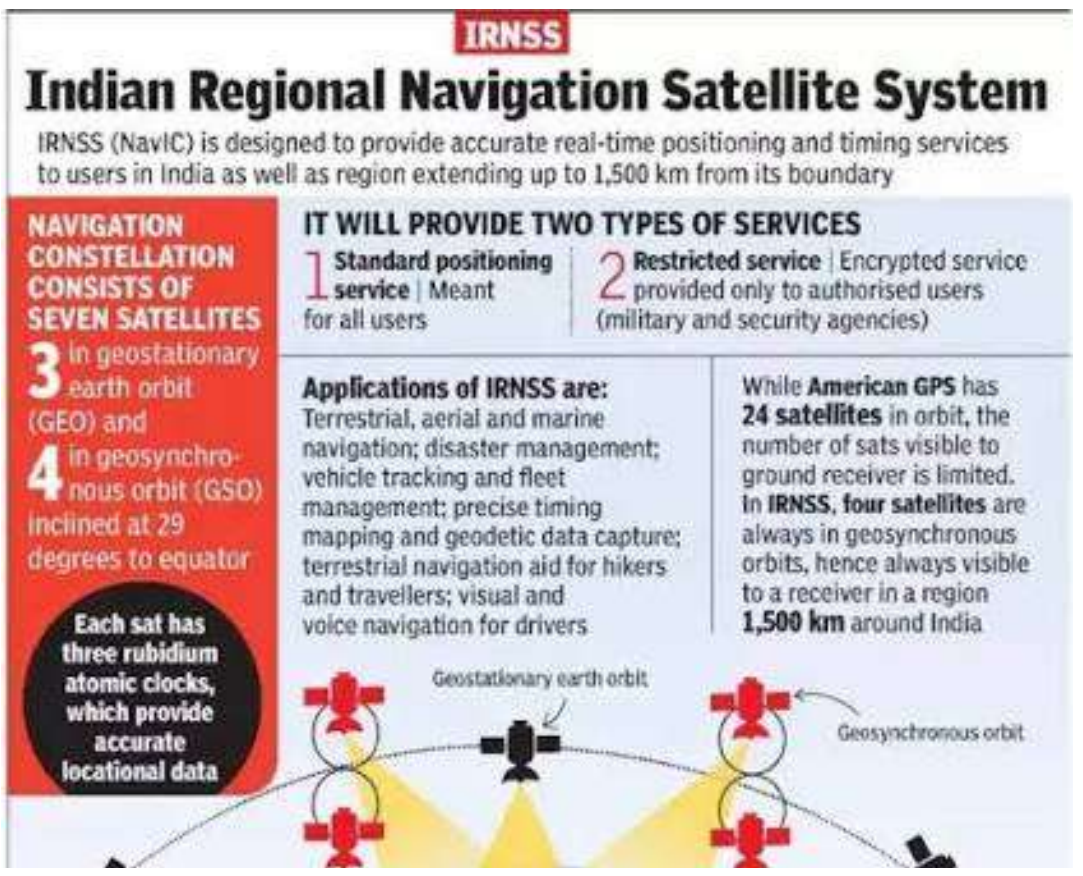


How does NavIC compare with other satellite navigation systems?

Satellite constellation: NavIC is India's regional navigation system, designed with a seven-satellite constellation. The United States' GPS has approximately 32 satellites, Russia's GLONASS 24, the European Union's Galileo 27, and China's BeiDou 30. Japan's Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS), with four satellites, augments GPS coverage in the Asia-Oceania region.

Regional versus global coverage: NavIC primarily covers India and approximately 1,500 km beyond its borders, whereas GPS, GLONASS, Galileo and BeiDou provide global coverage. QZSS focuses on regional augmentation.

Orbital configuration: NavIC uses high-orbit satellites. GPS, GLONASS and Galileo primarily use medium Earth orbit, while BeiDou combines satellites in medium and higher orbits. QZSS complements GPS coverage in the Asia-Oceania region.



Way forward

Ensure satellite reliability: Strengthen component testing, propulsion-system validation and mission-readiness reviews.

Complete constellation renewal: Replace ageing satellites promptly to maintain continuous positioning services.

Expand civilian adoption: Accelerate the availability of compatible receivers in smartphones, transport systems and other devices.

Strengthen indigenous capabilities: Develop reliable domestic components and reduce dependence on imported critical technologies.

Improve interoperability: Expand compatibility with other navigation systems while preserving NavIC's strategic autonomy.

