

# **Factly Weekly**

**Compilation**

**2025**

**For UPSC CSE Prelims  
Exam**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Week**

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## Persian Gulf

**News-** The US President Donald Trump plans to officially rename the 'Persian Gulf' as the 'Arabian Gulf' during a visit to Saudi Arabia, aligning with the preferences of Arab Gulf nations. **Persian Gulf.**

### About Persian Gulf



Figure 1. Source- Worldatlas

- **Location-** The Persian Gulf is a shallow marginal sea of the Indian Ocean, located in Western Asia, and bordered by several key Middle Eastern nations.

- It connects to the Arabian Sea through the Strait of Hormuz, a globally significant maritime route for oil transportation.

- The total coastline extends about 5,117 km, with Iran possessing the longest segment, roughly 1,536 km.

- **Bordering Countries:**

- **North:** Iran
- **Southwest:** Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates
- **Northwest:** Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain

- **Key Islands: Qeshm Island (Iran):** The largest island in the Persian Gulf, covering about 1,491 km<sup>2</sup>—nearly 2.5 times the land area of Bahrain.

- **Strategic and Economic Significance**

- The Persian Gulf plays a pivotal

role in global energy dynamics, with nearly 30% of the world's oil exports transiting through the Strait of Hormuz.

- The region frequently hosts naval deployments from powers such as the United States, Iran, and various Gulf nations, serving as a platform for military presence and geopolitical influence.

## Air Defence Systems

**News-** India recently has targeted Pakistan's air defence systems in response to multiple drone and munition attacks across the western border. **Air Defence Systems.**



### About Air Defence Systems

- Air defence systems are designed to detect, track, and neutralise aerial threats like fighter jets, drones, and missiles.
- They play a critical role in protecting national airspace and enabling offensive air operations by suppressing enemy defences.

### How Air Defence Systems Work?

1. **Detection:** Air defence systems begin by scanning the skies using radars and satellites. These tools detect incoming threats like aircraft, drones, or missiles. The reflected signals help determine the object's speed, direction, altitude, and type.
2. **Tracking:** Once detected, advanced sensors such as infrared cameras, lasers, and radar arrays track the threat in real time. Multiple targets can be monitored simultaneously, even in complex or hostile airspace.
3. **Interception:** Based on threat type, the system activates countermeasures—fighter aircraft, missiles, or electronic jamming.

### Prominent Air Defence Systems Worldwide

- S-400 (Russia)
- HQ-9 (China)
- THAAD (USA)
- Iron Dome (Israel)
- Aster-30 (France–Italy)

### Operation Sindoor

**News:** Operation Sindoor was launched in response to the Pahalgam terror attack on May 7, 2025. **Operation Sindoor.**



#### About Operation Sindoor

- **Target:** The Indian Armed Forces carried out **precision strikes** on **21 terror camps** across **9 locations** in **Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)**.
- **Objective:** To neutralize terrorist infrastructure while **minimizing collateral damage** using **niche-technology weapons** and **carefully selected warheads**.
- **Execution:** The operation was led jointly by the **Indian Army, Indian Air Force (IAF)**, and other strategic units.

#### Precision Weapon Systems Possibly Used in Operation Sindoor

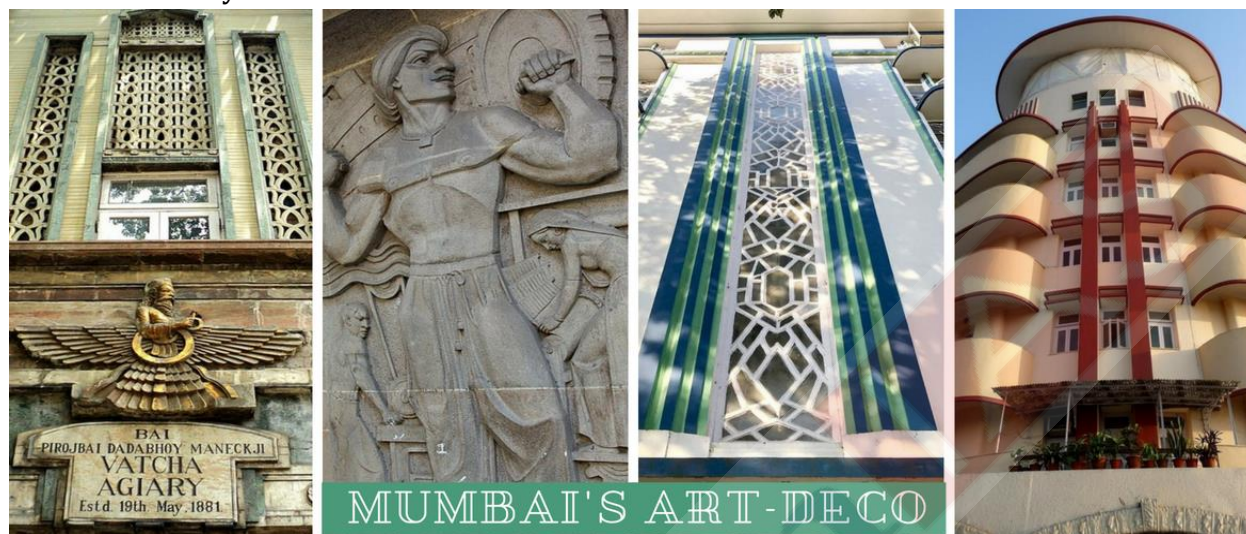
- **HAMMER (Highly Agile and Manoeuvrable Munition Extended Range):** It is an **Air-to-ground** precision-guided weapon system for **Rafale**. It ranges up to **70 km**. **Key Features** are **resistance** to jamming, suitable for low-altitude launches over difficult terrain.
- **SCALP (Storm Shadow):** It is a Long-range **stealth cruise missile** by MBDA. It **ranges approximately 450 km**. Its **capabilities** include night/all-weather operations, accurate bunker-penetrating strikes using INS, GPS, and terrain referencing.
- **METEOR:** It is beyond **Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM)**. Its specialty is a large '**No Escape Zone**', **high performance** in **electronic-warfare** scenarios. It uses solid-fuel **ramjet motor** technology, which maintains high speed till impact.
- **BRAHMOS:** It is a **supersonic cruise missile** developed by **DRDO-Russia JV**. Its speed is up to Mach 3. Its range was recently extended for **land and ship variants**. The missile is **capable of carrying a conventional warhead** with a payload ranging from 200 to 300 kilograms. **Key features** of the missile include a '**Fire and Forget**' **capability**, a terrain-hugging terminal phase for enhanced stealth and accuracy, and high versatility across diverse operational scenarios.
- **Loitering Munitions (Suicide Drones):** They are equipped with explosive warheads. **They are used** for **real-time surveillance** and **autonomous precision strikes**.



