

Factly Weekly

Compilation

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

**3rd Week
April 2026**

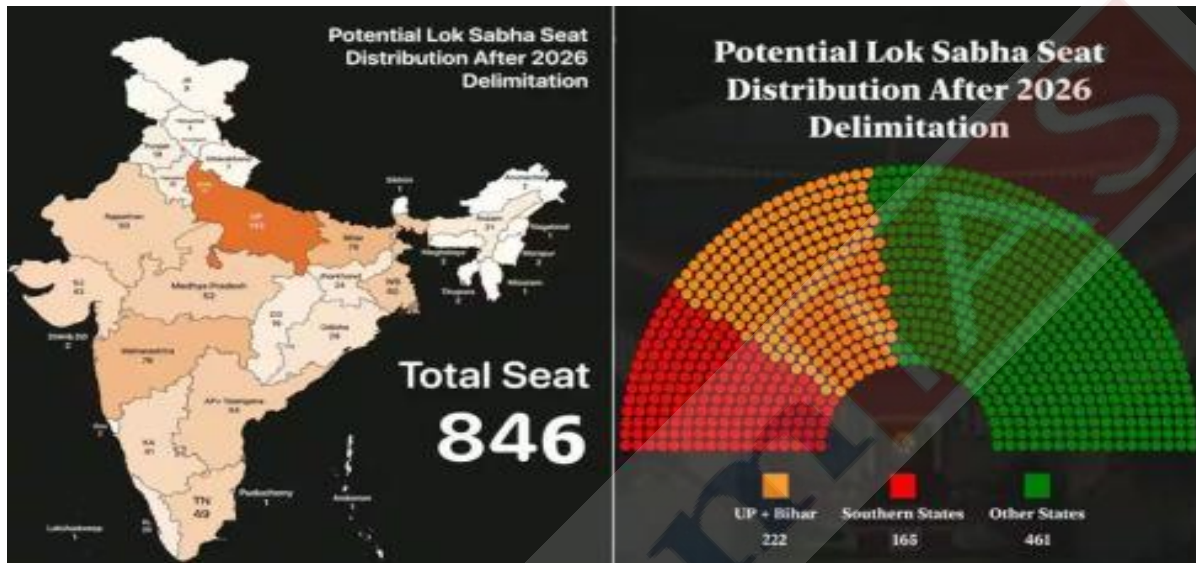
INDEX

Distribution of Lok Sabha Seats Across States	2
Memristor	3
Tadag Tal.....	5
Tehri Lake.....	6
Mahua Tree (<i>Madhuca longifolia</i>) and Gond Tribe	8
Borrowers' Platform.....	11
Umiyam Lake.....	13
The State of India's Bats (2024-25) Report.....	14
National Floor Level Minimum Wage (NFLMW)	15
Geckos.....	16
Operation Upstream	19
Induction vs Infrared Cooktops.....	20
Odisha becomes first state to launch Marine Spatial Plan	21
Potato Cultivation in India.....	23
Designer Rice.....	27
Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III.....	28
Vishwa Sutra Initiative	30
Black Panthers	31
DSC A 23.....	33
<i>Apis Mellifera</i>	34
India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)2026.....	37
Adyar River.....	38
<i>Myiophanes kempfi</i>	39
World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2026	41
India Emerges as Cradle of Jamun Evolution.....	42
Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary	44
DIVEX 2026.....	45
Salween River.....	46
Saint Basaveshwara	48
National Nutrition Fortnight Awareness Campaign	50

Distribution of Lok Sabha Seats Across States

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah announced a proposal to increase Lok Sabha seats with about 50% rise for each State.

About Distribution of Lok Sabha Seats Across States



Source - India Tomorrow

- Distribution of Lok Sabha seats is done through delimitation by a Commission, as provided under Articles 81 and 82.
- Present Distribution of Seats in Lok Sabha:
 - Total Strength: The maximum strength is 550 seats (530 from States and 20 from Union Territories), while the present strength is 543 elected members.
 - Basis of Distribution: The allocation among States is based on the 1971 Census, while constituency division within States is based on the 2001 Census.
 - Freeze Provision: The total number of seats is frozen until the first census after 2026.
- Key Aspects of Seat Distribution:
 - Constitutional Provisions: Articles 81 and 82 govern seat distribution through a two-step process:
 - First, allocation of seats among States; second, division of States into constituencies. This ensures balance between federalism and democracy.

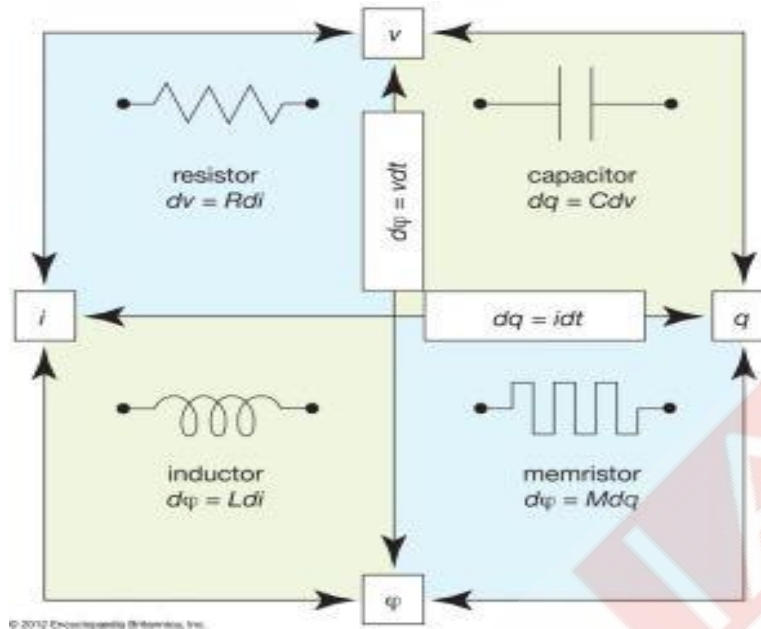
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- **Article 81:** It defines the composition of the Lok Sabha and ensures a uniform ratio between population and seats, except for States with less than 6 million population.
- **Article 82:** It provides for readjustment of seats and boundaries after each Census through a Delimitation Commission.
- **Amendments Related to Freeze:**
 - **84th Amendment Act (2001):** It extended the freeze on the number of seats per State until the first census after 2026.
 - **87th Amendment Act (2003):** It allowed redrawing of constituency boundaries within States based on the 2001 Census, without changing total seats.
 - **104th Amendment Act (2019):** It removed the provision for nominating two Anglo-Indian members.
- **Recent Proposals:**
 - **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026:** It aims to increase the Lok Sabha's maximum seat capacity to 888 seats.
 - **Uniform Expansion:** Each State may get around 50% additional seats, while maintaining its proportional share.
 - **Women's Reservation:** The 33% reservation under the 106th Amendment is linked to this new delimitation process.

Memristor

News: Researchers from the University of Cambridge reported a new brain-inspired hafnium-oxide memristor that can significantly reduce artificial intelligence energy use.

About Memristor



Source - Britannica

- A memristor is an electronic component that regulates current flow and remembers past electrical states.
- Origin: The concept was proposed by Leon Chua in 1971, and the first physical memristor was developed by HP Labs in 2008.
- Naming: The term 'memristor' is derived from combining the words memory and resistor.
- Working Mechanism:
 - A memristor works by changing its resistance based on the applied voltage, and its resistance depends on the history of current flow, unlike a normal resistor.
 - When power is removed, it retains its last resistance state, showing non-volatile behavior.
 - It is also a nonlinear device because the relationship between current and voltage is not a straight line, and it cannot amplify signals or add power like active elements.
- Cambridge Innovation: Researchers at University of Cambridge developed a hafnium-oxide memristor using a p-n junction instead of unpredictable filaments.
 - By applying low-voltage pulses, ions are moved to control the energy barrier, making the device more stable and energy-efficient.
- Key Features:

- **Non-Volatile Nature:** It retains resistance state even without power, ensuring continuous data storage.
- **Energy Efficiency:** It requires very small energy and can reduce energy use by more than 70%.
- **Brain-like Functioning:** It mimics synapses by combining memory and processing in the same place.
- **Scalability and Durability:** It uses hafnium oxide, supports integration with existing chips, and endures many switching cycles.
- **Application:**
 - **Memory devices:** It can be used as non-volatile memory in computers and industrial systems.
 - **Integrated circuits:** It can be used to replace or support transistors in integrated circuits.
 - **Neuromorphic computing:** It can be used to build brain-like systems for artificial intelligence.
 - **Artificial intelligence and edge computing:** It can be used to enable efficient AI processing.

Tadag Tal

News: Tadag Tal is in news due to dispute over its classification as wetland and feasibility assessment for converting it into a permanent lake.

