

# Factly Weekly

**Compilation**

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims  
Exam**

**4<sup>th</sup> Week  
January 2026**

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## Sirsiya River

**News:** The Sirsiya river is in the news due to severe industrial pollution affecting public health, culture, ecology, and cross-border areas of Nepal and India.

### About Sirsiya River



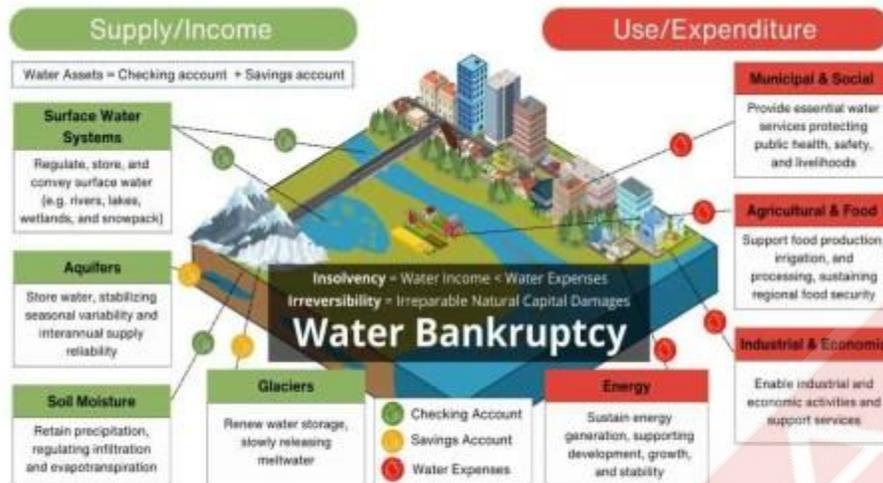
Source – Bihar Govt.

- The Sirsiya river is a **transboundary perennial river** flowing from southern Nepal to India.
- **Origin:** The river originates from the **Ramban Jhadi forest in Jeetpur Simara Sub-metropolitan City of Bara district in Nepal.**
- **Course:** The river flows through the **Bara-Parsa industrial corridor** and crosses into India at **Raxaul in Bihar.**
- **Tributaries** The two major tributaries of the Sirsiya river are **Kiyasut and Vaudyi, which merge near Birgunj.**
- **Merges into:** After crossing into India, it flows southward, merging with the **Bangari River** before joining the **Burhi Gandak River in Bihar**, contributing to the broader **Ganga River basin.**
- **Cultural Importance:** The riverbank is lined with **numerous shrines and temples.**
  - It is a **central site for the Chhath festival** for local communities.
- **Pollution crisis**
  - Untreated industrial waste and sewage released by factories have turned the Sirsiya river black and highly toxic.
  - During the dry season, nearly 80% of the river's flow consists of industrial wastewater, which has destroyed aquatic life and caused serious health problems and cultural decline among riverside communities.

## Global Water Bankruptcy Report

**News:** The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) has released a **Global Water Bankruptcy report.**

### About Global Water Bankruptcy Report – 2026



A simple illustration of water income and water expenses in a human-water system. Water bankruptcy is the outcome of both insolvency and irreversibility conditions, i.e., when water use (expenditure) exceeds water supply (renewable and non-renewable assets) for an extended period resulting in irreparable damages to the underlying natural capital that contributes to water production and stability of the hydrological cycle.

Source: Global Water Bankruptcy Report 2026

- **Title of the report:** “Global Water Bankruptcy: Living Beyond Our Hydrological Means in the Post-Crisis Era”
- **Published by:** United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)
  - It has been **published on the occasion of UNU-INWEH’s 30th anniversary and ahead of 2026 UN water conference.**
- **What it covers:** The report **highlights concern** such as **chronic groundwater depletion, water overallocation, land degradation, deforestation, pollution and climate change**, which are **pushing many regions to water bankruptcy and the need to take action.**
- **Findings of the Global Water Bankruptcy Report, 2026**
  - **Increasing Scarcity of Water:** **Water is becoming scarce around the world** leading to crop failures, power grids falter, diseases, migration, conflicts, and threats to peace and security.
  - **Slow Progress on SDG:** The report highlights that **the world is far from achieving SDG 6.** It highlights that **2.2 billion people lack safely managed drinking water, 3.5 billion lack proper sanitation, and nearly 4 billion face severe water scarcity every year.**
  - **Emergence of Global Water Bankruptcy:** The report declares that the world has entered an era of **“global water bankruptcy”** due to structural imbalance between water demand and available resources.
  - **Water Insecurity and Resource Depletion:** It shows that **nearly 75 percent of the global population lives in countries classified as water-insecure or critically water-insecure.**
    - It also finds that **70 percent of major aquifers are declining, nearly 3 billion people live in areas with unstable water storage, and more than 170 million hectares of farmland face high water stress.**
  - **Role of Climate Change:** **Climate change** is disrupting rainfall, melting glaciers, and increasing floods and droughts, **making water availability unpredictable.**
  - **Chronic and Interconnected Water crisis:** The report observes that **droughts, shortages, and pollution are becoming long-term problems and water stress in one region will intensify pressures and conflicts elsewhere.**

- **Risk of “Day Zero” in Cities:** The report warns that **many cities across continents are approaching “Day Zero,”** where regular water supply fails due to overburdened urban systems.
- **Shift in water Management:** The report calls for **moving away from crisis management to bankruptcy management.** There is need to **deliberate combination of efforts for mitigation plus adaptation** to new hydrological and environmental normals.

#### About Status of water scarcity in India

- India supports about **18 percent of the world’s population with only 4 percent of global freshwater,** and its **per capita surface water availability declined by 73 percent between 1951 and 2024.**
- **The NITI Aayog’s 2018 Composite Water Management Index warned that around 600 million Indians face high to extreme water stress** and by 2030, water demand may be twice the available supply.
- **World Resources Institute ranked India 13th among the 17 most water-stressed countries** and over **60 percent of irrigation and 85 percent of drinking water depend on rapidly depleting groundwater.**
- **According to 2024 Annual Groundwater Quality Report, nearly 70 percent of India’s water sources are contaminated** which is posing serious risks to public health, agriculture, and livelihoods.

#### Operation MegaBuru

**News:** Operation MegaBuru is in the news after 19 alleged Maoists were killed during a major anti-Maoist operation in Jharkhand’s Saranda forests.

#### About Operation MegaBuru



Figure 1. Source – Argus News

- Operation MegaBuru is a **large-scale counter-insurgency operation** carried out **against CPI (Maoist) in Jharkhand.**
- **Location:** The operation is being conducted in **the Kumdi area** under Kiriburu police station limits in **West Singhbhum district, Jharkhand.**
- **Launched in:** The operation was **launched in January 2026.**
- **Conducted by:** The operation is jointly conducted by the **Central Reserve Police Force and Jharkhand Police.**
- **Aim:** The aim of the operation is to **neutralise top Maoist leadership and dismantle their command structure** in the region.
  - It also seeks to **clear remaining Maoist pockets** in the **Singhbhum area** and support the **government’s goal to end Naxalism by March 2026.**
- **Key features**
  - **Intelligence-driven:** The operation was **intelligence-driven** and based on inputs about senior Maoist leaders.

- **Elite forces:** Around 1,500 elite CoBRA commandos were deployed for deep forest operations.
- **Advanced technology**, including helicopters, drones, and satellite monitoring, was used to support surveillance and operations.

### Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary

**News:** A forest fire has been burning for the past two days within Sikkim's Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### About Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary

##### IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS AND WILDLIFE PROTECTED AREAS OF SIKKIM

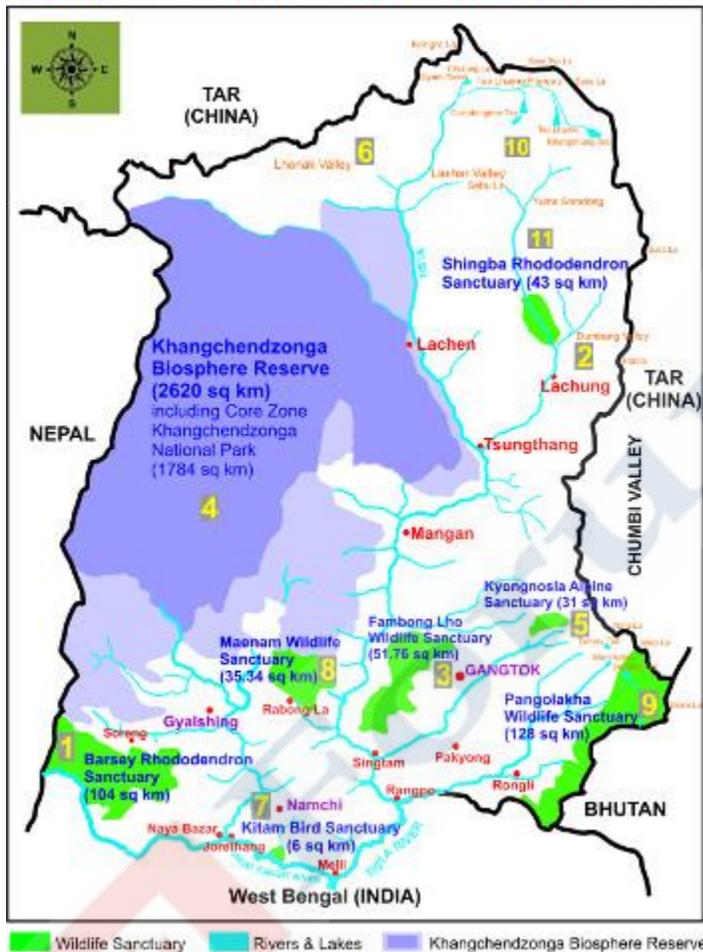


Figure 2. Source: ResearchGate

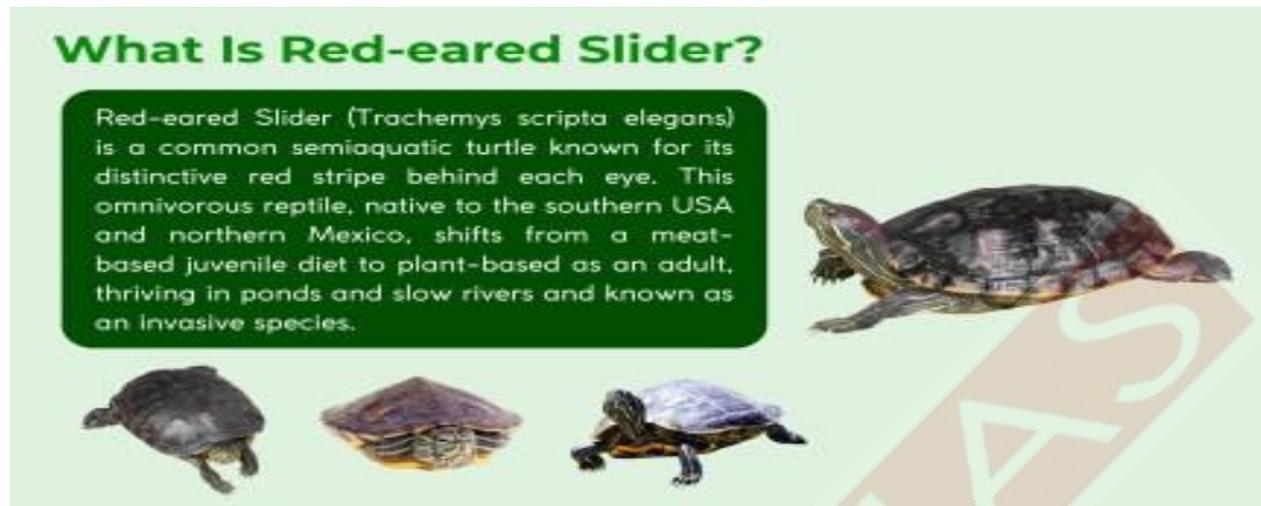
- **Location:** Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary is located in **East Sikkim**.
  - It is situated at the **tri-junction of Sikkim, Bengal and Bhutan**.
  - The **Pangolakha range** in the east separates Sikkim from Bhutan.
  - It is **linked to Neora Valley National Park of West Bengal**.
- **Established:** It was established as a **Wildlife Sanctuary in the year 2002**.
- **Area:** It covers an area of about **12,400 hectares**.
- **Altitude:** It lies at an altitude **ranging from 1,300 metres to above 4,000 metres**.
- **Lakes:** The area has **high-altitude lakes** such as **Bedang Tso** and **wetlands near Jelep La and Natu La**.
- **River:** Rivers like **Rangpo and Jaldhaka** originate from nearby lakes within the sanctuary.
- **Vegetation:** It contains **alpine, temperate, and subtropical vegetation zones**.
- **Flora:** **Rhododendron, silver fir, juniper, oak, and bamboo thickets** are found there.
- **Fauna:** Species such as **Red Panda, Tiger, Snow leopard, Takin, Goral, Serow, Musk Deer, Red Fox, and Asiatic Black Bear, Mouse-Hare and Himalayan Weasel** are found here.

- **Bird species** such as **Bar-headed Goose, Large Cormorant, and Brahminy Shelduck, Bar-headed Goose, Large Cormorant Brahminy, Shelduck, etc** are found here.

### Red-eared slider turtle

**News:** Red-eared slider turtle, an invasive turtle species is posing a threat to tanks and other wetlands in Coimbatore.

## About Red-eared slider turtle



Source: Animalpedia

- It is a **semiaquatic turtle freshwater turtle**.
- It belongs to **Emydidae family**.
- **Scientific name:** *Trachemys scripta elegans*
- **Habitat:** It prefers to live in **ponds, lakes, marshes, and slow-moving rivers**.
- **Distribution:** It has an established **distribution across all continents, except Antarctica**.
- It is native to **Mississippi River basin in the U.S.** (Illinois to Gulf of Mexico), and **northern Mexico**.
- **Characteristic Features**
  - It has **bright red stripes behind each eye**, which give the species its name.
  - It has a **hard, oval-shaped shell with yellow and green patterns**.
  - It has **webbed feet** that help it swim easily in water.
  - It has **strong, toothless jaws** that are used for tearing and crushing food.
  - **Females are generally larger than males**, while males have longer front claws and tails.
  - It is **diurnal (active during the day)** in nature.
  - During cold weather, it **survives by entering a resting state called brumation** (the reptile form of hibernation).
- **Diet:** It is **omnivorous**.
- **Lifespan:** 20–30 years on average; can exceed 40 years in captivity
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN: Least Concern**
  - In many countries, it is **considered an invasive species (like in India)**.

