Factly Weekly

Compilation

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For UPSC CSE Prelims Exam

2nd Week

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INDEX

Kalvarayan Hills

News: In a first, girl from tribal community in Kalvarayan Hills earns her seat in IIT.

About Kalvarayan Hills

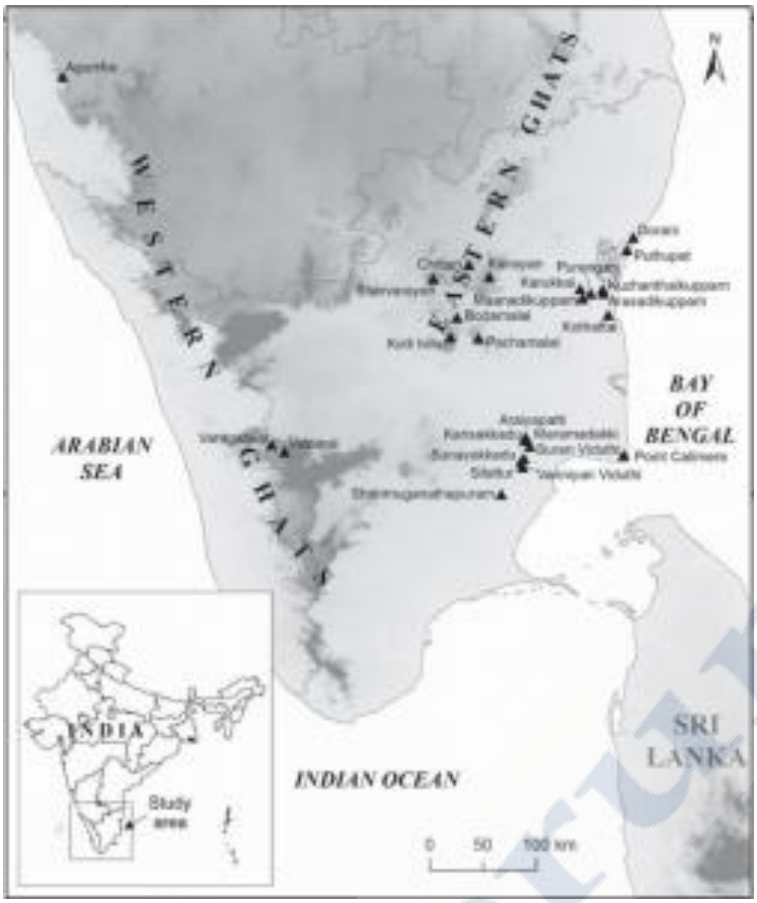


Figure 1.Source – ResearchGate

- **Location:** They are a major range of hills situated in the **Eastern Ghats** of the southern Indian state of **Tamil Nadu**.
- **Acting as a watershed**: Along with the **Pachaimalai, Javadi, and Shevaroy** hills, they **separate the Kaveri River basin to the south** from the **Palar River basin to the north**.
- **Height and spread**: The hills range in height from **2000 feet to 3000 feet** and extend over an area of **1095 square kilometers**.
- **Divisions:** The Kalrayans are divided into **two sections** —
  - The northern section, referred to as the Chinna ("little") Kalrayans, having a average height of 2700 feet.
  - The southern section, called the Periya ("big") Kalrayans having an average height of 4000 feet.
- **Vegetation:** Scrubs (up to 400 metres), deciduous forests (between above 800 metres), Sholas (on isolated plateaus)
- **Waterfalls:** Megam Falls and Periyar falls
- **Dam:** Gomukhi dam
- **Tribes:** The primary tribal community inhabiting the Kalrayan Hills is the **Malayali (Malaiyali) tribe.**

Pandyan Dynasty

News: An 800-year-old Shiva temple of the **later Pandya period** has been unearthed at Udampatti, a village in Melur taluk, Madurai district, Tamil Nadu.

About Pandyan Dynasty

Figure 2.Source – The Hindu

- It was one of the **three main lineages (Muvendars) from the southern part of the country (along with Cheras and Cholas)**, developed during the **Sangam Age**.
  - The term **Muvendar** refers to a Tamil word meaning **three chiefs**, used for the heads of three ruling families, the **Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas**.

Origin (Early Pandyan Dynasty)

- The Pandyas established their dynastic rule in southern Tamil Nadu by the **end of the sixth century CE after Kalabhras.**
- **Decline: Chola king Parantaka I** defeated the Pandya King **Rajasimha II** and that led to the decline of the Pandya empire.

The Re-Rise of Pandyas (Later Pandyan Dynasty)

- After the decline of the Cholas, the Pandya kingdom became the leading Tamil dynasty in the **thirteenth century.**
- **Illustrious rulers:** The illustrious ruler of the second Pandya kingdom was **Sadaiyavarman Sundarapandyan (1251-1268),** who not only brought the entire Tamil Nadu under his rule but also exercised his authority up to Nellore in Andhra.
  - After Sundarapandyan, **Maravarman Kulasekharan** ruled successfully for a period of **40 years,** giving the country peace and prosperity.
- **Decline:** It was **Malik Kafur's invasion** that finally led to the division and downfall of the Pandya empire.

Administration

- The territory of Pandyas is called **Pandymandalam**, **Thenmandalam or Pandynadu**, which lay in the rocky, hilly regions and mountain ranges **except** the areas fed by the rivers **Vaigai and Tamiraparni.**
- **Capital**: Pandya kings preferred **Madurai** as their capital.
- **Political division**: Pandy Mandalam or Pandy Nadu consisted of many **valanadus**, which, in turn, were divided into many **nadus and kurrams** (meaning **group of villages**).
- Kings and local chiefs created **Brahmin settlements called Mangalam or Chaturvedimangalam** with irrigation facilities.
  - These settlements were **given royal names and names of the deities.**
- **Royal officials were called by different names:**
  - The **prime minister** was called **Uttaramantri**
  - The **royal secretariat** was known as **Eluttu Mandapam**
  - The titles of **military commanders** were Palli Velan, Parantakan Pallivelan, Maran Adittan and Tennavan Tamizhavel.

- **Port**: The **busiest port town** under the Pandyas was **Kayalpattinam** (now in **Thoothukudi** district).

Social and Political Aspects

- **Royal palaces** were called **Tirumaligai and Manaparanan Tirumaligai** during the Pandya reign and the **royal couches** they used were named after the local chiefs, which attested to the legitimacy of the overlordship of the kings
- **The political division of land was as follows:**
  - The land assigned to **Brahmins** was **Salabogam**
  - The land assigned to **Ironsmiths** was called **Tattarkani**
  - The land assigned to **Carpenters** was known as **Taccu-maniyam**
  - The land donated to the **Brahmin group for imparting education** was called **Bhattavriutti**

About findings:

- The **inscriptions** on the **culvert of the Shiva temple** are significant as they reveal that the temple had been **financially independent**.
- **Dating:** It can be dated to **1217-1218 CE**, during the reign of **Maravarman Sundara Pandya.**
- The inscriptions say the name of the **village was Attur** and the temple was called **Thennavanisvaram**
  - **Thennavan** is actually a **title used by the Pandyas.**
- These inscriptions reveal the ancient name of **Udampatti**, which was then called Attur, and also the **socio-economic dynamics** that were at play during the later Pandya period.

RBI's Monetary Policy Instruments

News: RBI has slashed the repo rate by a larger-than-expected 50 basis points to 5.50 per cent, marking the third consecutive reduction since February 2025. **RBI's Monetary Policy Instruments.**

About RBI's Monetary Policy Instruments and key takeaways from the latest monetary policy

Monetary Policy Instruments

Figure 3.Source – RBI

- **Repo Rate and Reverse Repo Rate:** The interest rate that the RBI charges when commercial banks borrow money from it is called the **repo rate**.
  - The interest rate the central bank pays commercial banks when they park their excess cash is called the **reverse repo rate**.
- **Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) Rate:** It is the rate at which the RBI, on an **overnight** basis, **accepts uncollateralised deposits from all liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) participants**.
  - The SDF is also a **financial stability tool** in addition to its role in **liquidity management**.

