

# Factly Weekly

**Compilation**

2025

**For UPSC CSE Prelims  
Exam**

**1<sup>st</sup> Week**

**January 2025**

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## Financial Stability Report

**News:** The Financial Stability Report, December 2024 has highlighted that Indian economy, and financial system remains robust amid global vulnerabilities. **Financial Stability Report**

### Key findings of the Financial Stability Report

- **Prospects of Economic Growth:** The *Gross Domestic Product (GDP)* is expected to *grow at 6.6% in FY25 (2024-25)*, given the revival in rural consumption, increased government spending and services exports.
- **Fiscal Discipline:** The *union government's debt to GDP ratio* is expected to *decline from 62.7% (2020-21) to 58.6% by 2024-25*.
  - *States' outstanding liabilities* are also expected to *decline from 31% to 28.8%* during the same period.
- **Resilient Financial System:**
  - **Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs)**
    - They display strong profitability, lower non-performing assets and adequate capital and liquidity buffers.
    - *Return on assets and return on equity* are at a decadal high.
    - The *Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) Ratio* has fallen to a multi-year low.
    - Even under adverse scenario, SCBs aggregate capital would remain much higher than the *minimum regulatory capital requirement of 9%* in March 2026.
  - **Non-Banking Financial Companies**
    - They are financially healthy with sizable capital buffers, robust interest margins and improved asset quality.
    - Their *Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR)* is expected to remain much above the regulatory minimum level of 15% even under a high-risk scenario.
- **Retail Inflation:** It has *come down to 5.5% in November 2024*, largely due to softening of food prices and favorable base effect.

The Financial Stability Report is released by the RBI every 6 months. It is based on the collective assessment of the Financial Stability and Developmental Council (FSDC) Sub-Committee.

### Financial Stability and Developmental Council

- It is a non-statutory body formed by the central government in 2010
- **Functions:** It deals with issues related to financial stability, financial sector development, financial literacy and supervision etc.
- **Chairperson:** Union Finance Minister
- **Members:** Heads of financial sector regulators (RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, IRDA, FMC), Finance Secretary, Chief Economic Advisor etc.

## Tobacco Board of India

**News:** The Tobacco Board of India has claimed that Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco farmers' earnings have more than doubled from Rs. 124 per kg (2019-20) to Rs. 279.54 (2023-24).

### About Tobacco Board of India

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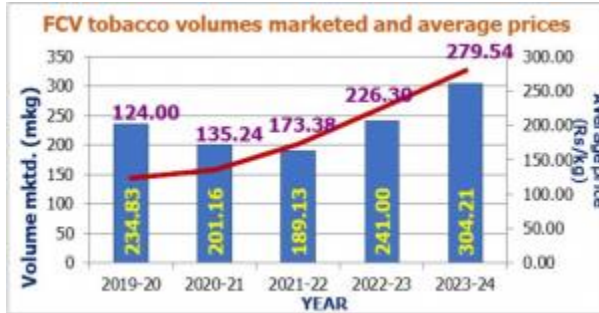


Figure 1.Source- PIB

- It is a *statutory body* established by the *Tobacco Board Act, 1975* for the overall development of the tobacco industry.
- **Functions:**
  - Monitors the Virginia tobacco market to *ensure fair and remunerative prices to growers*, checking the volatility of the market.
  - Establishes *auction platforms* for sale of Virginia tobacco by registered growers.
  - Sponsors scientific, technological and economic research for promotion of the tobacco industry.
- Engages in *extension and developmental activities* to promote sustainable tobacco cultivation practices.
- The board is administered by the *Ministry of Commerce and Industry*
- It is headquartered in *Guntur (Andhra Pradesh)*

### Key factors behind doubling of FCV tobacco farmers' earnings

- Implementation of IT-enabled transparent electronic auction system
- Export promotion activities carried out by the board
- Providing financial relief to the tobacco farmers during times of need

## Torrijos-Carter Treaties

**News:** Donald Trump has called the transfer of Panama Canal to Panama as foolish. This has brought Torrijos-Carter Treaties in the news.

### About Torrijos-Carter Treaties



Figure 2.Source- Wikipedia

- They are **two treaties** which were signed by the United States and Panama in 1977.
  - **Panama Canal Treaty:** It provided for joint US-Panama control until December 31, 1999, after which Panama will take full control of canal operations and become primarily responsible for its defense.
  - **Permanent Neutrality Treaty:** It declared the *canal to be open for all nations*, though the US has the right to defend the neutrality of the canal and have priority passage in military emergencies.
- **Reasons for Trump being upset with Panama**
  - **High Transit Fees:** Panama Canal Authority (ACP) has *imposed high transit fees* on US vessels. In 2023, due to droughts in Lakes Gatun and Alhajuela, ACP has reduced the number of slots for crossing ships by 36%, leading to an increase in transit fees.
  - **Increased Chinese presence:** Chinese presence in the Panama Canal has increased significantly, especially after 2017, when Panama became the first Latin American country to sign a Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) agreement.