## Art Deco Style

**News:** Art Deco style, first seen at the 1925 Paris Exposition, reached Madras nearly a decade later, after arriving in India through Bombay with the Syndicate Bank building in 1932. **Art Deco Style.**

### About Art Deco Style



The Heritage Lab

- It emerged in **Western Europe in the 1910s–1920s** and flourished in the **United States during the 1930s**.
- The name is derived from the **1925 Paris Exposition – Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes**.
- Art Deco blended **modernism with luxury and glamour**.
- It symbolized **sophistication, wealth, and forward-looking aesthetics**, moving away from traditional ornamentation.
- **Key Characteristics:**
  - It emphasizes **clean lines, geometric shapes, and streamlined forms**.
  - Rich use of both **natural** (ivory, jade, obsidian) and **manufactured materials** (chrome, Bakelite, ferroconcrete).
  - **Stylized ornamentation** inspired by nature, classical motifs, and machine-age aesthetics.
  - It features **nude female figures, animals, foliage, and sunbursts**, rendered in a **stylized, abstract manner**.

### Art Deco in Madras (Chennai)

- Art Deco was widely adopted in India by **banks, insurance firms, cinema halls, film studios, and commercial establishments**, symbolizing both **modernity and evolving cultural identity**.
- In 1932, **Laxman Mahadeo Chitale** marked the beginning of Art Deco architecture in the Madras.
- His notable projects include the Oriental Insurance Building on Armenian Street, the National Insurance Building (1938) on China Bazaar Road, and the Andhra Insurance Building (1939).
- The Art Deco style also extended to **furniture, silverware, and typographic design**, shaping the aesthetic of everyday life.

## Coal Gasification Financial Incentive Scheme

**News:** The Ministry of Coal has signed the Coal Gasification Plant Development and Production Agreement (CGPDPA) with selected applicants under Category II of the Coal Gasification Financial Incentive Scheme. These include Jindal Steel and Power Limited, New Era Cleantech Solution Private Limited, and Greta Energy and Metal Private Limited. **Coal Gasification Financial Incentive Scheme.**



### About Coal Gasification

- Coal gasification is a thermo-chemical process that converts coal into synthesis gas (syngas), mainly composed of CO, H<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and H<sub>2</sub>O.
- The process involves high-temperature reactions of coal with limited oxygen and steam.

### Process of Coal Gasification

1. **Preparation:** Coal is crushed to increase its surface area.
2. **Gasification Reactor:** Crushed coal is fed into a high-temperature vessel with steam and limited oxygen.
3. **Chemical Reactions:** Partial oxidation breaks coal into syngas.
4. **Gas Cleaning:** Tar, sulfur, and dust are removed from the raw gas.

### Coal Gasification Financial Incentive Scheme (FIS)

1. **Launch Date:** January 24, 2024
2. **Outlay:** ₹8,500 crore
3. **Target:** 100 million tonnes of coal gasification by 2030
4. **Objective:** Promote public and private sector participation in coal gasification projects

### Significance of Coal Gasification

1. **Cleaner Energy:** Produces syngas, which is cleaner and easier to transport.
2. **Industrial Uses:** Syngas is used for producing methanol, ammonia, ethanol, hydrogen, olefins, and power.

3. **Economic Value:** Reduces oil and gas imports, utilises 378.21 billion tonnes of domestic coal reserves (2023 inventory).
4. **Strategic Role:** Supports India's clean coal transition and energy security goals.

#### About the National Coal Gasification Mission

1. **Goal:** Achieve 100 MT coal gasification by 2030
2. **Phases:** *Phase I:* Pilot projects; *Phase II:* Upscaling through Coal India Limited; *Phase III:* Full-scale gasification after tech improvements

### Disqualification of a Sitting Lawmaker

**News:** Karnataka MLA G. Janardhan Reddy has been disqualified from the State Legislative Assembly after being convicted by the Principal Special Judge for CBI cases in Hyderabad. The disqualification is effective from May 6, 2025, as per Article 191(1)(e) of the Constitution and Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. **Disqualification of a Sitting Lawmaker.**



#### About the Disqualification

Disqualification of a lawmaker means **loss of membership in the legislature** due to legal or constitutional violations. It serves to uphold **integrity in public life** and prevent individuals with criminal convictions or disqualifying conduct from continuing in office.

#### Constitutional and Statutory Provisions

1. **Article 191(1)(e):** Applies to State Legislators; covers disqualification for conviction under law.
2. **Article 102(1):** Corresponding provision for Members of Parliament.
3. **Tenth Schedule:** Deals with disqualification due to defection. Introduced by the 52nd Amendment (1985). **Purpose:** Prevents elected members from switching parties or acting against party directions.
4. **Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951:**
  - **Section 8(1):** Includes offences like promoting enmity and electoral fraud.
  - **Section 8(2):** Includes dowry and food adulteration cases.
  - **Section 8(3):** Applies if imprisonment is for at least two years; disqualification continues for six more years after release.



- **Section 9 to 11B:** Cover disqualification due to corruption, government contracts, failure to declare expenses, and procedures for removal.

#### Judicial Interpretation and Appeal Impact

- **Lily Thomas v. Union of India (2013):** Supreme Court struck down Section 8(4) of the RPA. A convicted lawmaker is disqualified immediately; merely filing an appeal does not protect their seat.
- **Lok Prahari v. Union of India (2018):** A disqualification can only be reversed if the conviction itself is stayed by a competent court. A stay on sentence alone is not enough.

### United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

**News:** India actively participated in the 20th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF20), held at the UN Headquarters in New York from May 5 to 9, 2025. **United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).**



#### About the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

- The **United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)** is a functional commission under the **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.
- It was established in **2000** with the objective of promoting the management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests.
- The UNFF Secretariat is based at the **UN Headquarters in New York**, and it collaborates closely with major forest-related organizations through the **Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)**, which includes institutions such as **FAO, UNEP, UNDP, and the World Bank**.
- The Forum serves as a **global policy platform for intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation on forest-related issues**, engaging governments, international organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders.
- The **key functions** of the UNFF include:
  - Promoting the implementation of internationally agreed goals on forests.

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- Strengthening long-term political commitment to sustainable forest management (SFM).
- Facilitating the exchange of experiences, best practices, and policy coordination among countries.
- Supporting the implementation of the **United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030**, which outlines six Global Forest Goals and 26 associated targets to be achieved by 2030.
- **Membership:** It has a **universal membership** encompassing all Member States of the United Nations.
- The Forum convenes annual sessions and periodically conducts **Country-Led Initiatives (CLIs)** to foster focused discussions on thematic priorities such as forest financing, fire management, certification, and ecosystem services.

### Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN)

**News:** Recently, the Quad nations gathered at the Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii, to conduct a Tabletop Exercise simulating the launch of the Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN). **Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN).**



#### About Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN)

- The **Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN)** is a multilateral initiative aimed at establishing a coordinated logistics framework to support civilian-led disaster response across the Indo-Pacific region.
- It is designed to ensure the swift and efficient deployment of humanitarian assistance.
- IPLN enhances regional preparedness through shared infrastructure and interoperable systems.
- **Participating Countries:** India, United States, Japan, and Australia
- IPLN was introduced through a **Tabletop Exercise (TTX)** held at the **Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii**, serving as a simulation to test collaborative response mechanisms.