About Tadag Tal



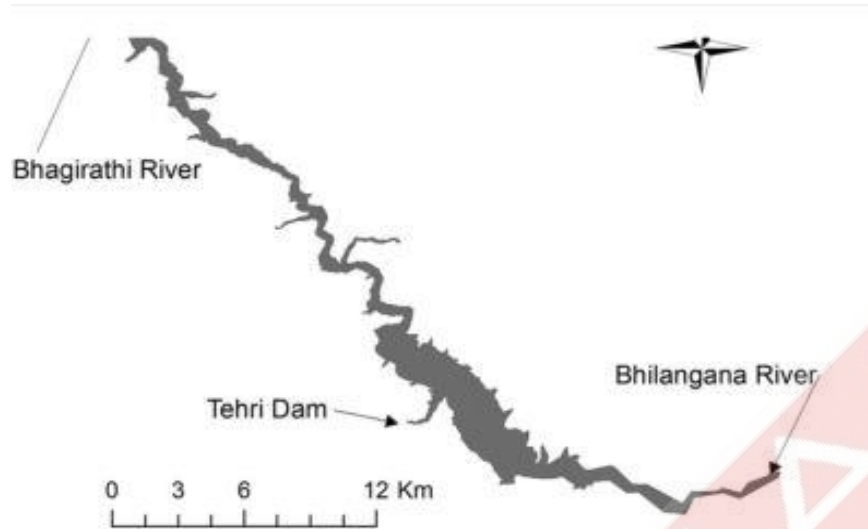
Source – DTE

- **Tadag Tal is a seasonal water body that changes from a water-filled lake in monsoon to a landscape of mountains and valleys in winter.**
- **Location: It is located in Almora district of Uttarakhand and lies in the Ramganga valley, which is a geologically active region.**
- **Seasonal nature: It holds water during monsoon due to rainfall and drainage, but dries up after monsoon ends.**
- **Ecological role: A significant portion of the area is marshy and receives water from local streams like Maligaad and Misariya.**
- **Extent and Land Use: It spans more than 50 hectares, with about 54.2 hectare affected by waterlogging, and supports seasonal agriculture like wheat cultivation.**
- **Wetland identification: It is listed among 192 wetlands in Wetland Atlas 2021 by ISRO.**
- **Classification (Lake vs Wetland)**
 - **Administration view: It is described as a seasonally waterlogged agricultural area that holds water only for a few months and does not meet the criteria for wetland notification.**
 - **It also includes cultivated land, and paddy fields are excluded under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.**
 - **Expert view: Experts consider it a marshy wetland with high ecological value, acting like a sponge that absorbs and releases water and supports biodiversity.**

Tehri Lake

News: During the trial operation, the seaplane successfully took off from Jolly Grant Airport and landed at Koti Colony in the Tehri Lake area.

About Tehri Lake



Source – ResearchGate

- **Location:** It is Asia's largest man-made lake, located in Tehri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand.
- **Formation:** Tehri Lake was formed when the waters of the Bhagirathi River were obstructed by the Tehri Dam, resulting in the submergence of Old Tehri town and several nearby villages.
 - Over time, as the reservoir filled, the valley transformed into a vast water body.
- **Source:** It is fed by the Bhagirathi and Bhilangna rivers, which meet at the Tehri dam.
- **Height and depth:** It is situated at an elevation of about 1,700 meters with depth of 262 meters approximately.
- It holds nearly 3.54 cubic kilometres of water and spreads across 42–52 square kilometres of surface area.
- It is surrounded by the Himalayan mountain ranges, dense pine forests, and terraced villages.
- **Significance:** The lake also supports the functioning of the Tehri Dam, which has a large power generation capacity of about 2,400 MW and supplies electricity to multiple states in northern India.
 - **Sport activities:** It hosts different sports activities, such as Jet Skiing, Flyboarding, Knee Boarding, Banana Ride, Surfing, etc.

About Tehri Dam

- It is a multi-purpose rock and earth-fill embankment dam in Uttarakhand.
- Situated on: It is located on Bhagirathi river at 1.5km downstream of its confluence with river Bhilangana.
- Height: The height of the Tehri Dam is approximately 260.5 meters.
- Managed by: It is managed by Tehri Hydro Development Corporation (THDC) India Limited, a subsidiary of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Limited.
- Installed Capacity: Its installed hydro capacity is 1,000 MW along with an additional 1,000 MW of pumped storage hydroelectricity.

Mahua Tree (*Madhuca longifolia*) and Gond Tribe

News: Mahua plays a pivotal role in the life of tribal communities from birth to death.

About Mahua Tree (*Madhuca longifolia*)



Source – Greenverz

- It is a **multipurpose tropical tree** mainly cultivated or harvested in the wild for its **edible flowers and oil seeds**.

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- It is commonly known as **mahuwa or madhuka, Butter Tree, Mahua and Mahwa.**
- **Family:** It belongs to the **Sapotaceae family.**
- **Scientific name:** Its scientific name is **Madhuca longifolia.**
- **Distribution:**
 - It is **indigenous to India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar.**
 - The **two major species** of the genus Mahua found in India are **Madhuca latifolia and Madhuca longifolia.**
 - It is widely distributed across India, including **West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.**
- **Climatic Requirements:**
 - It is a **frost-resistant species** that can grow in **marginal areas of dry tropical and subtropical forests up to an altitude of 1200-1800 m.**
 - **Growth Height:** It grows to approximately 20 meters in height.
 - **Rainfall:** It requires annual rainfall between **500 mm to 1500 mm.**
 - **Temperature:** For its proper growth, the temperatures should be in the range of 2-46 °C.
 - **Soil:** It grows well on **deep loamy or sandy-loam soils with good drainage.**
 - **Flowering period:** It grows slowly, begins to **flower after 10 to 15 years**, but lasts for decades. The average flowering period of the tree is **about five weeks.**
- **Production in India:** It is a non-edible oil with an **annual production of 60 million tonnes** in India.
 - **Mahua flowers are one of the top 5 minor forest products (MFP)** in terms of volume produced in the nation each year.
 - **Mahua nutra beverage** is a value-added product made out of Mahua flowers.
- **Uses:** **Mahua flowers are mainly used to prepare liquor, as well as cakes, vinegar, jam, syrup, and honey.**
 - **Seeds are processed to extract oil, which is used for ghee, soap, grease, and cosmetics.**
- **Medicinal use:** Its **bark, flowers, seeds, and leaves are used medicinally for respiratory problems, cold and cough, pain relief, lactation, and conditions like diabetes, bronchitis, rheumatism, headache, and haemorrhoids.**

- **Ecological significance:**
 - Its **strong-smelling flowers** bloom at night and hang openly, **which attracts bats that help in pollination and seed dispersal.**
 - Animals such as sloth bears also **depend on these flowers and often compete with humans in collecting them.**

About Gond Tribe



Source: Researchgate

- The **Gondi (Gōndi) or Gond or Koitur** are a **Dravidian ethno-linguistic group** of India.
- **Distribution:** They are spread over the states of **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha.**
 - They are mainly divided into four tribes, namely **Raj Gonds, Madia Gonds, Dhurve Gonds, and Khatulwar Gonds.**
 - They are **one of the largest groups in India** and are currently listed as a **Scheduled Tribe of India.**
 - Population: According to the 2001 census, their population was **nearly 11 million.**
- **Origin:** They are believed to **belong to the Dravidian stock.**
- **Historical Background:** Scholars believe **Gonds settled in Gondwana** between the **ninth and thirteenth centuries AD.**
 - Gond dynasties ruled in four kingdoms –**Garha-Mandla, Deogarh, Chanda, and Kherla in central India between the sixteenth and mid-eighteenth century.**
 - Maratha power swept into the Gond land in the 1740s. **They overthrew the Gond rajas (princes) and seized most of their territory.** Some Gond zamindaris (estates) survived until recently.

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- During the British rule in India, the Gonds actively resisted the British and fought several battles against them.
- **Languages:** Most Gonds **speak different dialects of Gondi**, an unwritten language belonging to the Dravidian family, and many of these dialects are **not intelligible**.
 - Some **Gonds have lost their native language and instead speak regional languages** such as Hindi, Marathi, or Telugu, depending on the dominant language of their area.
- **Society:** The Gond society is divided into **several exogamous patrilineal units known as sagas**. The saga is divided into **several clans (pari)**.
- **Religion:** The religion of the Gonds is mainly based on the worship of clan and village deities, along with reverence for their ancestors.
- **Festivals:** Pola, a cattle festival, Jathra, Nagapachami, and Dasahara are some of their major festivals.

Borrowers' Platform

News: Developing countries launched the first-ever Borrowers' Platform at IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings 2026 to address rising debt pressures collectively.

About Borrowers' Platform



Source – UNCTAD

- It is a dedicated forum for developing countries to coordinate and address sovereign debt challenges.
- **Launched:** It was launched during the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings 2026 by developing countries.
- **Origin:** The platform was first outlined in the Sevilla Commitment adopted at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2025, creating a permanent space for collaboration.
- **Supported by:** It is supported by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which serves as its secretariat.
- **Aim:** It aims to strengthen coordination and create a collective voice on sovereign debt issues among developing countries.
- **Representatives:** The platform includes representatives from 30 countries, including Prime Ministers, ministers, and central bank governors, with a working group.
- **Leadership:** It is guided by a working group chaired by Egypt, with Pakistan as Vice-Chair. Other key members include India, South Africa, Colombia, Nepal, and Zambia.
- **Key features:**
 - **Knowledge sharing and coordination:** The platform provides a space where countries can exchange experiences, learn from each other, and improve coordination on debt-related issues.
 - **Technical cooperation and capacity building:** It supports strengthening debt management capacity through technical assistance, including UNCTAD's Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) programme.
 - **Collective voice in global finance:** It enables developing countries to articulate a unified position in global debt discussions, addressing the imbalance created by creditor-led mechanisms like the Paris Club.
 - **Non-crisis cooperative platform:** It is not a debt restructuring or crisis coordination mechanism but focuses on practical solutions, peer learning, and improving transparency in debt management.

- **Significance:** The platform responds to high external debt of \$11.7 trillion, annual debt service costs of nearly \$920 billion, and the fact that 54 countries spend more on debt than on health or education.