- It was introduced in **2022** to replace the **fixed rate reverse repo (FRRR)** as the floor of the liquidity adjustment facility corridor.

- **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate:** It is the **rate at which a bank can borrow**, on an **overnight basis**, from the **RBI** in an **emergency situation** when inter-bank liquidity dries up completely.
  - It is typically placed at **25 basis points above the policy repo rate.**
- **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF):** LAF is a **facility extended by RBI to the scheduled commercial banks** (**excluding** Regional Rural Banks) and Primary Dealers to avail of liquidity in case of requirement or park excess funds with RBI in case of excess **liquidity on an overnight** basis **against the collateral of G-Secs** including State Development Loans (SDLs).
- **Main Liquidity Management Tool:** To manage the **frictional liquidity requirements**, a **14-day term repo/reverse repo auction operation** at a variable rate is conducted to coincide with the cash reserve ratio (CRR) maintenance cycle.
- **Bank Rate:** In case of **shortfalls** in meeting the reserve requirements (cash reserve ratio and statutory liquidity ratio) by the banks, the Reserve Bank **provides to buy or rediscount bills of exchange or other commercial papers at a rate which is called Bank rate.**
- **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR):** It is the **percentage of a bank's net demand and time liabilities (NDTL)** that is required to be **maintained in liquid cash with the RBI as a reserve**.
  - The RBI determines the CRR percentage from time to time.
- **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR):** Every bank is required to maintain in **Indian assets**, the value of which shall **not be less than such percentage of the total of its demand and time liabilities** in India as on the last Friday of the second preceding fortnight, in the form of **liquid cash, gold, government and state government securities.**
- **Open Market Operations (OMOs):** These include outright **purchase or sale of government securities by the Reserve Bank** for injection or absorption of durable liquidity in the banking system.

Recent Decisions by the RBI Monetray Policy Committee

- The Reserve Bank of India's six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has **slashed the repo rate by a bigger-than-expected 50 basis points to 5.50 per cent**, marking the third consecutive reduction since February 2025.
- The central bank **also cut the cash reserve ratio** of banks **by 100 basis points to 3 per cent**, releasing **Rs 2.5 lakh crore of lendable resources** to the banking system.

Impacts of Monetary Policy Instruments by the RBI

- **Impact of reducing repo rate:** When the RBI **wants to encourage economic activity** in the economy, it reduces the repo rate.
  - Doing this enables commercial banks to bring down the interest rates they charge (on their loans) as well as the interest rate they pay on deposits, incentivising people to spend money, and businesses to take new loans a little less cost.
- **Impact of increasing repo rate:** When the RBI **wants to control inflation**, it increases the repo rate.
  - Banks thus have to pay **more interest to borrow** from the RBI, which means they will charge more interest to their borrowers, disincentivising people from borrowing money.

Chenab Rail Bridge

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Chenab Railway Bridge on Friday, celebrating a historic milestone in India's infrastructure development. The bridge holds the distinction of being the world's highest railway bridge. **Chenab Rail Bridge.**

About Chenab Rail Bridge

- The Chenab Rail Bridge stands at a height of **359 metres above the riverbed**, making it **35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower**.
- It is constructed across the **Chenab River** in the **Reasi district** of **Jammu & Kashmir**.
- Both the **Chenab Bridge** and the **Anji Bridge** are integral components of the **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL)** project, which provides **all-weather rail connectivity** to the Kashmir Valley.
- It is designed to withstand high wind speeds and seismic activity, showcasing India's engineering and infrastructure capabilities.
- The bridge plays a vital role in **connecting Kashmir to the rest of India**, promoting **regional development and integration**.

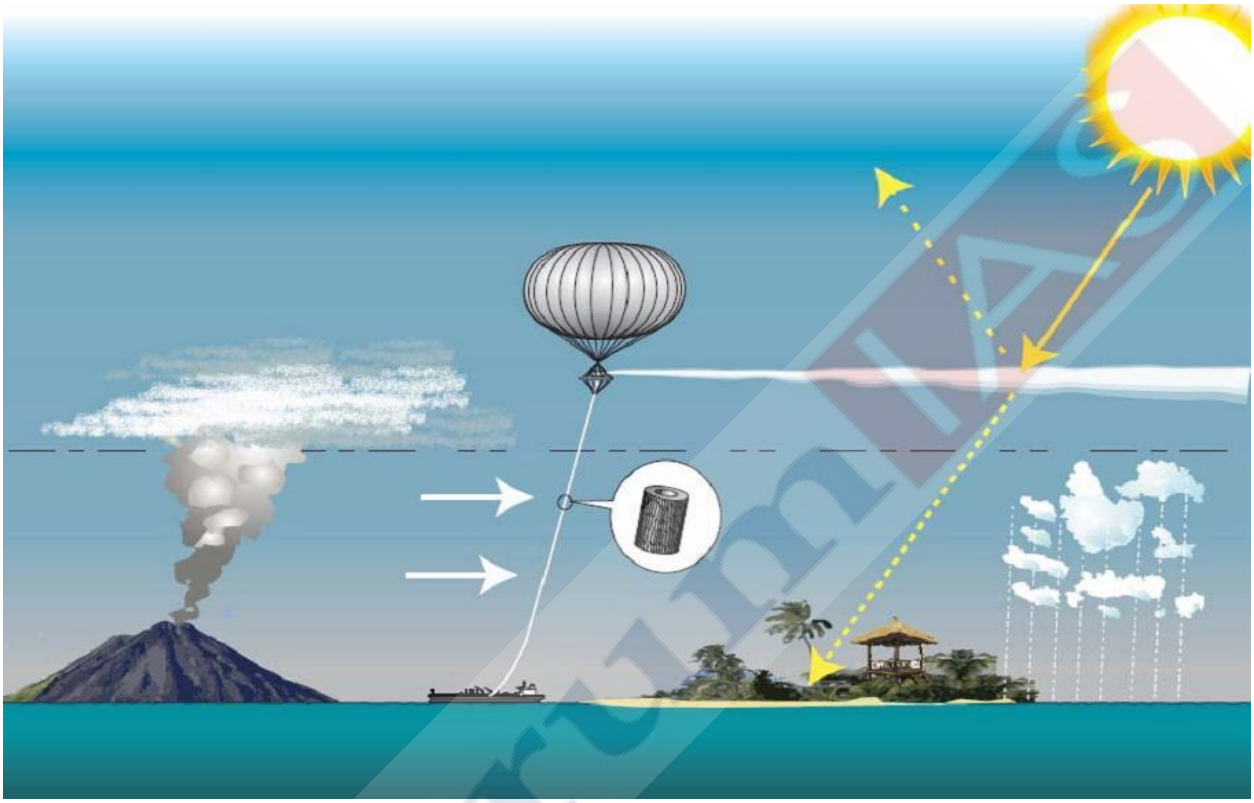
About Chenab River

- It is a significant river of the Indian subcontinent, flowing through **northwestern India** and **northeastern and eastern Pakistan**.
- The Chenab is an important **tributary of the Indus River**.
- The Chenab River originates from the **confluence of two rivers**, the *Chandra* and *Bhaga*, at **Tandi** in the upper Himalayas, located in the **Lahaul and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh**.
- In its upper reaches, the river is also referred to as the **Chandrabhaga**.
- From its origin, the river flows westward through the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, cutting through steep cliffs between the **Siwalik Range to the south** and the **Lesser Himalayas to the north**.
- It then takes a **southwesterly turn**, entering **Pakistan** and descending from the upland regions into the **broad alluvial plains of Punjab province**.
- In Pakistan, the Chenab receives the waters of the **Jhelum River near Trimmu**, before eventually merging with the **Sutlej River**, which is another tributary of the **Indus River**.
- It is the **largest river in Himachal Pradesh in terms of water volume**.
- The main tributaries of the Chenab River include: **Miyar Nalla, Sohal, Thirot, Bhut Nalla, Marusudar and Lidrari.**

Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI)

News: A new study has made the controversial concept of Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI) more technically and economically feasible by suggesting the use of modified existing aircraft instead of waiting for expensive high-altitude planes. **Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI).**

About Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI)



Stanford University

- It is a proposed climate engineering technique that involves **spraying tiny reflective particles into the stratosphere** — the upper layer of Earth's atmosphere — to reflect sunlight and cool the planet.
- **Purpose:** The goal is to **reduce global warming by mimicking the cooling effects observed after volcanic eruptions**, which release natural aerosols into the atmosphere. These aerosols scatter incoming solar radiation in the stratosphere, causing less solar energy to be absorbed by the troposphere.
- **Process:** SAI is implemented by spraying large quantities of tiny reflective particles into the stratosphere, thereby cooling the planet by reflecting sunlight back into space.
- **Method:** Reflective particles such as **sulfur dioxide, salt, or calcium carbonate would be dispersed from aircraft, rockets, artillery**, or pumped through high-altitude balloons or hoses. These particles form a reflective layer in the stratosphere that bounces sunlight back into space, reducing the Earth's surface temperature.