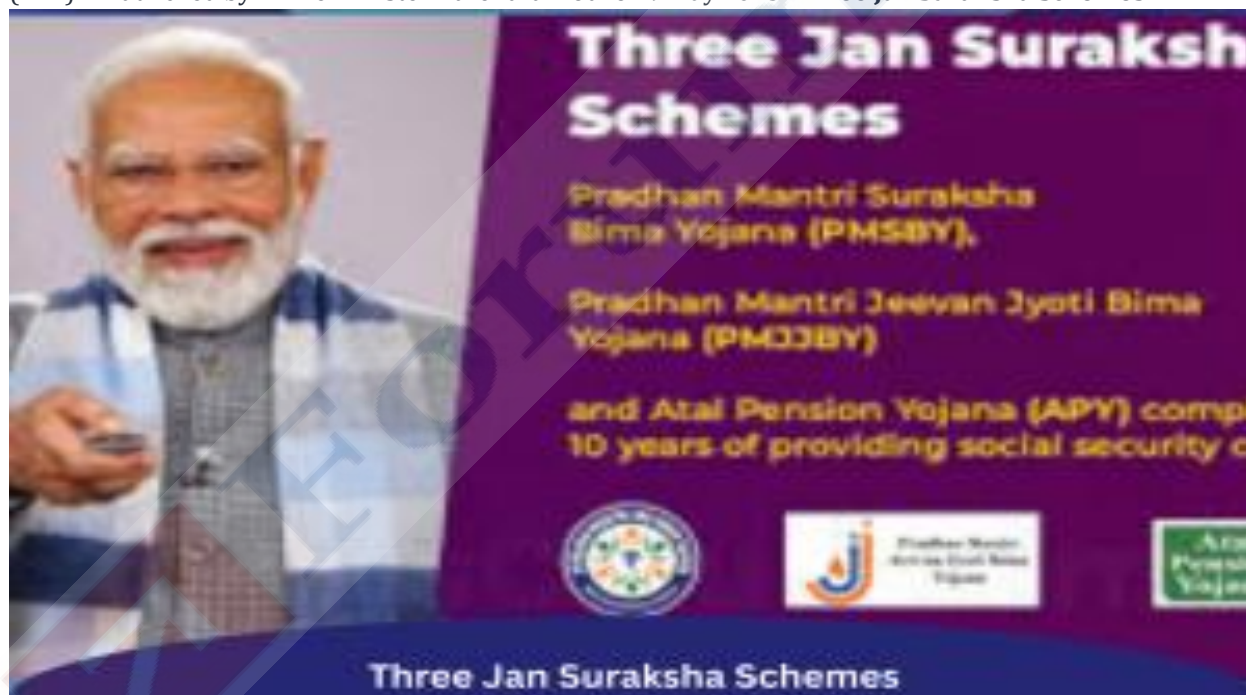
- The initiative aligns with broader efforts such as the **Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)** and the **Quad Pandemic Preparedness Workshop**.

#### Core Features

- The initiative facilitates **Shared Logistics Coordination** by streamlining humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) supply chains through unified logistics operations among partner nations.
- It adopts a **Civilian-Centric Approach** that emphasizes readiness for responding to natural disasters such as cyclones, tsunamis, and public health emergencies.
- **Interoperability and Mutual Support** are central to the initiative, with mechanisms established for joint logistical support and enhanced coordination among the Quad nations.
- The framework integrates **Technology Solutions** by using digital tools for logistics mapping, collaborative resource planning, and real-time tracking of aid and relief delivery.
- It offers **Scalability and Flexibility**, ensuring effective functioning across varied terrains, including island nations, coastal zones, and remote, disaster-prone regions.

### Three Jan Suraksha Schemes

**News:** India is marking the 10th anniversary of the three flagship social security schemes — Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) — launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9 May 2015. **Three Jan Suraksha Schemes.**



#### About the Jan Suraksha Schemes

##### 1. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)

- **Purpose:** Provides life insurance coverage for death due to any reason.
- **Eligibility:** Individuals aged 18–50 years with a bank or post office account, who give consent to join.
- **Premium:** Rs. 436 per annum (auto-debited from the account).
- **Benefit:** Rs. 2 lakh payable on death due to any cause.
- **Enrolment Cycle:** Annual — June 1 to May 31. Premium amount may vary depending on the month of enrolment.

- **Achievements (as of April 23, 2025):**

- 23.63 crore enrolments
- Rs.18,397.92 crore disbursed for 9,19,896 claims
- 10.66 crore female subscribers
- 7.08 crore PMJDY account holders enrolled

## **2. Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)**

- **Purpose:** Offers coverage for accidental death and disability.
- **Eligibility:** Individuals aged 18–70 years with a bank or post office account, who give consent to join.
- **Premium:** Rs. 20 per annum (auto-debited from the account).
- **Benefits:**
  - Rs. 2 lakh for death or full disability
  - Rs. 1 lakh for partial disability
- **Enrolment Cycle:** Annual — June 1 to May 31
- **Achievements (as of April 2025):**
  - 51 crore enrolments
  - Rs. 3,121 crore disbursed for 1.57 lakh claims

## **3. Atal Pension Yojana (APY)**

- **Purpose:** Provides pension coverage for workers in the unorganised sector.
- **Eligibility:**
  - Individuals aged 18–40 years
  - Must hold a bank account
  - Must not be income tax payers
- **Contribution:** Based on age and chosen pension slab.
- **Benefits:**
  - Guaranteed monthly pension of Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000 after the age of 60
  - In case of the subscriber's death, the spouse continues to receive the pension
  - After both spouse and subscriber pass away, the accumulated corpus is paid to the nominee
  - In case of premature death, the spouse can choose to continue contributions until the subscriber would have turned 60
- **Payment Frequency:** Monthly / Quarterly / Half-yearly
- **Achievements (as of April 2025):** 7.6 crore enrolments

### **Extended Fund Facility (EFF)**

**News:** The IMF approved a \$1 billion tranche for Pakistan under the \$7-billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and \$1.3 billion under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). India abstained from voting, raising concerns over Pakistan's track record and the risk of misuse of funds. **Extended Fund Facility (EFF).**





