

# Factly Weekly

**Compilation**

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims  
Exam**

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

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## SAARC Currency Swap Framework

News: India approved Rs. 30 billion withdrawal for Maldives under SAARC Currency Swap Framework, reaffirming financial support and regional cooperation commitment.

### About SAARC Currency Swap Framework



Source – PIB

- SAARC currency swap framework provides SAARC countries a line of funding for short-term foreign exchange requirements.
- Currency Swap Framework: It is a contract between countries to exchange currencies with predetermined terms for liquidity support. It helps meet short-term foreign exchange needs and avoid balance of payments pressure without market risks.
- Purpose: It aims to strengthen regional financial cooperation, promote integration, and support economic stability during external stress while enhancing India's ties with neighbouring countries.
- Structure: It operates through bilateral agreements between the RBI and SAARC member central banks.
- Swap Window: The framework includes an INR Swap Window of ₹25,000 crore along with an existing USD/Euro Swap Window of \$2 billion, operated through central banks.
- Key Aspects:

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- **Liquidity Support:** It allows access to foreign exchange during stress without relying on commercial borrowings.
- **Pre-determined Terms:** It carries no exchange rate or market risks as terms are fixed in advance.
- **Regional Integration:** It promotes inter-dependence and strengthens cooperation among SAARC countries.
- **INR Promotion:** It encourages drawals in Indian Rupee to support its internationalisation.
- **Significance:** It ensures financial stability and strengthens India's economic and strategic ties with South Asian neighbours.

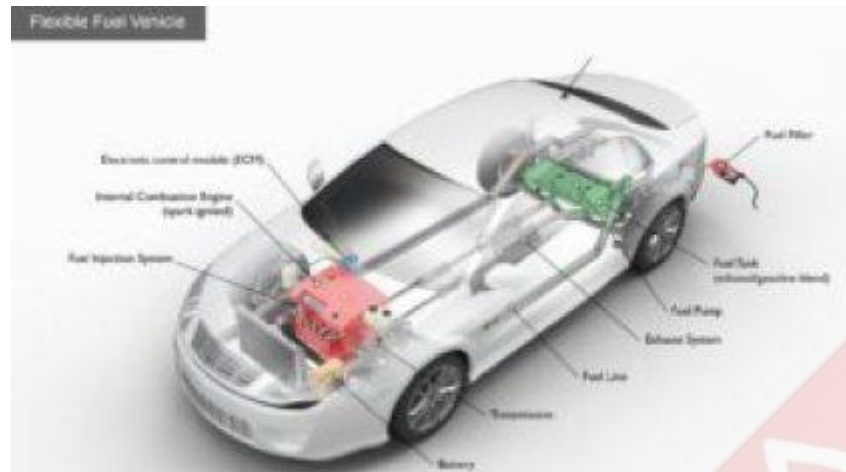
### About SAARC

- **The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** is a regional intergovernmental organisation of eight nations in South Asia.
- **Establishment:** It was established on 8 December 1985 in Dhaka to promote regional cooperation and economic growth.
- **Members:** It includes eight countries, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- **Secretariat:** It is located in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- **Principles:** It follows unanimity in decisions and excludes bilateral and contentious issues from deliberations.

### Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFVs)

**News:** Government is planning E100 fuel blending and promoting flex-fuel vehicles due to the energy crisis caused by the West Asia war.

### About Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFVs)



Source – US Deptt of Energy

- **Flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs)** are vehicles with internal combustion engines that can run on petrol, bio-ethanol, or their mixtures.
- **Key aspects:**
  - **Fuel flexibility:** FFVs can operate on petrol, ethanol, or blends including high ethanol levels like E100, allowing multiple fuel options across regions.
  - **Engine mechanism and modification:** FFVs use a fuel mix sensor and engine control module that detect fuel composition and adjust engine parameters, while fuel systems and injectors are modified to handle ethanol properties.
  - **Cost and efficiency:** Ethanol costs around Rs 60–62 per litre, while petrol costs above Rs 100, but ethanol delivers lower energy, leading to higher fuel consumption.
  - **Economic and agricultural link:** Ethanol is produced from surplus crops like corn, sugar, and wheat, which helps farmers earn better income, while increased ethanol use reduces crude oil import dependence.
- **Significance:** FFVs help reduce fossil fuel use, lower emissions, and decrease India's dependence on imported crude oil.