Indravati National Park

News: Security forces have recovered the bodies of five Maoist cadres during the ongoing anti-Naxal operations in the Indravati National Park area of Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh. **Indravati National Park.**

About Indravati National Park

Source – Chhattisgarh Govt.

- **Location:** It is a national park located in **Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh** state of India.
- **Naming:** The park derives its name from the **Indravati River**, which flows from **east to west** and forms the **northern boundary** of the reserve with the Indian state of **Maharashtra**.
    - **Chitrakote Falls:** A famous waterfall on the Indravati River (outside the park boundary, but part of the river system).
- **Vegetation: Three major forest types** are recognized in Indravati: **Moist Mixed Deciduous Forest** with Teak, **Moist Mixed Deciduous Forest** without Teak, and **Southern Dry Mixed Deciduous Forest.**
- **Flora:** Some **common species** found here are – teak, achar, karra, kullu, shisham, semal, haldu, arjun, bel, and jamun.
- **Fauna:** It is home to one of the **last populations of rare wild buffalo**. Other animals like Royal Bengal Tiger, Leopard, Indian Gaur (Bison), Sloth Bear, Dhole (Wild Dog), Nilgai, Chital, Sambar, Black Buck, Barking Deer are also found.
- **Recognition:** It attained the status of a **national park in 1981** and a **tiger reserve in 1983** under the famous **Project Tiger of India**.
    - It is **one among the two project tiger** sites in Chhattisgarh along with **Udanti-sitanadi.**
- **Tribes:** It is home to indigenous tribal communities such as the **Gond and Muria tribes.**

Asafoetida (Heeng) Cultivation

News: The first flowering and seed set of heeng at Palampur was reported on May 28, 2025, by CSIR, showing heeng can indeed be successfully cultivated in India.

Facts about Asafoetida (Heeng)

Source – PIB

- It is a **herbaceous plant** of the **umbelliferae family**.
- It is a **perennial plant** which produces **oleo-gum resin** from the **roots** after **five years of plantation.**
- **Climatic conditions required:** It thrives in **cold, arid environments**.
    - **Soil:** The plant prefers **sandy, well-drained soil** with **low moisture**.
    - **Rainfall:** Ideally **annual rainfall of 200 mm or less** is good, though it can **tolerate up to 300 mm** in cultivated regions like the Indian Himalaya.
        - **Excessive rainfall or high soil moisture** can hinder growth.
    - **Temperature:** It flourishes in temperatures of **10-20° C,** tolerates highs of up to 40° C, and withstands winter lows down to –4° C.
        - In **extremely dry and cold weather**, heeng plants typically become dormant to survive.
- **Suitability in India:** These requirements make **high-altitude, semi-arid regions like Lahaul-Spiti and Uttarkashi** in India suitable for its cultivation.

Significance

- It is one of the widely used **spices** in Indian cuisine since time immemorial.
- **Benefits:** It has a range of **medicinal properties**, including relief for **digestive, spasmodic and stomach disorders, asthma and bronchitis.**
- It is also commonly used to help with **painful or excessive bleeding during menstruation and premature labour.**

Asafoetida (heeng) cultivation in India

- India is world's **largest consumer** of heeng.
- There is **no production of heeng** in India and currently, it is being **imported** annually from **Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan**.

Government initiative

- The government launched a national effort to promote indigenous cultivation of heeng under the **CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh**.
- As part of this programme, CSIR-IHBT **procured heeng seeds, initially from Iran, and** later from **Afghanistan**.

- Import permits were taken from the **ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) in New Delhi,** the designated nodal agency for plant germplasm import and quarantine.
- Controlled trials were conducted at IHBT Palampur and its **Centre for High Altitude Biology in Ribling in Lahaul & Spiti.**
- To further institutionalise this progress, the **Heeng Germplasm Resource Centre was established** at IHBT Palampur and was formally inaugurated on March 5, 2022.
    - It serves as the national hub for conservation, research, training, seed production, and plant propagation vis-à-vis heeng.

Villages that became early adopters of this initiative were:

- Lahaul & Spiti: Madgran, Salgran, Beeling, Keylong
- Mandi: Janjehli, Majhakhal, Kataru, Ghayan, Karsog
- Kinnaur: Kafnoo, Hango, Maling, Reckong Peo, Kalpa, Moorang, Graming, Katgaon
- Kullu: Bagsaid, Dhaugi–Sainj, Kotla–Banjar
- Chamba: Pangi, Deol, Bharmour, Mahala, Tooh

Tardigrades

News: Among the scientific experiments to be conducted by astronauts onboard the International Space Station (ISS) include the one that will examine the revival, survival, and reproduction of tardigrades in space. **Tardigrades.**

About Tardigrades

Figure 4.Source – IE

- They are also known as "**water bears**" as they are robust **aquatic animals** that have been around for roughly **600 million years**.
- **Naming:** They derive their name from the fact that they look like **an eight-legged bear with a mouth** that can **project out like a tongue**.
- **Discovery:** They were discovered in 1773 by German zoologist Johann August Ephraim Goeze.
- **Shape and size:** They are about **5 mm long** when fully grown, have **four pairs of legs**, with 4-6 claws on each foot. They can only be **seen under a microscope**.
- **Feeding habit:** Tardigrade feed on **plant cells, algae and small invertebrates**.
- **Distribution and habitat:** They can be found almost **everywhere** — from the **highest mountains** to the **deepest oceans**.
    - Their **most common habitat** is the **thin film of water found on mosses and lichens**, which bestows upon these animals the moniker of "**moss piglets**".

Scientific significance of Tardigrades

- **Resilient:** They are among the **most resilient animals** which can **survive extreme conditions** such as exposure to outer space.
- **Cryptobiosis**: They owe their incredible **resilience to cryptobiosis**.
    - It is a state in which organisms bring their **metabolism to a near-complete standstill** in the face of adverse environmental conditions.
- **Anhydrobiosis:** Tardigrades can **reduce their metabolism to less than 0.01% of normal**, and **drop their water levels by more than 95%,** a state called **anhydrobiosis**.
- **Tun state:** Both **anhydrobiosis and cryptobiosis** result in the emergence of a **durable shrunken state**, called **tun**, in which tardigrades are able to **withstand extreme conditions**.
- **Protein generation:** They **produce unique proteins** such as **cytoplasmic-abundant heat soluble (CAHS) proteins** which are key to their resilience.
    - These proteins form a **gel-like matrix within their cells**, vitrifying and **protecting essential cellular components from destruction**.
- **Potential uses:** A better **understanding of tardigrades' survival mechanisms** can potentially have several **applications**: from helping scientists develop **more resilient crops** to creating **advanced sunscreens** to preserving human tissues and organs for transplantation.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

News: Recently, the seventh edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) was held on June 6–7 in Nice, France. **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**

About Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- It is a global partnership comprising **46 countries and 8 partner organizations**.
- CDRI is dedicated to enhancing the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks. It includes national governments, international organizations, and private sector
- Headquarters: **New Delhi, India.**
- It was **introduced in 2019** during the **United Nations Climate Action Summit held in New York.**
- It is funded through **voluntary contributions**.
- Major donors: **India (host), USA, UK, Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Canada**, and the **World Bank**.
- It supports international goals such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- **Key Focus Areas:** CDRI's ten core initiatives includes Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Urban resilience, Data and early warning systems, Finance and governance, Critical and social infrastructure, Mountain ecosystems, Africa-focused projects, Resilience for major events, Research and innovation and Capacity building and training
- **Governance Structure:**
    - **Governing Council:** All members; meets annually.