#### About the Extended Fund Facility (EFF)

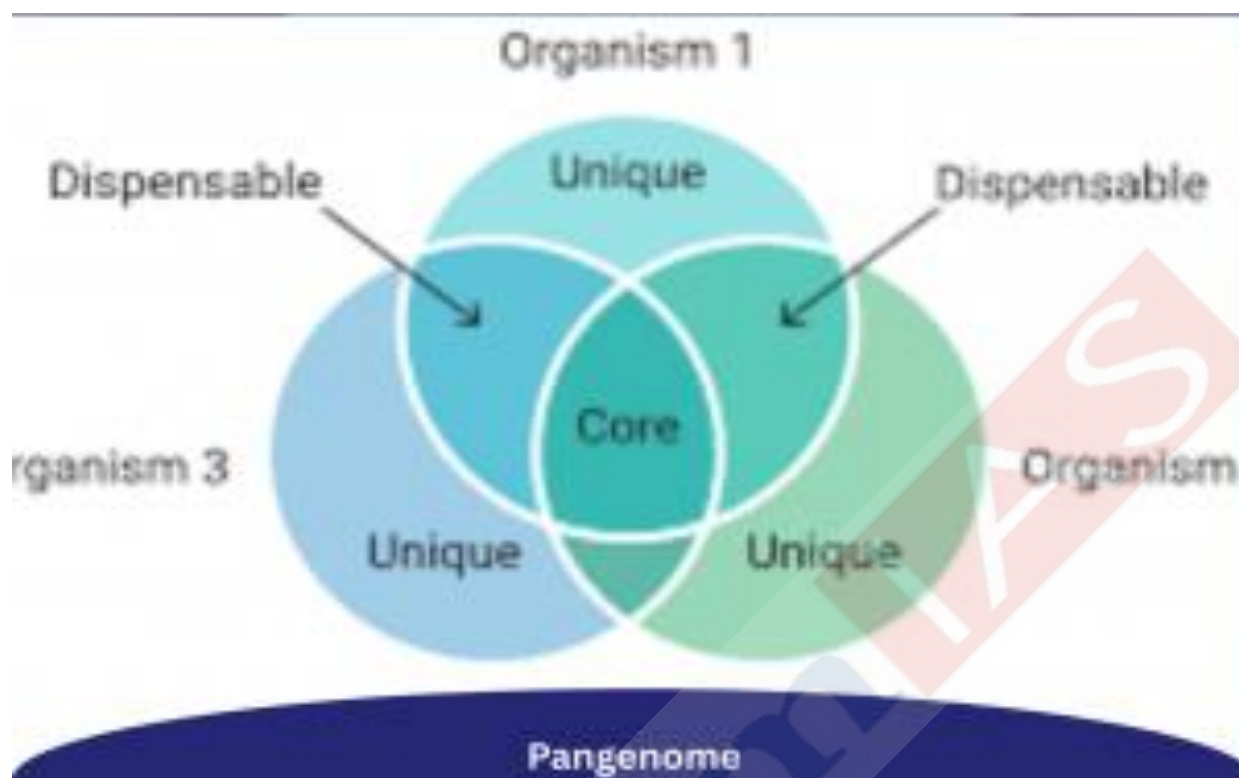
- The EFF offers *medium- to long-term financial support* to *countries with persistent balance of payments problems* caused by structural weaknesses. It helps nations undertake deep economic reforms over extended periods.
- The assistance under the EFF is in the form of a loan that has to be paid back, and not in the form of a grant or aid.
- **Eligibility:** Open to all member countries; mainly used by emerging and advanced economies, but sometimes by low-income nations with the Extended Credit Facility (ECF).

#### Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)

- **Purpose:** Designed to enhance the macroeconomic resilience and long-term sustainability of eligible nations.
- **Target Countries:** Available to low-income countries and vulnerable middle-income economies.
- **Other Major IMF Lending Instruments:** Includes the Extended Credit Facility (ECF), the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) etc.

### Pangenome

**News:** Scientists have created the first-ever 'pangenome' for rice by combining essential genetic segments from 144 wild and cultivated rice varieties across Asia to form a comprehensive reference genome. **Pangenome.**



#### About Pangenome

- A **pangenome** is a comprehensive collection of genome sequences from multiple individuals of the same species.
- It aims to capture the full range of **genetic variation** across a population, offering a broader reference for genomic comparisons.
- Scientists use pangenomes as **reference genomes** to compare with new individual genomes. This helps in **identifying genetic variants** that may affect traits, health, or disease susceptibility.

#### About Pangenome of Asian Rice

- A **pangenome** includes both core genes shared across all rice varieties and unique genes from individual strains. It provides a **comprehensive genetic map** of Asian rice, aiding in crop improvement.
- **Significance for India:** India, a key rice producer, recorded **220 million tonnes** of production in 2024–25 across **51,000 hectares** with an average yield of **4.2 tonnes/hectare**. The new pangenome database supports the development of **climate-resilient and disease-tolerant** rice varieties.

#### Key Scientific Findings

- Scientists have developed the **first-ever rice pangenome** by combining genomic sequences from **144 wild and cultivated rice varieties** across Asia.
- The study reveals **3.87 billion base pairs of novel genetic sequences** that were missing in the previously used single reference genome.
- A total of **69,531 genes** were identified across the pangenome:
  - **28,907 core genes** common to all varieties.
  - **13,728 genes specific to wild rice.**
  - Approximately **20% of the total genes** were unique to wild rice, offering critical insights into environmental adaptation and potential for breeding improvements.

- The research supports the hypothesis that all Asian cultivated rice originated from a **wild rice variety known as Or-IIIa**, an ancestor of japonica rice.
- **Population genetics analysis** confirms that **japonica rice** was the first to be domesticated from **O. rufipogon group IIIa** in China. Later, **indica rice** evolved through hybridization with **local wild rice (Or-I)** populations as japonica spread across Asia.
- The use of **PacBio HiFi sequencing** and advanced computational tools allowed for a deep analysis of **gene flow and evolutionary pathways** between domesticated and wild rice varieties.
- The study significantly enhances understanding of **rice domestication, phenotypic diversity, and resilience**, providing a foundation for breeding **superior, climate-resilient, and high-yield rice cultivars**.

### **Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project (TBMRP)**

**News:** In a major step towards ensuring regional water security, the governments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Saturday to collaboratively implement the Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project. **Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project (TBMRP).**



#### **About Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project (TBMRP)**

- TBMRP is a **joint initiative** between the Governments of **Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra** to **mitigate water scarcity**.
- It is positioned as the **world's largest groundwater recharge project**.
- **Project Objectives:**
  - Ensure **drinking water supply** to **northeastern Maharashtra**, including **Nagpur**.
  - Provide **irrigation support** to **southern Madhya Pradesh**, particularly **Chhindwara district**.

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- **Water Allocation: Total planned water utilisation: 31.13 TMC** (Thousand Million Cubic Feet)
- **Irrigation Benefits:**
  - **Madhya Pradesh:** Irrigation coverage for **1,23,082 hectares**
  - **Maharashtra:** Irrigation coverage for **2,34,706 hectares**
- **Proposed Water Structures:** Under the Project, four key water infrastructure components have been proposed: **Low Diversion Weir at Kharia Gutighat Dam Site, Right Bank Canal – Phase I, Left Bank Canal – Phase I and Left Bank Canal – Phase II.**

### Right to Know

**News:** The Supreme Court of India, on May 9, 2025, set aside a Delhi High Court order that had directed the Wikimedia Foundation to take down a Wikipedia page related to a defamation case. The judgment reinforced the importance of free expression, intermediary protection, and public discourse even in sub judice matters highlighting the judiciary's role in upholding transparency and democratic participation.

