

# Factly Weekly

**Compilation**

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims  
Exam**

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

**May 2026**

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## Election of Secretary-General of United Nations (UN)

**News:** The election of the next United Nations Secretary-General is underway, and on April 21-22, four candidates pitched before the UN General Assembly in informal, interactive dialogues.

**About Election of Secretary-General of United Nations (UN)**



Source: UN

- **Appointed by:** The Secretary-General of United Nations (UN) is appointed by the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Security Council (UNSC).
  - In practice, the Security Council first agrees on a candidate, requiring at least nine votes and no veto from its five permanent members.
  - The General Assembly then formally appoints the candidate by a majority of Member States.
- **Process of selection:**
  - Candidates for the United Nations Secretary-General must be formally proposed by one or more Member States.
  - Each candidate presents a vision statement outlining their priorities for the role.
  - Candidates participate in interactive dialogues, which are public sessions with Member States and civil society.
  - The Security Council recommends a candidate after securing at least nine votes and no veto from any permanent member.
  - The General Assembly appoints the Secretary-General with majority support from its 193 Member States.
- **Term:** The Secretary-General is appointed for a term of five years and may be reappointed for a second term.
  - In practice, most Secretaries-General have served a maximum of two terms.
- **Rotation:** The position also rotates among different world regions: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and Latin America & the Caribbean.
  - Currently, it is the turn of Latin America and the Caribbean, where different countries may support different candidates based on regional interests.
- **Role:** The United Nations Secretary-General is the chief administrative officer who manages the UN Secretariat and carries out tasks given by major UN bodies like the General Assembly, Security Council, and Economic and Social Council.
  - The Secretary-General can also bring important global issues, especially those affecting peace and security, to the attention of the Security Council.

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- They can appoint special representatives, called Personal Envoys, to handle specific conflicts or issues.
- The Secretary-General is often called the world's "chief diplomat."
- Main candidates vying to become the United Nations Secretary-General 2026: Michelle Bachelet, Macky Sall, Rafael Grossi and Rebecca Grynspan
  - The new Secretary-General will take office on January 1, 2027.

### About United Nations (UN)

- **Formation:** The United Nations is an international organisation founded in 1945.
  - There were 51 founding member states of the United Nations in 1945.
  - India was one of the original founding members.
- **Membership:** It is currently made up of 193 Member States.
  - All UN Member States are members of the General Assembly.
  - States are admitted to membership by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.
- **Structure:** The main bodies of the UN are the [General Assembly](#), the [Security Council](#), the [Economic and Social Council](#), the Trusteeship Council, the [International Court of Justice](#), and the UN Secretariat.
  - **UN Secretariat:** The Secretariat carries out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organisation's other main bodies.
- It is dedicated to promoting peace, human rights, and social progress, enhancing the quality of life and raising living standards for individuals worldwide.

### New Bidding Regulations for HAM Projects

News: New Bidding Regulations for HAM Projects were introduced by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to prevent catastrophic failures from construction defects.

### About Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM)



Source – Constro

- Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) is a Public-Private Partnership model used mainly for road and highway projects in India, where both government and private sector participate.
- It is a mix of the EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) and BOT (build, operate, transfer) models.
- It was introduced to revive private participation after challenges in earlier models like Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT).
- Financial Structure: It is a variant of the Public-Private Partnership model, where the government pay 40% of the project cost during construction and the balance 60% as annuity payments over the operations period.
- Risk Sharing: The government bears traffic risk, while the private developer handles construction and maintenance.
- Upon the completion of the concession period, ownership of the project reverts to the government.

#### About New Bidding Regulations for HAM Projects

- These regulations introduce stricter eligibility and disqualification norms for contractors in Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM)-based highway projects.
- Introduced by: The regulations are introduced by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).
- Aim: It aims to strengthen construction quality, ensure structural integrity, and prevent catastrophic failures in national highway projects.
- Key Changes:
  - Catastrophic Failure Clause: If a bidder was involved in serious construction failures such as collapse of bridge, flyover, embankment damage, pavement failure, construction deaths, or long tunnel entrapment within the last two years, then the bidder may face disqualification or a minus 30 mark penalty.
  - Wider Applicability: This rule applies to both ongoing and completed highway projects, ensuring that past performance is considered during bidding.

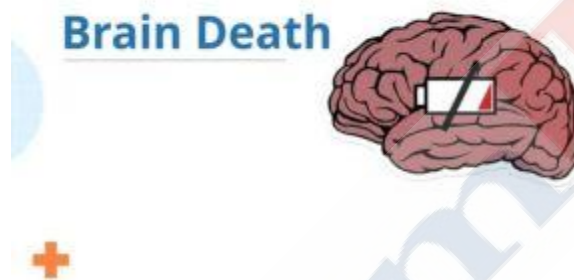
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- **Expanded Coverage:** Provisions earlier used for EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) projects are now extended to Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) contracts, with mandatory bidder declarations.
- **Significance:** It creates a preventive filter at the bidding stage to improve quality and reduce failures.

### Brain Death Certification in India & EEG and Angiogram

**News:** The Supreme Court of India is seeking expert opinion from AIIMS on using EEG and angiogram in brain death certification.

**About Brain Death Certification in India**



Source - PIMS

- **Brain Stem Death:**
  - **Definition:** Brain death or brain stem death is an irreversible condition where all brain activities, including automatic functions such as breathing, completely cease, even though the body is maintained on life support systems.
  - **Cause:** It is mainly caused by severe injuries such as road accidents and falls that cut off oxygen supply to the brain, leading to permanent loss of brain function.
  - **This condition is crucial for organ donation as organs such as heart and lungs can be donated.**
- **Legality:** Brain death certification in India is primarily governed by the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994.
- **Guided by:** The process of brain death certification is guided by the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO).
- **Protocol of Brain Death Certification:**
  - **The Medical Board:** A four-member board including hospital in-charge, neurologist or neurosurgeon, and treating physician certifies brain death.
  - **Mandatory Testing:** Doctors must identify the cause and rule out reversible conditions like drug use, hypothermia, or metabolic imbalance.
  - **The Apnea Test:** It checks if the patient can breathe independently, though it is considered subjective and not always properly videographed.
  - **Repetition:** Brain death must be confirmed at least twice with a 12-hour interval.
  - **Concerns:** Lack of training among doctors and inconsistent protocols reduce proper certification and organ donation.
- **Role of EEG and Angiogram:**

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- **EEG: Electroencephalogram (EEG)** is a test that records electrical signals in the brain using small electrodes attached to the head, and in a brain dead patient, it shows absence of any electrical activity.
- **Angiogram: Angiogram** is a test that uses contrast dyes and X-rays to examine blood flow in the brain, and in a brain dead patient, it shows that blood flow to the brain has completely stopped.

### **Pakistan's First Hangor-class Submarine**

**News:** Pakistan has inducted its first Hangor-class submarine into the navy, marking a major step in its maritime capability upgrade program.

**About Pakistan's First Hangor-class Submarine**



Source – Pak Observer

- It is Pakistan's first advanced submarine inducted under an agreement with China to modernize naval capabilities.
- **Designed by:** The submarine is based on China's Type 039A design.
- **Built under a contract:** It is built under an agreement between Pakistan and China for acquiring eight Hangor-class submarines.
- **Naming:** The name "Hangor" refers to a submarine that sank INS Khukri during the 1971 conflict.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Speed and Mobility:** It can achieve a speed of about 20 knots, which allows effective movement in operational areas.
  - **Displacement and Size:** It has an estimated surfaced displacement of about 2,800 tons and a length of around 76 meters.
  - **Crew Capacity:** It carries a crew of around 36 personnel, ensuring operational efficiency during missions.
  - **Armament capability:** It carries six 533 mm torpedo tubes capable of deploying torpedoes and anti-ship cruise missiles for multi-role missions.

- **Advanced propulsion system:** It uses diesel-electric propulsion integrated with air-independent propulsion (AIP) to extend underwater endurance beyond conventional limits.
- **Advanced Sensors:** It has advanced sensors that improve detection and surveillance capability.
- **Operational Role:** It is designed to secure vital sea lanes and protect maritime interests.

### Prosopis Juliflora and Banni Grassland

**News:** Prosopis juliflora, which is a non-native and invasive tree species, has encroached over half of Banni Grassland in Gujarat.

#### About Prosopis Juliflora

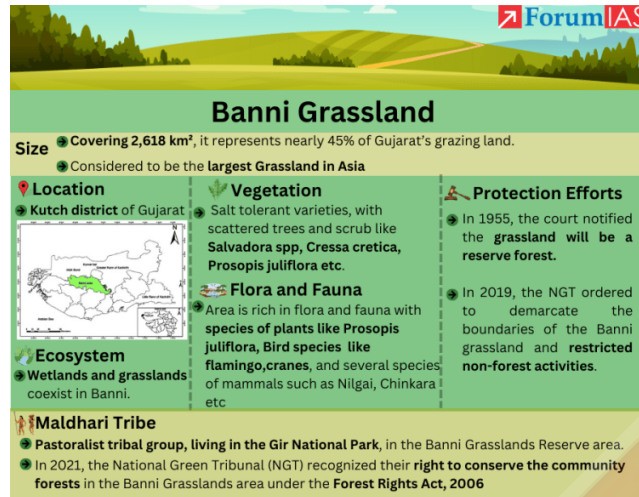


Source: India Biodiversity Portal

- Prosopis juliflora is one of the most widespread **hyperaccumulating, phreatophytic, perennial tree/shrub species.**
- **Family:** It is a member of the **Fabaceae family.**
- It is a **representative species** of the **Sonoran Desert ecosystem.**
- **Distribution:** It is a **Mexican-origin shrub.**
  - There are approximately **40 species of Prosopis distributed throughout Asia, Africa and America.**
  - The plant was **first introduced by the British in the 1920s to 'green' Delhi and by the Gujarat forest department in 1961** to halt the encroaching salt desert in the Rann.
  - It is now found in many states, including **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal** and in almost all districts of **Haryana, Gujarat and Rajasthan.**
  - It is known as **gando baval in the Kutch region, Vilayati keekar in North India and Velikathan in Tamil.**
  - Now, Maldharis local pastoral community living in the Banni Grasslands Reserve area are **dependent on widely grown Prosopis juliflora for two main reasons:**
    - Prosopis is a **major grazing option for cattle**, especially buffaloes, for the community.
    - They use **Prosopis trees to make charcoal**, which has become an important way to earn money.