- **Executive Committee:** Oversees programmes; meets twice a year.
- **Secretariat:** Led by Director General; handles daily operations.

Civil Registration System (CRS)

News: A new set of data from the Civil Registration System (CRS) shows that about 86.5 lakh deaths were registered in the country in 2022, substantially lower than the peak of 2021 which had seen a big spike in deaths due to Covid pandemic. **Civil Registration System (CRS)**

About Civil Registration System (CRS)

- It is popularly **known as birth and death registration system**.
- It is the **recording of vital eventse**. **Birth, Death & Still Birth** under the **statutory provisions** on continuous and permanent basis.
- CRS falls under the **Concurrent list of the Constitution** of India at **No. 30.**
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

- **Statutory provisions:** The registration of birth and death is done under the **provisions of a central Act** namely **Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD) Act, 1969 (amended in 2023)**.
  - Under the provisions of RBD Act, 1969, the **registration of birth and death is mandatory**.
  - The events of births, still births and deaths are **registered at the place of occurrence** of the event i.e where the event took place, **within 21 days** from occurrence of event.
- **Registration Functionaries**
  - **Central level:** The **Registrar General of India (RGI)** at the Central level coordinates and unifies the activities of registration **throughout the country**.
    - The **Office of the Registrar General, India, (ORGI)** obtains data on causes of death from the Chief Registrar of Births and Deaths of different States and Union Territories, under the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 (amended in 2023).
  - **State level:** The **State authority (Chief Registrar**) has been declared as the chief executive authority in the respective State for implementing the provisions of RBD Act.
  - **District level:** The **District Registrar** for each district within the State is responsible for carrying into execution the provision of RBD Act.
  - **Local level:** At lowest level, the **Registrars** are responsible for registering the events occurred in his/her **area of jurisdiction** and **issue certificates of birth and death**.
- **Features**
  - The RBD (Amendment) Act, 2023 makes it **mandatory for all medical institutions** to provide a **certificate** as to the cause of death to the Registrar and a copy of the same to the nearest relative.

- **Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD)** – an integral part of the **Vital Statistics System**, aims at providing a **reliable and temporal database** for generating cause-specific **mortality statistics**.

- **Significance**
  - Vital statistics generated from civil registration significantly contribute to the formulation of **effective and efficient evidence-based policy** across multiple sectors.

Flue gas desulphurisation (FGD)

News: Power Minister says that the Central Pollution Control Board will decide on future of flue gas desulphurisation units. **Flue gas desulphurisation (FGD)**

About Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD)

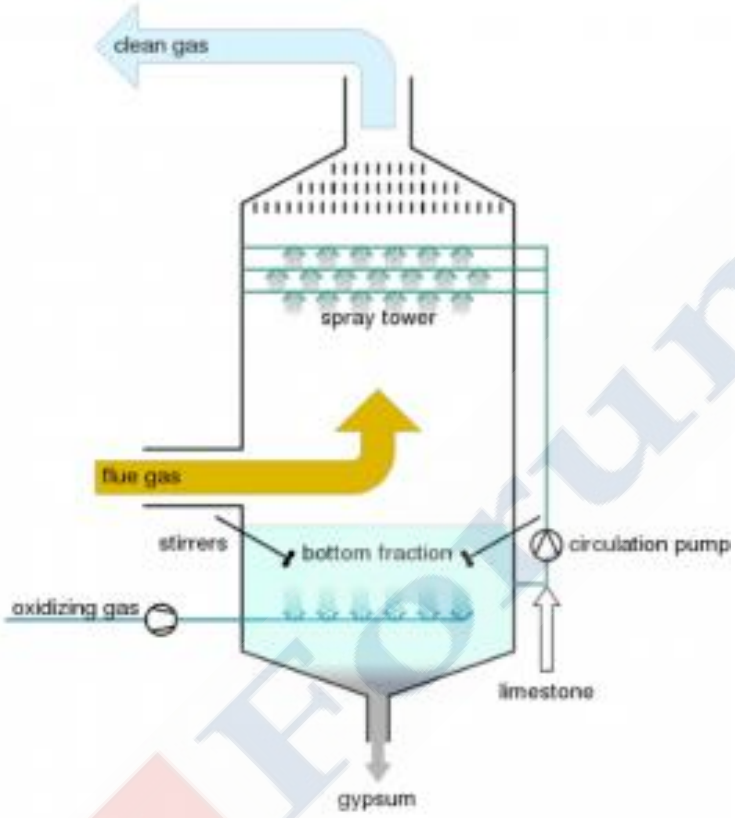


Figure 5.Source – ResearchGate

- Flue-gas desulfurization(FGD) is a **set of technologies** used to **remove sulfur dioxide (SO2)** from **exhaust flue gases of fossil-fuel power plants** and from the emissions of other sulfur dioxide-emitting processes such as **waste incineration**.
- These are an **additional piece of equipment** required to be retro-fitted in TPPs to cut harmful sulphur dioxide emissions resulting from burning coal.

Flue Gas

- Flue gas (sometimes called **exhaust gas or stack** gas) refers to the **gas that is released from combustion plants.**
- It is a **by-product** of burning fossil fuels.
- Flue gas actually contains a **mixture of gases**, such as carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO2), water vapor, nitrogen oxides (NO & NO2), sulfur dioxide (SO2), other trace pollutants, and often some particulate matter.

Ill effects of Sulphur Dioxide

- Sulphur dioxide emissions can **hover in the atmosphere** and form **aerosols of sulphates** that can temper the **heat** from global warming and exacerbate particulate **matter pollution** and **respiratory** diseases.

Categorization of Thermal Power Plants

- They are categorized into **A, B, and C** based on their **location and proximity to areas** with critical pollution or high population density for the purpose of installing Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) systems.
- **Category A plants:** The power plants located in a **10 km radius of the National Capital Region, and cities with a population of over one million**, are required to install FGD units.
    - There are 66 such plants, and only 14 of them have installed FGD units.
    - All these plants are required to comply by 2027.
- **Category B plants:** Those TPPs located in a **10-km radius of 'Critically Polluted Cities' or 'Non-Attainment Cities'.**
    - They would be eligible for **exemption on a "case by case" basis**, upon a **joint review** by the Central Electricity Authority or the CPCB.
    - There are 72 such plants, with only 4 having installed FGD units.
    - These plants have a **deadline of 2028.**
- **Category C plants:** The remaining 462 plants come under Category C.
    - Thirty-two of them have installed FGD units.
    - These plants have a 2029 deadline.
- **Deadline extensions:** So far, the government has granted three extensions since 2017, the latest being in December 2024, for plants **to comply by 2027-2030.**

