7. Short News

1. e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)

Rajasthan has emerged as the top state in India for e-trade volume on the e-NAM platform, signalling a major shift toward digital agricultural marketing.

Rajasthan's Lead - The state has integrated 173 mandis to the portal, benefiting over 15 lakh farmers.

Scale of Trade - Since 2016, Rajasthan has handled 3.16 crore tonnes of produce worth ₹1.3 lakh crore.

AI Integration - Rajasthan leads in technological adoption with AI-based quality testing implemented in 134 mandis.

Implementing Agency - The platform is managed by the Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) under the Ministry of Agriculture.

Core Objectives - e-NAM aims to create a "One Nation, One Market" by ensuring transparent price discovery through real-time online auctions and standardized procedures.

2. Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)

The 2025–26 Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment highlighted inadequate state support and institutional gaps in the welfare of DNT communities.

Historical Stigma - Denotified tribes were originally stigmatized under the colonial *Criminal Tribes Act*; they were "denotified" in 1952 but still face social exclusion.

Certification Crisis - Only 7 states (including Rajasthan, UP, and Tamil Nadu) currently issue specific DNT community certificates, which are essential for accessing benefits.

Population & Diversity - There are an estimated 10 crore DNT individuals across India, spread across SC, ST, and OBC categories.

Institutional Gaps - The report notes that most states have failed to establish dedicated welfare boards, grievance systems, or accurate population data.

Limited Scheme Reach - While the SEED scheme (Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs) has formed 5,000 self-help groups, overall coverage remains very low compared to the population size.

3. Tobacco and Vapes Bill (UK Smoking Ban)

The United Kingdom has passed a landmark law to create the world's first "smoke-free generation" by banning cigarette sales to anyone born after 2008.

Generational Ban - The law prohibits the sale of tobacco to anyone born after January 1, 2009. The legal smoking age will increase by one year every year, effectively banning it for this cohort for life.

Public Health Burden - Smoking causes approximately 75,000 deaths annually in England and accounts for one-fourth of all UK deaths.

Vaping Restrictions - The bill also cracks down on youth vaping by restricting flavors, packaging, and marketing strategies designed to appeal to children.

Global Context - While New Zealand attempted a similar model and later repealed it, the UK move aligns with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

Future Expansion - Provisions include extending smoking bans to outdoor public spaces like school gates and playgrounds to reduce second-hand smoke.

4. Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs)

The RBI has released a draft framework to restructure and expand digital wallets (PPIs) while tightening security and KYC rules.

Wallet Categories - PPIs are now classified into Full-KYC wallets (limit ₹2 lakh) and small wallets (limit ₹10,000 for goods/services only).

Specialized Wallets - New "Special Purpose" PPIs are proposed for specific needs like public transit, gifting, and foreign nationals visiting India.

Cross-Border Ban - The RBI has explicitly banned the cross-border use of PPIs, restricting them to **domestic transactions** only.

Consumer Protection - New rules mandate automatic closure of wallets after one year of inactivity and require immediate refunds for failed transactions.

Strict Regulation - Only banks and approved non-banks (with a minimum net worth of ₹15 crore after three years) are permitted to issue these digital wallets.

5. Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS)

The historic WHO Pandemic Agreement (WPA) adopted in 2025 is currently stalled because it lacks a finalized "PABS Annex."

The "Sample-to-Solution" Link - PABS is a system that legally links the sharing of virus samples by countries to a guaranteed share of the medical benefits produced from them.

Mandatory Contribution - Under PABS, pharmaceutical companies would be required to provide 20% of their production (vaccines/diagnostics) to the WHO during a pandemic.

North-South Divide - The system is backed by over 100 Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), including **India**, but faces opposition from developed nations with large pharma sectors.

Equity Issue - Currently, LMICs often share biological data, but have no legal guarantee that they will receive the resulting vaccines fairly or affordably.

Legal Status - The WPA is a legally binding international instrument that will enter into force once 60 countries have ratified it.