#### About Right to Know

- **Article 21** of the Indian Constitution guarantees the **Right to Life and Personal Liberty**, a broad term encompassing multiple rights, including the **Right to Know**.
- This right overlaps with **Article 19(1)(a)** (freedom of speech and expression), giving it a dual constitutional foundation.
- In **R.P. Ltd. v. Indian Express Newspaper**, the **Supreme Court (SC)** recognised the Right to Know as intrinsic to **participatory democracy**.
- The SC emphasised that in an increasingly interconnected global society, the concept of **liberty** must be interpreted expansively, including: The **right to hold opinions and the right to receive and sustain information**
- Hence, **Article 21** confers on every person a **Right to know**, which includes access to information essential for informed decision-making.
- In **PUCL v. Union of India**, the SC noted that **fundamental rights are not static**; they evolve with societal needs and contexts.
- Courts are urged to interpret fundamental rights expansively to reflect **contemporary values and social experiences**.
- There must be **no discrimination** between rights explicitly listed in **Part III** of the Constitution and those **declared by the judiciary** through interpretation.

### Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve

**News:** Recently, a woman was killed in an incident of human-wildlife conflict that occurred in the buffer zone of the **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR)**.

#### About Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve





#### The earth safari

- It lies in the **Chandrapur district of Maharashtra**. It is **Maharashtra's oldest and largest National Park**.
- The total area of the tiger reserve is **1,727 Sq.km**, which includes the **Tadoba National Park, created in the year 1955**.
- The **Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary** was formed in the year **1986** and was **amalgamated with the park in 1995** to establish the present **Tadoba Andheri Tiger Reserve**.
- It is **one of India's 47 project tiger reserves** existing in India.
- The word '**Tadoba**' is derived from the name of God "**Tadoba**" or "**Taru**," and "**Andhari**" is derived from the **name of Andhari river that flows in this area**.
- Tadoba National Park is divided into three main forest ranges: the **Tadoba North Range**, the **Kolsa South Range**, and the **Moharli Range**, which lies between the other two.
- The park is enriched by three primary water bodies: **Tadoba Lake, Kolsa Lake**, and the **Tadoba River**.
- **Flora**: Prominent tree species found in the park include **Teak, Ain, Bija, Dhaua, Haldu, Salai, Semal, and Tendu**.
  - Medicinal and economically significant trees such as **Beheda, Hirda, Karaya Gum, Mahua (Madhuca), Arjun, and Bamboo** are also commonly seen. Other species like **Bheria** and **Black Plum** further contribute to the ecological richness of the forest.
- **Fauna**: The reserve is home to several large mammals including the **Bengal Tiger, Indian Leopard, and Sloth Bear**.
  - Animals such as **Gaur (Indian Bison), Nilgai, Sambar Deer, Spotted Deer (Chital), Dhole (Indian Wild Dog), Striped Hyena, Small Indian Civet, and Jungle Cat** and **Barking Deer** also inhabit the region.
  - **Marsh Crocodile, Indian Python, and Indian Cobra, Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, and Peacock** are commonly found.

## Safe Harbour and Social Media Liability in India

**News:** The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting made submissions to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communication and IT. It stated that it is reconsidering the concept of safe harbour for social media platforms to tackle the spread of fake news online.

### About Safe Harbour

- Safe harbour is a legal protection granted to websites that host third-party content, shielding them from liability for unlawful user posts.
- In India, this protection is provided under **Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000**.
- It ensures that intermediaries are not punished for content they did not create, encouraging online innovation.
- This protection is withdrawn if platforms do not act after receiving official notice of illegal content.

### How Intermediary Liability is Regulated in India

1. The **IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** impose additional obligations.
  - Platforms must appoint a nodal and grievance officer.
  - They must be India-based and submit regular compliance reports.
2. In **2023**, amendments were notified allowing the Press Information Bureau's fact-check unit to identify "fake news."
  - This provision was challenged in court.
  - The **Bombay High Court ruled in favour of the petitioners**, and the government is appealing the decision.

### Reasons for Reconsideration Safe Harbour

- The government accuses social media platforms of: Not following Indian laws, Delaying takedown actions, Ignoring content flagged as harmful.
- Disputes with X (formerly Twitter) illustrate these tensions.
- The government aims to push platforms to act against misinformation, deepfakes, and cyberfrauds.
- A proposed **Digital India Act** may revise safe harbour norms, though no draft is available yet.

## Brahmos Missile

**News:** The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, operational since 2001, was likely used in combat for the first time during Operation Sindoor on May 10, 2025, as part of India's retaliatory precision strikes on Pakistani military bases. **Brahmos Missile.**



#### About Brahmos Missile

- **Type:** Supersonic cruise missile
- **Developed by:** Joint venture between India's DRDO and Russia's NPOM under BrahMos Aerospace (est. 1998)
- **Speed:** Up to **Mach 2.8–3.0**
- **Range:** Initially 290 km; extended to **350–400 km**, with plans up to **800 km**
- **Named after:** Brahmaputra (India) and Moskva (Russia) rivers
- **First tested:** 2001

#### Launch Platforms

- **Land-based:** Deployed along borders; variants like Block I (precision), II (deep-dive), III (mountain warfare)
- **Ship-based:** Sea-to-sea and sea-to-land roles; salvo-firing capability
- **Air-launched:** Modified **Sukhoi-30 MKI**; enhances reach in Indian Ocean
- **Submarine-launched:** Tested successfully from submerged platform (2013)

#### Technical Features

- **Two-stage system:**
  - 1st stage – solid booster
  - 2nd stage – liquid ramjet for sustained supersonic cruise
- **Fire-and-forget system** with advanced guidance
- **Stealth features:** Low radar signature
- **High precision and kinetic impact**

#### Next-Generation (BrahMos-NG)

- Under development
- **Smaller, lighter, stealthier**
- Can be launched from **aircraft, ships, submarines (torpedo tubes)**

## Framework on Repairability Index (RI)

**News:** The Committee for the Framework on Repairability Index (RI) in Mobile and Electronic Sector has submitted its report to the Department of Consumer Affairs. It aims to improve repair access, transparency, and empower consumers.

### About Repairability Index (RI)

- The Repairability Index is a **scoring system to rate how easily a product can be repaired**.
- It promotes sustainable consumption by helping consumers make informed choices.

### Need for the Framework

- Consumer complaints about repairs for mobiles and tablets rose from 19,057 (2022–23) to 22,864 (2024–25).
- The digital shift has made smartphones and tablets essential, demanding robust repair access.
- Rising material costs and engineering shortcuts are making newer products less durable.
- The goal is to reduce e-waste, encourage a circular economy, and ensure product longevity.