- **Geographical conditions:**
  - **Soil:** It is capable of growing on **inhospitable habitats such as rocky and saline soils, under adverse climatic conditions.**
  - **Climate:** It is well adapted to warm and dry tropical climates.
  - **Rainfall:** It grows well in areas receiving 250-600 mm annual rainfall.
- **Characteristics:**
  - It is a **thorny, deciduous, large-crowned, and deep-rooted bush.**
  - **Height:** It grows up to a **height of about 10 m.**
  - **Bark:** It has a **thick, rough, grey-green bark** that becomes scaly with age.
  - **Stem:** The plants are **often multistemmed with many sharp thorns that measure up to 5 cm.**
    - The stems of it are **often “mild zigzag” in shape**, with one or two thorns present at each turn.
  - **Flower:** It **flowers twice a year**, in February-March and August-September, and is a **prolific seeder.**
  - The **regional adaptation of the species, easy dispersion, and lack of proper management** have led **P. juliflora to be considered an invasive species.**
  - This weed is to become **the feedstock for India’s first green methanol production plant**, designed to fuel ocean-going ships.
- **Threat associated with it:**
  - It is a non-native and invasive tree species, thus impacting **habitat specialist species** such as the desert fox, Houbara bustard and spiny-tailed lizard.
  - It **depletes groundwater availability, increases soil salinity, and makes the grassland more susceptible to wildfires.**
- **Prevention:**
  - **Short-term restoration:** Banni Grasslands can be **managed using a mosaic approach, where** both restored grasslands and some areas of *Prosopis juliflora* are maintained.
    - **Mechanical removal of *Prosopis*** can be used in small areas.
  - **Long-term restoration:** The **needs and livelihoods of local communities must be considered**, as many Maldharis depend on *Prosopis* for income and grazing.
    - Scientists and policymakers should **study the long-term ecological effects, such as changes in soil, water, and wildlife**, before making large-scale restoration decisions.

### About Banni Grassland



Source – Forum IAS

- **Location:** It is located in the Kutch district of Gujarat.
- It is considered to be the largest grassland in Asia.
- Click here to know more about the [Banni grassland](#)

### Padma Doree and Eri Silk

**News:** Padma Doree was formally unveiled by NEHHDC under MDoNER, showcasing a cross-cultural textile initiative through a fashion show and exhibition.

**About Padma Doree**



Source – PIB

- Padma Doree is a unique cross-cultural textile initiative that fuses Eri silk of Northeast India with Chanderi weaving of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Launched by:** It was launched by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER).
- **Executing Agency:** It is executed by the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC).
- **Objective:** The initiative aims to promote a sustainable and integrated textile ecosystem and ensure economic empowerment of local artisans while linking different regions.

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- **Key Aspects:**
  - **Fusion of Traditions:** It combines Eri (Ahimsa) silk from Northeast India with intricate Chanderi textile motifs from Madhya Pradesh to create a unique textile blend.
  - **Sustainability and Innovation:** It highlights ethical silk production and integrates traditional knowledge with modern design and innovation.
- **Significance:** It highlights the relevance of traditional crafts, indigenous knowledge systems, and sustainable luxury in contemporary markets.

**About Eri Silk**

Aspects	Description
About	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eri Silk, also known as “Peace Silk” or “Vegan Silk,” is a unique type of silk derived from the Eri silkworm (<i>Samia ricini</i>).</li> <li>● Unlike other silk production processes, Eri Silk is made without harming the moth inside the cocoon</li> </ul>
Produced by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is predominantly produced in the North-Eastern states of India, particularly Assam.</li> <li>● It is also found in Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, and other regions.</li> </ul>
Unique Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eri Silk is considered the world’s only vegan silk because the moth is not killed during the extraction process.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The moth naturally exits the cocoon, leaving it intact for silk production.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The production of Eri Silk is environmentally friendly with a focus on compassion and sustainability.</li> <li>● It is known for its softness, warmth, and durability.</li> <li>● It has a distinct texture, often compared to wool, making it versatile for various garments and textiles.</li> <li>● It is highly breathable and has excellent temperature-regulating properties, making it suitable for both warm and cool climates.</li> </ul>
Cultural Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Traditional Craftsmanship:</b> It holds deep cultural importance in Assam, where it is traditionally handwoven by skilled artisans.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is a part of the region’s rich textile heritage.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Geographical Indication (GI) Status:</b> It is a GI-tagged product of Assam, which means it is recognized for its authenticity and regional significance.</li> </ul>
Contributions to Sustainable Fashion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Oeko-Tex Certification:</b> It recently obtained the prestigious Oeko-Tex certification, which ensures that the textile is free from harmful substances and produced under environmentally friendly conditions.</li> </ul>

- **International Market Potential:** The certification enhances its credibility on the global stage, paving the way for its expansion into international markets

### Operation WHITE STRIKE

**News:** The Narcotics Control Bureau uncovered a transnational cocaine syndicate and seized 349 kg cocaine worth ₹1,745 crore under Operation WHITE STRIKE.

#### About Operation WHITE STRIKE



Source – IBG News

- Operation WHITE STRIKE is a large-scale anti-narcotics operation targeting an international cocaine trafficking syndicate operating through India's logistics networks.
- **Executing Agency:** The operation is executed by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) through intelligence-based enforcement actions.
- **Objective:**
  - To dismantle organised narcotics supply chains and disrupt transnational drug networks.
  - To implement India's zero-tolerance policy against drug trafficking through coordinated operations.
- **Key Aspect:**
  - **Coordinated Multi-Location Action:** The agency carried out linked operations in Kalamboli and Bhiwandi after sustained intelligence and surveillance for more than six months.
  - **Large-Scale Seizure Through Follow-Up:** Interrogation of one accused led to another hidden consignment, resulting in a total seizure of 349 kg cocaine.
  - **Use of Logistics and Concealment Methods:** The network used warehouse systems and concealed transport, including hiding cocaine inside machinery and packaging it in multiple layers.

### Operation 'Clawing Back'

**News:** The Himachal Pradesh Forest Department conducted raids in Rohru and arrested six persons for illegal trade of wildlife body parts.

#### About Operation 'Clawing Back'



Source - IE

- Operation 'Clawing Back' is a special operation launched to bust organised trade of wildlife body parts.
- **Launched by:** The operation was launched by the Himachal Pradesh Forest and Wildlife Department.
- **Objective:** The objective is to curb illegal trade of protected wild animal body parts and identify supply sources.
- **Legal Action:** A case was registered under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- **Key Aspects:**
  - **Coordinated Raids:** Six teams conducted simultaneous raids on six jewellery shops and seized 85 leopard claws and five canines.
  - **Illegal Trade Pattern:** Wildlife body parts were concealed in jewellery items like amulets and lockets, showing ongoing demand driven by superstition and profit motives.
  - **Forensic Examination:** Seized items will be examined at the Wildlife Institute of India to trace origins.
- **Significance:** The operation highlights strict enforcement against wildlife crime and illegal trade.

### INS Mahendragiri

**News:** INS Mahendragiri, the sixth Project 17A frigate, was delivered to the Indian Navy at Mumbai on April 30, marking a milestone.

#### About INS Mahendragiri



Source – ANI

- Mahendragiri (Yard 12654) is the sixth indigenous stealth frigate of the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) delivered to the Indian Navy.
- Construction & Delivery: It was built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai and officially delivered to the Indian Navy on April 30, 2026.
- Designed by: It was designed by the Warship Design Bureau and overseen by the Warship Overseeing Team (Mumbai).
- Naming: It is named after a prominent mountain peak in the Eastern Ghats of Odisha.
- Aim: The project aims to create versatile multi-mission platforms to address current and emerging maritime challenges while promoting Aatmanirbharta in warship building.
- Key Features:
  - Advanced Systems: It is equipped with a potent weapon system and cutting-edge sensor suite for multiple warfare roles.
  - Propulsion: It uses Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion with diesel engine and gas turbine driving Controllable Pitch Propellers.
  - Integrated Management: It has a state-of-the-art Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS).
  - Multi-role Capability: It supports anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare operations.
  - Indigenous Content: It has about 75% indigenous content, involving over 200 MSMEs and generating significant employment.
- Significance: It reflects India's growing capability in design, shipbuilding, and engineering with strong focus on self-reliance.

#### About Project 17A

- Programme Details: It consists of seven advanced stealth guided-missile frigates known as the Nilgiri-class.
- The seven ships are: INS Nilgiri, INS Himgiri, INS Udaygiri, INS Taragiri, INS Vindhyagiri, INS Mahendragiri, and a seventh unnamed ship.
- Technological Leap: It represents a quantum leap in naval design, stealth, firepower, automation, and survivability compared to earlier projects.
- Built by: It is built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), with four ships by MDL and three by GRSE.

## Key Facts about Jamaica

**News:** In a significant step towards strengthening India-Caribbean relations, India has deployed its flagship Aarogya Maitri portable healthcare infrastructure in Jamaica.