Umiam Lake

News: A conservation group opposed a ₹330-crore Taj Umiam Luxury Resort project proposed on an island in Umiam Lake.

About Umiam Lake



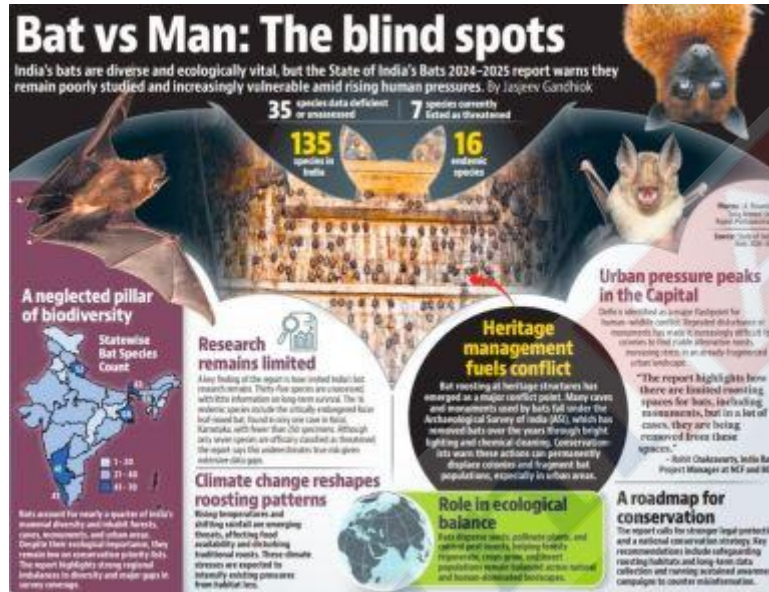
Source - Wikipedia

- **Umiam Lake is a large manmade reservoir created for hydroelectric power generation in Meghalaya.**
- **Location:** It is located north of Shillong in Meghalaya.
- **It is also called the Barapani Lake.**
- **It is one of the biggest artificial lakes in Meghalaya.**
- **Surrounded by:** It is surrounded by the East Khasi Hills and scenic landscapes.
- **Source of Water:** The lake receives water from the River Umiam, which is formed by the confluence of Umkhrach and Umshyrpi streams through Wah Ro-ro stream.
- **Projects:** It is part of the Umiam Umtru Hydroelectric Power Project, which was among the first hydel power projects in northeast India.
- **Hydropower Importance:** The dam was built mainly for storing water for hydroelectric generation, marking a major regional energy milestone.
- **Tourism Value:** The lake is a major hub for water sports and boating, attracting visitors with scenic beauty.

The State of India's Bats (2024–25) Report

News: The first-ever national assessment, “The State of India’s Bats (2024–25)”, highlights neglect, data gaps, and rising threats to bat species in India.

About State of India's Bats (2024–25) Report



Source – HT

- It is the first national-level assessment of bat species status in India.
- Prepared by: The report is prepared by Nature Conservation Foundation and Bat Conservation International with inputs from 36 experts across 27 institutions.
- Key Findings:
 - Total Diversity: India is home to around 135 bat species.
 - Endemism: 16 species are endemic to India.
 - Threat Status: 7 species are classified as threatened by IUCN.
 - Data Gap: 35 species are data deficient or not assessed.
 - Top Biodiversity States: West Bengal leads with 68 species, followed by Meghalaya (66 species) and Uttarakhand (52 species).
- Threats
 - Urbanisation
 - Deforestation

- Land-use changes
- Climate impacts
- Increased stigma after the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Research and policy issues:** The report highlights slow research permissions and need for urgent studies on habitats, ecology, diet, and disease risks.

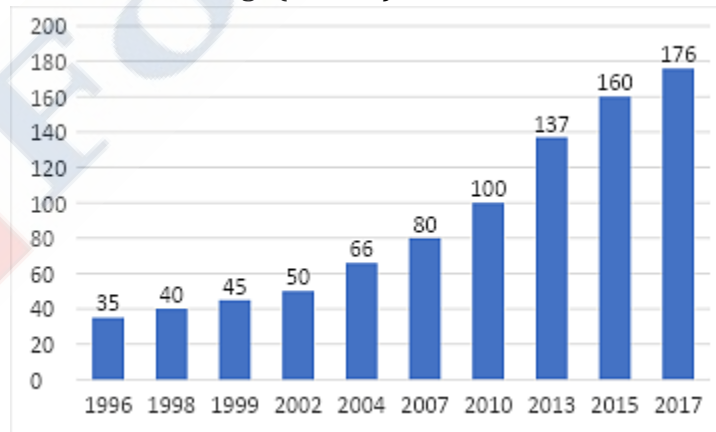
About Bats

- **Biological nature:** Bats are mammals that give birth to live young, have fur-covered bodies, and are warm-blooded.
- **Unique feature:** They are the only mammals capable of true powered flight, which makes them unique among animals.
- **Navigation ability:** Most bats use echolocation, which helps them move and hunt in complete darkness.
- **Ecosystem services:** Bats provide important ecosystem services such as pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, and also contribute to soil nutrition through their droppings.

National Floor Level Minimum Wage (NFLMW)

News: The Indian government is fast-tracking the introduction of a national floor-level minimum wage (NFLMW) to address differences in worker pay across states.

About National Floor Level Minimum Wage (NFLMW)



Source: Chapter 4, Report on the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 for the year 2020.

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- The **National Floor Level Minimum Wage (NFLMW)** is the **minimum pay below which no state government can set the minimum wage for workers.**
 - Wage includes **basic pay, dearness allowance and retaining allowance**, and is to be the basis for calculation of benefits and social security contributions.
- This is a **non-statutory measure** to guarantee an increase in minimum wages across states.
- It was **first introduced** by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment** in **1996** to provide employees and their families with a minimal standard of living.
 - The **[Code on Wages, 2019](#)**, also provides for **floor wages to be fixed by the Central government based on the minimum living standards** of employees, including food, clothing, etc.
- It has been **revised from time to time**, taking into account the increase in the **Consumer Price Index Number for Industrial Workers**.
- It will be **fixed for different geographical areas to ensure that no state government sets the minimum wage below the notified floor wage.**
- Current NFLMW is **₹176 per day**. This has remained unchanged since 2017.

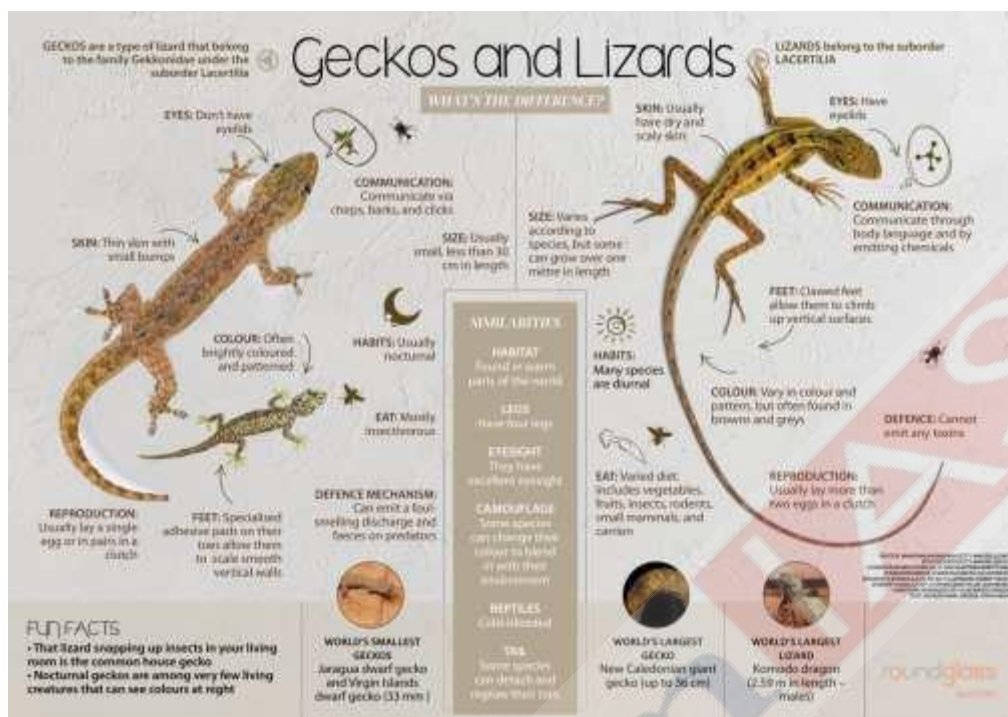
About Minimum Wages

- Under the **Code of Wages, 2019**, **Minimum wage rates for time work, piece work for different wage periods (by hours, day or by month) are fixed** by the appropriate Government.
- It is **based on the skill of the employee, and/or geographical area and the arduousness of work.**
- The minimum rate of wages **may consist of basis rate of wages and allowances.**
- The government will revise the minimum rate of wages in **every five years.**

Geckos

News: Researchers have discovered a new bent-toed gecko species, *Cyrtodactylus jayadityai*, in the lowland forests of North Tripura.