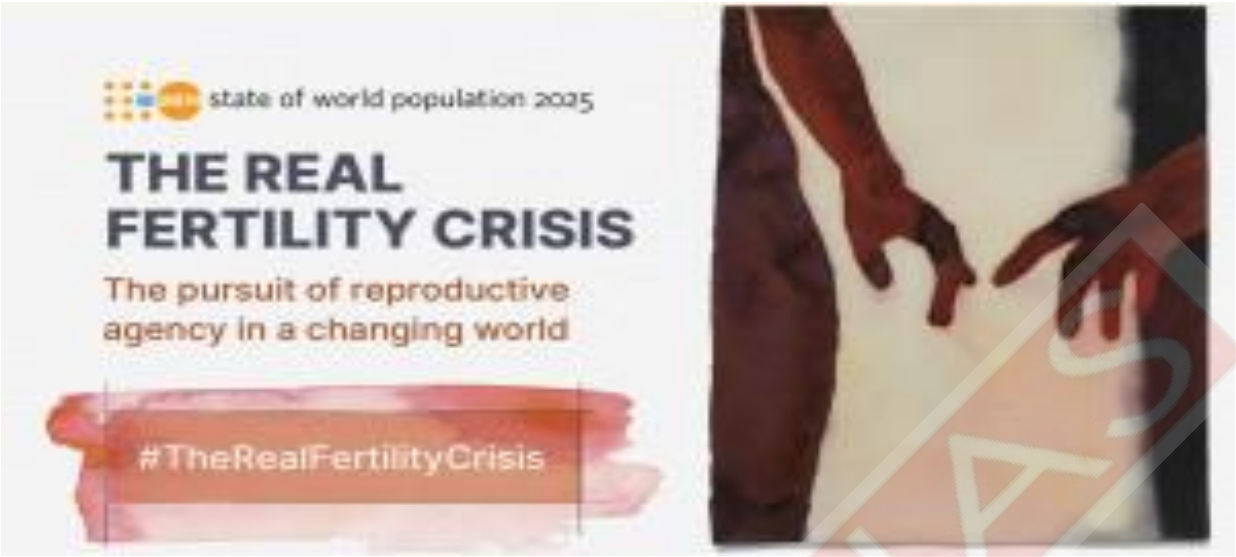
Present Scenario

- **92%** of India's 600 TPPs **haven't yet installed FGD units**.
- **High installation cost:** It is estimated that the current installation cost of such equipment is about **₹1 crore per megawatt (MW)** of installed power capacity.
- **Note:** The fitment of FGDs in all TPPs in India is **not necessary to comply** with the **NAAQ (National Ambient Air Quality) standards** whose compliance is essential to safeguard public health.

State of the World Population 2025 Report

News: A UN report says that the population is expected to grow to 170 crore before starting to dip in about 40 years. **State of the World Population 2025 Report.**

About State of the World Population 2025 Report



Source – UNFPA

- **Released by**: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Key Highlights of Report about India

- **Total population:** India's population is estimated to reach **1. 46 billion in 2025**, the highest in the world.
- **TFR:** The country's total fertility rate (TFR) has **declined to 1.9**, falling below the replacement level of 2.1.
    - **The TFR** measures the number of children a woman is expected to have throughout their reproductive age.
    - **Replacement level TFR** is the rate needed for each generation to replace the previous generation's population.
- **Future population estimates:** The population is expected to grow to 170 crore before starting to dip in about 40 years.
- **Age cohorts:** India's **youth population remains significant** –
    - 24% of the population in the age bracket of 0-14
    - 17% in age group of 10-19
    - 26% in the age group of 10-24
- **Elders:** The elderly population (**65 and older**) currently stands **at 7%.**
- **Workforce:** The report estimates that **68%** of the population in India is of **working age (15-64 years).**
- **Life expectancy:** The life expectancy at birth is projected to be **71 years for men** and **74 years for women.**

CROPIC Initiative

News: The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare plans to launch CROPIC, a study to gather crop information using field photographs and AI-based models. **CROPIC Initiative**

Figure 6. Source – PMFBY website

About CROPIC Initiative

- **CROPIC** stands for "**Collection of Real Time Observations & Photo of Crops".**
- It is a **study** to **gather crop information** using **field photographs and AI-based models**.
- CROPIC is envisaged to be used in **collection of geotagged crowd-sourced photographs from farmers** and field **coordinators through smartphones**.
- **Purpose**
  - CROPIC is an initiative under **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)** with a **dual purpose of monitoring crop health and stress and automation of crop loss assessment and payment of claims** to affected farmers using computer vision technology and photo-analytic models.
  - It will assist in **creating a rich directory of crop signatures**, and will also lead to **automation of loss assessment and compensation** to eligible farmers under PMFBY.
  - This initiative is **part of digital innovations in agriculture** for fostering financial resilience.
- **Coverage**
  - CROPIC will be rolled out **initially in at least 50 districts per season**.
  - These districts will be well distributed in different agro-climatic zones **covering the three major notified crops** (notified crops are those covered under insurance schemes like PMFBY) in each district for each season, initially.
- **Funding**
  - The **Fund for Innovation and Technology (FIAT) under PMFBY** will be used for funding CROPIC.
    - The FIAT has a total outlay of **Rs. 825 crore** for different technology innovations under crop insurance schemes.

ICC Hall of Fame

News: The ICC announced seven new additions to the ICC Hall of Fame with a large group of former greats added as the latest inductees.

About ICC Hall of Fame

Source – ICC

- **Origin:** The ICC Cricket Hall of Fame was launched on **2 January 2009** in association with the **Federation of International Cricketers Associations (FICA),** as part of the **ICC's centenary year celebrations.**
- The ICC Cricket Hall of Fame **recognises the achievements of the legends** of the game from cricket's long and illustrious history.
- **Eligibility criteria**
    - To be inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame, a player must **have retired from international cricket for at least five years**, and demonstrated **outstanding achievements**, impact on the game, and long-standing contributions to cricket at the global level.
- **Player inductions**
    - The **initial intake of inductees was the 55 players** named in the FICA Hall of Fame, which ran between **1999 and 2003**.
    - This was **supplemented by a select group of inductions each year**, which **started in 2009**.
- **Ceremony**
    - Induction ceremonies **take place throughout the cricket calendar** where the inductees are presented with a **commemorative ICC Cricket Hall of Fame cap**.
- **ICC Hall of Fame 2025 list**
    - **Seven former players** to have been inducted by the ICC – M S Dhoni, Australia's Matthew Hayden, former South Africa captain Graeme Smith, former New Zealand skipper Daniel Vettori, South African Hashim Amla, former Pakistan captain Sana Mir and England's Sarah Taylor.
- **Indians in ICC Hall of Fame list**
    - **Dhoni is the 11th Indian** to be inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame after Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, **Diana Edulji (women cricket)**, Anil Kumble, Bishan Singh Bedi, Kapil Dev, Rahul Dravid, Vinoo Mankad and **Neetu David (women cricket)**.

Exercise Khaan Quest

News: The Indian Army contingent reached Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia for the Multinational Military Exercise KHAAN QUEST, scheduled to be conducted from 14th to 28th June 2025.

About Exercise Khaan Quest

Figure 7.Source – PIB

- It is an **annual multinational military peacekeeping** exercise event.
- The exercise brings together **military forces from around the world** to collaborate and enhance their peacekeeping capabilities.
- **2025 Edition**: It is scheduled to be conducted from 14th to 28th June 2025 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- **2024 edition**: It was conducted in **Mongolia** from 27th July to 9th August 2024.
- **History:** The exercise **first started** as a **bilateral** event between **USA and Mongolian** Armed Forces in the year 2003.
    - Subsequently, from the **year 2006 onwards** the exercise graduated to a **Multinational Peacekeeping Exercise** with **current year being the 22nd iteration**.
- **India in 2025 Edition:** The Indian Army contingent comprising 40 personnel is being represented mainly by troops from a Battalion of the **KUMAON REGIMENT** along with personnel from other Arms and Services.
- **Aim:** The aim of Exercise is to **prepare Indian Armed Forces for peacekeeping missions** while operating **in a multinational environment**, thereby increasing interoperability and military readiness in peace support operations under **Chapter VII of United Nations Charter.**
- **Significance:** The Exercise will enable the participating countries to **share their best practices** in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for conduct of joint operations.
    - The exercise will facilitate developing **inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie** between soldiers of the participating countries.