### Key Facts about Jamaica



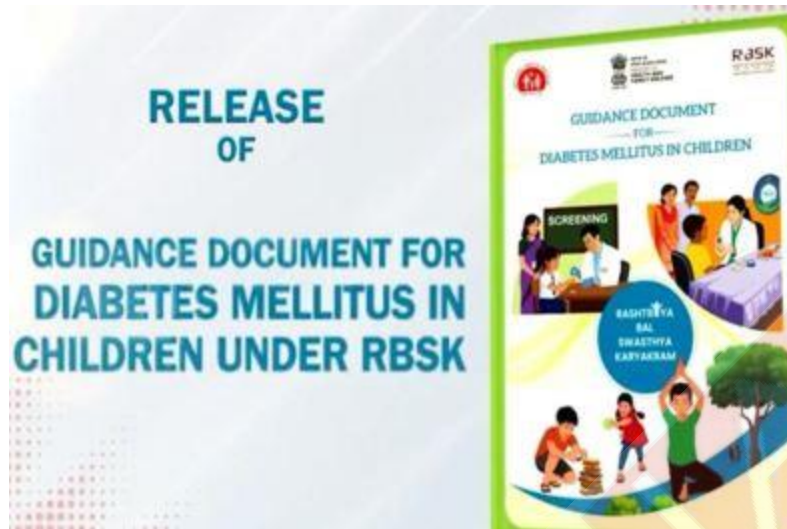
Source: World Atlas

- **Jamaica is an island country** of the West Indies.
- **Location:** It is located in the west-central Caribbean in the Greater Antilles archipelago.
- It is the **third-largest island in the Caribbean Sea**.
- **Boundaries:** It is situated to the south of Cuba; to the west of the Hispaniola Islands (Haiti & the Dominican Republic) and to the northwest of the Cayman Islands.
- **Bordering sea:** It is surrounded by the Caribbean Sea.
- **Capital:** Its national capital is Kingston.
- **Geography:** It is divided into three primary geographic regions: the Coastal Plains, the Limestone Plateau, and the Blue Mountains.
- **Highest peak:** Blue Mountain Peak is the highest point of the island.
- Many parts of Jamaica have **limestone landscapes with ridges, valleys, and sinkholes**, especially in the John Crow Mountains, Dry Harbour Mountains, and Cockpit Country.
- **Mountain ranges:** In the southwest, important mountain ranges include the Don Figueroero Mountains, Santa Cruz Mountains, and May Day Mountains.
- **River:** The Rio Minho is the longest river, about 60 miles (100 km) long. The Black River in the west and the Rio Cobre are also important rivers.
- **Climate:** It has a tropical climate, influenced by the sea and steady northeast trade winds.

## Guidance Document on Diabetes Mellitus in Children

**News:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released a national framework for childhood diabetes at the National Summit on Public Healthcare Service Delivery.

## About Guidance Document on Diabetes Mellitus in Children



Source – AIR

- It is a structured and standardized national framework for screening, diagnosis, treatment and long-term management of childhood diabetes.
- Released by: It was released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Aim: The document aims to ensure universal screening of children from birth to 18 years with early detection and timely treatment through community and school platforms.
- Key Aspects of the Guidance Document:
  - Universal Screening: It ensures screening of all children through community and school-based platforms for early identification of diabetes.
  - Testing and Referral System: Suspected cases undergo immediate blood glucose testing and are referred to district-level facilities for confirmation and treatment.
  - Free Comprehensive Care Package: It provides free screening, diagnostics, lifelong insulin therapy, glucometers, test strips and follow-up care at public health facilities.
  - Integration with RBSK 2.0: The framework is integrated into Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK 2.0), which expands screening to include non-communicable diseases like diabetes and ensures a continuum of preventive, promotive and curative care.
  - Integrated Continuum of Care: It links community screening with district hospitals and medical colleges to ensure continuous and seamless care.
  - 4Ts Awareness Framework: It promotes Toilet, Thirsty, Tired and Thinner signs to support early detection of Type 1 Diabetes.
  - Family and Caregiver Training: It includes structured training on insulin use, glucose monitoring, emergency response and daily disease management.
- Significance: It will reduce mortality, prevent complications and improve quality of life while strengthening public health capacity for managing childhood non-communicable diseases.

## United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT)

**News:** The United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT) raised serious concerns over Pakistan's mass deportation of Afghan refugees under the 2023 Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan, citing lack of individual protection assessments and risks of refoulement.

### About United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT)



Source: National Campaign Against Torture

- It is the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by its States parties.
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland, operating under the [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#).
- Composition: The CAT is composed of 10 independent experts serving in their personal capacity, and not as representatives of a State.
  - Eligibility: They must have high moral standing and recognised competence in the field of human rights.
  - Membership: The States determine committee membership.
  - Term: Each member is nominated by a State Party to the Convention and elected by States Parties for a four-year term.
    - They may be re-elected if re-nominated.
    - Equitable geographical distribution and the usefulness of the participation of some persons having legal experience have to be taken into account.
- How the committee works:
  - All States parties are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights are being implemented.
  - States must report initially one year after acceding to the Convention and then every four years.
  - The Committee examines each report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the State party in the form of "concluding observations".
  - In addition to the reporting procedure, the Convention provides three other mechanisms through which the Committee carries out its monitoring functions:
    - It can consider individual complaints from persons alleging violations of their rights.
    - It can undertake inquiries.
    - It can consider inter-state complaints.

## Factly Compilation [First Week] May 2026

- **Session:** It meets three times per year in Geneva. Each session lasts two to four weeks.
- **Functions:** The Committee against Torture (CAT) monitors State compliance with the Convention through five key functions.
  - Under State Reporting (Article 19), each State must submit a report within one year of joining the Convention and then every four years.
  - Under the Inquiry Procedure (Article 20), the Committee can conduct a confidential inquiry if there is reliable information that torture is being systematically practised in a State.
    - However, this inquiry cannot happen if the State has not accepted the Committee's authority under Article 20.
  - Under Inter-State Communications (Article 21), one State can complain against another State for not following the Convention, but only if both States accept this system.
    - So far, no such complaint has been made.
  - Under Individual Communications (Article 22), individuals can file complaints if their rights under the Convention are violated, provided the State has accepted this procedure.
  - Through General Comments, the Committee explains the meaning and scope of the Convention's provisions.

### About Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the "Torture Convention") was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1984.
- The Convention entered into force in 1987.
- **Membership:** It currently has 154 States as signatories.
  - India has been a signatory to it since 1997, but India has not ratified it.
- **Definition of Torture:** Article 1 of the Convention defines torture as the deliberate infliction of severe physical or mental pain for purposes such as obtaining information, punishment, or intimidation, with the involvement or consent of a public official.
- **Universal Jurisdiction:** Article 5 requires States to either prosecute or extradite persons accused of torture, regardless of where the crime was committed or the nationality of the offender.
- It is to ensure protection for all individuals from torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.

### Exercise CINBAX-II 2026

**News:** The Indian Army contingent departed for the second edition of India - Cambodia Bilateral Military Exercise CINBAX-II 2026.

### About Exercise CINBAX-II 2026



Source: PIB

- **It is conducted between the Indian Army and the Cambodian Army.**
- **First edition:** Its first edition was conducted in 2024.
- **Present edition:** The present edition is the second edition of the exercise.
- **Scheduled at:** It is scheduled to be conducted at Techo Sen Phnom Thom Mreas Prov Royal Cambodian Air Force Training Centre (Camp Basil), Kampong Speu Province, Kingdom of Cambodia.
- **Duration:** It is to be conducted from 04 to 17 May 2026.
- **Objective:** Its primary objective is to enhance interoperability, coordination and operational synergy between the contingents of both nations.
- **Broad Framework:** It will be conducted under the framework of Chapter VII of the UN Mandate, showcasing company-level joint training for the conduct of operations in a sub-conventional environment.
- **Participants:**
  - **Indian Army contingent:** It comprises 120 personnel, mainly from a Battalion of the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment.
  - **Cambodian contingent:** It comprises 160 personnel from the Royal Cambodian Army.
- **Features:**
  - It will be aligned with the current dynamics of Counter-Terrorism operations encountered by the peacekeeping forces during the UN peacekeeping operation.
  - A series of practical, in-depth discussions and tactical exercises will be carried out, culminating in a comprehensive validation exercise.
  - Special skill training, including that of Drone operations, mortar, and sniper tactics, will be practised as part of the exercise.
  - It will showcase the capability of both nations towards maintaining global peace.
  - It will also facilitate in exchanging best practices and sharing of operational experiences gained during various operations against hostile forces in Semi-Urban environment.
- **Significance:** It reflects the growing Defence Co-operation between India – Cambodia and will further enhance the bilateral relations between the two nations.

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### India's First Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) Barrier-less Tolling System

**News:** Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari announced the launch of India's first Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) barrier-less tolling system at the Chorayasi Toll Plaza on the Surat-Bharuch section of NH-48 in Gujarat.

#### About India's First Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) Barrier-less Tolling System

- **Initiated at:** It has been initiated at the Chorayasi Toll Plaza on the Surat-Bharuch section of NH-48 in Gujarat.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It has been initiated by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- **Developed by:** It has been developed by ICICI Bank under an agreement with the Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCL).
- **Operating agency:** It is operationalized by the [National Highway Authority of India \(NHAI\)](#).
- **How it works:**
  - This advanced system relies on high-performance Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) readers and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras.
  - These technologies work together to read FASTag details and vehicle registration numbers (VRN) even at high speeds, unlike earlier systems that functioned effectively only at speeds of 10-12 km/h.
- **Implementation measures:** To support the rollout of MLFF, several policy and regulatory measures were introduced:
  - Mandating High Security Registration Plates (HSRP) to ensure accurate number plate reading.
  - Implementing the "One Vehicle, One FASTag" rule to prevent misuse.
  - Vehicles that pass without payment must pay double the toll unless the fee is cleared within 72 hours.
  - A grievance redressal mechanism has also been established.
- **Benefits:** MLFF is expected to significantly reduce travel time, ease congestion at toll plazas, improve fuel efficiency, and lower vehicular emissions.

### Fugitive Economic Offenders

**News:** The Enforcement Directorate reported declaring 21 individuals as fugitive economic offenders and initiating proceedings against 54 persons under the law.