About Geckos



Source: Round Glass Sustain

- Geckos are reptiles **belonging to the suborder Gekkota**, which includes over 1,000 species of lizards.
- **Family:** They are spread across six families: **Carphodactylidae, Diplodactylidae, Eublepharidae, Gekkonidae, Phyllodactylidae, and Sphaerodactylidae.**
- **Scientific Name:** Their scientific name is **Palmatogecko rangei.**
- **Habitat:** They live in many habitats, such as **rainforests, deserts, and mountains.**
- **Distribution:** They are **found in different parts of the world** except Antarctica.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Appearance:** They are **small reptiles** with soft skin, known for their **bright colours and unique patterns.**
 - They also **possess a short, stout body**, a large head, and typically well-developed limbs.
 - The ends of each limb are often equipped with **digits possessing adhesive pads.**
 - **Length:** Most of the species are 3 to 15 cm long, including tail length.
 - Their **tails help in balance** while climbing, for **camouflaging** and also to **store fat** (energy reserve).

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- They can **shed their tails** to escape predators, after which their tails regrow.
- Most geckos **do not have movable eyelids**. They have a **transparent eyelid**. They **lick their eyes** to keep them clean.
- **Diet:** They eat **insects, fruits, and nectar**.
- **Behaviour:** Most geckos are **nocturnal**. Some species (day geckos) are active during the day.
 - They make sounds like **chirping, barking, and clicking** to **defend territory and attract mates**.
 - Female geckos lay **eggs in leaves or bark**.
 - **In defence of predators, they emit a foul-smelling discharge and faeces on predators**.
- **Conservation:** There are **many species of geckos**. Their conservation status varies from **least concern** to **critically endangered**.

About *Cyrtodactylus jayadityai* Gecko



Source: TH

- A new species of **bent-toed gecko** has been **found in Tripura**.
- **Scientific name:** It has been named as ***Cyrtodactylus jayadityai* sp. nov.**, in honour of **Dr Jayaditya Purkayastha, a noted Indian herpetologist**, recognising his immense contributions to reptile research and conservation in the region.
- **Habitat:** Its habitat is **the lowland forests of North Tripura**.
- **Characteristic:**
 - It is a **distinct species from its closest relative, *Cyrtodactylus tripuraensis***, with a **genetic divergence** of 4.7-5.2 per cent in the mitochondrial ND2 gene.

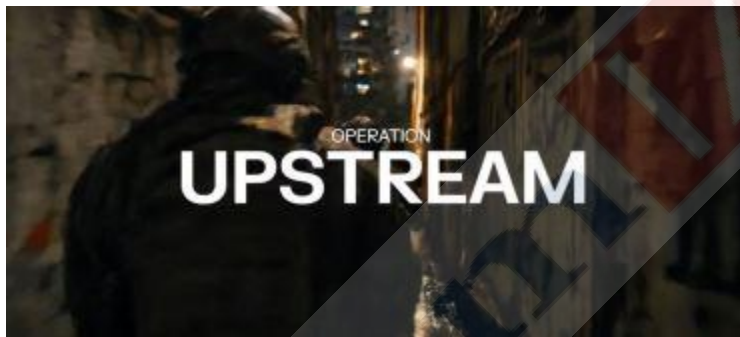
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- It is **nocturnal**, forages at night and retreats into burrows during the day.
- It is currently proposed to be categorised as **Data Deficient (DD) under the IUCN Red List**.
- With this discovery, the number of *Cyrtodactylus* species in Northeast India rises to 31.

Operation Upstream

News: World Anti-Doping Agency is collaborating with Central Bureau of Investigation to curb doping through a supply-chain focused strategy.

About Operation Upstream



Source – WADA

- **Operation Upstream :** It is an initiative that focuses on identifying and targeting the supply chains responsible for producing and moving prohibited performance-enhancing drugs.
- **Launched by:** The operation is conducted with support from World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), along with INTERPOL and EUROPOL.
- **Objective:** The main objective is to curb doping by targeting supply chains that help in moving prohibited substances.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Approach:** The strategy follows a “top to down” approach by focusing on suppliers and networks instead of only athletes, as athletes are considered victims.
 - **Supply Chain Focus:** The method aims to attack the movement of prohibited substances, especially given the large population and scale of the issue.
 - **Intelligence-Based Action:** Greater emphasis is placed on intelligence gathering because doping has become organized and sophisticated, requiring action from different sides.

- **Global Enforcement Actions:** The operation has led to 250 raids, seizure of approximately 1.8 billion doses, and closure of 88 illegal laboratories across 20 countries.
- **Significance:** This initiative is important as it targets the root cause of doping by focusing on supply chains and movement of prohibited substances.

About World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

- **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA):** It is an international independent agency that promotes and coordinates the fight against doping in sport globally.
- **Established:** It was established on 10 November 1999 following the Lausanne Declaration on Doping in Sport.
- **Funding:** It is equally funded by the sport movement and governments, which highlights balanced participation.
- **Government structure:** It has a 42-member Foundation Board as the highest policy body and a 16-member Executive Committee for management.
- **Function:** It conducts research, education, monitoring of World Anti-Doping Code, and capacity development to ensure uniform anti-doping rules.
- **Headquarter:** It is headquartered in Montreal, Canada.

Induction vs Infrared Cooktops

News: West Asia conflict and fuel disruptions caused LPG shortages and price rise, leading to surge in electric cooktop adoption in India.

About Induction vs Infrared Cooktops



Source – Sahara Appliances

- Induction heats vessels directly use electromagnetic fields, while infrared cooktops use radiant heat from a heated coil beneath glass.
- Working Principle:
 - Induction Cooktop: It generates a rapidly changing electromagnetic field, which heats the vessel directly through electrical resistance and converts energy into heat.
 - Infrared Cooktop: It uses electricity to heat a coil or halogen element, which emits infrared radiation that heats the vessel.
- Heat Transfer:
 - Induction: Heat is produced directly inside the vessel due to electrical resistance.
 - Infrared: Heat passes from coil to glass and then to the vessel through radiation.
- Energy Efficiency:
 - Induction: It converts 85–95% of electricity into heat, making it highly efficient and consuming less electricity.
 - Infrared: It operates at 70–80% efficiency, with energy loss during multi-stage heat transfer.
- Cookware:
 - Induction: It requires ferromagnetic cookware like cast iron or magnetic stainless steel.
 - Infrared: It works with all types of cookware such as steel, aluminium, glass, and ceramic.
- Safety:
 - Induction: It is safer as it does not use an open flame and heats only the vessel.
 - Infrared: It involves a glowing hot coil, which may pose higher surface heat risks.
- Impact on Grid: Infrared cooktops distort current and reduce power factor, causing inefficiencies and infrastructure stress.

Odisha becomes first state to launch Marine Spatial Plan

News: Odisha signed an MoU with NCCR to launch Marine Spatial Plan for integrated coastal planning under Indo-Norway ocean initiative.

About Marine Spatial Plan (MSP)



Source - MRC

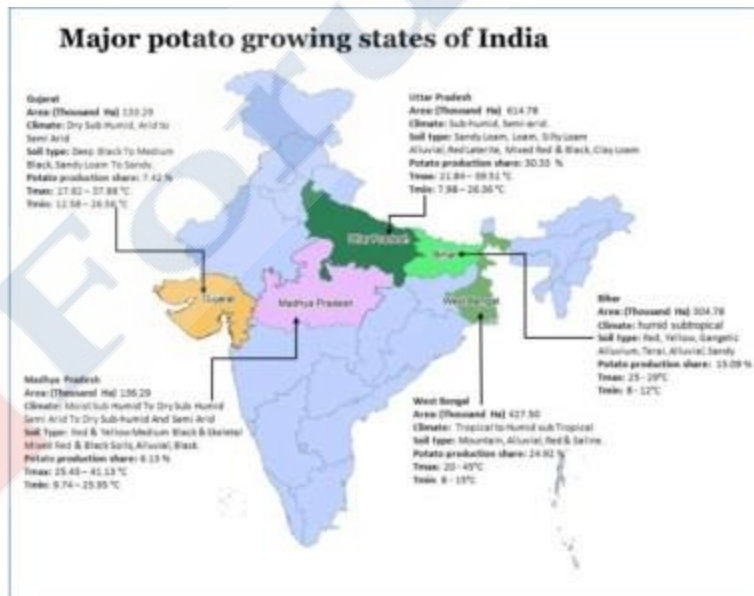
- **Odisha has officially launched its Marine Spatial Plan (MSP), making it the first Indian state to do so.**
- **Pilot Frameworks:** While pilot frameworks were previously implemented in the Union Territories of Puducherry and Lakshadweep, Odisha is the first state to adopt it.
- **Marine Spatial Plan (MSP):** Marine Spatial Planning is a tool for sustainable and integrated ocean management to utilize marine resources efficiently.
- **Implementing Partners:** Odisha Government and National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR) under Union Ministry of Earth Sciences are implementing this plan.
- **International Cooperation:** The initiative is part of Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative under the 2019 MoU between India and Norway.
- **Objective:** The main objective is to ensure sustainable use of marine resources, promote blue economy growth, and strengthen climate resilience while balancing ecological and economic needs.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Scientific Mapping and Assessment:** Experts will study coastal waters, including salinity, temperature, and conduct benthic mapping to identify suitable zones for activities.

- Sectoral Planning and Resource Use: The plan will identify areas for fisheries, tourism, ports, aquaculture, and industries to ensure efficient and sustainable utilization.
- Policy Support and Ecosystem Protection: The data will help the state frame policies that support economic activities while protecting biodiversity and maintaining environmental balance.
- Other Initiatives:
 - OMBRIC Launch: Odisha launched the Marine Biotechnology Research and Innovation Corridor in August 2025 for research and development.
 - Support to MSP: This initiative promotes startups, environmental protection, and livelihood support, strengthening the Marine Spatial Planning framework.

Potato Cultivation in India

News: Farmers' organisations claim that the Centre's potato procurement price is only about half of the actual input cost.