## Gandak River

**News:** The Gandak river has emerged as the second major river after the Chambal with the highest number of gharials.

## About Gandak River



Figure 3. Source – Living Water Museum

- Gandak River is a **major river of Nepal** and a **left-bank tributary of the Ganges in India**.
- **Origin:** It **originates at an altitude of 620 m above msl to the north of Dhaulagiri Mountain in Tibet near Nepal border**.
- **Course of river:** Gandak River is known as the **Kali Gandaki and Narayani after its confluence with the Trisuli River in Nepal**.
  - While flowing through the **Nepal Himalayas, it forms the Kali Gandaki gorge, one of the deepest river gorges in the world**.
  - It **flows southward into India** and passes through the **districts of West Champaran, East Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Gopalganj, Siwan, Saran, and Vaishali in Bihar, as well as Gorakhpur and Deoria in Uttar Pradesh**.
  - It **finally joins Ganga at Hajipur in Bihar**.
- **Total Catchment area:** 46,300 km<sup>2</sup>.
- **Major Tributaries:** Daraudi, Seti, Madi, Marsyandi, and Budhi Gandaki.
- **Fauna:** The basin supports species such as **tiger, one-horned rhinoceros, gaur, and fishing cat, Gangetic dolphin, smooth-coated otter, gharial, and mugger, gangetic dolphins, turtles,**

**greater and lesser adjutants and the common shelduck, etc**

### About Gharial

- The gharial is a **species of crocodilian**. Its scientific name is **Gavialis gangeticus**.
- It is the **only visibly sexually dimorphic crocodilian, characterized by a large, bulbous knob called a ghara**.
- **Distribution:** Gharials are primarily **found in the rivers of India and Nepal**.
  - The surviving population can be found within the **tributaries of the Ganges river system: Girwa, Son, Ramganga, Gandak, Chambal and Mahanadi**.
- **Habitat:** Gharials prefer **deep, fast-flowing rivers** but are also found in **still water branches and deep holes at river bends and confluences**.
- **Physical Characteristics**
  - It is **one of the largest crocodilian species**.
  - **Male gharials grow between 3 to 6 m in length, while females range from 2.6 to 4.5 m**.
  - **Mature males develop a bulbous growth called a ghara on their snouts, which they use to produce vocalization**.
  - Their **distinctive snout is lined with sharp, interlocking teeth, which help them catch fish efficiently**.
  - **Gharials are not well-suited for walking on land and spend most of their time in water**.
- **Importance in Ecosystem:** Gharials play a **vital role in maintaining the balance of river ecosystems and act as an indicator of a healthy ecosystem**.
- **Threats to Gharial:** **Habitat destruction, Fishing activities and Climate change**

## Factly Compilation [Fourth Week] January 2026

- **Conservation status:** Listed in **Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and as **Critically Endangered** on **IUCN Red List**.
- **Conservation efforts:**
  - Between 1975 and 1982, India established **16 captive breeding and release centers** to support gharial populations.
  - The species primarily survives in five key sanctuaries: **National Chambal Sanctuary (NCS), Katerniaghat Sanctuary, Chitwan National Park, Son River Sanctuary and Satkosia Gorge Sanctuary.**

### Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards-2025

**News:** The President of India has approved the conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards – 2025.

#### About Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards-2025



Source : Royal Patiala

- **About:** Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards are **an offshoot of the Ashoka Chakra series of Gallantry awards.**
- **Instituted in:** 1961
- The awards are **given to a person for meritorious act of human nature in saving the life of a person.**
- **Categories:** The award is given in **three categories:**
  - **Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak-** for **conspicuous courage in saving life** under circumstances of very great danger to the life of the rescuer
  - **Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak-** for **courage and promptitude in saving life** under circumstances of great danger to the life of the rescuer.
  - **Jeevan Raksha Padak-** for **courage and promptitude in saving life** under circumstances of grave bodily injury to the rescuer.
- **Presented by:** It is presented to the awardees **by the respective Union Ministries/Organizations/State Government** to which the awardee belongs.
- **Eligibility:** Persons of all walks of life are **eligible for these awards.**
  - The award **can also be conferred posthumously.**
- **Process of the award:** Its nominations are **invited annually** from States/UTs and Union Ministries.

## Factly Compilation [Fourth Week] January 2026

- The recommendations of the award are **considered by the Awards Committee within a period of two calendar years** from the date of performance of the act.
- The **Awards Committee makes its recommendations to the Prime Minister and the President.**
- **Awards constitute: A Medal, Certificate** signed by the Union Home Minister and **lump sum Monetary Allowance.**
  - **Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak:** ₹ 2,00,000/-
  - **Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak:** ₹ 1,50,000/-
  - **Jeevan Raksha Padak:** ₹ 1,00,000/-
- **Details of Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards-2025:** Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards-2025 has been conferred on **30 persons.**
  - **Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 06, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 06 and Jeevan Raksha Padak to 18 persons.**
  - **Six awardees are posthumous.**

### Operation Sahyadri Checkmate

**News:** Operation Sahyadri Checkmate was launched recently by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).

#### About Operation Sahyadri Checkmate



Figure 4. Source: PIB

- “Operation Sahyadri Checkmate” was **anti-narcotics operation.**
- **Aim:** It **dismantled a clandestine mobile mephedrone manufacturing laboratory** in the remote **hinterland of the Sahyadri ranges.**
- **Launched by:** Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)
- **What was recovered:** **Around 21.9 kilograms of mephedrone in various forms and over 70 kilograms of chemical precursors and raw materials** were recovered.

- **Note:** Mephedrone is a **synthetic stimulant** and is

**commonly described as a party drug.**

- The **total value of the seized contraband** is estimated at **Rs 55 crore in the illicit market.**

#### About Sahyadri Ranges



Source – Research Gate

- **About:** The Northern-Western Ghats of India are popularly known as 'Sahyadri'.
- **Location:** They extend from the Goa–Karnataka–Maharashtra tri-junction in the south to the Tapi River near the Gujarat border in the north.
- **Length:** About 640 km long and 10 to 20 km wide.
- **Height:** Average elevation is of around 1,000 m.
- **Formation:** They are formed about 60 million years ago due to massive volcanic activity and are part of the Deccan Traps.
- **Composition:** They are mainly composed of basalt rocks.
- **Features**
  - The western slopes of the Sahyadris rise steeply from the Konkan Coast, while the eastern slopes descend gradually into the Deccan Plateau.
  - They act as a natural barrier to the southwest monsoon winds and receive heavy rainfall on their crestline.
  - **Annual rainfall:** Between 4,000 and 6,000 mm.
- **Rivers:** The rivers Godavari and Krishna originate from these ranges.
- **Peaks:** Kalasubai (Highest – 1,646 meters), Salher and Mahabaleshwar.
- **Important passes:** Thal Ghat, Bhor Ghat, Naneghat, Amba Ghat, and Amboli Ghat.
- **Vegetation:** Evergreen forests are found mainly along the wet western crestline, while drier regions support deciduous forests and grasslands.

- **Flora:** It is home to **over 4,000 plant species, with at least 159 endemic flowering plants.**
  - **Sacred groves** are protected by local communities.
- **Fauna:** The Sahyadris support various wildlife species, including the **purple frog (endemic), leopards, gaur, Indian giant squirrel, Tigers, Asian elephants, sloth bears, etc.**
  - Some of the important birds include the **Nilgiri wood-pigeon, Malabar grey hornbill, grey-headed bulbul, and the Malabar parakeet.**
- **Important protected areas:** **Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandoli National Park, Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary, etc.**
- **Historical Importance:** Famous **forts** like **Raigad, Rajgad, Sinhagad, and Shivneri** are located in this range.
- **Conservation International** has recognized the **Sahyadri range (Western Ghats)** as part of one of the world's 34 **global biodiversity hotspots.**

### Chattergala Pass

**News:** Border Roads Organisation (BRO) successfully carried out a high-altitude rescue and road restoration operation under Project Sampark at Chattergala Pass in the Baderwah–Chattergala axis in Jammu region of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

#### About Chattergala Pass



Figure 5. Source – Republic World

- Chattergala Pass is a **mountain pass** located in the **Middle Himalayas of the Jammu region** of Jammu and Kashmir, India.
- **Connecting:** It connects the **town of Baderwah** in the Neeru river valley with **Basohli** in the Shivalik hills.
- **Significance:** It is a **strategically and geographically significant location**, particularly in the context of **border security and connectivity in the Pir Panjal sub-range.**
- The **Chattergala Tunnel** is planned under the pass.