### Committee Formation and Stakeholders

1. Formed in September 2024 under **Shri Bharat Khera**.
2. **Members** included:
  - **Companies** like Apple, Samsung, Dell, HP
  - **Industry Associations:** ICEA, MAIT
  - **Consumer groups** like EPIC
  - **Government officials** from DoCA, MeitY, MSME
  - **Institutions** like NTH, BIS
3. Multiple meetings ensured diverse consultations.

### Key Features of the Framework

1. **Product Focus:** Smartphones and tablets in the initial phase
2. **Parts Covered:** Battery, display, charging port, camera modules, etc.
3. **Six Evaluation Parameters:** **Disassembly depth; Repair information; Spare part availability; Software updates; Tools and fasteners**
4. **Scoring System:** Products rated on a **5-point numeric scale**

### Implementation Strategy

1. OEMs to self-declare RI without extra compliance burden
2. RI to be displayed on packaging, online platforms, and stores via QR codes
3. Aligns with global practices while protecting industry innovation

### Right to Repair Portal

1. **Launched in 2022 for 4 sectors:** automobiles, electronics, durables, and farming equipment
2. Over 65 companies have shared repair data for consumer awareness.

## Designating Senior Advocates

**News:** The Supreme Court scrapped its existing points-based system for designating senior advocates in the Supreme Court and High Courts. A **new set of guidelines** is issued.

### About Designating Senior Advocates

1. Under **Section 16 of the Advocates Act, 1961**, the Supreme Court and High Courts have the authority to confer the designation of senior advocate based on merit and legal standing.
2. Before **2017**, each High Court followed its own inconsistent procedures.



3. In **2017**, the Supreme Court, acting on a PIL by Senior Advocate Indira Jaising, introduced a uniform, points-based system with a Permanent Committee.
4. In **2023**, the Court adjusted the marking system to improve the framework.
5. In **May 2025**, the Supreme Court ruled the points system unworkable and issued new guidelines based on collective decision-making by the Full Court.

#### New Guidelines Issued by Supreme Court (2025)

1. **Points-Based System Removed:** The Supreme Court has scrapped the 2017 points-based assessment for designating senior advocates, calling it unworkable and flawed.
2. **Full Court to Decide:** Now, the full court of the Supreme Court or High Court will take the final decision on designations, aiming for consensus or using a vote if needed.
3. **No Recommendations by Individual Judges:** Judges cannot recommend any advocate for the designation. Applications will be treated as consent.
4. **Minimum Practice Requirement Maintained:** Advocates must still have 10 years of practice.
5. **Permanent Secretariat to Continue:** The secretariat will continue screening applications and documents.
6. **Secret Ballot Optional:** Courts may decide on secret voting.
7. **No Application Needed:** Designation may be conferred without an application.

### Germanium (Ge)

**News:** India has formally raised concerns with China regarding export restrictions on *germanium*, a critical mineral essential for manufacturing semiconductors, fiber optic cables, and solar panels.

#### About Germanium (Ge)

- Germanium (Ge) is a chemical element classified as a **metalloid and appears as a silvery-grey, brittle solid**.
- This element lies between silicon and tin in **Group 14 (IVa)** of the periodic table.
- It has the chemical **symbol Ge** and the **atomic number 32**.
- Germanium was discovered in 1886 by **German chemist Clemens** but was predicted earlier in 1871 by Russian chemist Dmitry Mendeleev, who named the unknown element “ekasilicon.”

#### Key Properties

- Germanium exhibits properties that are intermediate **between those of metals and nonmetals**.
- It has a **melting point of approximately 1,100°C (2,000°F)** and a **diamond-like crystal structure**. The element is brittle rather than ductile.
- It remains **stable in air at room temperature** but oxidises at **temperatures between 600°C and 700°C**.
- Germanium **reacts readily with halogens to form tetrahalides** and is **attacked by concentrated nitric acid, sulfuric acid, and aqua regia**.
- They **dissolve rapidly in molten sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide to form germanates**.
- Germanium is a **relatively scarce element**, with an abundance of about 1.5 parts per million in the Earth's crust.
  - It is found in several rare minerals, including **argyrodite (from which it was first isolated), germanite, renierite, and canfieldite**. Among these, **only germanite and renierite are used commercially**.
  - Trace amounts of germanium are found in **zinc ores, sulfidic copper and arsenic ores, and in coal**, likely due to accumulation by Carboniferous-period plants.

- Some modern plants also concentrate germanium. Commercially, germanium is extracted from zinc-processing by-products and from the ash and flue dust of coal-burning facilities.
- **Major Producers:** China is the leading global producer of germanium, accounting for approximately 60% of total output. The rest of the production is primarily contributed by countries such as Canada, Finland, Russia, and the United States.
  - India is 100% dependent on germanium import.
- **Use in Electronics and Semiconductors:**
  - It is essential in the manufacture of transistors, rectifiers, and photocells.
  - Beyond electronics, germanium is used in alloys and as a phosphor in fluorescent lamps.
  - Its transparency to infrared radiation makes it suitable for windows and lenses in infrared detection equipment.
  - Due to its high refractive index, germanium dioxide is used in the manufacture of wide-angle camera lenses and microscope objectives.

### Basket sneaking and Confirm Shaming

**News:** The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has intensified its scrutiny of e-commerce platforms for allegedly violating consumer rights. The authority is particularly targeting the use of dark patterns.

#### About Dark Patterns

- Dark patterns are defined as **deceptive design techniques** used in **user interface (UI) or user experience (UX)** that are intentionally created to mislead or manipulate users into actions they did not intend or wish to take.
- These practices undermine consumer autonomy, decision-making, or choice, and are considered misleading advertisements, unfair trade practices, or violations of consumer rights.

#### About Basket Sneaking

- Basket sneaking is **when extra items like paid services, products, or donations are added to your online shopping cart** during checkout **without asking you first**.
- This makes your final bill higher than what you expected based on what you actually chose to buy.
- It's *not* basket sneaking if: Free samples or complimentary services are added and Fees like delivery charges, gift wrapping, or taxes are added **only if** they were clearly shown to you before you made the purchase
- These are called "**necessary fees**" because they are required to complete the order and were clearly mentioned earlier.
- **Examples of Basket Sneaking:** A paid service is automatically added to your cart with a pre-checked box or one choose one salon service, but a paid subscription is added without ones permission. In all these cases, the total cost goes up without your clear permission.

#### About Confirm Shaming

- Confirm shaming is when a website or app tries to **make you feel bad like guilty, scared, or embarrassed** to pressure you into doing something, like buying a product or keeping a subscription.
- It uses words, videos, or sounds that try to **shame you into saying yes**.
- **Examples of Confirm Shaming:** When booking a flight, if one don't add travel insurance, the site says: "*I will stay unsecured.*" (This tries to make one feel unsafe if you skip insurance.) or If one remove a charity donation from your cart, the site says: "*Charity is for rich, I don't care.*" (This makes oneself feel guilty for not donating.)

### Chandrayaan-5 mission

**News:** The Chandrayaan-5 mission, jointly undertaken by ISRO and JAXA, was approved by the Indian Cabinet in March 2025. It aims to explore the Moon's surface and subsurface for water. Preliminary design work for the lander and rover is now underway.