Blue NDC Challenge

News: Recently, Brazil and France launched Blue Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Challenge initiative at the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) to dramatically scale up ocean-focused climate action. **Blue NDC Challenge.**

About Blue NDC Challenge

- It is a global initiative launched by **Brazil and France** on **June 9, 2025**, at the **UN Ocean Conference** in **Nice, France**.
- It is aligned with Ocean Breakthroughs under the Marrakech Partnership.
- **Aim:** To place the **ocean at the center of national climate strategies** (Nationally Determined Contributions – NDCs).
- **Institutional Support and Partnerships**: It is being supported by: Ocean Conservancy, World Resources Institute (WRI), Ocean & Climate Platform, Ocean Resilience and Climate Alliance (ORCA) and NDC Partnership
- **Founding countries: Brazil** and **France**.
- **Eight inaugural participants: Australia, Fiji, Kenya, Mexico, Palau and Republic of Seychelles**

Objectives of the Blue NDC Challenge

- Integrate **ocean-based mitigation and adaptation** in updated NDCs under the **Paris Agreement**.
- Highlight the **climate-regulating role of oceans**.
- Support **resilient, net-zero, and nature-positive development** by 2050.
- Mobilize global cooperation and ambition for **ocean-climate solutions**.

Key Areas of Ocean-Based Climate Action

1. **Marine Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation: P**rotecting and restoring mangroves, coral reefs, and seagrasses, and expand Marine Protected Areas to safeguard biodiversity and support carbon sequestration.
2. **Marine Spatial Planning and Coastal Management:** Integrated, climate-smart planning can guide sustainable coastal development and reduce climate risks.
3. **Clean Ocean Energy:** Nations can scale up offshore wind, wave, and tidal energy while phasing out offshore oil and gas production.
4. **Climate-Resilient Fisheries and Aquaculture:** Strengthening sustainability and adaptive practices will help secure ocean health and food security.

5. **Decarbonization of Marine Sectors:** Reducing emissions from shipping and seafood industries is key to achieving ocean-related climate goals.

Gender Gap Index 2025

News: India has ranked 131 out of 148 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, slipping two places from its position last year.

About Global Gender Gap Index

Figure 8.Source – WEF

- It **annually** benchmarks the **current state and evolution of gender parity** across **four key dimensions (sub-indexes):**
  - Economic Participation and Opportunity
  - Educational Attainment
  - Health and Survival
  - Political Empowerment.
- **Launched in: 2006**
- **Feature:** It is the **longest-standing index** tracking the **progress of numerous countries' efforts towards closing these gaps over time.**

Global Gender Gap Index, 2025 (19th edition) and India

- India ranked **131st** in global gender parity out of **148 countries**, with a **score of 64.4%, down three positions** from the previous year.
- **Comparisons with neighbours:** India is **behind** its neighbours – Bhutan (119th), Nepal (125th) and Sri Lanka (130th).
- **Economic Participation and Opportunity:** India saw an **improvement** in **economic participation and opportunity**.
  - The **score rose to 40.7%** (improved by +.9 percentage points), supported by an **increase in estimated earned income from 28.6% to 29.9%,** while **labour-force participation remained steady at 45.9%.**
- **Educational Attainment**: India scored **1%,** reflecting **gains** in female literacy and tertiary education enrolment.
- **Health and survival:** This also **improved** due to a **better sex ratio at birth** and **increased healthy life expectancy.**
- **Political empowerment: This sub-index declined**, with women's representation in **parliament dropping from 14.7% to 13.8%.**

Global highlights of the Report

- **Leaders: Iceland** leads the rankings for the 16th year running, followed by **Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.**

- The **global gender gap has closed to 68.8%,** marking the strongest annual advancement since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The **progress made** in this edition was **driven primarily** by significant strides in **political empowerment and economic participation** while **educational attainment and health and survival** maintained near-**parity levels** above 95%.
- However, despite women representing 41.2% of the **global workforce**, a stark **leadership gap** persists with women **holding only 28.8% of top leadership positions.**

Passage Exercise (PASSEX) 2025

News: The Indian Navy conducted a high-profile Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group in the North Arabian Sea on June 9 and 10.

About Passage Exercise (PASSEX), 2025

Figure 9. Source – The Hindu

- **PASSEX** refers to **joint naval drills** conducted between friendly navies when **they cross each other during deployments.**
- The PASSEX 2025 between **India and U.K.** was held in the **North Arabian Sea.**
- **Contingents involved:** The Indian Navy deployed **INS Tabar, a submarine, and a P-8I maritime patrol aircraft**, which operated alongside the **UK's Carrier Strike Group** led by **HMS Prince of Wales** and accompanied by **HMS Richmond**.
    - The exercise involved coordinated anti-submarine operations complex tactical manoeuvres, integrated helicopter operations and a professional exchange of naval officers.
- **Significance**
    - It enhances **interoperability, communication, and strategic cooperation** at sea.
    - It demonstrates the **deepening cooperation** between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy, showcasing a shared commitment to maritime security and robust bilateral ties.

Black Box

News: Authorities have recovered one of two black boxes of the London-bound Air India flight that crashed in a crowded area near Meghaninagar in Ahmedabad.

About Black Box

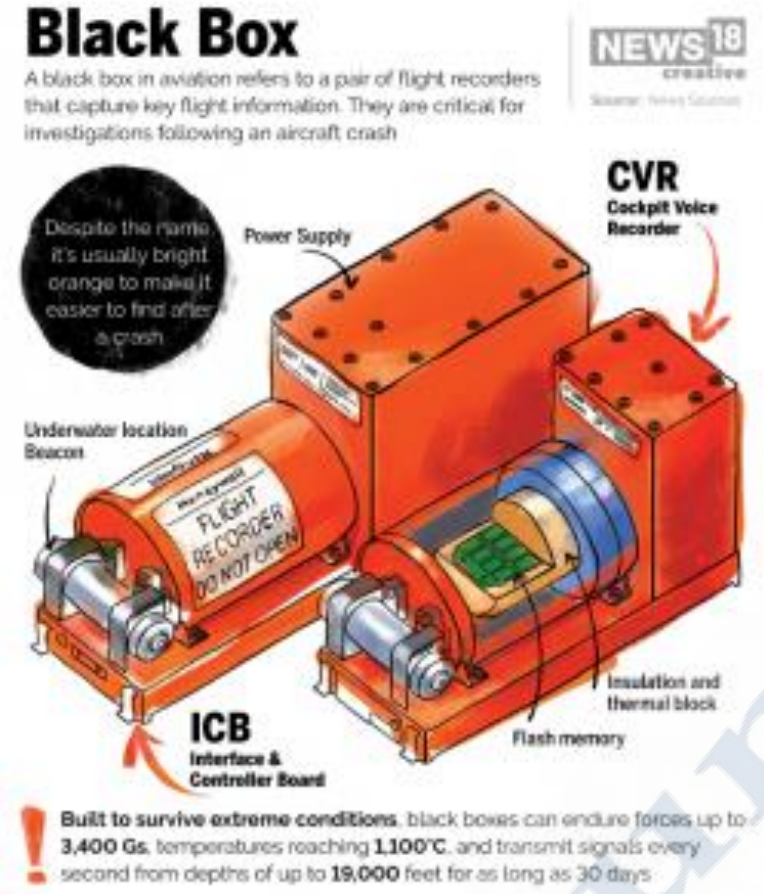


Figure 10.Source – News18

- It is a **small machine** that **records information** about an aircraft **during its flight.**
- It is basically a **flight recorder**.
- This **bright orange or yellow rectangular box (not of black colour)** is crafted to **withstand explosions, fire, water pressure, and high-speed crashes.**
- **Invented by:** It was invented by **Australian** scientist **David Ronald de Mey Warren** in early 1950s.
- **Black boxes in an aircraft:** Every commercial aircraft carries **two such recorders** – the **cockpit voice recorder (CVR)** and the **flight data recorder (FDR).**
  - **FDR:** It logs critical **technical parameters** including altitude, speed, engine thrust, and flight path data.
  - **CVR**: It captures all **cockpit audio** – pilot conversations, radio transmissions, warning alarms, and ambient mechanical sounds.
- **Inside a black box:** A black box consists of **four main parts** which are-
  - an interface to facilitate recording and playback
  - a underwater locator beacon
  - a "crash survivable memory unit" to withstand a force equivalent to 3,400 times the force of gravity
  - a recording chip on a circuit board.
- **Naming as 'Black' box**
  - This equipment had sensors that would optically project around 10 parameters onto a photographic film.
  - This film ran continuously in a box that was constructed to prevent any light from entering it. **Hence, it was called a "black box".**
- **Surviving the crash**
  - It is made of strong substances such as **steel or titanium** and is **insulated** from factors such as extreme heat and cold.
  - It is purposely **placed towards the tail end** of the aircraft, where the impact of a crash is usually the least.
  - To make black boxes discoverable in situations where they are **underwater**, they are equipped with a **beacon** that sends out ultrasound **signals for 30 days**.