#### Chattergala Tunnel

- It is a **8 km long road tunnel** under the Chattergala pass.
- It is built at an **elevation of 10,500 ft.**
- It is planned to **connect Kathua and Doda via Bani.**
- It will provide **all-weather road connectivity** and **reduce the travel time** from **Lakhanpur to Doda to four hours.**

## Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-AShM)

**News-** At the 77th Republic Day Parade on Kartavya Path, DRDO showcased the Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-AShM) for the first time.



Figure 6. Source- The Hans India

### About Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LR-AShM)

- It is an indigenously developed hypersonic glide missile by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It is designed primarily to meet the coastal battery and sea-denial requirements of the Indian Navy.

#### ● Key Features

- **Range:** Capable of striking static and moving targets at a range of around 1,500 km, with future variants planned up to 3,500 km.

- **Speed & Trajectory:** Follows a *quasi-ballistic trajectory*, reaching speeds of *Mach 10* initially and maintaining an *average Mach 5*.
- **Stealth advantage:** Its low-altitude flight, high speed, and manoeuvrability reduce detection by enemy ground- and ship-based radars.
- **Propulsion & flight Profile**
  - Configured with a *two-stage solid propulsion* rocket motor system.
  - Possesses high aerodynamic efficiency, enabling long-range, accurate strikes with minimal drag.
- **Strategic significance**
  - Capable of neutralising all classes of warships, it is a major asset for sea denial operations, especially in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
  - Army, Air Force, and ship-launched naval variants are under development or consideration, placing India firmly in the hypersonic weapons domain.

### India's Other Hypersonic Missile Programmes

- DRDO is developing two hypersonic weapon technologies—*hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs)* and *hypersonic cruise missiles*.
  - A Hypersonic Glide Vehicle (HGV) is carried to high altitude by a rocket, after which it separates and glides through the atmosphere while manoeuvring at speeds above Mach 5.
  - In contrast, hypersonic cruise missiles remain within the atmosphere and achieve hypersonic speeds using scramjet engines for sustained, powered flight and high manoeuvrability.

### Ramjet vs Scramjet:

- Ramjets are air-breathing engines that compress incoming air using the missile's forward motion and therefore require an assisted launch. They operate most efficiently around **Mach 3** but lose efficiency at hypersonic speeds.

- Scramjets maintain supersonic airflow within the combustion chamber during operation. This enables efficient flight **beyond Mach 5**, though scramjets are technologically more complex to design and operate.

### Punjab Kesari Lala Lajpat Rai

**News:** The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid tributes to Lala Lajpat Rai on his birth anniversary and remembered his life of sacrifice.

#### About Lala Lajpat Rai

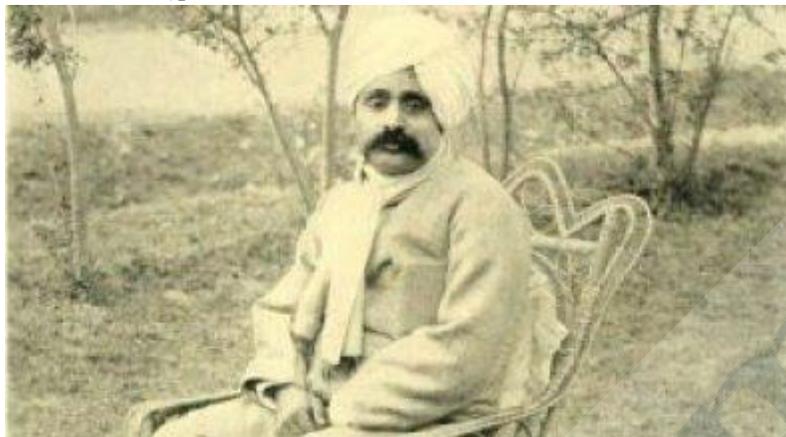


Figure 7. Source – Indian Express

- Lala Lajpat Rai was an Indian revolutionary, politician, and author, **popularly known as Punjab Kesari** and a **member of the Lal-Bal-Pal trio**.
- **Birth:** He was born on **28 January 1865** in **Dhudike**, Faridkot district of the Punjab Province.
  - He belonged to an **Agrawal Jain family** and was the eldest son of **Munshi Radha Krishna** and **Gulab Devi Aggarwal**.
- **Education:** He received his early education in **Rewari** and later studied law at **Government College, Lahore**.
- **Influence by:** He was deeply influenced by **Swami Dayanand Saraswati** and the **Arya Samaj movement**.
- **Key Contributions**
  - **Freedom Struggle**
    - He joined the **Indian National Congress** and was deported to **Mandalay in 1907**.
    - He founded the **Indian Home Rule League of America** in 1917.
    - He was elected **President of the Indian National Congress in 1920**.
    - He led the protest against the **Simon Commission in 1928** with the slogan “Simon Go Back.”
  - **Social & Institutional Reforms**
    - He helped establish the **Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School, Lahore**.
    - He founded the **National College at Lahore**, where Bhagat Singh studied.
    - He established the **Servants of the People Society** in 1921.
    - He supported reforms related to caste system, women’s position, and untouchability.
  - **Banking and Economy:** In 1894, he helped found the **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** and the **Lakshmi Insurance Company** to promote Indian-owned financial institutions.
- **Literary Works:** Important works included **Unhappy India, Young India, England’s Debt to India, and The Story of My Deportation**.
  - He also wrote biographies of **Mazzini, Garibaldi, Shivaji, and Shri Krishna**.
- **Death:** He died on **17 November 1928** due to injuries from a **police baton charge during the Lahore protest against the Simon Commission**.

## Bactrian Camel

**News:** This year, two Bactrian camels named Galwan and Nubra marched on Kartavya Path in the Republic Day Parade.

### About Bactrian Camel



Source – DTE

- The Bactrian camel is a **double-humped camel scientifically known as *Camelus bactrianus***.
- **Naming:** The name “Bactrian” comes from the ancient region of Bactria, located between present-day Afghanistan, Iran and Kazakhstan
- **Distribution**
  - **Globally:** It is **native to Central Asia** and occupies regions from **Afghanistan to China**, including the **Mongolian steppes and the Gobi desert**.
  - **Smaller populations** exist in **northern Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and India**.
  - **In India:** It is found only in the **cold desert of Ladakh**, mainly in the **Nubra Valley**.
- **Key characteristics**
  - **Hump structure:** The two humps store fat that can be converted into energy during long periods of food scarcity
  - **Body adaptation:** Its nostrils can close to block dust, and its broad feet help movement on sand and snow.
  - **Cold tolerance:** It has a thick, shaggy coat that becomes dense in winter and protects it from temperatures as low as minus 40°C.
  - **Thirst survival:** It can **withstand thirst for long periods** and can survive by eating snow to meet hydration needs.
  - **Feeding habit:** It feeds on **bitter, thorny and saline plants** and is mainly **herbivorous**.
- **Historical significance**
  - The Bactrian camel was **central to Silk Road trade** and was known as the “**ship of the Silk Road**.”
  - It enabled movement of **goods, people, monks and ideas** across Central Asia and India.
  - Chinese Buddhist monks **Faxian (Fahien)** and **Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang)** travelled from China to India in caravans that **included Bactrian camels**.
- **Conservation status**
  - **IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered**

## ExoMiner++

**News:** NASA has open sourced its AI system ExoMiner++ while analysing TESS data to support transparent, collaborative, and faster global exoplanet discovery.

### About ExoMiner++



Source – Tech Times

- ExoMiner++ is a **deep learning-based artificial intelligence system** used to identify exoplanets from space mission data.
- **Developed by:** It was developed by NASA.
- **The main goals of the ExoMiner project are:**
  - Perform classification of transit signals in **Kepler and Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) data**;
  - Create vetted catalogs of **Threshold Crossing Events (TCEs)** for Kepler and TESS runs for the exoplanet community.
  - **Validate new exoplanets** using Kepler and TESS data.
- **Mechanism used:** ExoMiner++ uses **deep learning to study stellar light curves and detect small dips in brightness** caused by planetary transits.
- **Key features**
  - **Explainable AI (XAI):** The open-source system allows researchers to study, audit, and understand the model's working.
  - **False Positive Mitigation:** It distinguishes genuine planetary signals from eclipsing binary stars and astrophysical noise.
  - **Efficiency:** It flagged approximately 7,000 potential exoplanet candidates from TESS data, speeding up exoplanet discovery.
  - **Open Science:** NASA has open sourced ExoMiner++, enabling global collaboration and replication of results.