#### About Chandrayaan-5

Chandrayaan-5, also called **LUPEX** (Lunar Polar Exploration), this mission is a collaboration between ISRO and JAXA. It will carry a 6.5-tonne payload aboard Japan's H3 rocket, scheduled for launch in 2027–28.

#### Mission Goals and Duration

1. **Water and Soil Exploration:** The rover will trace water and drill into the Moon's surface to study regolith samples.
2. **In-Situ Experiments:** Instruments will assess water content, quality, and conduct surface analysis.
3. **Timeline:** Planned for 100 days, with a possible one-year extension.

#### Scientific Collaboration and Technology

1. **ISRO's Contribution:** Developing the lander and one sensor in a large instrument with four sensors.
2. **JAXA's Role:** Building the 350-kg rover and three sensors in the same instrument. The rover will travel inclined surfaces up to 25° and has a complex battery charging system for sampling operations.
3. **Global Partnerships:**
  - ESA is developing a **mass spectrometer**.
  - NASA is building **neutron spectrometers**.
  - Both instruments are in the design phase.
4. **Total Payload:** Seven scientific instruments will be onboard.

#### Background of Chandrayaan Missions

**Chandrayaan-1 (2008):** Mineral and chemical mapping.

**Chandrayaan-2 (2019):** 98% success.

**Chandrayaan-3 (2023):** Soft-landing on Moon's south pole.

**Chandrayaan-4 (Upcoming):** Sample return mission.

**Chandrayaan-5:** Focused on deeper lunar exploration through international cooperation.

#### Strategic Significance

1. Enhances India's deep space exploration capacity.
2. Strengthens Indo-Japan and global space partnerships.
3. Supports future goals like India's Bharatiya Space Station.

### Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

**News:** The government has appointed former Defence Secretary **Dr. Ajay Kumar** as the new Chairman of the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**. This follows the retirement of **Preeti Sudan** on **April 29**. His appointment was made under **Article 316(1)** of the Constitution. His tenure will continue until **October 2027**, when he turns **65**.

#### About UPSC

The UPSC is a **constitutional authority** established under **Article 315**. It is tasked with selecting candidates for various services including **All India Services**, **Central Civil Services**, and **Group A and B positions**, ensuring transparency and merit in recruitment.

#### Historical Evolution

1. The **Government of India Act, 1919** proposed the idea of a central recruitment body.
2. The **Federal Public Service Commission** came into existence in **1926**, based on recommendations from the Lee Commission (1924).

3. The **1935 Act** formalized provisions for both Central and State Public Service Commissions.
4. The Indian Constitution gave UPSC its present legal status through **Articles 315 to 323 (Part XIV)**.

### Structure and Composition

1. The Commission is headed by a **Chairman** and supported by other **members**, all appointed by the **President**.
2. The number of members is flexible and usually ranges from **9 to 11**.
3. **50%** of members must have **10+ years** of government experience.

### Appointment and Tenure

1. **President** appoints members under **Article 316(1)**.
2. Tenure: **6 years** or until **65 years of age**, whichever comes first.
3. The President decides their **service conditions**.

### Eligibility and Disqualifications

1. No specific educational qualifications required.
2. Disqualifications include: **Insolvency, Holding paid employment, Mental or physical unfitness**.

### Removal Process and Safeguards

Members can leave office or be removed under the following conditions:

1. **Voluntary Resignation:**

A member may resign by writing to the **President of India**.

2. **Direct Removal by the President:**

Possible if the member is: **Bankrupt, Holding paid work, or Medically unfit for duty**.

3. **Removal for Misconduct (Article 317):**

- In such cases, the **President must seek the opinion of the Supreme Court**.
  - **The Court's advice is final and binding**.
  - The President may **suspend the member** during the inquiry.
  - Misconduct includes personal gains through **government contracts**.
4. **Additional Protections:**
    - Members have **security of tenure**, and their service terms cannot be worsened after appointment.
    - Their salaries and expenses are drawn from the **Consolidated Fund of India**, ensuring independence.

### Functions and Powers

1. Conducts major exams like **CSE, NDA, CDS**, etc.
2. **It also advises the government on issues like promotions, transfers, and disciplinary matters**.
3. The Commission sends an **annual report** to the President, which is later shared with **both Houses of Parliament**.
4. Although the UPSC's recommendations are **advisory**, any decision to reject them must be **justified in writing**.

## Dirang Geothermal Project

**News:** The Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS) has successfully established the first geothermal production well in Northeast India at Dirang, located in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.

### About Dirang Geothermal Project

- The first geothermal production well has been successfully drilled in **Dirang, Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The Dirang region is located **within a medium to high enthalpy geothermal zone**.



- With a temperature gradient of around 115°C, it is well-suited for efficient and low-impact geothermal drilling.
- Funding for the project is **jointly provided by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and the Ministry of Science and Earth Sciences**, Government of India.
- The plant uses a **closed-loop binary Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC)** process to convert geothermal heat to electricity.
- Advanced **geological, structural, and chemical analyses** were conducted over two years prior to drilling.
- Drilling targeted a fault zone between **quartzite and schist rock formations**, ensuring efficient access and minimal environmental disturbance.
- Potential applications of geothermal energy include: **Drying of agricultural produce** (fruits, nuts, meat), **space heating and controlled-environment storage**
- These interventions are expected to significantly **improve living conditions and agricultural productivity** in high-altitude Himalayan areas.

#### About Geothermal Energy in India

- As per the **Geothermal Atlas of India (2022)**, the country has **381 thermally anomalous sites** and a generation potential of around **10,600 MW**.
- India's first geothermal project was in **Manuguru, Telangana** (20 kW pilot by SCCL).
- **Puga Valley (Ladakh)** and **Khammam (Telangana)** also have geothermal projects, though with varying progress.
- India has international collaborations in geothermal energy with **Iceland, Saudi Arabia**, and the **USA** under RETAP (2023).

### Treasury Bills

**News:** India has renewed a USD 50 million Treasury Bill for the Maldives through the State Bank of India (SBI), extending financial assistance for another year.

#### About Treasury Bills

- Treasury Bills (T-Bills) are short-term debt instruments issued by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** on behalf of the **Government of India (GOI)**.
- They are issued in the form of **promissory notes** to meet the **short-term funding needs** of the central government.
- They are part of the broader monetary and fiscal policy tools used to regulate **liquidity and interest rates** in the economy.
- Banks use T-Bills for **Repo transactions** with RBI and maintaining **SLR (Statutory Liquidity Ratio)**
- It is known for their **high liquidity** and **low risk**, T-Bills are among the **safest investment options** in the market.
- Treasury Bills are issued via **auctions conducted by RBI** on its electronic platform **E-Kuber**.
- Participants include: **Banks, Primary dealers, Institutional investors and Individuals** (can also invest directly via RBI Retail Direct)
- The minimum investment required in T-Bills is **Rs. 10,000**. Further investments must be in **multiples of Rs. 10,000**.
- On maturity, the **face value is automatically credited** to the investor's account.