## Tharu Community

**News:** The Allahabad High Court quashed a 2021 order denying forest rights claims of the Tharu community under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

### About Tharu Community



Source - MoTA

- **The Tharu community is an indigenous ethnic group living in the Terai region of India and Nepal.**
- **Distribution:** The Tharu people live in southern Nepal and northern India, mainly in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar in the Indian Terai.
- **Naming:** The term 'Tharu' is thought to be derived from sthavir, meaning follower of Theravada Buddhism.
- **Status:** The Tharu community was notified as a Scheduled Tribe in India and is officially recognized in Nepal.
- **Socio-Cultural Features:**
  - **Livelihood and Economy:** Most Tharu people practice agriculture, cattle rearing, fishing, hunting, and collection of forest products.

- **Social Structure:** They follow a patrilineal system, but women enjoy greater property rights, and joint family living is common.
- **Settlement Pattern:** They live in compact villages in forest clearings and follow a joint family system in long houses called “Badaghar.”
- **Local Governance:** The panchayat system is strong, and the head is known as “Pradhan,” showing organised local decision-making.
- **Art Forms:** Ashtimki and Mokha paintings use natural colors and depict religious and cultural themes, while Sikki grass crafts are widely used.
- **Traditional Practices:** Denhari earthen vessels are used for storing grains and also hold cultural and religious importance.
- **Religion and Beliefs:** The Tharu follow a blend of animism, Hinduism, and nature worship, reflecting close ties with the natural environment.

### **Technology Development and Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme**

**News:** Revised guidelines for the Technology Development and Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme have been released to strengthen India’s global telecom footprint.

#### **About Technology Development and Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme**

**Powering India's Telecom Future**

**Technology Development and Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme**

An initiative by the Department of Telecommunications,  
Government of India

**About the Scheme**

TDIP Scheme is a Central Sector initiative designed to position India as a global leader in telecom innovation, standardisation, and exports.

Spanning 2026–2031, with a total outlay of ₹203 crore, the scheme builds on India's strong digital foundation and supports the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, NDCP 2018, and the nation's 6G ambitions.

Source: DoT India

- The Technology Development and Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme is an initiative to **position India as a global leader in telecom innovation**, standardisation and exports.
- **Nodal Ministry: Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications**
- **Implementation agencies:** It will be implemented through designated agencies, including the **Telecommunications Standards Development Society, India (TSDSI), Telecom Centres of Excellence, India (TCoE) and Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL).**
  - These agencies will facilitate **coordination, capacity building and effective utilisation of resources.**
- **Scheme type: It is a Central Sector Scheme.**
- **Aim:** It aims at **strengthening India's participation in global telecom standardization and accelerating the development of indigenous telecom technologies.**

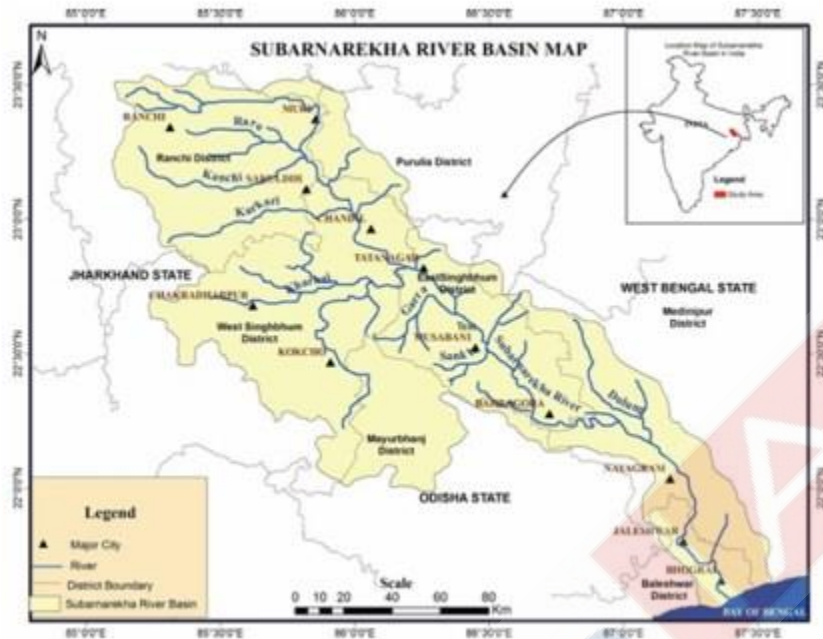
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- It also aims to **shift India from being a technology participant to a global standard-setter**, and to **drive the creation of intellectual property**, enhance export potential, and improve the competitiveness of domestic telecom products and solutions.
- **Outlay:** It has a total outlay of **₹203 crore for the period 2026-31**.
- **Features:**
  - It has been designed as a **comprehensive support framework to enable Indian entities to actively contribute to global standards, promote innovation, and enhance India's competitiveness** in next-generation telecommunications technologies, including **5G Advanced and 6G**.
  - It seeks to **enhance India's representation and influence in leading international telecom standardization bodies** such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 3GPP and oneM2M.
- **Scope expanded:** The revised guidelines expanded the scope of the scheme to include **startups, MSMEs, academia, research institutions, telecom service providers and industry players** to deepen ecosystem participation and foster collaborative innovation across the telecom value chain.
  - It also supports **pilot projects, proof-of-concept initiatives and technology demonstrations** to facilitate transition from research to real-world deployment.