#### About Fugitive Economic Offenders



Source – IE

- A fugitive economic offender is a person against whom a warrant for a scheduled offence of ₹100 crore or more is issued and who avoids returning to India.
- **Legality:** The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 provides the legal framework to declare fugitive economic offenders.
- **Special Court:** A Special Court designated under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002 examines such cases and declares individuals as offenders.
- **Key Aspects:**
  - **Threshold:** An offender must face a warrant for offences involving ₹100 crore or more and must have fled India or refused to return.
  - **Application Process:** A director or deputy director files an application with reasons, property details, whereabouts, and list of interested persons before a special court.
  - **Court Proceedings:** The court issues notice for appearance, and failure to appear leads to declaration as a fugitive economic offender after due hearing.
  - **Property Confiscation:** Authorities can attach and confiscate proceeds of crime, benami properties, and other assets in India or abroad, including provisional attachment for 180 days.
  - **Legal Consequences:** Declared offenders and related entities may be barred from filing or defending civil claims, and appeals lie before the High Court.

**Girmitiyas**

**News:** India's External Affairs Minister is visiting Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, highlighting their special connection through Girmitiya communities.

**About Girmitiyas**



Source – Girmitdotorg

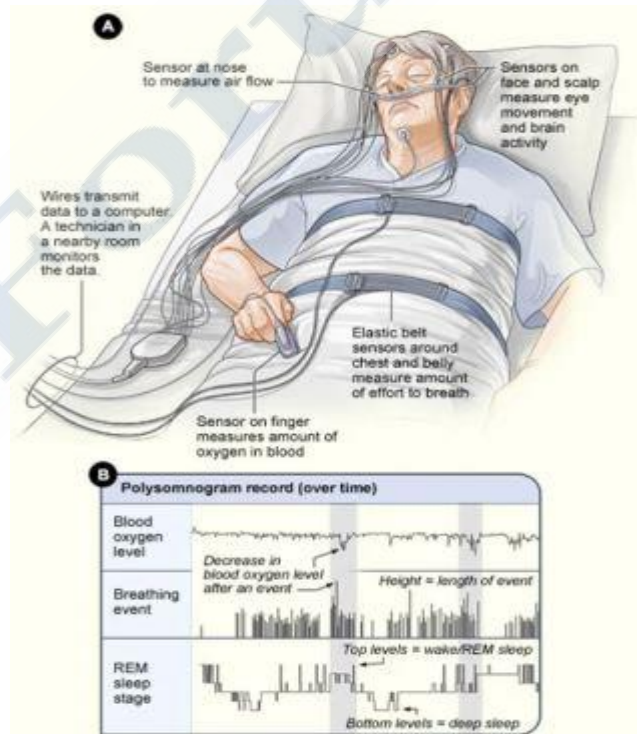
- Girmitiyas were Indian indentured labourers who migrated to British colonies in the mid to late nineteenth century for work.

- **Timeline:** Girmityas migrated mainly after the British Slavery Abolition Act 1833, which created labour shortages in colonies.
- **Origin of Term:** The term “Girmit” is a mispronunciation of “Agreement,” which described the labour contracts signed with the British Government.
- **Naming:** Girmityas were also called Jahazis or Jahajis, referring to their shared journey by ship to foreign lands.
- **Source Regions:** Most Girmityas came from eastern United Provinces and Bihar due to poverty, unemployment, and poor agricultural conditions.
- **Major Destinations:** They were sent to plantations in Fiji, South Africa, Mauritius, and Caribbean regions like Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, and Jamaica.
- **Key Aspects:**
  - **Migration Conditions:** Labourers migrated due to economic hardship but faced poverty, lack of resources, low wages, and poor living conditions after arrival.
  - **Cultural Continuity:** They preserved traditions through festivals like Diwali, Ramleela, and Hosay, and maintained folk music and instruments like dholak and harmonium.
  - **Language and Identity:** Languages such as Hindi, Bhojpuri, and Awadhi remained widely spoken in places like Mauritius, Fiji, and Suriname.

### Apnoea Test

**News:** The Supreme Court of India observed that a plea raised concerns that the apnoea test may not conclusively determine brain death.

#### About Apnoea Test



Source – CPAP

- The apnoea test is considered an essential clinical test for determining brain death by assessing loss of brainstem function.
- Aim: The aim is to confirm the absence of brainstem function by observing breathing response when carbon dioxide level rises.
- Indicators: Absence of breathing effort at a carbon dioxide level of about 60 mmHg or a 20 mmHg rise from baseline supports brain death, while any breathing effort rules it out.
- Key aspects:
  - Essential yet difficult test: It is considered a necessary condition for brain death, but it is difficult, lengthy, and may cause complications.
  - Prerequisites before test: The test requires stable conditions such as normal body temperature, proper oxygen level, normal carbon dioxide level, stable blood pressure, and absence of drugs affecting respiration.
  - Procedure and threshold: The test is considered positive when no breathing effort is seen at a carbon dioxide level of about 60 mmHg or a 20 mmHg rise from baseline.
  - Monitoring and Stopping Conditions: The test must be stopped if blood pressure falls below 90 mmHg, oxygen levels drop significantly, or cardiac arrhythmia occurs.
  - Complications and Risks: The test may cause hypotension, hypoxia, acidosis, pneumothorax, and cardiac complications, which may force stopping the test and affect diagnosis.

### Mission Drishti- World's First OptoSAR Satellite

News: Indian space start-up GalaxEye has launched Mission Drishti, which is the world's first OptoSAR satellite.

About Mission Drishti- World's First OptoSAR Satellite



Source: Galaxeye

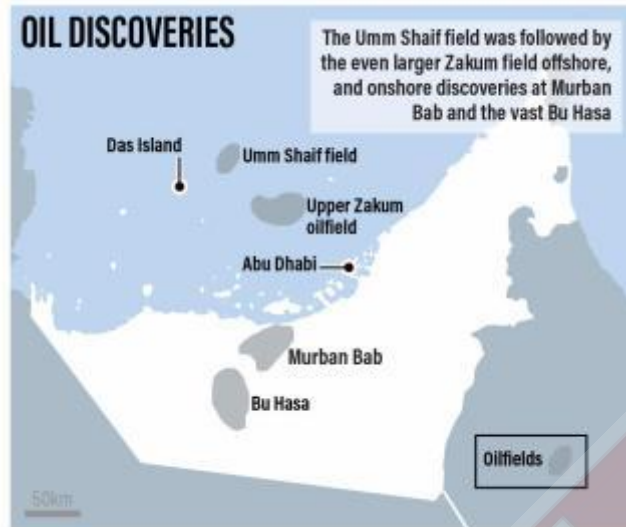
- GalaxEye has launched [Mission Drishti](#), the world's first OptoSAR satellite, using the Falcon 9 rocket from California, U.S.A.

- **OptoSAR satellite:** It is a modern satellite imaging system that combines optical cameras and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) in one satellite.
- It is designed to overcome the limitations of using only one type of imaging technology.
- **How it works:**
  - **Optical cameras:** They capture images like a regular digital camera.
    - They provide clear, detailed, and colourful pictures of the Earth.
    - However, they cannot work properly during cloudy weather, heavy smoke, or at night.
  - **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR):** It uses radar signals to create images of the Earth's surface. It can work in all weather conditions, including clouds and rain, and it can also capture images at night.
    - However, SAR images are usually black and white and can be difficult to understand.
  - **OptoSAR technology** combines the advantages of both systems.
  - It can capture clear and detailed images like optical cameras while also working in poor weather and darkness like SAR.
- **Uses:** This technology helps scientists, researchers, and governments get more accurate and useful information about the Earth.
  - It is especially helpful for monitoring natural disasters, agriculture, forests, and environmental changes.
- **Significance for India:**
  - It can enable continuous border surveillance, uninterrupted crop tracking during monsoons and more reliable monitoring of large-scale projects.
  - It will help in farming, disaster response, coastline monitoring, and infrastructure planning, supporting both civilian and strategic needs.

### **Das Island, Tuapse Region and Primorsk port**

**News:** Ukraine intensified long-range strikes on Russian energy infrastructure including hits on Primorsk and Tuapse region. Also, LNG carrier Umm Al Ashtan resumed movement from Dahej toward Das Island via the Strait of Hormuz, signaling improving stability in the region.

**About Das Island**



Source: The National

- Das Island is an island of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) located in the [Persian Gulf](#).
- Size: It covers approximately 1.21 km.
- It is a strategic hub for oil and gas production in the UAE.
- It exports crude oil and liquefied natural gas by tankers to far-off nations like Japan, Europe, etc.
- It was formerly a noted breeding site for turtles and seabirds and has remained an important landfall for migrant birds.

#### About Tuapse Region

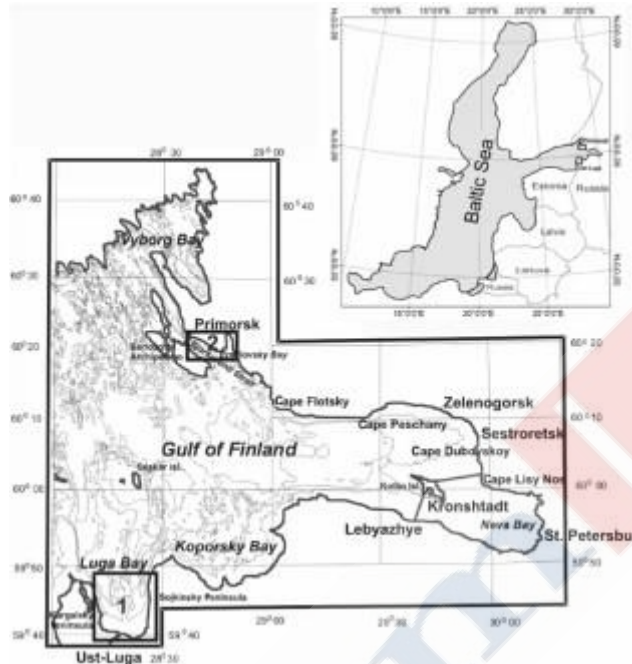


Source: Britannica

- The Tuapse Region is a coastal area in Krasnodar Krai, Russia.
- It is located on the northeast Black Sea shore, south of Gelendzhik and north of Sochi.