PYQ COMPASS

Discuss India's achievements in the field of Space Science and Technology. How the application of this technology has helped India in its socio-economic development? (GS III - 2016)

PYQ COMPASS

Q. Which among the following is/are the objective(s) of the Rainfed Area Development (RAD) initiative under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)? (2026)

1. Encouraging monoculture in rainfed areas
2. Increasing rice cultivation in irrigated regions
3. Enhancing productivity and minimising climatic risks through Integrated Farming Systems (IFS) Select the answer using the code given below:

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

Ans : d

The Rainfed Area Development (RAD) component has been implemented under the NMSA since 2014-15. It aims to promote sustainable agricultural production through agro-climatic zone-specific Integrated Farming System (IFS) models developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

Statement 1 is not correct: The Rainfed Area Development (RAD) programme promotes diversified farming systems, not monoculture.

Statement 2 is not correct: RAD specifically targets rainfed areas, not irrigated regions.

Statement 3 is correct: It adopts an area-based approach, focuses on Integrated Farming System (IFS) for enhancing productivity and minimizing risks associated with climatic variability.

Q. In, India, markets in agricultural products are regulated under the (2015)

a) Essential Commodities Act, 1955
b) Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act enacted by States
c) Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, 1937
d) Food Products Order, 1956 and Meat and Food Products Order, 1973

Ans: b

Markets in Agricultural Products in India are regulated under the Agricultural produce market committee (APMC) Act enacted by the States. An agricultural produce market committee is a marketing board established by state governments of India. APMC acts run on two principles: Ensure that intermediaries (and money lenders) do not compel farmers to sell their produce at the farm gate extremely low price so that farmers are not exploited. All food produce should first be brought to the market yard and then be sold through Auction.

PYQ COMPASS

Q. With reference to the election of the President of India, consider the following statements: (2018)
1. The value of the vote of each MLA varies from State to State.
2. The value of vote of MPs in Lok Sabha is more than the value of the vote of MPs of the Rajya Sabha. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans : a
Statement 1: This is correct. The value of the vote of each MLA in the Presidential election varies from state to state. It is calculated based on the population of the state as per the 1971 Census and the total number of elected MLAs in the state. The formula ensures proportional representation of states in the electoral process.
Statement 2: This is incorrect. The value of the vote of all Members of Parliament (MPs) is the same, irrespective of whether they are from the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. The value is determined by dividing the total value of the votes of all MLAs by the total number of elected MPs.

Q. With reference to the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), consider the following statements: (2018)
1. IRNSS has three satellites in geostationary and four satellites in geosynchronous orbits.
2. IRNSS covers the entire India and about 5500 sq. km beyond its borders.
3. India will have its own satellite navigation system with full global coverage by the middle of 2019.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) None

Ans: a
Statement 1: Correct. IRNSS consists of a constellation of seven satellites, with three satellites placed in geostationary orbit (GEO) and four satellites in geosynchronous orbit (GSO). This configuration provides accurate navigation services over India and the surrounding region.
Statement 2: Incorrect. IRNSS is designed to cover the entire Indian landmass and an area extending up to approximately 1,500 km beyond India's borders, not 5,500 km.
Statement 3: Incorrect. IRNSS (also called NavIC) is a regional navigation satellite system and does not provide full global coverage. It focuses on regional coverage over India and its vicinity.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the major challenges faced by the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD):

1. The fund's financial resources remain inadequate compared with the funding requests submitted by vulnerable countries.
2. The absence of a fixed resource-mobilisation target and dependence on voluntary contributions constrain the fund's financial capacity.
3. Delays in processing applications can hinder timely recovery and increase reconstruction costs in disaster-affected countries.
4. Developed countries have fully met their climate-finance commitments, eliminating financial constraints on the fund.

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) 1, 2 and 3 only

- Statement 1 is correct: The fund's pledged resources of approximately $822 million are significantly lower than the $2.8 billion in requests recorded in the supplementary material.
- Statement 2 is correct: The absence of a fixed resource-mobilisation target and reliance on voluntary contributions create uncertainty over future funding.
- Statement 3 is correct: Bureaucratic hurdles and delays in disbursement can prolong hardship and increase recovery costs.
- Statement 4 is incorrect: Developed countries have faced criticism for not fully meeting their climate-finance commitments. The gap between developing countries' financial needs and available resources remains substantial.

Q. With reference to the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC), consider the following statements:
NavIC is a regional satellite navigation system designed to cover India and approximately 1,500 km beyond its boundaries.
NavIC requires a minimum of four operational satellites to provide standalone positioning services.
The second-generation NavIC satellites use only the L5 and S frequency bands, without the L1 band.
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: (a) 1 and 2 only
Statement 3 is incorrect: Second-generation satellites transmit signals in the L1 band in addition to the L5 and S bands, improving compatibility with other navigation systems and supporting devices such as smartwatches.