### About ExoMiner

- ExoMiner is an **open-source artificial intelligence software** designed to **analyse exoplanet data** from space missions.
- **Developed by:** It was developed by a team from **NASA's Ames Research Center in 2021**.
- The team later created ExoMiner++, trained using Kepler and TESS data.

## Humanoid Robot 'ASC ARJUN'

**News:** Indian Railways has introduced a humanoid robot named "ASC ARJUN" at Visakhapatnam Railway Station.

### About Humanoid Robot 'ASC ARJUN'



Figure 8. Source: PIB

- ASC ARJUN is a **humanoid robot, deployed at Visakhapatnam Railway Station.**
- This deployment **marks a first-of-its-kind initiative** on the Indian Railways network.
- **Developed By:** ASC ARJUN has been **fully designed and developed in Visakhapatnam** using **home-grown technology.**
- **Main Objective:** To create a safer, more secure, and passenger-friendly railway environment.
- It **works alongside RPF personnel** to support station operations, especially during peak passenger movement.
- **Features:**
  - It **assists in intrusion detection** through a **Face Recognition System (FRS), AI-based crowd monitoring, and real-time alerts** to RPF control rooms.
  - **Patrolling Capability:** It has **semi-autonomous navigation** along predefined paths with obstacle avoidance for continuous patrolling.
  - **Emergency Response:** It is **equipped with fire and smoke detection systems** to enable **timely response in emergency situations.**
  - It can **make automated public announcements in English, Hindi, and Telugu.**
  - It **also offers friendly gestures such as Namaste for passengers and salutes for RPF personnel,** along with an easy-to-use interface.

## Pygmy Hog

**News:** The population of Pygmy Hog has declined sharply due to habitat loss, grass burning, illegal grazing, and land degradation.

### About Pygmy Hog



Source: DTE

- The Pygmy Hog is the **smallest and rarest wild suid in the world.**
- **Scientific name:** *Porcula salvania*
- **Habitat:** Pygmy Hogs prefer **undisturbed patches of tall wet grassland** mixed with a wide variety of herbs, shrubs and young trees.
- **Distribution:** It is endemic to Northeast India.
  - At present, they are found only in **Assam**, mainly in **Manas and Orang National Parks.**
- **Physical Features:**
  - **Size:** They measure about **55–71 cm in length, 25 cm in height**, and weights **6.6–9.7 kg.**
  - They have **small, compact, and streamlined body** with small ears and tail.
  - They have **grayish-brown skin** with **blackish-brown bristles.**
  - They have **short legs and short false hooves**, suitable for grassland living.
  - The **snout is positioned perpendicular** to their head, and they **lacks facial warts.**
  - **They have well-developed teeth**, with upturned canines and rounded molars.
- The pygmy hog is **one of the very few mammals that build their own home, or nest, complete with a 'roof'.**
- **Nature:** They are **social animals** and **live in small family groups.**
  - They are **diurnal** and spend daylight hours foraging.
- **Ecological Role:** They are also an **indicator species** as their presence reflects the health of grassland of the region.
  - They **help to disperse seeds and aerate the soil** through their dietary and foraging habits.
- **Diet:** It is an **omnivore** and feeds on **roots, tubers, insects, rodents, and small reptiles.**
- **Threats**
  - Loss and degradation of habitat due to human settlements
  - Agricultural encroachments
  - Flood control schemes
  - Traditional forestry management practices
- **Conservation status**
  - **IUCN: Critically Endangered**
  - Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: **Schedule I**

## Madras Hedgehog

**News:** For the first time, the Tamil Nadu forest department has begun a study on Madras Hedgehog at the Theri forests.

### About Madras Hedgehog



Source: DTE

- The Madras hedgehog is a **small-sized insectivorous mammal**.
- It is also called the **bare-bellied hedgehog** or **South Indian hedgehog**.
- **Scientific name:** *Paraechinus nudiventris*
- **Habitat:** It lives in **arid and semi-arid habitats** such as grasslands, open shrublands, thorn forests, and dry deciduous forests.
  - It prefers **open natural ecosystems and avoids dense forests**.
- **Distribution:** It is **endemic to southern India**.
  - It is **found only in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala**.
- **Physical Features:**
  - **Appearance:** Its body is **covered with sharp spines** except on the face, legs, and underbelly. It has soft white fur on its belly.
  - **Defence:** When threatened, it **rolls itself into a tight ball for protection**.
  - It has a **pig-like snout** which helps it in searching for food in the soil.
  - **Length:** 14–25 cm with a short tail of 1–3 cm.
  - **Weight:** 130-315 grams
  - **Lifespan:** Five to six years
- **Nature:** It is a **nocturnal animal** and remains active mostly during the night.
  - It has a **limited home range of about two to three kilometres** and completes its life cycle within this area.
- **Diet:** It is an **omnivore** and mainly feeds on insects and soil invertebrates.
- **Ecological role:**
  - It plays an important role in **maintaining ecological balance** as both a predator and prey species.
  - It can eat up to forty insects in an hour and **helps farmers by controlling pest populations**.

- It is considered an **ecological indicator** because its population reflects the health of the **environment**.
- **Threat**
  - Habitat loss from agriculture, plantations and wind or solar infrastructure
  - Poaching
  - Road mortality.
- **Conservation status**
  - **IUCN Red List: Least Concern**

### Rojava Region

**News:** Renewed fighting between Syrian government forces and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces threatens the autonomy of the Rojava region in northeastern Syria.

#### About Rojava Region



Source – Freedom Socialist Party

- **Rojava region** (meaning “West” in Kurdish) refers to a **de facto Kurdish autonomous region in northern and northeastern Syria**.
- The region lies **along the Euphrates basin** and includes **major oil- and gas-rich areas of eastern Syria**.
- **Major Regions:** It covers parts of **Hasakah, Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, and Aleppo**, including the **Kobane region**.
- **Boundary**
  - **Türkiye** lies to the **north**.
  - **Iraq’s Kurdistan Region** lies to the **east**.
  - **Syrian government-controlled** areas lie to the **west and south**.
- **Climate:** The climate is **generally arid**, marked by hot summers and cold winters, which **supports wheat cultivation in fertile river plains**.
- **Topography:** The region is dominated by **mostly flat, arid to semi-arid plains and steppe lands**, forming part of the broader **Fertile Crescent zone**.
- **Mountains:** Although largely flat, the region includes the **Mount Abdulaziz** (also known as **Mount Kezwan**) range in the **Hasakah area**.
- **Rivers:** Rojava lies between the **Tigris River in the east** and the **Euphrates River system**, with the **Khabur River** as an important tributary supporting agriculture.

## TomTom Traffic Index 2025

**News:** As per TomTom Traffic Index 2025, Bengaluru was the second most congested city in the world in 2025.

### About TomTom Traffic Index 2025

Rank	Country	Average Congestion level (2025)
1	 Colombia	48.8%
2	 Malta	45.1%
3	 Philippines	44.6%
4	 Mauritius	37.8%
5	 India	37.4%
6	 Singapore	36.8%
7	 Mexico	36.8%
8	 Peru	36.5%
9	 Japan	34.3%
10	 Indonesia	34.4%

Figure 9. Source: tomtom

- TomTom Traffic Index is an **annual analysis of global traffic trends and commuting behavior.**

- **Released by:** TomTom, an Amsterdam-based company that offers traffic solutions

- **Benchmark:** The Index measures **congestion levels, average speeds and travel times per mile** across the global road network.