- It has the Tuapse Refinery, which is one of the oldest and only Russian refineries located on the Black Sea coast.

#### About Primorsk Port



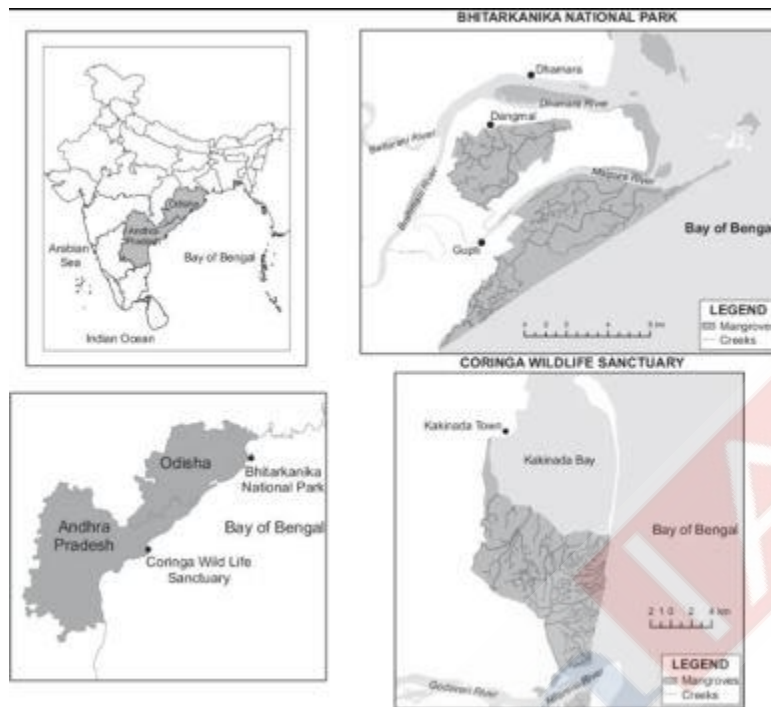
Source: Research Gate

- Primorsk Port is a major Russian oil export port.
- It is located on the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland in the [Baltic Sea](#)
- It is one of Russia's key terminals for exporting crude oil and petroleum products to Europe.

#### Bhitarkanika National Park and Microplastics

News: A new study found microplastics with heavy metals in sediments at all 20 sampled sites within and around Bhitarkanika sanctuary.

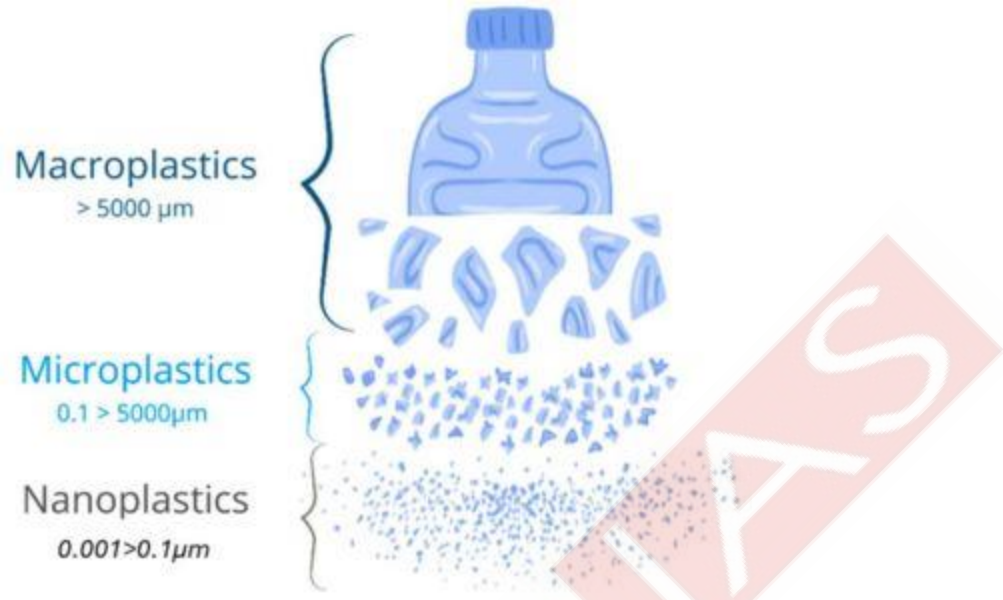
#### About Bhitarkanika National Park



Source – ResearchGate

- **Location:** Bhitarkanika National Park is located in the Kendrapara district of Odisha.
- **Surrounded by:** The park is surrounded by the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, while Gahirmatha Beach and Marine Sanctuary lie to the east near the Bay of Bengal.
- **Mangrove Ecosystem:** Bhitarkanika is India's second-largest mangrove ecosystem after the Sunderbans and spreads across 672 sq. km.
- **River Network:** The park is formed on the delta of the Brahmani, Baitarani, and Dhamra rivers and contains creeks, canals, estuaries, backwaters, and mudflats.
- **Intertidal Ecosystem:** The vegetation and species of the park are mainly found in tropical and subtropical intertidal regions, while proximity to the Bay of Bengal makes the soil saline.
- **Fauna:**
  - **Saltwater Crocodiles:** The park supports the largest congregation of endangered saltwater crocodiles in India.
  - **Olive Ridley Turtles:** Gahirmatha Beach near the park supports the largest colony of Olive Ridley Sea Turtles.
  - **Unique Bird Habitat:** The Bagagahana heronry near Surajpore creek attracts thousands of birds for nesting and is an important ecological feature of the park.
- **Flora:** Bhitarkanika features more than 60 mangrove species, including Avicennia and Sundari, along with casuarinas and grasses such as the indigo bush.
- **Conservation Status:** Bhitarkanika is recognised as a Wildlife Sanctuary, National Park, and Ramsar Site because of its rich mangrove ecosystem and biodiversity.

#### About Microplastics



Source - MDPI

- **Microplastics** are plastic particles smaller than 5 millimetres that persist in nature and accumulate in ecosystems.
- **Types of Microplastics:**
  - **Primary Microplastics:** These are intentionally manufactured small particles used in cosmetics, synthetic textiles, fishing nets, and commercial products.
  - **Secondary Microplastics:** These are formed from the breakdown of larger plastic items like bottles due to sunlight, ocean waves, and mechanical forces.
- **Applications:**
  - **Medical and Pharmaceutical:** Microplastics are used in drug delivery systems because they can absorb and release chemicals effectively.
  - **Industrial:** They are used in air-blasting technology and synthetic textile production.
  - **Personal Care Products:** They are present in facial scrubs, toothpaste, and cosmetics.
- **Impacts of Microplastics:**
  - **Environmental Impact:** Microplastics reduce soil quality, disturb nutrient cycles, accumulate in rivers and oceans, and carry toxic pollutants.
  - **Bioaccumulation:** Microplastics are ingested by marine organisms and gradually accumulate through the food chain, affecting higher predators.
  - **Impact on Animals:** They cause reduced fertility, stunted growth, and cell damage in aquatic and terrestrial organisms.
  - **Human Health Impact:** Microplastics are linked with inflammation, oxidative stress, DNA damage, and accumulation in organs like the brain, lungs, and heart.
- **India's Regulations:**
  - **Plastic Waste Management Rules:** India introduced Plastic Waste Management Rules in 2016, 2018, 2024 and 2026 to manage plastic waste.
  - **Ban on Single-Use Plastics:** India banned items such as plastic straws and cutlery to reduce plastic pollution.

- India Plastics Pact: It encourages industries to reduce plastic use and improve recycling practices.
- Global Actions:
  - UNEA (UN Environment Assembly) Resolution: It mandated the creation of the Global Plastics Treaty to address plastic pollution, including microplastics.
  - International Cooperation: Plastic pollution is also addressed through UN Ocean Conferences, WTO discussions, and the Basel Conventions.

### **Increasing the Judge Strength of the Supreme Court of India**

**News:** The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, approved the proposal to introduce the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, in Parliament, increasing the Judge Strength of the Supreme Court of India.

**About Increasing the Judge Strength of the Supreme Court of India**



Source: Bar & Bench

- The government has recently approved the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956.
  - It will increase the strength from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India.
- The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956, was enacted under Article 124(1) of the Indian Constitution, which empowers Parliament to increase the number of judges.
- Past amendments: The Act has been amended several times to increase the maximum number of judges in the Supreme Court.
  - The strength was increased to 13 in 1960, to 17 in 1977, to 25 in 1986, to 30 in 2008, and to 33 in 2019.
- Constitutional Provision:
  - Article 124 (1): It states that there shall be a Supreme Court consisting of the Chief Justice of India and other judges, with the number of judges decided by Parliament through law.

- Article 124 (2): It states that the President appoints Supreme Court judges by warrant under their hand and seal, following consultation with designated Supreme Court and High Court judges.

### Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0

**News:** The Union Cabinet approved Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0 to support businesses facing liquidity stress due to the West Asia crisis.