About Potato Cultivation in India



Description of major potato growing states of India in detail with cultivated area, production, productivity, climate and soil types

Source: ResearchGate

- It is a root vegetable plant native to America and domesticated in Peru about 6000 years ago.

- In India, it was introduced by the Portuguese in the 16th century, and since then, it has become an important vegetable across India.
- **Geographical conditions required for its growth:**
 - **Climate:** It thrives in temperate climates where the growing season remains moderately cool.
 - **Temperature:** An ideal temperature range for its growth is 18–29°C during the day and 13–18°C at night.
 - **Vegetative growth** is best around 24°C, and **tuber formation** is optimal at about 20°C.
 - **Sunlight:** It requires at least six hours of sunlight daily, though it can also grow under partial or dappled shade.
 - **Soil:** It requires a well-drained, well-aerated, porous soil with a pH of 5 to 6.
 - **Loamy and sandy loam soils** that are rich in organic matter, well-drained, and well-aerated are most suitable for its cultivation.
 - **Water requirement:** It is relatively sensitive to soil water deficits. To optimise yields, the total available soil water should not be depleted by more than 30 to 50 per cent.
- **Potato production in India**
 - **India** is the second-largest producer of potatoes in the world after China.
 - Its higher productivity level is confined mainly to the Indo-Gangetic plains and plateau regions, producing about 90% of potatoes.
 - **Production: Between 1991-92 and 2020-21:**
 - **Potato cultivated area** has doubled from 11 to 22 lakh hectares
 - **Production** tripled from 181.95 to 561.72 lakh metric tonnes
 - **Productivity** increased by over 50%—from 16 to 25 metric tonnes per hectare.
 - **Top producing states:** The 74% of its total output is from Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar.
 - **Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Assam, Haryana, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh** also have significant production.

About Operation Greens

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Source: PIB

- It was introduced to **stabilize the supply of tomato, onion, and Potato (TOP)** crops.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It was launched by the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)** in 2018.
- **Implementing agency:** It is being implemented by **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED)**.
- **Scheme type:** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** under the [Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana \(PMKSY\)](#).
- **Objectives:**
 - **Boost income for TOP farmers** by strengthening production clusters, FPOs, and market linkages.
 - **Stabilise prices** through better production planning and the use of dual-purpose varieties.
 - **Reduce post-harvest losses** with farm-gate infrastructure, improved logistics, and storage near consumption centres.
 - **Expand processing capacity and value addition** with strong links to production clusters.
 - **Develop a market intelligence system** for real-time data on demand, supply, and prices of TOP crops.
- **Components:** The scheme has **two components**:
 - **Short-term strategy**, i.e. Price Stabilisation Measures through the grant of transportation /storage subsidy.

- Long-term strategy focuses on creating post-harvest processing facilities, agri-logistics, and capacity building for Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs).

About From TOP to TOTAL



Source: PIB

- In 2020, the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)** extended the **Operation Greens** scheme from **Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP)** to **all fruits & vegetables (TOTAL)** as part of the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.
- It was initiated for a period of six months on a pilot basis but has now been further expanded and extended.
- **Eligible Crops:**
 - **Fruits-** Mango, Banana, Guava, Kiwi, Litchi, Papaya, Mousambi, Orange, Kinnow, Lime, Lemon, Pineapple, Pomegranate, Jackfruit, Apple, Almond, Aonla, Passion fruit, Pear, Mandarins;
 - **Vegetables** – French beans, Bitter Gourd, Brinjal, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Chillies (Green), Okra, Cucumber, Peas, Garlic, Onion, Potato, Tomato, Turmeric (raw).
 - **Any other fruit/vegetable can be added** in future based on **recommendations by the Ministry of Agriculture or the State Government**
- **Eligible Entities:** It includes:

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- Food processors, FPOs/FPCs, Co-operative Societies, Individual farmers, Licensed Commission Agents, Exporters, State Marketing/Co-operative Federation, Retailers, etc., engaged in processing/ marketing of fruits and vegetables.
- **Pattern of Assistance:** It provides a 50% subsidy on transportation and storage to reduce post-harvest losses and prevent distress sales by farmers.

Designer Rice

News: Scientists at CSIR – National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology, Kerala, have developed designer rice.

About Designer Rice



Source: PIB

- Designer rice is a **type of “functional food,”** intentionally **modified to meet specific health and nutritional needs.**
- **Developed by:** This rice has been **developed by CSIR – National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.**
 - The technology has been **transferred by CSIR-NIIST to Tata Consumer Products Limited** for large-scale production.
- **Aim:** It aims to **nourish millions and tackle malnutrition one plate at a time.**

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- **How it is created:** Scientists use **food-processing technology** in which broken rice is **ground into flour, enriched with starch, protein, fibre and micronutrients** like iron, folic acid, and vitamin B12, and then **reformed into grains** that look, feel, and taste like regular rice.
- **Difference between regular rice and designer rice:**
 - **Regular white rice is mainly carbohydrates and has a higher glycemic index (GI)**, which can cause faster spikes in blood sugar.
 - **Designer rice contains more protein and has a lower GI**, making it more nutritionally balanced and helpful for managing blood sugar levels and improving satiety.
- **Benefits of designer rice:**
 - It has a **low glycemic index (below 55)**, which means it **releases energy slowly and helps prevent sudden blood sugar spikes**, especially beneficial for diabetics.
 - It is **rich in protein, containing over 20% protein** compared to 6–8% in regular rice.
 - It **helps combat anaemia** as it is fortified with iron, folic acid, and vitamin B12 embedded directly into the grain.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III

News: The Union Cabinet approved continuation of PMGSY-III beyond March 2025 till March 2028 with revised outlay and extended timelines.

About Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III



Source – PIB

- It is the third phase of rural road development focusing on consolidation and upgradation of existing routes under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).
- Launched In: PMGSY was launched on 25 December 2000 and PMGSY-III was launched in July 2019.
- Nodal Ministry: The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is the nodal ministry
- Funding Pattern: The funding pattern for the PMGSY-III will be 60:40 between Centre and the States and 90:10 for NE and Himalayan States.
- Aim: PMGSY-III aims to consolidate 1,25,000 km of Through Routes and Major Rural Links to connect habitations with Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools, and Hospitals while reducing transportation time and cost.
- Revised Deadline:
 - Plain Areas: Completion of roads and bridges extended till March 2028.
 - Hilly Areas: Completion of roads extended till March 2028 and bridges extended till March 2029.

- Revised Outlay: ₹83,977 crore, increased from ₹80,250 crore.
- Key Features:
 - Pending Works Clearance: Works sanctioned before 31 March 2025 but not yet awarded are now allowed to be taken up for tender and award to ensure completion.
 - Long Span Bridges (LSBs): A total of 161 Long Span Bridges, with an estimated cost of ₹961 crore, are approved for sanction and execution along already sanctioned road alignments.
 - Technology Use: The scheme promotes the use of green technologies such as waste plastic and cold mix technology in rural road construction.

Vishwa Sutra Initiative

News: Ministry of Textiles launched “Vishwa Sutra – Weaves of India for the World” to promote Indian handlooms globally through contemporary design framework.

About Vishwa Sutra Initiative



Source – PIB

- It is an initiative to present Indian handlooms in a contemporary global design framework.

- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) under the Ministry of Textiles in collaboration with National Institute of Fashion Technology.
- **Objective:** The initiative aims to expand the global reach and recognition of Indian handloom products through modern fashion interpretations.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Diverse Handloom Representation:** Around 30 different weaves from across India are included, each representing a unique state tradition.
 - **Global Design Integration:** Each weave is creatively reinterpreted using design inspirations from 30 countries, reflecting global cultures and modern fashion sensibilities.
 - **Continuity of Tradition:** The initiative highlights the depth and continuity of handloom techniques preserved across generations
 - **Practical Representation:** The designer collection was presented at the 61st edition of Femina Miss India in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, demonstrating real-world application of the concept.
- **Significance:** It supports “Vocal for Local to Global” and the 5F framework (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign), strengthening India’s handloom sector globally.

Black Panthers

News: A female black panther will be released at Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam, ending a 40-year gap in display.

About Black Panthers



Source – Britannica

- **A black panther is not a distinct species or breed, but rather a melanistic (black-furred) color variant of big cats, most commonly leopards (*Panthera pardus*) or jaguars (*Panthera onca*).**
- **They have black fur or very dark coats due to high concentration of black pigmentation.**
- **Distribution:**
 - **Global: Black panthers are found across Asia, Africa, and the Americas, including Southwest China, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Burma.**
 - **India: They are reported from Karnataka (Kabini Forest, Nagarhole National Park), Kerala (Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Silent Valley), West Bengal (Sundarbans), and also from Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.**
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Physical Features: They have glossy black or dark brown fur with faint spotted patterns visible under sunlight.**
 - **Eyes: Their emerald green eyes provide a striking and fierce appearance even in darkness.**
 - **Behaviour: They are solitary and territorial hunters with strong intelligence, sharp eyesight, and a powerful sense of smell.**

- **Melanism:** Their black color results from genetic alleles that increase melanin, helping in camouflage in dense forests.
- **Threats**
 - **Habitat loss**
 - **Poaching**
 - **Human encroachment**
 - **Vehicle collisions**
 - **Diseases**
 - **Declining prey populations**
- **Conservation Status**
 - **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable**
 - **CITES: Appendix I**
 - **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**

DSC A 23

News: DSC A 23, the fourth ship of the five Diving Support Craft (DSC) project, was launched at Titagarh, Kolkata (WB).