#### Key Features of Treasury Bills

1. **Zero-Coupon Instrument:** T-Bills do **not offer periodic interest** payments. They are issued at a **discounted price** and redeemed at **face value**, with the **difference being the investor's return**.

2. **Short-Term Maturity:** T-Bills are issued with **fixed tenures: 14 days, 91 days, 182 days and 364 days.** Their short duration provides **quick liquidity**, making them ideal for short-term investors.

### Geotube (Geobag) Technology

**News:** A recent study has found that the use of geotube technology in the offshore breakwater system along the Poonthura coastal stretch has led to significant improvements in the coastal landscape behind the structure.

#### About Geotube (Geobag) Technology



[gssb.com](https://gssb.com)

- Geotubes, also referred to as geobags, are large permeable containers used extensively for sludge dewatering due to their cost-effectiveness and operational simplicity.
- These containers are hydraulically filled with a slurry mixture of sand and water, where the water drains through the engineered fabric, and the sand or solids settle inside through gravity.
- The system operates without belts, gears, or complex mechanical parts, making it easy to use and maintain in a variety of settings.
- Geotubes are available in multiple sizes and can be custom-fabricated to suit specific project requirements and volume capacities.
- They can be mounted on mobile roll-off containers, allowing easy transport and use across different areas of a property or project site.

#### Key Applications

- Geotube systems are ideal for shoreline protection, island and wetland creation, construction platforms, and offshore structures.
- They are widely used in the pulp and paper industry, mining operations, coal sludge removal, and municipal wastewater treatment.
- The technology is also beneficial in the agriculture sector, especially in dairy farms, piggeries, abattoirs, and aquaculture.

## Yak Genomics

**News:** Scientists from four ICAR institutions have successfully assembled the first chromosome-level genome of the Indian yak (*Bos grunniens*).

### About Yak Genomics

- Yak Genomics involves **sequencing and analyzing the genome of the domestic yak (Bos grunniens)** to gain insights into its high-altitude adaptations and to enhance its productivity and overall health.
- **Technology Used:** Employed **long-read sequencing** and advanced **bioinformatics tools** to map genes precisely to chromosomes, offering a clearer view of yak genetics.
- This genomic is expected to **greatly enhance selective breeding programmes, support conservation efforts, and deepen scientific understanding** of the yak's unique adaptations to cold, high-altitude environments.
- The availability of a complete genome will allow for the **identification of genetic markers** linked to desirable traits such as cold tolerance, disease resistance, and improved milk production, leading to more targeted and efficient breeding.
- The genome assembly is also anticipated **to strengthen local livestock management practices** by providing scientific tools to support sustainable yak farming.

### About Indian Yak

- The Indian yak (*Bos grunniens*), often referred to as the “**ship of the Himalayas**”, is a **robust and resilient bovine species** that plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic and cultural life of high-altitude communities.
- They are primarily found **above 7,000 feet** in regions such as **Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh**.
- The Indian yak is indispensable to the livelihoods of mountain dwellers who rely on it for **meat, milk, fibre, hides, manure, and transportation**.
- Yaks are supremely **adapted to extreme cold**, low oxygen levels, and high-altitude terrain.
- **Ecological Role:** Yaks contribute to the **sustainability of fragile alpine ecosystems** through their grazing patterns and nutrient cycling.
- Indian yaks face growing threats from **shrinking grazing grounds, climate change impacts, disease outbreaks and genetic erosion due to inbreeding and lack of scientific breeding interventions**.

## Key Facts about Colombia

**News:** On May 14, 2025, Colombia officially joined China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The agreement was signed during a major regional leaders' gathering in Beijing.

### About Colombia

**Location:** It is situated in the northwestern part of South America, serving as a bridge between South and Central America.

#### Borders:

- **Land:** Venezuela and Brazil to the east, Peru and Ecuador to the south, Panama to the northwest.
- **Maritime:** Caribbean Sea to the north, Pacific Ocean to the west.

#### Topography:

- **Andes Mountains:** Divided into three ranges—Cordillera Occidental, Cordillera Central, and Cordillera Oriental—running north-south.
- **Eastern Plains (Llanos):** Vast lowland plains extending towards Venezuela, part of the Orinoco River basin.

- **Amazon Rainforest:** Dense tropical rainforest in the southeast, part of the Amazon basin.
- **Major Rivers:** Major rivers such as the Magdalena, Cauca, and Putumayo traverse the country, playing crucial roles in transportation and agriculture..
- **Highest Point:** Pico Cristóbal Colón, approximately 5,730 meters above sea level.

#### Political Features

- **Government:** Unitary republic with a centralized government.
- **Capital:** Bogotá, located in the Andean region, serving as the political, economic, and cultural center.
- **International Affiliations:** Member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since 2020.

### Agamic Temples and Supreme Court's Direction

**News:** On May 14, 2025, the Supreme Court asked a committee formed by the Madras High Court to identify Agamic temples in Tamil Nadu within three months. It ordered that no priest appointments be made in these temples until the process is complete. The next hearing is in September 2025.

#### About Agamas and Agamic Temples

- Agamic temples follow the **Agamas**, ancient Hindu scriptures in Tamil and Sanskrit.
- These texts prescribe temple design, rituals, deity worship, and priest conduct.
- They are the **spiritual and operational base** for many temples in South India.

#### Features of the Agamas

- Agamas are **post-Vedic scriptures** passed down over generations.
- They cover topics like **yoga, mantras, temple architecture, and daily worship**.
- Three key categories: 28 Shaiva Agamas, 64 Shakta Tantras, 108 Vaishnava Agamas
- Temples must have: *Sthala* (location), *Tirtha* (water source), *Murti* (deity image)
- They include **detailed rules** for sculpture, materials, dimensions, lighting, and ventilation.
- These texts gained prominence during the **Pallava and Chola dynasties** and remain influential today.

#### Supreme Court's Directions

- No archakar appointments in Agamic temples until identification is complete.
- The committee is headed by **Justice M. Chockalingam**; **M.P. Sathyavel Murugan** was removed.
- Appointments in **non-Agamic temples** can proceed afterward.
- The Court also directed **vacant posts at Rameswaram temple** be filled per customs.

#### Cause of Legal Dispute

- Petitioners opposed the state's decision to **open priesthood to all castes and genders**.
- They argued that Agamic priesthood needs **years of training**, not short-term courses.
- They also alleged the appointment of **non-believers**, violating religious rights.

#### Reform and Equality Measures

- **1971:** TN government ended **hereditary priesthood**.
- **2006:** Allowed all qualified individuals to become priests.
- **2015:** SC upheld Agamic traditions while ensuring **constitutional protections**.
- Past judgments upheld **non-Brahmin and women priests**, supporting **Articles 15 and 51A(e)** on non-discrimination and dignity.