**About Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0**



Source – PIB

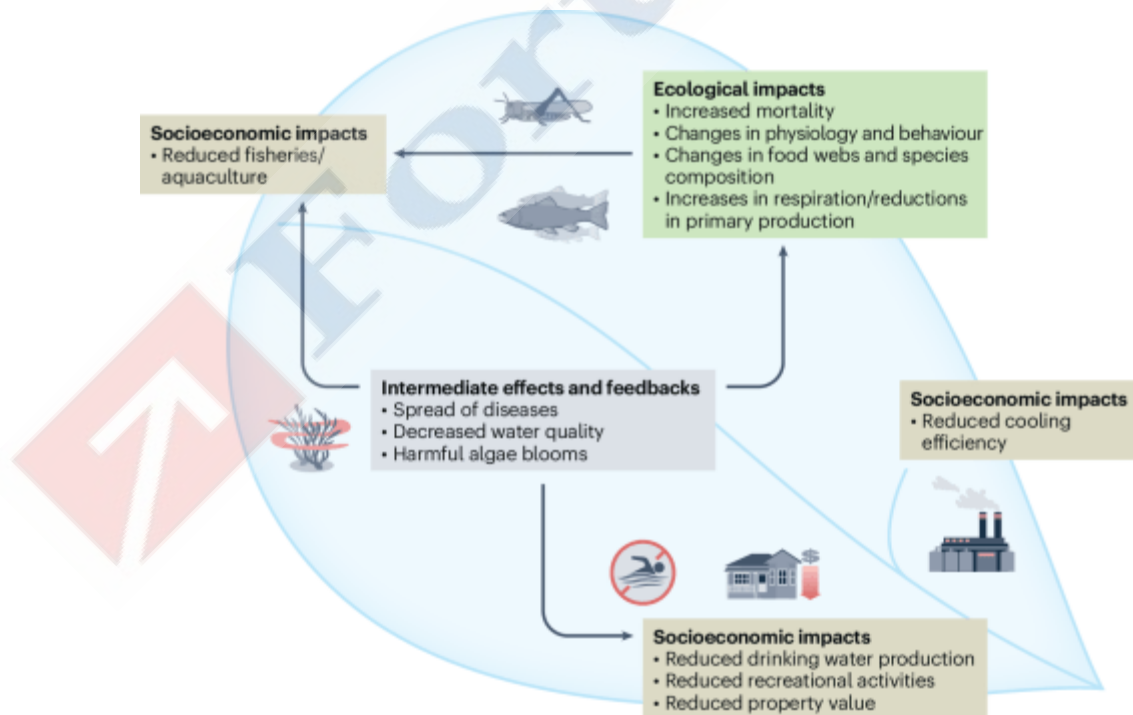
- **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0 provides government-backed additional credit support to eligible businesses facing temporary liquidity stress.**
- **Commencement of the Scheme:** The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme was first commenced on 23.05.2020 to help businesses facing liquidity stress during Covid-19 restrictions.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The scheme is sponsored by the Department of Financial Services under the Ministry of Finance.
- **Nodal Agency:** The National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) acts as the nodal agency for providing guarantee coverage under the scheme.
- **Aim:** The scheme aims to provide guaranteed collateral free loans to eligible businesses to help them manage short-term liquidity mismatches arising from the West Asia crisis.
- **Key Features of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0:**

- **Eligible Borrowers:** MSMEs, non-MSMEs, and scheduled passenger airlines with standard accounts and existing working capital limits or outstanding credit facilities as on March 31, 2026 are eligible under the scheme.
- **Guarantee Coverage:** The scheme provides 100% guarantee coverage for MSMEs and 90% guarantee coverage for non-MSMEs and the airline sector through Member Lending Institutions.
- **Guarantee Fee:** The scheme provides guarantee coverage without charging any guarantee fee.
- **Quantum of Support:** Eligible borrowers can receive additional credit up to 20% of peak working capital utilized during Q4 FY26, capped at Rs.100 crore. Airlines can receive support up to 100% of outstanding credit facilities, capped at Rs.1,500 crore per borrower.
- **Loan Tenor:** Loans for MSMEs and non-MSMEs will have a 5-year tenor with a 1-year moratorium, while airline sector loans will have a 7-year tenor with a 2-year moratorium.
- **Duration and Guarantee Cover:** The scheme will remain applicable for loans sanctioned up to 31.03.2027, and the guarantee cover period will remain co-terminus with the loan tenor.

### Riverine Heatwaves

**News:** Several studies have highlighted the increase in intensity and frequency of riverine heatwaves across rivers globally.

#### About Riverine Heatwaves



Source: Nature Water

- **Definition:** Riverine heatwaves are defined as periods where daily mean river water temperatures exceed the 90th percentile threshold of the locally defined and seasonally varying river temperatures, for at least five consecutive days.
  - An increase in temperatures for a shorter duration is considered a heat spike.
- **Causes:** Riverine heatwaves are mainly caused by rising air temperatures due to climate change, along with reduced snowmelt, low streamflow, and shrinking river water levels.
  - Human activities such as dams, hydropower projects, wastewater discharge by other water bodies, industrial effluents, and changes in riverbank vegetation also contribute to increasing river water temperatures.
- **Status of Riverine heatwaves:** It has been observed that between 1976 and 2005, rivers globally experienced, on average, 2.19 heatwave events per year.
  - The intensity has increased over time at a rate of 0.02°C per decade.
  - The duration of riverine heatwaves has increased to 0.09 weeks per decade.
  - Under the high climate emissions scenario, projections reveal a 95-fold increase in the duration of riverine heatwaves by the end of the 21st century.
  - **Status in the context of India:** The study also predicts that in India, more than 50% of the Ganges will experience year-round heatwaves under the high emissions scenario by the 2090s.
    - **Impact:** It will cause widespread damage to the ecosystem, and the population's exposure to heatwaves in the Ganges (impacts on drinking water, agriculture, and fisheries) will also be the highest in the world.
- **Overall impact:** Riverine heatwaves can negatively affect river ecosystems and the organisms dependent on them:
  - The heat stress to the riverine floral and faunal species can affect reproduction rates, reduce migration, and alter food webs.
    - **Example:** Studies on the Indian freshwater fish, Magur (*Clarias magur*), showed that the species displays compromised immune responses along with severe tissue and physiological damage when exposed to extreme heat stress.
    - In rohu (*Labeo rohita*), even short heat spikes cause changes in the production of proteins involved in energy metabolism and immune system regulation.
  - **Threat to vulnerable species:** Riverine heatwaves also add undue pressure on endemic and endangered species that have narrow thermal tolerances, and benefit invasive species that tolerate broader temperature ranges
  - **Indirect Impact:** Global reports also reveal that riverine heatwaves can have indirect effects, such as promoting the spread of pathogens and reducing the overall quality of river water.
    - Changes in river temperature can affect processes such as decomposition of leaf litter, carbon processing, and carbon storage, which may further impact aquatic insects, crustaceans, fish, and aquatic mammals.
- **Prevention:**
  - **Restoration approach:** There is a need to move beyond local-scale interventions and adopt restoration approaches that consider the entire river catchment.
    - Extreme events occurring in headwater regions can affect the entire river network, with ecological and biological impacts spreading downstream, making catchment-level restoration essential.

- **Rehabilitating and maintaining riparian forest cover:** Riparian vegetation provides shade that reduces the heating of water and also stabilises riverbanks, improving aquatic habitat.
  - However, care must be taken in selecting appropriate species and planting locations. he adds.
- **Proper operation of reservoirs:** There is a need to maintain sufficient flow in rivers by operating reservoirs appropriately for hydropower, drinking, and irrigation water demands.
- **Locate and protect thermal refuges:** There is also a need to locate and protect thermal refuges in riverine systems. It would require some basic on-the-ground monitoring, where one would explore the riverine network for natural cold-water refuges.

### **Viability Plan 2.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)**

**News:** The Department of Financial Services approved Viability Plan 2.0 to strengthen financial stability and improve operational efficiency in Regional Rural Banks.

**About Viability Plan 2.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)**



Source - ET

- **Viability Plan 2.0:** It is a revised three-year framework to improve financial sustainability and long-term competitiveness of RRBs.
- **Implementing Ministry:** Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Ministry of Finance
- **Duration:** It will be implemented for three years from 2025-26 to 2027-28.
  - The earlier plan covered the period from FY2021-22 to FY2024-25.
- **Aim:** The plan aims to enhance financial sustainability, improve operational efficiency, strengthen governance reforms, and ensure long-term competitiveness of RRBs.
- **Viability Plan 1.0:** The Viability Plan 1.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) was a 3-year board-approved framework initiated in FY 2022-23.
  - It was aimed at ensuring sustainable viability, it focused on credit expansion, NPA reduction, digital adoption, and cost rationalization, following recapitalization assistance.
- **Key Features of Viability Plan 2.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs):**
  - **Performance Parameters:** The plan includes 30 performance parameters to monitor and improve the functioning of RRBs.
  - **Four Key Pillars:** The framework is based on four major pillars -

- operational excellence, asset quality, profitability, and growth.
- **Critical metrics:** The plan uses important indicators such as Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR), credit-deposit ratio, digital adoption, Non-Performing Asset (NPA) levels, recovery performance, and profitability ratios to assess the performance of Regional Rural Banks.
- **Comprehensive Monitoring Framework:** The plan provides a balanced framework to assess and monitor the overall health and efficiency of all 28 RRBs.
- **Scheme Monitoring:** The framework evaluates the performance of RRBs in implementing Central Government schemes.

### International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026

**News:** Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the website and logo for the 1st International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026, in New Delhi.

#### About International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026



Source – PIB

- India will host the first [International Big Cat Alliance \(IBCA\)](#) Summit on 1st–2nd June 2026 in New Delhi.
- **Focus:** The Summit will be focusing on conserving seven major big cat species.
- **IBCA:** It was launched in 2023 and is a the treaty-based inter-governmental alliance includes 95 range countries, aiming to protect tigers, lions, leopards, snow leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, and pumas.
- **Key details about the 2026 summit:**
  - **Theme:** “Save Big Cats, Save Humanity, Save Ecosystem”.
  - **IBCA Summit Logo:** The logo features the seven big cat species at its core, symbolizing unity and shared responsibility and is encircled by a lotus-inspired design representing the five elements of nature.
    - The Logo captures the spirit of the initiative, reflecting harmony, balance and interconnected ecosystems.
- **Key Agenda:** Adoption of the inaugural “Delhi Declaration,” which aims to establish a shared framework for global big cat conservation and enhance transboundary cooperation.
- **Participants:** Expected to include Heads of State, government officials, and over 400 global experts, scientists, and stakeholders.