### Subarnarekha River

**News: The Indian Army defused a high-risk, World War II-era bomb recovered from the Subarnarekha River near Baharagora in East Singhbhum.**

**About Subarnarekha River**



Source: Jharkhand gov

- The Subarnarekha River **originates in Jharkhand** and **flows through Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha.**
- It is a **rain-fed river** and is **ranked as the smallest river basin** among the fourteen major river basins of India.
- It is one of the **longest east-flowing inter-state rivers.**
- **Origin and Course:** It originates **near Nagri village in the Ranchi district of Jharkhand** at an elevation of 600 m.
  - On the **Ranchi Plateau**, it meanders gently for about 60 km before plunging over a 74-meter-high cliff, forming the picturesque **Hundru Falls.**
  - It flows **for a length of 395 km** before **outflowing into the Bay of Bengal.**
- It is bounded on the **North-West** by the **Chhotnagpur Plateau**, in the **South-West** by the **Brahmani basin**, in the **South** by the **Burhabalang basin** and in the **South-East** by the **Bay of Bengal.**
- **Total length:** The total length of the river is **about 395 km.**
- **Tributaries:** Its principal tributaries are **Kanchi, Kharkai and Karkari.**
- The **Subernarekha and the Burhabalang** form the major river systems in the basin.

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- The basin is **generally influenced by the South-West monsoon**, which onsets in the month of June and extends up to October.
- **Total catchment area:** The total catchment area of the basin is **29196 sq.km.**
- **Rich in mineral resources:** The mineral resources of the Subarnarekha basin are mainly **comprises of ores** of Copper, Iron, Uranium, Gold, etc.
  - Its basin area is also **rich in industrial minerals**, including **kyanite, asbestos, barytes, apatite, china clay, talc, limestone, dolomite, and building stones**
  - There are **major industrial areas** located along the bank of the Subarnarekha, such as **Ranchi-Hatia industrial area, the iron and steel plant and the industrial complex at Jamshedpur, etc.**
- **Dams:** Major dams and reservoirs situated on the river include **Getalsud Reservoir, Chandil Dam, Galudih Barrage, Icha Dam, and Kharkai Barrage.**