About DSC A 23



Source: PIB

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- **DSC A 23** is the **fourth ship of the five Diving Support Craft (DSC) project**.
- **Launched on:** It was launched on **19 Apr 2026** at **Titagarh, Kolkata (WB)**.
- **Constructed by:** It was constructed by **M/s Titagarh Rail Systems Ltd (TRSL), Kolkata**.
 - It is **designed and built in accordance with the Naval Rules and Regulations of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS)**.
 - It has also undergone **extensive model testing and hydrodynamic analysis at NSTL, Visakhapatnam**, ensuring operational reliability and safety.
- **Features:**
 - It features a **30-m catamaran hull design** with a **displacement of around 380 tons**.
 - This provides craft with **enhanced stability, larger working deck space, and improved sea-keeping capabilities** for coastal and harbour diving operations.
 - **70% of the main and auxiliary equipment** in these crafts comes from indigenous manufacturers.
- **Already Inducted ships:** The **three ships of the five Diving Support Craft (DSC) project** have already been launched, namely:
 - **DSC A22 (Yard 327)** (Third ship)
 - **DSC A 21 (Yard 326)** (Second ship)
 - **[DSC A20 \(Yard 325\)](#)** (First ship)
- **Significance:** Its induction will augment the **Diving Support, Underwater Inspection, Salvage Assistance and Coastal Operational Deployment capabilities** of the Indian Navy.

Apis Mellifera

News: Recently, a new set of protocols and scientific interventions has been developed in honey bee farming in Jammu and Kashmir, which allows beekeepers to rear colonies in sub-zero temperatures.

About Apis Mellifera



Source: Britannica

- The **western honeybee**, also known as the **European honeybee**, is one of **several species in the genus Apis**.
- **Scientific name:** Its scientific name is *Apis mellifera*.
- **Sub-species:** There are currently **26 recognized subspecies of *Apis mellifera***.
- **Habitat:** They prefer habitats that have an **abundant supply of suitable flowering plants**.
 - They can **survive in grasslands, deserts, and wetlands** if there is sufficient water, food, and shelter.
 - They need **cavities (e.g. in hollow trees) to nest in**.
- **Distribution:**
 - They are **originally native to Europe, western Asia, and Africa**.
 - However, they are **now widely distributed across East Asia, Australia, and both North and South America, and are found on all continents except Antarctica**.
- **Characteristics**
 - **Appearance:** They are generally **red/brown in colour with black bands and orange-yellow rings on the abdomen**.
 - They have **hair on the thorax and less hair on the abdomen**.
 - They have **two pairs of wings and a slender waist**.
 - They also **have a pollen basket on their hind legs**.
 - **There are two castes of females: Sterile workers are smaller (adults 10-15 mm long), fertile queens are larger (18-20 mm)**.
 - **Males, called drones, are 15-17 mm long at maturity**.

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- **Both castes of females have a stinger** that is formed from modified ovipositor structures.
- **Males have much larger eyes than females**, probably to help locate flying queens during mating flights.
- **Workers and queens possess stingers spiked with venom coming from abdominal glands.**
- **Diet:** They feed on pollen and nectar collected from blooming flowers.
 - They **also eat honey** (stored, concentrated nectar) **and secretions** produced by other members of their colony.
- **Behaviour:**
 - **Foraging:** It **only occurs during daylight**, but bees are active in the hive continuously.
 - **Communication:** Their communication is **based on chemical signals**, and most of their communication and perception behaviours are centred around scent and taste.
 - They are **partially endothermic**.
 - They can **warm their bodies and the temperature in their hive** by working their flight muscles.
 - They are **eusocial**, creating colonies **with a single fertile female (Queen)**, many normally **non-reproductive females (Workers)**, and a small proportion of **fertile males (Drones)**. Individual colonies can house tens of thousands of bees.
- **Lifecycle:** They are **holometabolous insects**, and have **four stages** in the life cycle – **egg, larva, pupa, and adult**.
- **Ecosystem role:** They play a key ecological role as **primary pollinators, supporting plant reproduction and maintaining biodiversity**.
- **Economic Importance:** They were one of the **first domesticated insects**. They are the primary species maintained by beekeepers for both their **honey production and pollination activities**.
- **Threat:** They are threatened by **pests and diseases**, especially the **Varroa mite** and **colony collapse disorder**.

India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) 2026

News: India will host the Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit in May-end 2026, after a gap of more than a decade.

About India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) 2026



Source – ORF

- It is an official institutional platform for African-Indian relations and a high-level consultative mechanism between the Government of India and the member states of the African Union.
- Established: The IAFS was established in 2008.
- Summit History:
 - 1st Summit (2008, New Delhi): It was the inaugural meeting with 14 African countries and focused on rising oil and food prices.
 - 2nd Summit (2011, Addis Ababa): It expanded to 15 African nations and focused on infrastructure development.
 - 3rd Summit (2015, New Delhi): It saw participation from all 54 African nations and marked a major diplomatic outreach.
- Purpose: It aims to widen and deepen mutual cooperation, support Africa in health, education, and human resource development, and promote investment and industrial partnerships.
- Key Functions:
 - Development Assistance: It supports Africa's development through concessional Lines of Credit, capacity-building programmes, infrastructure projects, and scholarships for African students.

- **Economic Cooperation:** It promotes trade and investment across sectors like infrastructure, agriculture, healthcare, and telecommunications, leading to economic growth and job creation.
- **Human Resource Development:** It strengthens education and skills through initiatives like telemedicine, e-learning, and scholarships, helping build long-term capacity.
- **South-South Cooperation:** It promotes solidarity among developing countries and supports a collective voice for equitable global governance and institutional reforms.

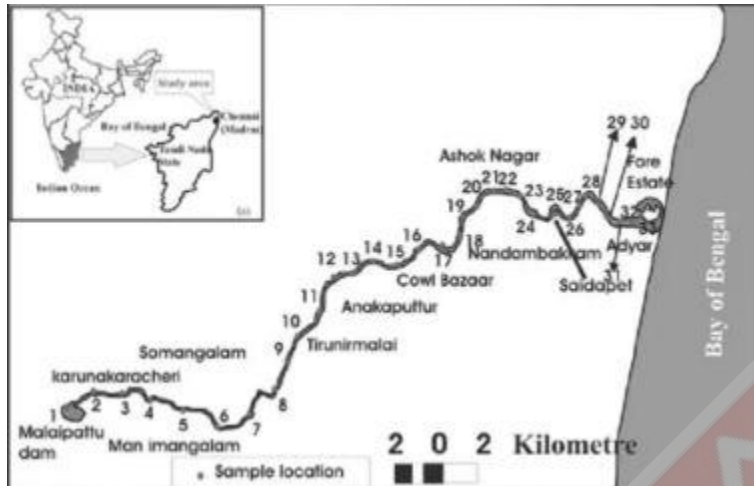
About India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) 2026

- **It is the fourth summit to strengthen India-Africa cooperation across multiple sectors.**
- **Location:** It will be held in New Delhi, India.
- **Scheduled:** It is scheduled for May-end 2026.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Strategic Agenda:** It will focus on development initiatives, education, capacity building, diplomatic expansion, and defense cooperation.
 - **Diplomatic Expansion:** It will review India's outreach, including 16 new missions since 2018 and presence in 45 countries.
 - **Global Context:** It is significant due to global supply chain disruptions, where Africa remains relatively stable for critical supplies.
 - **Implementation Focus:** It highlights the need to improve India's implementation rate, which is currently around 40% of commitments.

Adyar River

News: A report by the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust submitted to the National Green Tribunal stressed the need for Adyar River restoration.

About Adyar River



Source – ResearchGate

- Adyar River is one of the three rivers of Chennai, along with the Cooum and Kosasthalaiyar.
- Course: The river originates near Chembarambakkam Lake in Kanchipuram district and flows through Chennai before meeting the sea.
- Length: The river has a total length of 42.5 km.
- Drains into: It drains into the Bay of Bengal at the Adyar Estuary.
- Adyar Creek: The river forms a backwater called Adyar Creek near its mouth due to sandbar formation.
 - This natural channel carries tidal water back into the sea.
- Ecological Issues: The river is affected by pollution from multiple discharge points, leading to poor water quality and very low dissolved oxygen levels, which harm aquatic life.

Myiophanes kempi

News: Recently, researchers rediscovered *Myiophanes kempi* in limestone caves of the Andaman Islands after almost 100 years gap.

About *Myiophanes kempi*



Source - Mongabay

- It is a rare, thread-legged assassin bug that recently rediscovered in limestone caves in the Andaman Islands, marking its presence after nearly a century.
- **Original Discovery (1924):** It was first described by British entomologist William Edward China in 1924 from Siju Cave in Meghalaya.
- **Classification:** It belongs to the subfamily Reduviidae, commonly known as assassin bugs.
- **Habitat:** It inhabits subterranean cave ecosystems and completes its entire lifecycle in complete darkness.
- **Distribution Shift:** The rediscovery extends its known range from Siju Cave in Meghalaya to the Andaman Islands, showing a major geographical shift.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Morphology:** It has a slender body with long legs adapted to cave life.
 - **Diet:** It is a specialized predator of cave ecosystems that catches small arthropods using its long raptorial forelegs, and it depends on such prey to survive in complete darkness.

About Siju Cave

- **Location:** It is located in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya near the Simsang River.
- **Known as:** It is also known as Dobakkol or Bat Cave, one of India's longest limestone caves stretching over 4.7 km.

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2026

News: Samriddh Gram: Integrated Phygital Service Delivery Model Enabled by BharatNet has been selected as a nominee for the prestigious WSIS Prizes 2026.