To know more about the [International Big Cat Alliance \(IBCA\)](#), [Click here](#).

### What happens if a Chief Minister refuses to relinquish office after electoral defeat?

**News:** After the Trinamool Congress lost the West Bengal elections to the BJP, Mamata Banerjee said that she would not resign as Chief Minister, alleging that the election result was due to a “conspiracy” and misuse of central forces by the BJP.

What happens if a Chief Minister refuses to relinquish office after electoral defeat?



Source - The Sunday Guardian

- If a Chief Minister refuses to step down voluntarily, the Governor has the authority to intervene under Article 164 of the Constitution of India.
- Article 164(1): It provides that the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Governor and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister, and the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor.
- In practice, this means that if the Chief Minister clearly lacks majority support, the Governor can take the call.
- Provision of floor test: The Governor may then invite the leader of the majority party or coalition to form a new government or ask a claimant to prove their majority through a [floor test](#) in the Assembly.
- President's Rule: If no party or coalition can form a stable government, then President's Rule under Article 356 may be imposed as a last resort.
- Article 172: Another relevant provision is Article 172 of the Constitution of India, which sets the five-year term of a Legislative Assembly unless dissolved earlier.
- This defines the lifespan of the Assembly, but it does not protect a Chief Minister who has lost majority support within that period.
- Note: [Section 100 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951](#) enumerates the grounds on which the election of a candidate may be challenged and declared void.

**Supreme Court's Interpretation in the Case**

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- The Supreme Court has also interpreted the Governor's powers as flowing primarily from the "aid and advice" of the Council of Ministers.
- In *A.G. Perarivalan v. State Through Superintendent of Police (2022)*, Supreme Court observed that the "Governor" is a shorthand expression for the State government.
- Recognizing the Governor as "the formal head and sole repository of the executive power", the court held that the office is ordinarily bound by the aid and advice of the State's Council of Ministers.

### **Mahi River**

**News:** Two persons, including an eight-year-old boy, went missing after a boat capsized in the Mahi River in Rajasthan's Banswara.

#### **About Mahi River**

- **Origin:** It originates from the northern slopes of the Vindhya Mountain Range in Madhya Pradesh.
- It is the major interstate west-flowing river of India.
- It is one of three west-flowing major rivers in India, along with the Tapti River and the Narmada River.
- **State through which it flows:** It crosses through three states – Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- **Course of the river:** After rising from the northern slopes of the Vindhya Mountain, it enters the Vagad region in the southeastern part of Rajasthan.
  - Finally, it drains into the Arabian Sea through a wide estuary near the Gulf of Khambhat, Gujarat.
- **Total Length:** Its total length is 583 km.
- **Catchment area:** Its total catchment area is 34842 sq.km.
- **Basin Topography:** The Mahi basin is marked by hilly terrain belonging to the Aravali chain in the northwestern part of the basin.
- **Tributaries:** The major tributaries of the river include Eru, Nori, Chap, Som, Jakham, Moran, Anas, Panam, and Bhadar.
- **Dams:** Major dams built on the river include the Mahi Bajaj Sagar Dam, Kadana Dam, and Panam Dam, which play an important role in water management and irrigation.

### **Key Facts About Vietnam**

**News:** The President of India received the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

#### **Key Facts About Vietnam**



Source: World Atlas

- **Location:** Vietnam is located on the eastern edge of mainland Southeast Asia along the eastern coast of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula.
- **Boundaries:** It has land borders with three countries – China to the north, and Cambodia and Laos to the west.
  - The Gulf of Tonkin, with the Island of Hainan Dao (China) lies to the northeast of Vietnam.
  - To the south and east, the country is bordered by the South China Sea.
  - The Gulf of Thailand lies to the southwest.
- **Capital:** Its capital is Hanoi.
- **Area:** It covers an area of around 331,211.6 sq. km.
- **Coastline:** The coastline of mainland Vietnam is about 3,260 km long.
- **Climate:** It is a country of tropical lowlands, rolling green hills, and densely forested mountains.
- **Rivers:** Two extensive alluvial deltas are formed by the Red (Hong) River in the north and the Mekong (Cuu Long) River in the south.
  - The Red River Delta is surrounded by hills that slowly rise into the high mountains in the northwest.
  - A narrow and fertile coastal plain stretches from the Red River Delta to the Mekong Delta.
  - The Annam Highlands cover most of central Vietnam.
  - In the south, the coastal plains connect with the Mekong River Delta.
- **Highest Point:** Its highest point is Phan Xi Pang, which is 3,144 m high.

## India-EU Initiative to Boost EV Battery Recycling and Circular Economy

News: India and the European Union (EU) have jointly launched a ₹169 crore initiative to strengthen electric vehicle (EV) battery recycling and promote a circular economy, marking a significant step in their growing partnership on clean and green technologies.

### About India-EU Initiative to Boost EV Battery Recycling and Circular Economy



Source - PIB

- The Initiative has been launched under the framework of the India-EU Trade & Technology Council (TTC) - Working Group 2 on Green and Clean Energy Technologies.
- Aim: It aims to secure critical raw materials, accelerate the global transition to a circular economy, and strengthen bilateral relations between India and the European Union (EU).
- Funding and Implementing Agency: With a combined funding pool of €15.2 million (₹169 crore), the initiative will be funded through the EU's Horizon Europe programme, while the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) will support the Indian component.
- Focus Areas of Initiative
  - The programme will focus on developing advanced recycling technologies, including high-efficiency material recovery, safe and digitalized collection systems, and pilot-scale demonstration of innovative processes.
  - It will support the establishment of a joint India-EU pilot line in India to enable real-world validation and industrial deployment, bringing together leading researchers, industries, and startups.
  - It will focus on High Recovery Rates; Mixed Chemistry Handling; Logistics & Inclusion and Safety & Second Life for critical minerals like lithium, graphite, and cobalt.
  - A key component of the initiative is the establishment of a joint India-EU pilot line in India, which will facilitate real-world validation and industrial deployment of recycling technologies.
  - The programme will bring together researchers, industry stakeholders, and startups from both regions.

- The initiative will prioritize areas such as high recovery rates, handling of mixed battery chemistries, logistics and inclusion, and ensuring safety and second-life applications for critical minerals like lithium, graphite, and cobalt.

#### About EU's Horizon Europe Programme



Source - EU

- **Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation.**
- **Focus areas: It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth.**
- **The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges.**
- **It supports the creation and better diffusion of excellent knowledge and technologies.**
- **Pillars: The programme is organized into three main pillars:**
  - **Excellent Science: Supporting top-level research via the European Research Council (ERC).**
  - **Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness: Funding research on climate change, digital technologies, and health.**
  - **Innovative Europe: Boosting market-creating innovations through the European Innovation Council (EIC).**

#### **ANEEL Fuel**

**News: Chicago-based nuclear fuel company Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE) announced that its patented 'ANEEL' fuel has completed its high burnup irradiation test in an Advanced Test Reactor (ATR) at Idaho National Laboratory (INL).**

#### **About ANEEL Fuel**



Source: The Hindu

- ANEEL stands for 'Advanced Nuclear Energy for Enriched Life'.
- It is a new nuclear fuel that combines thorium and uranium to create a cleaner, safer, and more efficient energy source.
- It is designed to be used in pressurized heavy water reactors (PHWR).
- Naming: ANEEL is named after Dr. Anil Kakodkar, a prominent nuclear scientist and former chairman of the [Atomic Energy Commission \(AEC\)](#), India.
- Developed by: It has been developed by Clean Core Thorium Energy, a Chicago-based company.
- Composition: ANEEL is a proprietary fuel blend composed of two key materials:
  - Thorium-232 is the only naturally occurring isotope of thorium and is considered 'fertile' for fission.
  - [HALEU \(High-Assay Low-Enriched Uranium\)](#) is used as the initiating fuel source or "spark plug" to activate the thorium-based reaction cycle.
  - Together, these materials are designed to combine thorium's long-term fuel potential with the ignition capability provided by HALEU.
- ANEEL has the following advantages:
  - It can be used in the existing Pressurised Heavy-Water Reactors (PHWRs), which are an indigenous reactor system.
  - It provides an easier and quicker alternative for the deployment of thorium, leveraging imported HALEU, especially for nations which lack the infrastructure to install natural gas, wind, solar or hydro.
  - By utilizing this fuel, the operation cost and nuclear waste can be reduced significantly as compared with the currently used natural uranium.
  - The fuel bundle lasts much longer and burns more efficiently.
  - The spent ANEEL fuel cannot be used for weapons.
  - With this, India can guarantee green energy security for the subcontinent by fast-tracking the use of Thorium in nuclear reactors.
- Challenges:
  - Expensive: Thorium is costly to extract from the ground, and building and testing thorium reactors is also very expensive.
  - Not directly usable as fuel: Thorium itself is not fissile, so it cannot start a nuclear reaction on its own. It requires uranium or plutonium to maintain the reaction.

- **Complex fuel process:** Thorium must first be converted into Uranium-233 before use.
- **Difficult handling:** Thorium fuel systems are technically challenging to manage.
- **Limited experience:** Most nuclear systems are designed for uranium, not thorium.
- **Regulatory challenges:** Thorium fuels still need approvals and commercial acceptance.
- **Limited supply economics:** Thorium is mostly obtained as a by-product of rare earth mining, so production is limited.

### JANANI Platform

**News:** Recently, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the JANANI Platform to strengthen maternal and child healthcare at the National Summit on Innovation and Inclusivity – Best Practices Shaping India’s Health Future.