### **Strait of Malacca**

**News:** Indonesia has said it does not plan to charge tolls on ships passing through the Strait of Malacca.

#### **About Strait of Malacca**



**Source: Britannica**

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- **Location:** The Strait of Malacca is a **long and narrow stretch of water** located **between the Malay Peninsula, West Malaysia, and the Indonesian island of Sumatra.**
- **Named after:** Its name was derived from the **Malacca Sultanate**, who governed the archipelago from 1400 until 1511.
- **Size:** It has an area of **about 65,000 sq. km.**
- **Depth and Width:** It has a **width of about 890 kilometres** and a **depth of 25 meters.**
- **Geography of the Strait of Malacca**
  - **It connects the Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean) in the west to the South China Sea (Pacific Ocean) in the east.**
  - At the **Philips Channel (near Singapore)**, it becomes **very narrow**, measuring only about **2.8 km wide.**
  - It is **bordered to the north by Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula.**
  - Its **southern boundary** is at **Lem Voalan (Thailand).**
  - The **northwest boundary** of the strait borders the **Ujong Baka (Indonesia).**
  - The **southeasternmost** part of the strait is defined by **Tanjung Piai (Malaysia).**
- **Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia control the joint patrolling of the Malacca Strait.**
- **Economic and strategic significance:** It is a major **shipping connection between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean.**
  - It **provides the shortest route between East Asia, West Asia and Europe.**
  - **Around one-fifth (almost 20%) of global maritime trade** moves through this corridor.
- **Note:** The term **Malaccamax** is used to define the **maximum volume of a vessel that is able to pass through** the Strait of Malacca.
  - A ship whose **volume exceeds** the Malaccamax **must use wider and deeper straits** such as **Lombok Strait, Makassar Strait, and the Mindoro Strait.**

### Payment Banks

**News:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently revoked the banking licence of Paytm Payments Bank Limited, bringing its operations as a bank to an end from April 24.

### About Payment Banks



Source: AIR

- **Formation:** Payment Banks in India were **established in 2014 based on the recommendations of the Nachiket Mor Committee.**
  - It was set up to **operate on a smaller scale with minimal credit risk.**
- **Objective:** The main objective is **to advance financial inclusion by offering banking and financial services to the unbanked and under-banked areas.**
- **Legal Provisions:** The legal provisions governing the payment banking operations in India are mentioned below:
  - These banks have to register as a **Public Limited Company under the Companies Act 2013** and obtain a **licence as per the Banking Regulation Act 1949.**
  - **Regulated by:** They are also regulated by the **RBI Act 1934, Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999 and Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.**
  - The **minimum capital requirement is 100 crores.**
- **Features:**
  - **Type of Accounts:** The payment bank **can open only Savings Bank Accounts and Current Accounts.**
  - The **maximum balance of deposit** they can have in their account is only **Rs. 2,00,000 (Earlier it was only Rs. 1,00,000).**
  - However, these **cannot accept deposits from Non-resident Indians.**
  - **Lack of lending power:** These are **not allowed to lend** money or provide lending services.

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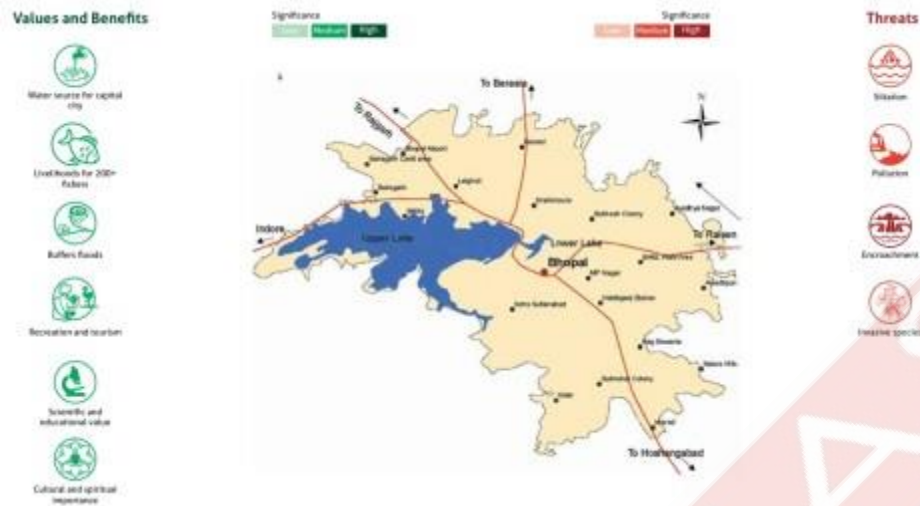
- They are allowed to issue ATM or Debit cards, but are not allowed to issue credit cards.
- **CRR Requirement:** Payment banks have to deposit the **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)** with the RBI, just **like other** commercial banks.
- **Payment Banks operating in India:** Now, **only 5 such banks** are operating in the country- **Airtel Payments Bank Limited, [India Post Payments Bank Limited](#), Fino Payments Bank Limited, NSDL Payments Bank Limited and Jio Payments Bank Limited.**
- **Reasons behind the cancellation of the license of PayTm payment bank:**
  - The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has **cancelled the banking licence issued to Paytm Payments Bank Limited under Section 22(4) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 ('BR Act')**, effective from the close of business on April 24, 2026.
  - Paytm Payments Bank is **now prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking' as defined in Section 5(b) or any additional business specified under Section 6 of the BR Act, 1949** with immediate effect.
  - **Section 22 (3) (b) of the BR Act:** In its order, the **RBI stated that the bank's operations were conducted in a manner detrimental** to both its own interests and those of its depositors, resulting in **non-compliance with Section 22 (3) (b) of the BR Act.**
  - **Section 22 (3) (c) of the BR Act:** The **overall conduct of the bank's management was found to be against the interests of depositors and the public**, leading to a **violation of Section 22 (3) (c) of the BR Act.**
  - **Section 22 (3) (e) of the BR Act:** As per Section 22 (3) (e) of the BR Act, permitting the bank to continue its operations would **not serve any meaningful purpose or public interest.**
  - **Section 22 (3) (g) of the BR Act:** The bank failed to **satisfy the conditions specified under its Payments Bank licence, thereby breaching Section 22 (3) (g) of the BR Act.**