### Response of Panama's President Jose Raul Mulino

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- He defended the transit rates by arguing that transit rates are set *as per international standards and decided by a procedure*.
- He *denied the claims of Chinese involvement*, citing the importance of sovereignty for the people of Panama.

### Project VISTAAR

**News:** The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare are collaborating on Project VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources)

#### About Project VISTAAR



Source- The Hindu

- It **aims** to transform agricultural extension service by making information easily accessible to farmers from start-ups in agriculture and allied sectors.
- The digitalisation of the agriculture extension service will help farmers in **accessing high quality advisory services** on crop production, marketing, value addition, and supply chain management.
- The advisory services will also help the farmers to **avail benefits of government schemes** related to agriculture, allied sectors and rural development.
- The platform incorporates a **database of over 12,000 start-ups** in the agricultural and farming sectors, providing farmers access to start-up driven innovations and technologies.
  - **Eg:** Innovative technologies developed by agri-start-ups can make agriculture sustainable and climate resilient.

## National Anthem of India

**News:** Recently, a controversy in Tamil Nadu's Legislative Assembly occurred when the Governor departed without delivering the customary address, citing the absence of the National Anthem. **National Anthem of India**



Figure 3. Source- Times of India

### About National Anthem of India

- **Composed by-** Rabindranath Tagore in Bangla.
- **Adopted in-** It was first adopted in its Hindi version by the Constituent Assembly on January 24, 1950.
- **Procedure for Singing the Anthem:**

<b>Full Version</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Duration:</b> Around 52 seconds.</li> <li>• <b>Occasions:</b> The full version is sung during:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Civil and military investitures.</li> <li>○ Arrival or departure of the President or Governor at state functions.</li> <li>○ Parades or when the National Flag is unfurled.</li> <li>○ Arrival or departure of the President for any public function.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The anthem is preceded by a drum roll when performed by a band.</li> </ul>
<b>Short Version</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Duration:</b> Around 20 seconds.</li> <li>• <b>Occasions:</b> The short version is played:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ During toasts in messes.</li> <li>○ On special occasions as directed by the Government of India.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Mass Singing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Occasions:</b> The anthem is sung at:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unfurling of the National Flag.</li> <li>○ Cultural and ceremonial functions where there is public participation.</li> <li>○ Arrival or departure of the President at non-state public functions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Legal and Constitutional Aspects

**1. Article 51A:** The Constitution of India encourages every citizen to respect the National Anthem as part of their fundamental duties.

**2. Punishment for Non-Compliance:** In a 2019 case, the Madras High Court dismissed a petition seeking punishment for not playing the National Anthem at a function, ruling that there is *no legal mandate for its compulsory performance*.

### Bharatpol Portal

**News:** The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation launched the bharatpol portal in New Delhi on 7th January 2025 at the Bharat Mandapam.



Source- The Indian Express

#### About Bharatpol Portal

- It is a significant initiative aimed at streamlining the processing of requests for international assistance through INTERPOL.
- It will handle tasks such as the issuance of *Red Notices* and other colour-coded **INTERPOL notices**, facilitating more efficient international cooperation in criminal investigations and law enforcement.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Improved Efficiency:** The portal will provide easier and faster access to international police assistance, strengthening India's efforts in combating transnational crimes.
  - **Real-Time Information Sharing:** It will enable Indian Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to share real-time information, ensuring quicker access to necessary support from global policing networks.
  - **Developed by:** Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which will oversee its operation and integration with international law enforcement systems.

#### Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI): Key Facts

- **Role:** The CBI is India's premier investigative agency, responsible for handling serious crimes and providing leadership in fighting corruption within the police force across the country.

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- **Establishment:** It was established in 1963 following the recommendations of the *Santhanam Committee* on Prevention of Corruption.
- **Non-Statutory Body:** The CBI is not a statutory body but was set up by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It derives its power to investigate from the *Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946*.
- **National Central Bureau (NCB):** It acts as the National Central Bureau (NCB-New Delhi) for INTERPOL in India, coordinating international police cooperation and assistance.

### Sultanpur National Park

**News:** The management of Sultanpur National Park aims to develop two water bodies to attract the migratory flamingoes, who have been populating the nearby Najafgarh wetland.