#### About JANANI Platform



Source - MoHFW

- JANANI is a service-oriented digital platform designed to comprehensively monitor and maintain digital health records of women during their reproductive age.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It has been developed as an upgraded version of the existing RCH portal.
- **Aim:** The platform aims to ensure seamless tracking of maternal and child health services, covering antenatal care, delivery preparedness, delivery, postnatal care, newborn care, home-based newborn and young child care, and family planning.
- It strengthens service delivery and ensures continuity of care at every stage by enabling continuous monitoring and timely interventions.
- **Features:**
  - **Introduction of QR-enabled digital Mother and Child Health (MCH) Cards:** This enables portability and easy access to health records.
  - **Automated alerts:** It also incorporates automated alerts for high-risk pregnancies, real-time dashboards for supervisory review, and due-list generation, enabling timely tracking, monitoring, and targeted interventions.
  - **Strong interoperability features:** It is designed with strong interoperability features, enabling integration with national platforms such as U-WIN and [POSHAN](#).
    - This is to facilitate seamless data exchange, improved coordination across programmes, and comprehensive monitoring of beneficiaries across sectors.

## Factly Compilation [First Week] May 2026

- **Registration of beneficiaries:** The platform enables registration of beneficiaries using unique identifiers such as ABHA, Aadhaar (OTP and biometric), and mobile number, along with pan-India search functionality.
  - This ensures continuity of care for migratory populations and prevents duplication of records.
  - It also provides self-registration facilities through web and mobile platforms, empowering beneficiaries to actively engage with their healthcare journey.
- **Timely Healthcare Support:** It supports citizens by enabling the timely scheduling and monitoring of antenatal care visits and immunisations, along with alerts and reminders to ensure that no critical health milestone is missed.
- **Access to Digital Health Services:** It provides access to digital MCH cards, information on nearby healthcare facilities, expected place of delivery, and supports informed decision-making through health education and nutritional guidance.
- **Coverage:** Till date, JANANI has achieved
  - 1.34 crore beneficiary registrations
  - Over 30 lakh pregnant women registered
  - More than 30 lakh MCH cards generated
  - Over 1 lakh biometric verifications.

### About Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Portal

- Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Portal is designed for early identification and tracking of the individual beneficiary throughout the reproductive lifecycle of women.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **Aim:** To strengthen the monitoring of RCH indicators - Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) through name-based tracking of health services delivered to eligible couples, pregnant women & children.
- It helps in ensuring the timely delivery of antenatal and postnatal services to mothers and the immunisation of children.
- It also promotes, monitors, and supports the reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) schemes/programme delivery and reporting.

## World Migration Report 2026

**News:** The World Migration Report 2026 was released recently by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

### About World Migration Report 2026



Source: IOM UN Migration

- Released by: The report is released by the [International Organisation for Migration \(IOM\)](#).
- First edition: The first World Migration Report was released in 2000.
  - This report is the thirteenth in the series.
- Frequency: It is published biannually.
- It has been produced in line with IOM's Environment Policy.
- This edition presents key data and information on migration and thematic chapters on highly topical migration issues.
- It is structured to focus on two key contributions:
  - Part I: Key information on migration and migrants (including migration-related statistics)
  - Part II: Balanced, evidence-based analysis of complex and emerging migration issues.

#### Findings of Report

- **Reduced benefits of migration:** The persistent marginalisation of migrants throughout the migration cycle, growing inequality in mobility, the narrowing of regular migration pathways, and the weaponisation of migration in political discourse have threatened the role of migration in development.
- **Importance of Migration:** The report highlighted the continued importance of migration in the global economy alongside emerging challenges.
  - **Trend:** By mid-2024, the number of international migrants reached 304 million, accounting for 3.7 per cent of the global population.
  - The number of migrant workers has also risen significantly, increasing by more than 30 million between 2013 and 2022.
  - These trends underscore migration's growing role in supporting labour markets, addressing skill shortages and fostering innovation worldwide.
  - Migrants contribute through their labour, financial transfers and transnational networks that strengthen both origin and destination economies.
- **Benefits of migration:** The report highlighted the benefits of migration:

- **Remittances:** Global remittance flows in 2024 are expected to reach \$905 billion, out of which \$685 billion will go to low- and middle-income countries.
  - These remittances are now greater than official development assistance and foreign direct investment combined, making them an important financial support for developing nations.
  - At the household level, remittances help improve access to education, healthcare and nutrition, which supports human development and reduces poverty.
- **Knowledge transfer:** Migration also encourages the sharing of knowledge and skills.
  - Migrants contribute both professional expertise and practical experience, increasing productivity and innovation across countries.
- **Diaspora engagement:** Diaspora communities strengthen the developmental impact of migration by acting as economic and cultural links between countries.
  - They encourage trade, investment and entrepreneurship, and also support education, healthcare and cultural activities.
- **Uneven access to opportunities:** The report emphasises that access to migration opportunities remains highly uneven.
  - High-income countries tend to offer more structured and regular migration pathways, while individuals from lower-income countries face greater barriers.
- **Global displacement:** By the end of 2024, over 120 million people were forcibly displaced, including refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, with 83.4 million displaced within their own countries.
  - These movements are driven by conflict, environmental stress, and structural inequalities, requiring both humanitarian and long-term development responses.
- **Weaponisation of migration in political discourse:** Migration is increasingly politicised and restricted.
  - Limited access to safe and regular migration pathways pushes many migrants into irregular routes, exposing them to exploitation and life-threatening conditions.
  - Dangerous routes, such as those across the Mediterranean, continue to claim thousands of lives annually.
  - Survivors often face abuse, poor health conditions and limited economic opportunities, which diminish migration's positive developmental impact.
- **Suggestions:** The report called for urgent action to safeguard migration as a global public good.
  - Key recommendations include expanding safe and regular pathways, reducing remittance costs, supporting skills mobility and strengthening reintegration policies.
  - It also emphasised the need for enhanced regional cooperation, improved data systems, and inclusive, evidence-based policymaking to ensure migration continues to benefit societies worldwide.

### Ulsoor Lake

**News:** As Ulsoor Lake has been drained and the desilting process has been taken up after more than three decades, lake conservation activists have taken objection to the lakebed being desilted by only 0.6 m, arguing that it is insufficient.

#### About Ulsoor Lake



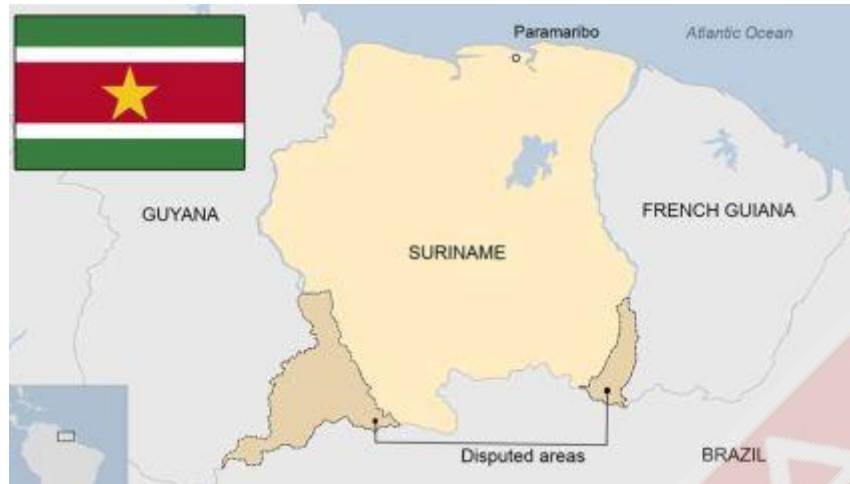
Source – TH

- **Location:** Ulsoor Lake is one of the biggest lakes in Bangalore, located on the eastern side of the city.
- It is also known as the Halasuru Lake.
- **Naming:** It derives its name from the name of the locality it is situated, namely, Halasuru, close to M G Road.
- **Type:** It is an artificial freshwater lake.
- **Area:** It is spread over 50 ha (123.6 acres) and has several islands.
- **Construction:** The Lake is believed to have been constructed during the reign of Kempe Gowda I in the 16th century.
- It was later expanded and developed by the British during colonial rule.
- **Control:** A part of the lake is controlled by the Madras Engineer Group, and the rest by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).
- **Pollution:** Like many urban lakes in India, the Lake faces challenges:
  - Water pollution due to sewage inflow
  - Eutrophication (excess nutrients causing algal blooms)
  - Encroachment and urban pressure
  - Periodic fish deaths due to low oxygen levels

### Key Facts about Suriname

**News:** Indian External Affairs Minister reviewed the full spectrum of India-Suriname relations during the 9th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) held in the capital city of Paramaribo.

### Key Facts about Suriname



Source – BBC

- **Location:** Suriname is a country in northern South America located slightly north of the equator on the Guiana Shield.
- It is also considered as part of the Caribbean and the West Indies.
- **Unique feature:** Over 90% of its territory is covered by rainforest, the highest proportion of forest cover in the world.
- **Boundaries:** Suriname is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, French Guiana to the east, Brazil to the south, and Guyana to the west.
- **Size and population:** It is the smallest country in South America by both population and territory, with around 612,985 inhabitants in 2021 in an area of approximately 165,940 sq. km.
- **Capital:** The capital and largest city is Paramaribo, which is home to roughly half the population.
  - It was inscribed on the list as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, for its outstanding collection of Dutch colonial architecture.
- **Climate:** Suriname has a tropical climate, with a large and small rainy season, as well as a large and small dry season.
- **Rivers:** The major rivers include the Corantijn (bordering Guyana), Marowijne (bordering French Guiana), Coppename, Suriname, Saramacca, Commewijne, and Nickerie rivers.
- **Mountains:** The two main mountain ranges are the Bakuys Mountains and the Van Asch Van Wijck Mountains.
- **Highest peak:** Julianatop is the highest mountain in the country at 1,286 m.
- **International cooperation:** Suriname is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Organization of American States.