- The TomTom Traffic Index is compiled using anonymised GPS data and real driving speeds from across the world.

- **2025 edition:** TomTom Traffic Index 2025 is the **15th edition of the index.**

- **Findings related to India:**

- **India ranked as the fifth most traffic-congested country globally and second in Asia**, with commuters experiencing an **average congestion level of 37.4 per cent.**

- **Bengaluru emerged as India's most traffic-congested city**, recording an average congestion level of 74.4 per cent, thereby ranking second globally.

- During peak hours, commuters in Bengaluru took **15 minutes to travel 4.2 kilometres** and commuters **lost 168 hours per year** due to heavy traffic.

- Kolkata ranked **fourth among the world's slowest cities.**

- Pune became the **fifth most congested city globally**, overtaking Mumbai.

- **Mumbai showed slight improvement**, with time lost to congestion reducing to **126 hours per year.**

- **New Delhi ranked 23rd in the global congestion index.**

- **Other Indian cities featured in the rankings:** Jaipur, Chennai, Hyderabad, Ernakulam, and Ahmedabad.

- **Findings related to Global Congestion:**

- For the first time, TomTom calculated global congestion using driving data from over **2.2 trillion miles (3.6 trillion km)** worldwide.

- The index showed that **global congestion increased from 20% to 25%**, marking a rise of **5 percentage points.**

- Of the top 10 cities with the highest congestion in Asia, **six were from India: Bengaluru (1), Pune (2), Mumbai (6), New Delhi (7), Kolkata (9), and Jaipur (10).** Chennai ranked 11th, while Hyderabad was placed 15th in the Asia ranking.

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- **Least Congested:** U.S.A ranked 54th globally in congestion, making it one of the least congested countries.
- **Most Congested:** Colombia ranked first with nearly 50% congestion, making it the most congested country.

### PESA Rankings of States for Year 2024-25

**News:** The PESA Rankings for 2024-25 were released, showing Maharashtra first, Madhya Pradesh second and Himachal Pradesh third among PESA States.

#### About PESA Rankings of States for Year 2024-25

The performance of the States in PESA Ranking is as follows:

State	Performance
Maharashtra Madhya Pradesh Himachal Pradesh	Front Runner
Rajasthan Chhattisgarh Telangana	Performer
Andhra Pradesh Gujarat	Aspirant
Odisha Jharkhand	Beginner

Source – PIB

- The PESA Rankings of the States for 2024-25 assess how well States have implemented the PESA Act in the Fifth Schedule Areas.
- **Released by:** It is release by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**.
- **Aim:** The Rankings aim to encourage States with Fifth Schedule Areas to strengthen Gram Sabha-centered self-governance and identify areas needing focused support.
- **Measurement of performance:**
  - The performance of States was measured on mutually agreed **100-point PESA indicators** to ensure objectivity, transparency and accountability in the implementation of the PESA Act.
  - The PESA Indicators were **formally released during PESA Mahotsav on 24th December, 2025**, the day when PESA Act came into force in 1996.
- **The performance of the States in PESA Ranking (2024-25) is as follows**
  - **Front Runner category:** Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh
  - **Performers category:** Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana
  - **Aspirant category:** Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat
  - **Beginner category:** Odisha and Jharkhand

#### About Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) PESA Act

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- The act intends to **provide tribal self-rule for people** living in scheduled and tribal areas.
- To promote **local self-governance** in rural India, the **73rd constitutional amendment was made in 1992**, due to which a three-tier Panchayati Raj Institution was made into a law.
  - However, its **application to the scheduled and tribal areas under Article 243(M) was restricted.**
- After the **Bhuria Committee** recommendations in 1995, **PESA Act 1996** came into existence.
- The PESA Act conferred the **powers to Gram Sabha**, whereas **state legislature has given an advisory role** to ensure the proper functioning of Panchayats and Gram Sabhas.

### Fishing Cat

**News:** The fishing cat is in the news due to rapid wetland destruction and increasing concern over its declining population across floodplains and deltas.

#### About Fishing Cat



Source – DTE

- The fishing cat is a **medium-sized wild cat** that is strongly **adapted to wetland and aquatic environments.**
- **Scientific Name:** Its scientific name is **Prionailurus viverrinus.**
- **Habitat:** The fishing cat mainly inhabits **wetlands** such as **marshes, swamps, floodplains, mangroves, and reed-beds near rivers** and agricultural landscapes.
- **Distribution :** **In India**, its range extends from the **Indus basin** through the **Ganga river system** and **Terai region**, across the **Ganga–Brahmaputra plains and delta**, and south up to the **Mahanadi, Godavari, and Krishna basins.**
  - It is the **state animal of West Bengal** in India.
- **Key Characteristics**
  - **Behavior:** It is **nocturnal, swims** frequently, and can **dive underwater** to catch fish.
  - It has a **strong body, stocky legs, and measures** about **57–78 cm** in length.
  - **Aquatic adaptations:** It has **semi-webbed feet, a water-resistant coat, a thick tail, half-retractable claws, and ear lobules** that **block water** while diving.
  - **Diet:** It mainly feeds on **fish** and also eats **frogs, crustaceans, snakes, birds, and carcasses.**
- **Threats**

- Destruction of wetlands due to human settlement
- Agriculture drainage
- Pollution
- Wood-cutting
- Depletion of fish
- Occasional poaching
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN Red List: Endangered**
  - **CITES: Appendix II**
  - **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I**

### Hoverflies

**News:** Concern is growing over declining pollinator populations worldwide, bringing attention to the ecological importance of non-bee pollinators such as hoverflies.

#### About Hoverflies



Source – Mongabay

- Hoverflies are a diverse group and not a single insect type.
- They belong to the **Syrphidae family of Diptera**, which includes more than 6,000 species across 377 genera worldwide.
- Different hoverfly species **perform different ecological roles such as pollination, pest control, and waste recycling.**
- **Distribution:** Hoverflies are found across the globe with over 6,000 species, thriving everywhere except in extreme tundra and desert climates.
- **Key Characteristics**
  - **Appearance:** They have large globular eyes, short stubby antennae, and a rounder lower body that gives them a distinct shape.
  - **Mimicry:** They show **Batesian mimicry (where harmless insects imitate harmful ones for protection)** by resembling bees or wasps in colour, body shape, and buzzing sound.
  - **Hovering is a signature behaviour** of these flies and is linked to food searching, with males and females showing different flight patterns.
  - They thrive in meadows, peatlands, farms, forests, and densely populated urban areas, **showing high adaptability.**
  - **Harmlessness:** Hoverflies are **harmless insects and do not possess stingers.**
- **Ecological Roles**

- **Second-Line Pollinators:** Hoverflies support pollination of 551 plant species and contribute significantly after wild bees.
- **Biological Control:** Their larvae feed on pests like aphids and can remove 70–100% of pest populations.
- **Waste Recycling:** Some larvae live in stagnant water and organic waste, breaking down matter and recycling nutrients.

### Euratom

**News:** The European Union (EU) and India have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy under the India–Euratom agreement.

#### About Euratom



Figure 10. Source – Euratom

- The European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or EURATOM) is an **international organisation** created by **Treaty of Rome** signed on **25 March 1957**.
- **Entered into force:** 1st January 1958
- **Objective:** The Treaty was created to **promote research, achieve security of nuclear materials supply and to establish a system for supervising the peaceful use of nuclear materials** for all member countries.
- **Scope:** The treaty is strictly limited to **civilian (not military) uses** of nuclear energy.
- **Membership:** Six founding members: **Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands** and further it included **all members of the European Union (EU)**.
  - UK left Euratom following Brexit.
- **Purpose:** Its current role is **to establish and maintain standards for regulating civilian nuclear activities in the United Kingdom**.
  - These include **oversight of nuclear fuel supply, radioactive waste management, and cooperation** between nuclear states.
  - It also **operates a system of nuclear safeguards**, monitors and controls the distribution of fissile materials among member states.
  - It also **ensures high levels of safety, and supports international research** in nuclear fission and fusion.
- **Governed by: Commission and Council**, operating under the **jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice**.
- **Main Instruments:** Its main instruments are the **Euratom Supply Agency, and its research and nuclear safeguard activities**.
- Euratom **regulates the European civil nuclear industry**, which produces almost 30 % of energy in the EU.