About World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2026



Source: ITU

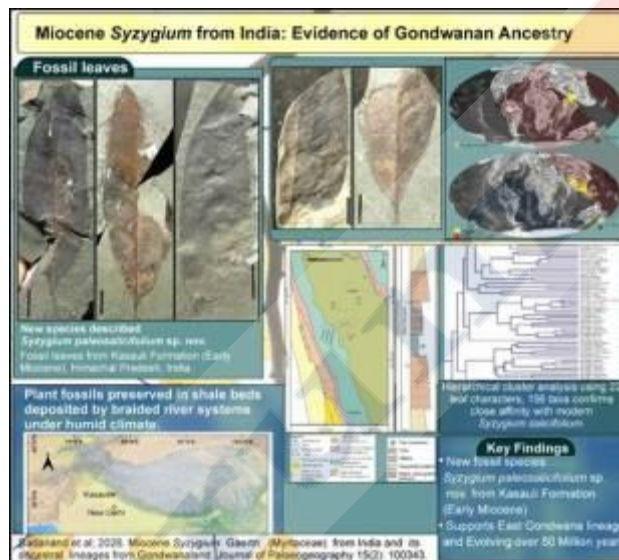
- The **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum** is a **globally recognized multi-stakeholder platform** focused on advancing digital development and fostering inclusive information societies.
- It brings **together key stakeholders**, including governments, industry, academia, civil society, and international organisations, **to collaborate on critical digital issues**.
- **WSIS Prize:** It celebrates innovative ICT-driven projects that **contribute to sustainable development** worldwide.
- **About WSIS Forum 2026:**
 - The WSIS Forum 2026 is **scheduled to take place from 6–10 July 2026 in Geneva**.
 - **Organized by:** The event is co-organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in collaboration with UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
 - **Participation:** It will have participation of **more than 50 United Nations entities**.
 - **Features:**
 - It features **discussions on emerging technologies, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and global digital cooperation**.
 - It serves as a **platform for showcasing innovative solutions** that support sustainable development objectives and for developing roadmaps that guide global cooperation on digital policy and inclusion.

- India's recognition: [Samridhh Gram: Integrated Phygital Service Delivery Model](#) has been selected as a nominee for the **WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) Prizes 2026** under the **Action Line AL C6: Enabling Environment** category.

India Emerges as Cradle of Jamun Evolution

News: India has emerged as the cradle of Jamun evolution, with evidence showing that the genus *Syzygium* originated around 80 million years ago and diversified early in the Indian region.

About India Emerges as Cradle of Jamun Evolution



Source: PIB

- Jamun is an important indigenous minor fruit of commercial value.
- It is also known as black plum, Indian black cherry, Ram jamun etc. in different parts of India.
- Family: It belongs to the family Myrtaceae.
- Scientific name: Its scientific name is *Syzygium*.
- Origin of Jamun: New research showed that the genus *Syzygium* has an East Gondwanan origin dating back around 80 million years.
 - Earlier, scientists believed that Jamun originated in Australia or Southeast Asia.
 - Researchers concluded that Jamun existed in India since the early Eocene, and from here, it is believed to have dispersed to Southeast Asia and Australia.
- Distribution: It is native to the Indian subcontinent.

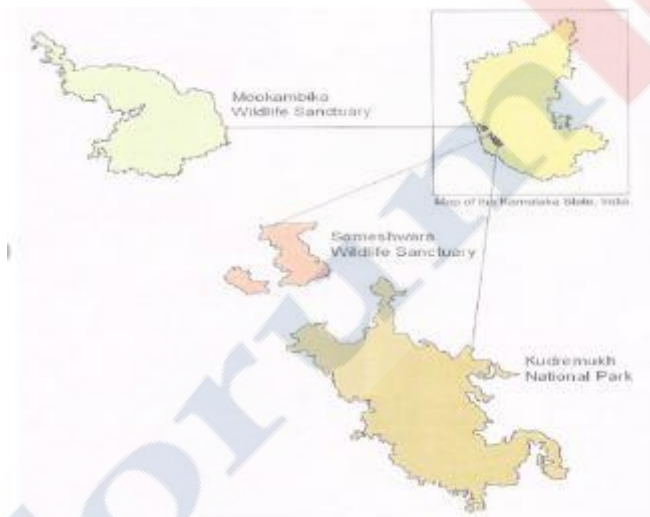
- It is found throughout India, including the Himalayan hills.
- It is widely distributed in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Australia.
- **Geographical Conditions required for its growth:**
 - **Climate:** It grows well in tropical and subtropical climates. It is hardy and can tolerate drought, heavy rainfall, and even temporary flooding.
 - **Rainfall:** It can be successfully grown in semi-arid regions with an annual rainfall of about 350–500 mm.
 - **Altitude:** It can grow up to an altitude of 1300 -1600 meters.
 - **Weather Requirement:** Dry weather is required during flowering and fruiting, while early rains help improve fruit size, colour, and taste.
 - **Soil:** It grows best in deep, well-drained loamy soils with good moisture retention. It can tolerate saline, sodic, degraded, and alkaline soils (up to pH 10.5).
- **It is a nutritious fruit with a variety of uses, and every part of the tree is used.**
 - Its fruit has a sub-acid spicy flavour and is used to prepare squashes, juices, jam, jelly, pickles and wine, etc.
- **Its timber is used in buildings, agricultural implements and for other woodwork as it resists the action of water.**
- **Medical uses:**
 - It contains a high amount of acidity, tannins and anthocyanins.
 - It is known for its anti-diabetic properties.
 - Its fruit syrup is useful for curing diarrhoea.
 - The vinegar prepared from the juice extracted from slightly unripe jamun is stomachic, carminative and diuretic. It also has cooling and digestive properties.
- **Production in India: India is one of the highest producers of jamuns.**
 - Maharashtra is at the top of the list of jamun-producing states in the country
 - **Note:** Bahadoli Jamun, from Palghar, Maharashtra, officially received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2024.
 - Other major producing states are Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Assam.

- **Status of cultivation:** It is estimated that almost 5000 acres of jamun plantations have been done in the last decade.
- **The cultivation is getting more popular in drier regions of southern and western Indian states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.**

Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary

News : Sewage from religious tourism in Kollur is threatening Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary as the Souparnika river carries sludge into the core area in summer.

About Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary



Source – ResearchGate

- **Location:** It is located in the Udupi district of Karnataka in the Western Ghats region.
- **Naming:** It is named after the presiding deity of the Kollur Mookambika Temple situated within its boundaries.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Kodachadri Hills:** The sanctuary includes Kodachadri Peak, which is located at its core and is known as a “botanical paradise.”
 - **Major rivers:** The sanctuary has two important rivers, namely River Chakra and River Souparnika.

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- **Waterfall:** It has notable waterfalls such as Koosalli waterfalls and Belkal Theertha waterfalls.
- **Troika Significance:** It forms part of a troika of Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary – Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary and Kudremukh National Park, which supports rare and endangered species of the Western Ghats.
- **Ecological Connectivity:** It acts as a vital connecting link between Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary (south) and Sharavathi Wildlife Sanctuary (north).
- **Vegetation:** The vegetation consists of evergreen, semi-evergreen, and moist deciduous forests covering steep slopes.
- **Flora:** Important species include Dipterocarpus Indicus, Calophyllum Tomentosum, Hopea Parviflora, and a rare climber Coscinium Fenestratum, along with small teak plantations.
- **Fauna:** It supports diverse wildlife such as lion-tailed macaque, slender loris, tiger, leopard, sloth bear, sambar deer, chital, wild pig, barking deer, gaur, porcupine, and otter, and it has also historically recorded species like Malabar civet, wild dog, king cobra, and giant squirrel.

DIVEX 2026

News: INS Nireekshak arrived in Colombo on April 21, 2026 to participate in the fourth edition of India – Sri Lanka DIVEX 2026.

About DIVEX 2026



Source – TH

- **DIVEX (Diving Exercise) 2026** is a specialized bilateral naval exercise focused on diving and underwater operations between India and Sri Lanka.
- **Host:** The exercise is hosted by Sri Lanka in Colombo.

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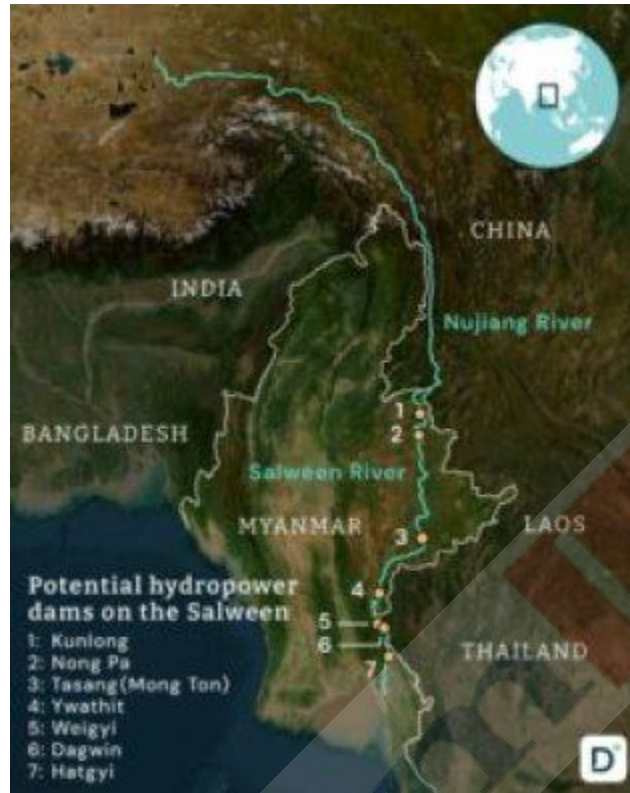
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- **Participants:** The exercise includes participation of the Indian Navy and the Sri Lankan Navy.
- **Duration:** The exercise is scheduled from April 21 to April 27, 2026.
- **Aim:** The exercise aims to enhance the ability of both navies to operate together during underwater salvage, search, and rescue missions, and to strengthen coordination in the Indian Ocean Region under the MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Humanitarian Outreach (BHISM Cubes):** India is providing two BHISM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita & Maitri) cubes capable of handling up to 200 emergency cases, equipped with essential medicines and surgical tools for rapid response.
 - **Security Assistance:** The Indian Navy is handing over 50,000 rounds of 9 mm ammunition to the Sri Lankan Navy to strengthen maritime security cooperation.
 - **Camaraderie and Dialogue:** The programme includes social interactions, sports fixtures, joint yoga sessions, and high-level discussions to build friendship, goodwill, and cooperation.
- **Significance:** The exercise highlights the deep-rooted maritime partnership and reinforces commitment to stability, cooperation, and collective growth in the Indian Ocean Region.