### Lower Lake and Bhoj Wetlands

**News:** After addressing encroachment and environmental issues at Bhopal's Upper Lake, the NGT has now turned its focus to the Lower Lake, part of the Bhoj Wetland.

#### About Lower Lake

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Source: Indian Wetlands

- Lower Lake is a **man-made lake** located in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**.
- It is also known as **Chhota Talaab**.
- **Constructed by:** It was constructed by **Chote Khan, a minister of Nawab Hayat Mohammad Khan, in 1794**.
- **Source:** The Lower Lake **does not have any fresh water source and receives seepage water from the Upper Lake** and drainage from 28 sewage-filled nullahs.
  - It flows **into the Patra rivulet, which further merges with the Halali River**—a minor tributary of the Betwa River.
- **Chota Talaab, together with the nearby Upper Lake** (also known as Bada Talaab or Bhojtal), **forms the Bhoj Wetland, which has been designated as a Ramsar site**.
  - The **Lower Lake is located to the east of the Upper Lake**.
  - The **two lakes are built in a terraced manner**. The lowest level of the Upper Lake is just below the highest level of the Lower Lake.
- **Total area:** The Lower Lake has an area (water spread) of **1.29 km<sup>2</sup>**.
- **Catchment area:** It has a catchment area of **9.6 km<sup>2</sup>**.

#### About Bhoj Wetland

Source: Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

- **Location:** Bhoj Wetland is located in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.**
- It comprises **two contiguous man-made reservoirs**, namely **the Upper Lake (Bhojtal or Bada Talaab) and the Lower Lake (Chota Talaab).**
  - **The upper lake is the oldest among the large man-made lakes in central India.**
  - **It was created by King Bhoj in the 11th century by constructing an earthen dam across the Kolans River.**
  - The upper and lower lakes are separated by an overbridge called **Pul Pukhta.**
- **Ramsar Sites:** It was designated as a Ramsar site in **November 2002.**
- **Boundaries:** The **Upper Lake is bordered by Van Vihar National Park to the south, human settlements to the east and north, and agricultural fields to the west.**
  - The **Lower Lake is surrounded by human settlements** on all sides.
- **Fauna:** It is rich in aquatic biodiversity, **particularly in macrophytes, phytoplankton, and zooplankton.**
- **Significance:** It provides **drinking water and recreational benefits** to approximately 1.8 million residents of Bhopal.

- The **Upper Lake** provides about 40% of the city's drinking water, about 29 million gallons per day.
- **Threats**
  - **Unregulated urban development**
  - **Inefficient waste treatment systems**
  - **Weak enforcement of ecological safeguards**

### **Mehar Baba Competition-3**

**News:** The Indian Air Force launched Mehar Baba Competition-3, with registrations starting from 27 April 2026 for drone-based radar innovation.

**About Mehar Baba Competition-3**



Source – PIB

- **Launched by:** Mehar Baba Competition-3 (MBC-3) is the third edition of a defence innovation competition launched by the Indian Air Force.
- **Launched In:** Mehar Baba Competition was originally launched in 2018.
- **Theme of MBC-3:** The theme is “Collaborative Drone-Based Surveillance Radars.”