International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities

News: India actively participated as the Vice President of the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) in the 2nd Session of the IALA Council, held in Nice, France. **International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities.**

About the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities

- It was established in *1957 as* a **Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)** ensuring safe and efficient navigation across the world's seas and waterways.
- **Formation:** On **August 22, 2024**, it officially became an **Intergovernmental Organisation (IGO)** after **30 countries** agreed to or approved (ratified or acceded to) the convention. As of now, there are 39 ratifications/acceptances/accessions of the Convention
- **Aim**:
    - To ensure safe, efficient, and sustainable navigation by developing globally harmonised standards for Marine Aids to Navigation.
    - To promote innovation, technical excellence, and capacity-building through credible, practical, and non-commercial guidance.
    - To foster international cooperation and knowledge-sharing among maritime stakeholders to support global maritime obligations.
- **Mandate: To harmonise global maritime navigation systems, enhance maritime safety, and collaborate with member states, international bodies, and industry on emerging safety and environmental challenges.**
- **Membership:** IALA has 200 members, including 80 national authorities and 60 commercial firms. India has been a member since 1957.
- **Headquarters:** Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France.
- The 1st General Assembly of the International Organisation for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) was held in **Singapore.**

AviList: First-ever unified global checklist of bird species

News: AviList, the first-ever unified global checklist of bird species, became live on June 12, 2025, after four years of work by the Working Group on Avian Checklists. **AviList: First-ever unified global checklist of bird species.**

About AviList: First-ever unified global checklist of bird species

Figure 11.Source – Cornell Lab

- It is the first-ever unified global checklist of bird species.
- **Launched by:** It is launched under the **Working Group on Avian Checklists**, which includes experts from **BirdLife International, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the American Ornithologists' Society, the International Ornithologists' Union, and Avibase.**
- It will **replace** the **International Ornithological Committee (IOC)** and **Clements lists** and will be updated **annually**.
- **Aim:** It aims to **eliminate confusion** caused by **multiple lists** and to help the global community "speak the same language" for bird conservation and research.
- **Features**
  - The list contains **11,131 species, 19,879 subspecies, 2,376 genera, 252 families and 46 orders**.
  - It has brought together global thinking on **what constitutes a species** and shakes up **humanity's understanding** of the avian world.
  - The new list will especially **help scientists get clarity** on conservation **priorities**.

Lake Natron

News: Climate impact is jeopardising delicate balance of Tanzania's Lake Natron bringing Flamingos under threat.

Lake Natron

About Lake Natron

Source – Daily Mail

- Lake Natron is a **salt or alkaline lake** located in **north Ngorongoro District of Arusha Region in Tanzania** at the border with **Kenya**.
- It is in the **Gregory Rift**, which is the eastern branch of the **East African Rift.**
- It lies at the foot of the **Ol Doinyo Lengai**, an active **volcano**.
- **Expanse:** It is 57 km long and 22 km wide.
- **Water resources:** It is fed principally by the southern **Ewaso Ng'iro River**, which rises in central **Kenya**, and by **mineral-rich hot springs**.
- **Temperature and alkalinity:** Temperatures at the lake are frequently **above 40 °C.**
    - **High levels of evaporation** have left behind **natron (sodium carbonate decahydrate)** and **trona** (**sodium sesquicarbonate dihydrate**).
    - The **alkalinity** of the lake can reach **a pH of greater than 12,** responsible for its **striking red coloration**.
- **Importance:** It is a **Ramsar site** and has a unique composition of w**arm waters and salt, caustic soda, and magnesite** deposits that provide ideal conditions for **flamingos** to thrive.
- **Threat:** Agriculture, pollution, and climate change pose significant threats to this unique ecosystem.

Zero-Coupon Bond

News: State-owned PFC has withdrawn its planned issuance of zero-coupon bonds for the second time in over a month, as investors demanded higher yields. **Zero-Coupon Bond.**

About Zero-Coupon Bond

Source – Business Standard

- A zero-coupon bond is a **type of debt instrument** that **does not pay periodic interest**.
- It is also known as the **discount bond**.
- Instead, it is **issued at a deep discount** and **redeemed at its full face value** upon maturity, with the **profit** being the **difference** between the purchase price and the maturity value.
- **Types:** There are **two types** of Zero Coupon Bonds, which are **corporate Zero Coupon bonds** and **Government Zero Coupon bonds**.
- **Suitable tenure for Zero Bond Coupon**
    - The **time and the maturity value** of Zero Coupon bonds share a **negative correlation**.
    - The **longer** until the maturity date, the **less the investors have to pay** for it.
    - Therefore, the Zero Coupon bonds generally come with a **time horizon of 10 to 15 years**.
    - On the other hand, these **bonds with a time period of less than one** can be a short-term investment option.
- **Taxability**
    - Taxability of zero-coupon bonds **depends on the issuer organisation**.
    - Maturity and premature withdrawal of certain types of zero-coupon bonds are **subject to tax under "Capital gain".**
    - Otherwise, only the interest part is taxable on its maturity under **"Income From Other Sources".**

Rudrastra UAV

News: India successfully conducted a test of the Rudrastra Hybrid VTOL UAV, demonstrating its capabilities in precision strikes, long endurance, and autonomous return. **Rudrastra UAV**

About Rudrastra UAV

Economic Times

- Rudrastra is an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) developed by **Solar Defence and Aerospace Limited (SDAL)**.
- It is a **VTOL drone**, which means it can take off and land vertically like a helicopter.
- It is designed for both **surveillance** and **precision strike** missions in defence.

Key Features

- **Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL):** It helps to operate in tough terrains.
- **Mission Range:** It flies over **50 km** for active missions.
- **Total Range:** It covers over **170 km** including loitering (hovering near the target).
- **Flight Time:** It stays in air for around **1.5 hours.**
- **Live Video Feed:** It provides **real-time, clear visuals** to ground operators.
- The system possesses a precision strike capability and is equipped with a precision-guided warhead.
- It executed a low-height airburst, effectively dispersing damage across a wide area. This feature makes it ideal for neutralizing enemy camps or concealed targets.
- It supports **Atmanirbhar Bharat** (self-reliant India) in defence and reduces the need to import foreign weapons

DNA Identification

News: Authorities are using DNA analysis to identify the remains of those killed in the Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner crash in Ahmedabad. **DNA Identification**

About DNA Identification

Source – Genome Project

- DNA identification is a scientific method used **to identify an individual based on their unique genetic makeup** by comparing their DNA with DNA found in biological samples such as blood, hair, or tissue, to determine if they are the source of the sample.
- Every person has a **unique DNA** that is present in nearly every cell of their body, with the **exception of identical twins**.
- **Use:** DNA identification is the gold standard for **identifying human remains**, especially after mass fatality events in which bodies might not be easy to identify otherwise.

Collecting and Storing Samples

- DNA **survives** much **better in cold and dry conditions**, than when it is hot and humid.
- This is why samples have to be **collected as soon as possible**, and once collected, should ideally be **frozen at minus 20 degrees Celsius**, or, in the case of **soft tissues** (skin, muscles, etc.), they may be stored in **95% ethanol.**
    - DNA from **soft tissues degrades much faster** than that from hard tissues (bones and teeth).
- To identify who the collected DNA belongs to, **reference samples** are collected from **biological relatives.**
    - Parents and children of the victim are ideal candidates for providing these samples, given that they share 50% of each other's DNA.