Salween River

News: Recent reports highlight arsenic contamination in the Salween River, raising concern over threats to one of Asia's longest free-flowing rivers.

About Salween River



Source – Dialogue Earth

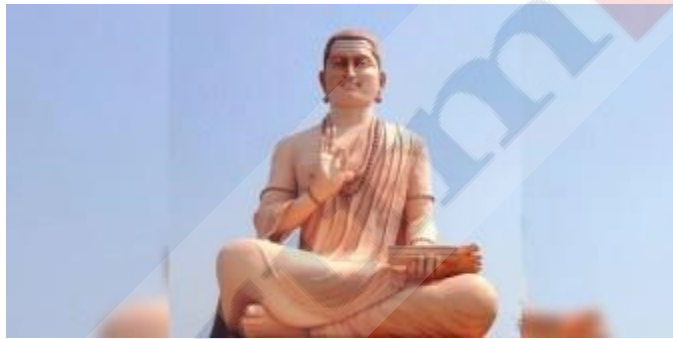
- **The Salween River is a major transboundary river in Asia and is the longest undammed river in mainland Southeast Asia.**
- **Alternative Names:** It is known as the Nu River in China and the Thanlwin River in Myanmar.
- **Origin:** The river originates about 4,000 m above sea level in the Tanggula Mountains in the central Tibetan Plateau.
- **Course:** The river flows through western Yunnan in China, passes through Myanmar, forms the border between Myanmar and Thailand for some distance, and then re-enters Myanmar.
 - **Three Parallel Rivers Region:** The upper course flows parallel to the Mekong and Yangtze rivers, forming the Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan UNESCO World Heritage Site .
- **Transboundary River:** It is shared by China, Myanmar, and Thailand, making it an important international river system.
- **Destination:** It drains into the Gulf of Martaban in the Andaman Sea.
- **Length:** It is approximately 2,400 km long.

- **Tributaries:** Important tributaries include the Pang, Teng, Pawn, Hka, Hsim, and Moei rivers.
- **Ecological importance:** The river basin supports over 200 fish species, including one-third endemic species, and it is believed to support over 25% of the world's and over 50% of China's animal species, showing its high ecological value.
- **Significance:** The river is important as it supports over 10 million people, rich biodiversity, and many ethnic communities dependent on its resources.

Saint Basaveshwara

News: The Vice President has called upon society to emulate the philosophy of Saint Basaveshwara, who taught us social equality and to serve society.

About Saint Basaveshwara



Source: Deccan Herald

- Saint Basaveshwara was a **12th-century philosopher**, founding saint of the **Lingayat sect**, Kannada **poet** and **social reformer** during the reign of the **Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I** in Karnataka.
- He is also known as **Basavanna**.
- **Birth:** He was born in Karnataka in **1131 CE**.
- He **studied Veda, grammar and logic** at a young age.
- **Spiritual journey:** At the age of 8, he removed his sacred thread, saying that he had **Linga deeksha** at his birth, and so there was no need for Upanayana.
 - Then **he went to Kudalasangama**, where he studied **under Jatavedamuni**.
 - He **rose to serve as a minister in King Bijjala's Kalachuri court**, giving his reforms institutional backing.
- **Philosophy:**

Factly Compilation [Third Week] April 2026

- He is known for **introducing the Ishtalinga** (a necklace with a pendant that contains a small Shiva Linga).
 - It **acted as a personal emblem of Lord Shiva** that completely rejected the need for priestly intermediaries and ritual hierarchies.
- He gave **socio-economic principles of Kayaka**, which means **Divine work** and **Dasoha**, which means **equal distribution**.
- **Equality in all forms:** He rejected **gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals**. He advocated that every human being was equal, irrespective of caste. According to him, **all forms of manual labour were equally important**.
- His **philosophy** was based **on the principles of Arivu (true knowledge), ethos (right conduct), and Anubhava (divine experience)**.
 - This brought a social, religious, and economic revolution in the 12th century.
- **Veerashaiva movement:** He **developed and inspired a new devotional movement named Virashaivas**, or “ardent, heroic worshippers of Shiva”. This movement shared its roots in the ongoing Tamil Bhakti movement.
- **Respect towards women:** In **seven vachanas**, **Basavanna explains how women should be regarded**.
 - Through these vachanas, he sets moral guidelines for his followers.
- **Anubhava Mantapa:** Basavanna founded the **Anubhava Mantapa, the first spiritual parliament of India** to promote a **caste-free society with equal opportunities for all**.
 - It served as a **forum for mystics and thinkers to discuss universal human values and ethics**.
- **Contributions:**
 - His teachings were **universal and timeless**, going beyond social boundaries and addressing humanity as a whole.
 - He **promoted a new way of life centred on personal spiritual experience**, where distinctions based on caste, gender, and social status held no importance.
- **Poetry:** Basavanna spread social awareness through **poetry (Vachanas)** such as **Shat-sthala-vachana (discourses on the six phases of salvation), Kala-jnana-vachana (forecasts of the future), Mantra-gopya, Ghatna Chakra-vachana, and Raja-yoga-vachana**.

- He composed **religious and ethical literature** in the **local languages**, such as **Kannada**.
- **Literary Works**
 - The earliest known account of **Basaveshwara's life** is found in *Basavaraj Devara Ragale*, composed by the **Kannada poet Harihara**.
 - A more detailed narration of his life and teachings appears in the **13th-century Telugu text *Basava Purana***, written by **Palkuriki Somanatha**.
- **Legacy:** Every year, **Basava Jayanthi** is observed to **commemorate the birth of Saint Basavanna**.
 - He was the **first Kannadiga to be honored** with a commemorative coin for his contributions to social reform.
 - Grand statues such as the **108-foot monument at Basavakalyan** and the **111-foot *Vishwa Guru Basaveshwara* statue at Gadag** stand as lasting symbols of his ideals and vision.
 - In 2015, the **Prime Minister of India inaugurated another statue of Basaveshwara on the banks of the River Thames** at Lambeth in London.
 - The *Bharat Mandapam*, inaugurated in 2023, is inspired by Basaveshwara's concept of the **Anubhava Mantapa**, reflecting his emphasis on dialogue, equality, and collective wisdom.

National Nutrition Fortnight Awareness Campaign

News: Ahilyanagar district of Maharashtra has secured the first rank in the country for conducting awareness activities under the eighth National Nutrition Fortnight campaign.

About the National Nutrition Fortnight Awareness Campaign

- It is a **two-week intensive outreach campaign** conducted in April to **strengthen community mobilisation** and reinforce **key nutrition behaviours** under **POSHAN Abhiyaan**.
- **National Nutrition Fortnight Awareness Campaign** is often referred to as the **Poshan Pakhwada**.
- It is a **nationwide campaign** focused on **strengthening nutrition and early childhood development across the country**.
- **Implementing agency:** It is implemented by the **Women and Child Development Department**.
- This was the **8th edition of Poshan Pakhwada**, held from **9th April to 23rd April 2026**.

Factly Compilation [Third Week] April 2026

- **Aim:** It aimed to reinforce the government's commitment to improving nutritional outcomes and promoting holistic development among children, particularly in their formative years.
- **Theme:** The theme for this edition was “Maximising Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life”.
- It highlights the **critical importance of early childhood, particularly the first 1,000 days**, in shaping cognitive growth, physical development, and overall well-being.
- **Key Focus Areas:** The campaign focused on multiple aspects of early childhood care and nutrition, including:
 - **Maternal and child nutrition**, with emphasis on breastfeeding and complementary feeding
 - **Early stimulation for children** aged 0–3 years through responsive caregiving
 - **Play-based education for children** aged 3–6 years to support school readiness
 - **Reducing screen time among young children** through community awareness
 - **Strengthening Anganwadi centres** with community participation and improved infrastructure
- **Activities conducted:** During the fortnight, activities were conducted across states and Union Territories through **Anganwadi centres, involving mothers, caregivers, and local communities.**
 - These include **Poshan Panchayats, awareness drives, early learning activities, and campaigns promoting healthy lifestyles.**
- **Performance status:**
 - **Ahilyanagar district** of Maharashtra has **secured the first rank** in the country. The district has recorded a total of 324,075 activities so far.
 - **Pune district** has achieved the **second position nationwide.**