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- **Aim:** The aim is to develop a proof of concept for a collaborative swarm of Unmanned Aerial Systems acting as airborne radar to detect, track, and report aerial targets with accurate location sharing.
- **Name after:** The competition is named after Mehar Singh, a pioneering air veteran and Maha Vir Chakra awardee.
- **Eligibility:** Indian industries, start-ups, academic institutions, and research establishments are eligible to participate.
- **Key Aspects of MBC-3:**
  - **Innovation Support:** Meritorious participants will receive development funding from the Indian Air Force, and top three winners will be awarded prizes.
  - **Technological Focus:** The competition focuses on advanced drone and radar technologies using swarm-based Unmanned Aerial Systems in contested environments.
  - **Strategic Importance:** It promotes indigenous innovation and supports the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative by encouraging local technical talent to solve complex defence challenges.

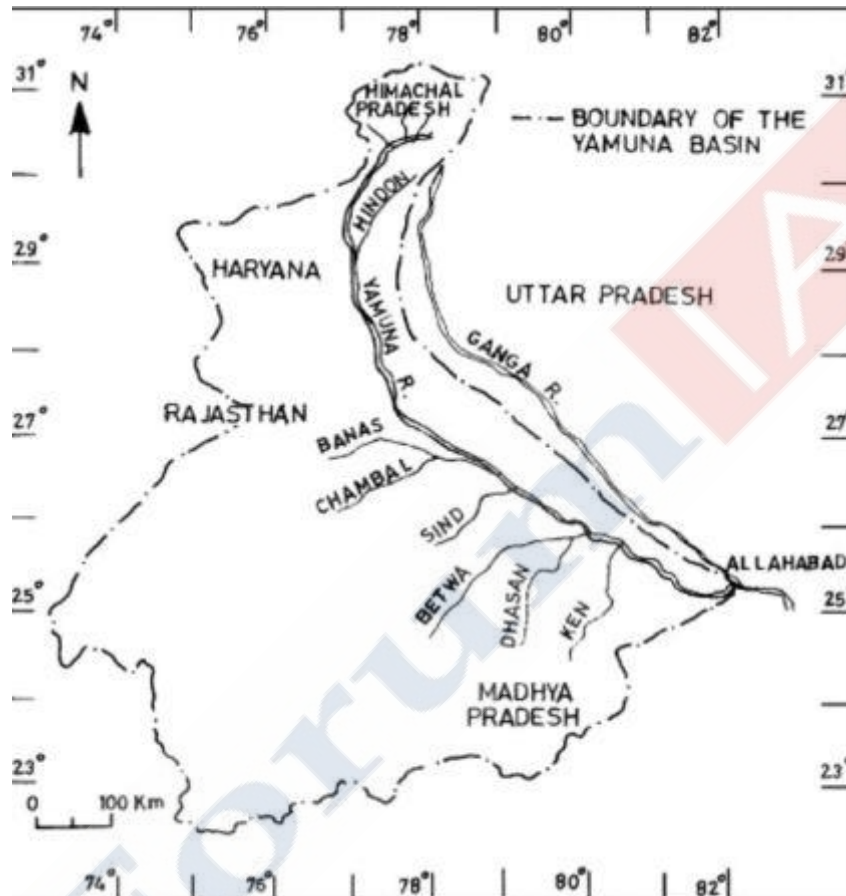
### About Air Commodore Mehar Singh

- MBC is conducted in the honour of the legendary air veteran Air Commodore Mehar Singh, affectionately known as Mehar Baba.
- He was born in the district of Lyallapur in 1915 and joined the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell in 1934.
- Mehar Baba earned the respect of his fellow airmen with his flying skills.
- At the age of 29, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for effective leadership and personal bravery.
- Out of his many achievements, the mission led by him carrying the first contingent of the Indian Army in a Dakota aircraft to Srinagar in 1947 is the most memorable.
- He also has the distinction of being the first to land at Leh, the highest airstrip in the world then.
- Mehar Baba was the first IAF recipient to be awarded with Maha Vir Chakra.

## Yamuna River

News: The NGT issued notices over alleged pollution in Yamuna at Mathura-Vrindavan, where water quality reportedly fell to “very poor” Category D level.