#### About Sultanpur National Park



Figure 4. Source- Times of India

- It is a popular *bird sanctuary* located in the *Gurugram district* of Haryana.
- The park is a *paradise for bird watchers*, hosting both the migratory as well as resident birds, especially during the winter months.
- **History:**
  - **1971**– It was accorded sanctuary status under the Punjab Wildlife Preservation Act of 1959.
  - **1991**– The park was upgraded to a National Park under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
  - **2021**– It was notified as a Ramsar site under the criteria of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, 1971
- *Sultanpur Jheel*, located inside the park, is the main source of water and attracts a large number of winter birds.
- **Flora and Fauna:**
  - **Flora:** It is dominated by tropical dry deciduous trees, which includes neem, khair, tendu etc.
  - **Fauna:**
    - **Resident Birds:** Common Hoopoe, Black Francolin, Spot Billed Duck, Painted Stork etc.
    - **Migratory Birds:** Common Teal, Siberian Cranes, Northern Pintail etc.

### Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary

**News:** A four-day faunal survey, organised by the Travancore Nature History Society in collaboration with the Forest department, conducted at the Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary has added to its biodiversity.



### About Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary



Figure 5. Source- The Hindu

- **Location:**
  - It is a protected area nestled in the southern part of the Western Ghats in the Kollam district of Kerala.
  - It forms part of the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve.
  - Its name is derived from an endemic plant locally known as Chenkurinji.
  - The sanctuary is famous for its lush green forests, diverse wildlife, scenic landscape and serves as a paradise for nature lovers.
- **Flora and Fauna:**
  - **Flora:** The vegetation is dominated by tropical evergreen forests, semi-evergreen forests and moist deciduous forests.
  - **Fauna:** Elephants, tigers, leopards, barking deer, Indian Hornbill, Flycatchers, Raptors etc.

### Golden Jackal Explanation

**News-** Environmentalists say that golden jackals appear to be adapting to their changing environment and are no longer avoiding humans.

### About Golden Jackal



Figure 6. Source- BBC Wildlife

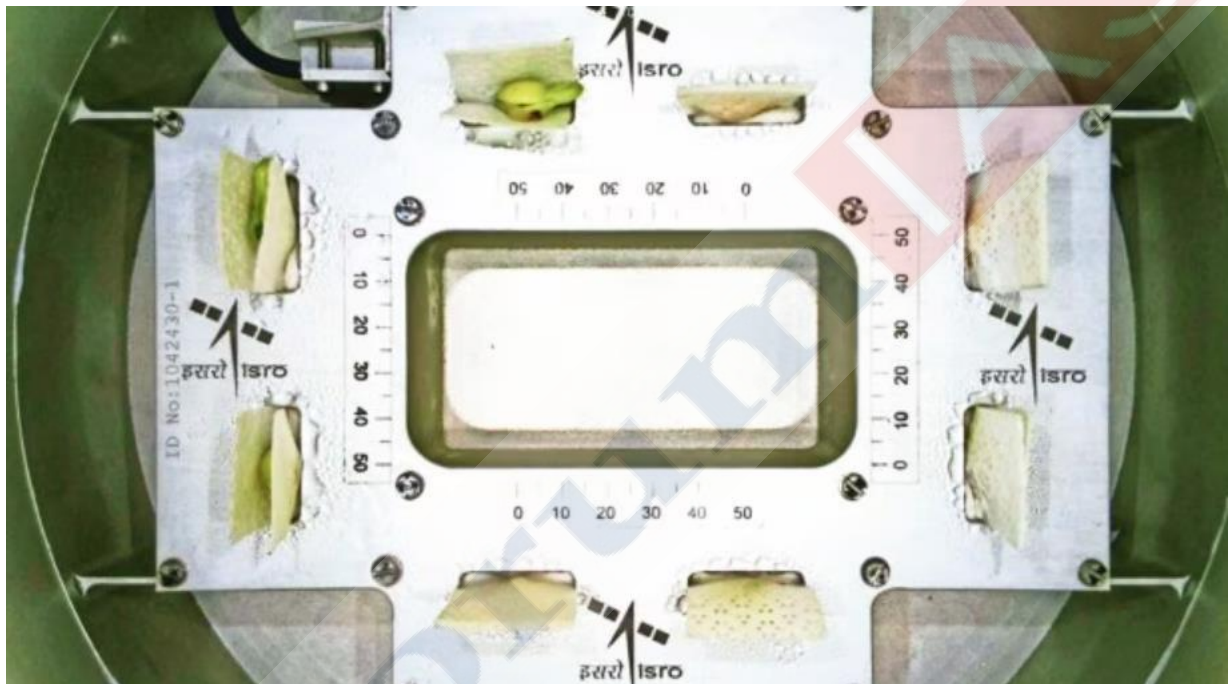
- The golden jackal, also referred to as the common jackal, is a *medium-sized*, wolf-like canid.
  - **Activity-** In human-inhabited areas, they are strictly *nocturnal*, but in less-disturbed regions, they may exhibit partially diurnal behavior.
  - **Mating-** They are *monogamous*, forming lifelong pairs.
  - **Diet-** They are *omnivorous* and opportunistic foragers, consuming a diverse range of food.
  - **Habitat-** These animals thrive in valleys, riverbanks, tributaries, canals, lakes, and coastal areas. However, they are *less common* in *foothills and low mountainous regions*.
- **Distribution-** They are widely distributed across North and East Africa, Southeastern Europe, and South Asia, extending to Burma. In India, they inhabit diverse landscapes, ranging from the Himalayan foothills to the Western Ghats.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN:** Least Concern
  - **CITES:** Appendix III

- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (India):** Schedule I
- **Ecological Significance**– Golden jackals play a vital role in preserving the biodiversity of mangrove and grassland ecosystems.

### Cowpea Explanation

**News:** ISRO's PSLV-C60 POEM-4 Mission has achieved a milestone by germinating cowpea seeds under microgravity conditions within four days of the launch of the mission.

#### About Cowpea



Source- The Indian Express

- The cowpea is an *annual herbaceous legume* within the *pea family*.
- The plant was *originally domesticated in Africa*. Presently, they are grown in semi-arid areas covering Africa, Asia, Europe, United States, Central and South America.
- **Characteristics:**
  - Tolerates *sandy soil* and *low rainfall*.
  - Possess *nitrogen fixation properties*, which replenishes the fertility of soils.
  - Has *multiple uses* like food, feed, forage etc.
  - *Rich source of proteins, minerals and vitamins*.
  - Its wide leaves keep soil and soil moisture conserved due to *shading effect*.
- **Climate:** It is *warm weather and semi-arid crop*. The crop is best suited to temperatures ranging from 20-degree celsius to 30-degree celsius.
- **Production:**
  - Globally, *African continent* dominates the cowpea production.
  - In *India*, cowpea is cultivated mainly in the states of Rajasthan, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Haryana etc.

### Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

**News:** A male tiger born in the Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary in Yavatmal has traveled an extraordinary 500 kilometers to reach Solapur district in Maharashtra.



Source- Hindustan Times

#### About Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Location:**
  - Situated in *Yavatmal district, Maharashtra*.
  - Known as the “*Green Oasis*” of Southern Maharashtra due to abundant water resources from rivers like Purna, Krishna, Bhima, and Tapti.
- **Geography:**
  - The sanctuary is located in a *basalt region* created by ancient volcanic lava eruptions.
  - The terrain is *hilly* and undulating, offering a diverse ecosystem.
- **Flora:** Rich in vegetation, including herbs, grasses, and bamboo forests.
- **Fauna:** Home to a wide array of wildlife, such as: Hyenas, chital (spotted deer), black buck, sambar, jackal, wild boar, wild cat, bear, and blue bull, Peacock, Monkeys etc.

### Indus Valley Script

**News:** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has announced a prize money of \$1 million for experts or organisations that are successful in deciphering the scripts of Indus Valley Civilisation.

- **Evolution:**

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- During the *early Harappan phase (3500-2700 BCE)*, the earliest examples of script signs are found on Ravi and Kot Diji pottery excavated at Harappa.
- During the *urban period (2600-1900 BCE)*, the script was fully developed, and longer inscriptions were recorded.
- Though the script remains undeciphered, experts say that ***it was not alphabetical*** as it had too many signs, ranging from 375 to 400.
- The script was written from ***right to left (Boustrophedon Style)***. This is evident as some seals show a wider spacing on the right and cramping on the left.
- ***Evidence of writing*** has been found on a *variety of objects* including seals, copper tools, jewelry, terracotta tablets etc.
- The script was ***pictographic*** and contained ***iconographic motifs*** like realistic pictures of animals.

### Key attempts to decipher the Indus Valley Script

**1932-** Flinders Petrie attempted to decipher the script based on supposed similarity of pictographic principles between Indus Valley Script and Egyptian hieroglyphs.

**Early 1970s-** Iravatham Mahadevan found that an average inscription contained five symbols and longest inscription contained only 14 symbols in single line, establishing the direction of writing being from right to left.

**1982-** SR Rao argued for a Sanskrit based decipherment of script. He traced the gradual changes in the Harappan script from a picture cum linear script to a purely linear one.

### About Indus Valley Script