## Smart and Integrated Fishing Harbour at Mayabunder

**News:** The Government of India approved the Smart and Integrated Fishing Harbour at Mayabunder under PMMSY with full central financial assistance.

### About Smart and Integrated Fishing Harbour at Mayabunder

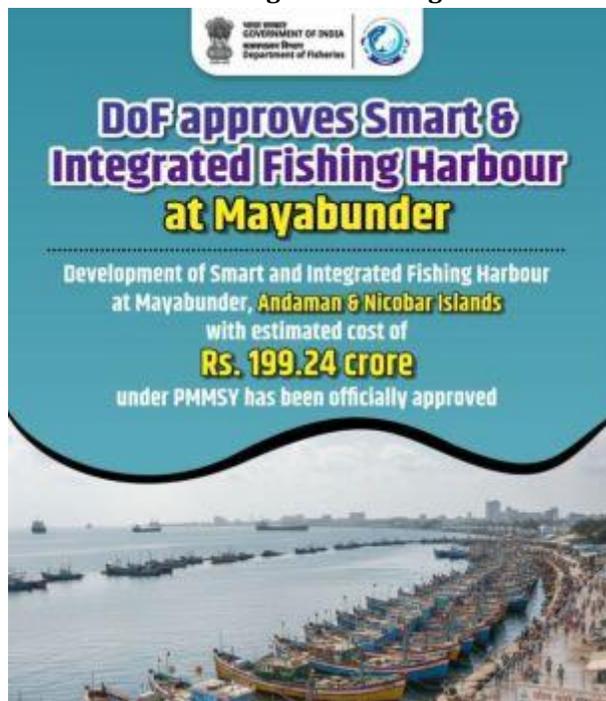


Figure 11. Source – PIB

- It is a **modern harbour project** planned to **improve fisheries infrastructure using technology and sustainable practices**.
- **Location:** It is located at **Mayabunder** in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- **Ministry involved:** The project is **implemented by the Department of Fisheries** under the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
- **Total corpus:** The total approved cost of the project is **₹199.24 crore**, with **100% Central Financial Assistance**.
- **Scheme type:** The project is **funded under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**.
- **Objective:** The project aims to **strengthen fisheries infrastructure**, promote sustainable fishing, enhance safety, and improve income and livelihoods of stakeholders.
- **Key features**
  - **Harbour facilities:** Safe landing and berthing arrangements for fishing vessels.
  - **Blue Port Initiative:** It is being developed in alignment with the **Blue Port Initiative**, focusing on sustainable and technologically advanced maritime infrastructure.
  - **Technological Integration:** The harbour will feature **IoT-enabled systems**, digital traceability, and energy-efficient infrastructure to modernize fish handling and operations.
  - **Capacity:** It will provide safe landing and berthing for **430 fishing vessels** and is designed to handle an annual fish landing of **9,900 tonnes**.

## Gita Mittal Committee

**News:** The Supreme Court extended the tenure of the all-women Gita Mittal Committee monitoring rehabilitation work in violence-affected Manipur by six months.

### About Gita Mittal Committee



Source – Live Law

- The Gita Mittal Committee is an **all-women committee of three former High Court judges** formed to **support rehabilitation in Manipur**.
- **Appointed by:** The committee was appointed by the **Supreme Court in August 2023**.
- **Role:** The committee was formed to **provide a “healing touch”** by **supervising and monitoring relief, rehabilitation, and restoration work** in violence-affected Manipur.
- It **does not conduct criminal investigations**, as investigation-related responsibilities are handled separately by the **CBI, SITs, and police officers under Supreme Court monitoring**.
- **The committee consists of three retired High Court judges:**
  - **Justice Gita Mittal (Chairperson):** Former Chief Justice of the Jammu & Kashmir High Court.
  - **Justice Shalini Phansalkar Joshi:** Retired judge of the Bombay High Court.
  - **Justice Asha Menon:** Retired judge of the Delhi High Court.
- **Its key responsibilities include**
  - **Relief and Rehabilitation:** Monitoring the conditions of relief camps and ensuring the supply of essential items.
  - **Documentation:** Overseeing the reconstruction of identity documents (like Aadhaar cards) lost by displaced persons.
  - **Compensation:** Ensuring the disbursement of compensation to victims of sexual assault and violence.
  - **Restoration:** Monitoring the restoration of homes and religious places of worship damaged during the conflict.

### **Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark**

**News:** Conservationists have launched Thailand’s first rewilding project by releasing a young Indo-Pacific leopard shark into Maiton Island.

#### **About Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark**



Source: Seattleaquarium

- Indo-Pacific leopard sharks are **slow-swimming reef sharks**.
- **Scientific name:** *Stegostoma tigrinum*
- **Habitat:** They live in **coastal waters** and can be found from the **intertidal zone to depths of about 62 metres**.
  - They **prefer water temperatures** that are **warmer than 22 degrees Celsius**.
- **Distribution:** Leopard sharks live in **tropical waters of the Indo-Pacific region**.
- **Lifespan:** 18 to 24 years in wild
- **Diet:** Leopard sharks mainly **feed on molluscs, crustaceans, and small bony fish**.
- **Physical Characteristics:**
  - It grows up to **2.5 metres** in length.
  - Appearance: It has **dark spots on a pale body**, giving a “leopard” pattern and also features **five raised ridges** along its back.
  - Juveniles are **dark with white stripes**, which is why they are sometimes called **zebra sharks**.
  - They use their stripes as **camouflage** to avoid predators.
  - The **shark’s body pattern changes as it grows older**.
  - They have whisker-like sensory organs called **barbels** on their snout. **Barbels help them locate and taste prey in the dark**.
  - They **use strong teeth to crush the shells** of mollusks and crustaceans.
- **Nature:** Indo-Pacific leopard sharks are **nocturnal** and **are active mainly at night**.
- **Threat:** **Overfishing and habitat loss** are the main causes of decline.
- **Conservation:** The species is **listed as endangered by the IUCN**.

## Arab League

**News:** External Affairs Minister (EAM) met Secretary General of the League of Arab States to discuss strengthening cooperation between India and the Arab League across a wide range of sectors.

### About Arab League



Source – Research Gate

Aspects	Description
<b>About</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>Arab League</b> is also known as the <b>League of Arab States (LAS)</b>.</li> <li>● It is a <b>regional organization</b> comprising <b>Arab states in the Middle East and parts of Africa</b>.</li> <li>● It was <b>established in Cairo on March 22, 1945</b>, in response to concerns about postwar colonial divisions and strong opposition to the establishment of a Jewish state on Palestinian territory.</li> </ul>
<b>Headquarter</b>	It's headquarters is located at <b>Cairo, Egypt</b> .
<b>Official Language</b>	It's official Language is <b>Arabic</b> .
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Its primary <b>aim</b> is to <b>promote arab interests</b>.</li> <li>● The <b>aim</b> is to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ develop both national and international strategies</li> <li>○ identify priorities for crime prevention.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Objective</b>	Its main <b>objective</b> includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Strengthen and coordinate the political, cultural, economic, and social programs</b> of member states.</li> <li>● <b>Resolve disputes</b> among member states or between them and third parties.</li> <li>● <b>Provide military support</b> to defend member states, an agreement reached in 1950.</li> </ul>

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<b>Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● It has total <b>22 members</b>.</li><li>● <b>Founding members:</b> Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen</li><li>● <b>Other members</b> include Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Kuwait, Algeria, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Mauritania, Somalia, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Djibouti, and Comoros.</li><li>● <b>Observer Status:</b> It is conferred to Brazil, Eritrea, <b>India</b>, and Venezuela.</li></ul>
<b>Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Structure:</b> The <b>highest body</b> of the League is the <b>Council</b>, consisting of <b>representatives from member states</b>, usually <b>foreign ministers</b>, their representatives, or permanent delegates.</li><li>● <b>Decision-Making:</b> Decisions are made on a <b>majority basis</b>.</li><li>● <b>Voting and Compliance:</b> Each member has <b>one vote</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Decisions</b> are <b>binding only on those states that voted for them</b>, with <b>no enforcement mechanism</b> for compliance.</li></ul></li></ul>

### PAIMANA Portal

**News:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has operationalized the PAIMANA portal to monitor central sector infrastructure projects and replace OCMS-2006.