Methods of Analysis

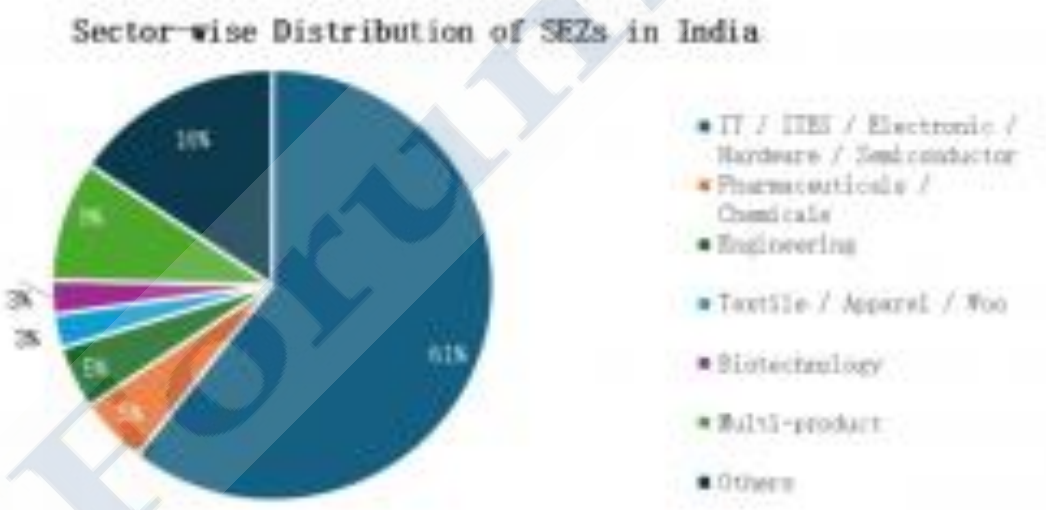
- **Short tandem repeat (STR) analysis:** The method evaluates short tandem repeats, which are essentially **short repeating sequences of DNA**.
    - STRs are used for DNA identification as they widely **vary between individuals**.
    - The STRs are typically found on nuclear DNA which is located within the **nucleus of a cell**.
- **Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis:** This method is used when **nuclear DNA is degraded** or unavailable.
    - Mitochondrial DNA is **found** within the cell's energy-producing organelles known as **mitochondria.**
    - As mtDNA is present in multiple copies within the cell, it is **easier to recover** from human remains that are not well preserved.
    - This is used for identification because **mtDNA is passed down by the mother, unchanged, to all her children.**

- **Y chromosome analysis:** Humans have **two types of sex chromosomes**, **X and Y**:
    - Biological **males** typically have **one X and one Y** chromosome, and biological **females** typically have **two X**
    - In this method, a panel of **STR on Y chromosomes**, passed on from father to son, is examined to match the remains of the victim **with their male relatives**.
- **Single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) analysis:** The method is typically used when the DNA to be analysed is **highly degraded**.
    - A SNP is a **variation in the DNA sequence** where a single base — **A, C, G, or T** — at a specific location differs among people.
    - Given that SNPs are **unique to each person**, they can be used for identification purposes with the **help of reference samples** taken from, e.g. victim's **personal belongings** such as a toothbrush and hairbrush.
    - This method is **not as effective as STR analysis**.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

News: The government has relaxed key rules related to Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to encourage the domestic manufacture of semiconductors and electronics.

About Special Economic Zones (SEZs)



Source – Ministry of Commerce

- A special economic zone is a **geographical area** in which the **trade and tax laws are relaxed** and **different from that in the rest of the country** so as to be more **conducive to industries**.
- **Aim:** The aim of a SEZ is to **increase investment (FDI), exports and employment**.
- India had setup the **first SEZ in Asia** in **1965 at Kandla** (based on **Export Processing Zone (EPZ)** model).
- **SEZ policy:** The SEZ policy was announced by the government in **2000** which was strengthened through **SEZ Act 2005** which was passed by Parliament in May, 2005 which came into effect on 10th February, **2006**.
- **SEZ Rules**: The **SEZ Rules** provide for **different minimum land requirement** for different **class of SEZs.**
    - Every **SEZ is divided into a processing area** where alone the SEZ units would come up and the **non-processing area** where the **supporting infrastructure** is to be created.

Recent changes in the SEZ Rules

- The **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** has notified several **modifications to the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Rules, 2006** to enhance the **domestic manufacture of semiconductors**.
- **Rule 5 – Size of the SEZ**: The minimum contiguous land area required for the manufacture of semiconductors or electronic components has been reduced to 10 hectares from 50 hectares earlier.
- **Rule 7:** It now **allows the Board of Approval for SEZs** to **relax the condition** that had required SEZ land to be **"encumbrance-free".**
    - Land is deemed to be **encumbrance-free** if it **does not have any legal claims, liens, or charges against it**, and when **clear title of ownership** and **transfer** can be established.
- **Rule 18:** It now allows SEZ units in semiconductor and electronics component manufacturing **to supply domestically,** after paying the applicable duties.
    - Conventionally, SEZs are exclusively export-oriented.

Servants of India Society (SIS)

News: Tensions have flared between the Pune-based Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) and parent Servants of India Society (SIS) over control of a key bank account.

About Servants of India Society (SIS)

Figure 12.Source – SIS

- **Founders:** The Servants of India Society (SIS) was founded by **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**, along with **K. Devadhar, A.V. Patwardhan, and N.A. Dravid**, in **Pune**, India, on **June 12, 1905.**
- **Objectives:** Its objectives were to **train individuals** who were willing to devote their lives to the **country's cause in a religious spirit, for political education and agitation**, and to promote the **national interest** of the Indian people **through constitutional means**.
- The members of the Society were considered as **young missionaries** of Indian nationalism.
- **Prominent members:** Several young Indian nationalists including **S. Srinivas Shastri, Hriday Nath Kunzru, and A.V. Thakkar** enrolled as members.
    - Later **M. K. Gandhi** also became a member of Society under guidance of Gokhale.
- **Headquarter:** The organization has its **headquarters in Pune (Poona)** and **branches** in Chennai (Madras), Mumbai (Bombay), Allahabad, Nagpur among other places.
- **Presidents: G. K. Gokhale** remained its president from **1905-1915**, followed by **V. S. Srinivas Shastri (1915-1927)** and **Gopal Krishna Devdhar (1928-1936).**
- The Society began publishing ***the Hitavada***, its **english-language journal** from **Nagpur, in 1911.**
- In **1930**, the society established the **Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics**, **Pune**.
- **Post-Independence work**
    - The SIS **continues to be an active** organization today, more than a century after its establishment.

- While some of its activities have evolved and changed over time, the SIS remains **committed** to its **original mission of promoting education, social reform, and political freedom** in India.

Key Facts about Cyprus

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Cyprus marking the first stop of his three-nation tour. **Key Facts about Cyprus.**

About Cyprus

- **Location:** Cyprus is an island nation in the **eastern Mediterranean Sea**, located about 65 km south of Turkey and 100 km west of Syria.
- It is the **third-largest island in the Mediterranean, after Sicily and Sardinia,** with a total area of 9,251 square kilometers.
- **The capital of Cyprus is Nicosia**, which is also the only divided capital city in the world.
- The terrain includes the Kyrenia Mountains in the north, the Troodos Mountains in the south, and the Mesaoria Plain in between. Mount Olympus (Troodos), at 1,951 meters, is the highest point on the island.
- **Climate:** Cyprus has a typical Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters.
- **History:** Cyprus **gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960** and became the Republic of Cyprus.
- The island is now divided between the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus in the south and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the north, recognized only by Turkey.
- A United Nations peacekeeping force patrols the **"Green Line"**, which separates the two parts of the island.
- **Official language:** Greek and Turkish, and English is widely spoken.
- **Agriculture:** Major crops include **citrus fruits, potatoes, grapes, and olives.**
- **Economy:** The Cyprus economy is dominated by **services, particularly tourism, finance, and shipping.** It has **historically been known for its copper, with mining** dating back to 2500 BCE.
- The country is a **major producer of solar energy,** but imports all its petroleum.
- Major historic and UNESCO sites include **Petra tou Romiou, ancient Paphos, Choirokotia, and the painted churches of the Troodos.**