#### About PAIMANA Portal



Source – MoSPI

- **PAIMANA (Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring & Analytics for Nation-building)** is a **web-based portal** created for mandated **monitoring of Central Sector Infrastructure Projects** worth **₹150 crore and above**.
- **Operationalized by:** The portal has been operationalised by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (**MoSPI**).
- It will **replace** the erstwhile **OCMS-2006 (Online Computerized Monitoring system)**.
- **Key Features**
  - **Integration with IPMP:** PAIMANA is integrated with DPIIT's Integrated Project Monitoring Portal through APIs to enable automatic data flow.
  - **One data, one entry principle:** The portal follows a **single data entry system**, which reduces duplication and improves consistency.

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- **Reduced manual data entry:** Around 60 % of projects are updated automatically, lowering manual reporting work.
- **Centralized national repository:** The portal functions as a **single national database of infrastructure projects**.
- **Advanced analytical tools:** It provides **web-generated analytical reports** to support better monitoring and evaluation.
- **Data quality and decision support:** Features such as **dashboards**, reporting modules, role-based access, and review cases help identify data gaps and improve informed decision-making.

### Menstrual Hygiene as a Fundamental Right

**News:** The Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgment while hearing a case on nationwide implementation of the Centre's menstrual hygiene policy for school-going girls.

#### About Menstrual Hygiene as a Fundamental Right



Source – HT

- The Supreme Court held that the **right to menstrual hygiene and access to related products** is part of the **right to life under Article 21**.
- **Case Background:** The judgment was delivered by a Bench of **Justices J. B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan** during a hearing **related to menstrual hygiene in schools**.
- **Supreme Court Observation**
  - **Article 21 (Dignity and Privacy):** The Court ruled that **dignity cannot remain an abstract idea** and must include conditions that prevent humiliation, exclusion, and avoidable suffering.
    - **Forcing girls to choose between education and menstruation violates the right to live with dignity.**
  - **Article 14 (Substantive Equality):** The SC observed that **equal treatment without addressing existing disadvantages** perpetuates inequality.

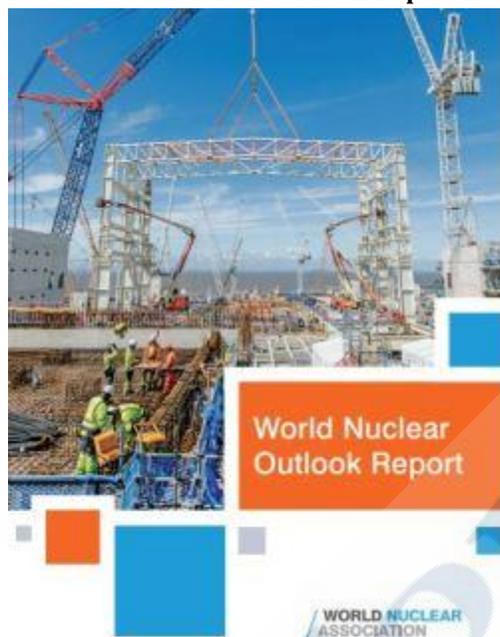
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- The absence of menstrual hygiene facilities converts a biological reality into structural exclusion.
- **Article 21A (Right to Education):** Lack of menstrual hygiene facilities acts as an **infrastructural barrier to education**.
  - Removing this barrier is necessary to make education truly free, compulsory, and accessible.

### World Nuclear Outlook Report 2025-26

**News:** The World Nuclear Association released the World Nuclear Outlook Report highlighting the possibility of global nuclear power capacity reaching 1,446 GWe by 2050.

#### About World Nuclear Outlook Report 2025-26



- It assesses future global nuclear power capacity based on existing reactors, planned projects, and government targets.
- **Published by:** It is published by **World Nuclear Association**.
- **Key Highlights**
  - **Global Capacity Projection:** Global nuclear capacity **could reach 1,446 GWe by 2050**, exceeding the 1,200 GWe target established under the **Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy**. This declaration was **announced at the COP28 meeting in Dubai in 2023**.
  - **Role of 5 Major Countries:** **China, France, India, Russia, and the United States** together may account for **nearly 980 GWe by 2050**.
  - **Reactor Lifetime Extension:** Extending reactor lifetimes to 60–80 years is highlighted as a cost-effective low-carbon electricity option.
  - **Construction Challenges:** Annual grid connections must rise to 65.3 GWe per year during 2046–2050, nearly double the historic peak.

Figure 12. Source – World Nuclear Association

- **India-Specific Outlook**
  - India is among the **five leading countries** anchoring global nuclear capacity by 2050.
  - The report expects **continued expansion of India's nuclear fleet**.
  - South Asia's outlook reflects **ongoing nuclear build-out in countries with existing programmes**, including India.
- **Recommendations of the Report**
  - Governments should **integrate nuclear power** firmly into long-term **decarbonisation and energy security plans**.
  - Support is **needed for reactor lifetime extensions** and **faster licensing and financing frameworks**.
  - Financial institutions are urged to **adopt technology-neutral** lending and ESG approaches.
  - Industry should **expand manufacturing capacity** and prepare for large-scale deployment after 2035.

## Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0

**News:** Recently, NITI Aayog has launched Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0, a 3-month national campaign to saturate key health, nutrition, education and sanitation indicators in Aspirational Districts and Blocks.

### About Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0



Source: NITI Aayog

- **Launched by:** NITI Aayog on 28 January 2026.
  - NITI Aayog will work **in collaboration with the relevant Central Ministries and Departments**, as well as **the Governments of States and Union Territories**.
- **Duration:** The campaign will run for **three months (28 January to 14 April 2026)**.
- **Aims:** It aims to achieve **saturation of critical development indicators in 112 Aspirational Districts and 513 Aspirational Blocks**.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** The programme targets **6 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** in Aspirational Blocks and **5 KPIs** in Aspirational Districts.
  - **Focus:** The KPIs focuses on improving **health, nutrition, sanitation, education, and livestock welfare** indicators.
- **Districts and Blocks are required** to prepare **3-month action plans** for achieving saturation.
- Progress will be **reviewed and monitored monthly**.
- **Awareness campaigns and behaviour change initiatives** will be conducted to increase community participation.
- District-level officers will undertake **regular field visits** for monitoring and support.

### About Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme

- **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP):** It was launched in **2018** to accelerate development in **112 underdeveloped and remote districts**.
  - It focuses on improving outcomes in **health and nutrition, education, agriculture & Water resources, financial inclusion & Skill development, and Infrastructure**
  - Progress is measured on **49 Indicators of development**.
- The **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP):** It was launched in **2023** and expanded to **513 blocks by 2025**.
  - It focuses on **health and nutrition, education, agriculture & allied services, basic infrastructure and social development**.
  - Progress is measured on **40 Indicators of development**.

**Read more:** [Sampoornata Abhiyan](#)