### About Yamuna River



Source – Science Direct

- **Naming:** The name Yamuna is derived from the Sanskrit word “yama” meaning ‘twin’.
- **Origin:** The Yamuna River originates from the Yamunotri Glacier near Bandarpunch peaks in Uttarakhand.
- **It is the second-largest tributary of the Ganga, and it is an integral part of the Ganga Drainage System, which is one of the three major river basins in the Himalayan region.**
- **Length:** The Yamuna travels a total length of 1,376 km.

- **States Covered:** The river flows through Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh.
- **Confluence:** The Yamuna merges with the Ganga at Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, which is an important site of the Kumbh Mela held every 12 years.
- **Tributaries:** It is joined by the Tons, Chambal, the Sind, the Betwa and the Ken on its right bank while the Hindan, the Rind, the Sengar, the Varuna, etc. join it on its left bank.
- **Boundaries:** The river flows along the boundary of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, showing its role in regional demarcation.
- **Major Cities on Bank:** The major cities located on the banks of the Yamuna River are Yamunotri, Paonta Sahib, Delhi, Noida, Mathura, Agra, Firozabad, Etawah, Kalpi, Hamirpur, and Prayagraj (Allahabad).
- **Major Project:** Major irrigation projects on the Yamuna River include the Western Yamuna Canal (Haryana), Eastern Yamuna Canal (UP), and the Agra Canal.
  - Key infrastructure includes the Hathnikund Barrage, with major storage projects like the Renukaji Dam, Lakhwar Multipurpose Project, and Kishau Dam under development to enhance irrigation and water supply.

### About Twister (Tornado)

**News:** A large tornado touched down in Kay County, Oklahoma, with multiple confirmed tornadoes during an active severe weather outbreak.

### About Twister (Tornado)



Source – Difference Between

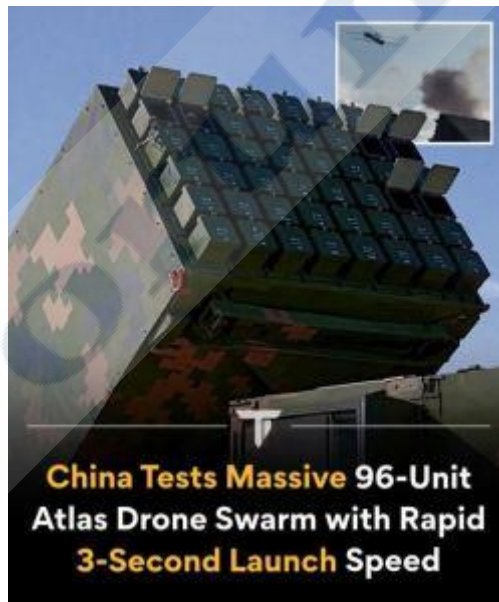
- **A twister, commonly known as a tornado, is a rapidly rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground.**
- **Formation mechanism:**
  - **Initial condition:** Warm, moist air near the surface rises while cold, dry air above creates strong atmospheric instability.
  - **Rotation development:** Wind shear causes changes in wind speed and direction with height, which creates a horizontal spinning motion in the air.
  - **Vertical formation:** Strong updrafts in a thunderstorm tilt this horizontal rotation into a vertical position and intensify it.
  - **Final stage:** Descending air helps pull the rotating column downward, and when it touches the ground, it becomes a tornado or twister.
- **Types:**
  - **Supercell tornadoes:** These are the most intense and form from rotating thunderstorms with a mesocyclone, causing major destruction.
  - **Landspouts:** These are weaker and short-lived tornadoes that form without a mesocyclone.
  - **Waterspouts:** These form over water bodies and may sometimes move onto land.
  - **Multiple-vortex tornadoes:** These consist of smaller rotating columns within a larger tornado, increasing damage intensity.
- **Key characteristics:**
  - **Structure:** They appear as a funnel-shaped cloud, often visible due to dust and debris.
  - **Intensity:** Wind speeds can exceed 480 km/h, making them highly destructive.
  - **Duration and Size:** Most last less than 10 minutes, and their width can range from a few metres to over 3 km.
  - **Movement and Rotation:** They follow unpredictable paths and rotate counter-clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere, while flying debris causes major damage.

- **Measurement:** Twisters are measured using the Enhanced Fujita (EF) Scale, which classifies them based on damage and estimated wind speeds.
- **Geographic distribution:**
  - **High frequency:** United States, especially Tornado Alley (Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska).
  - **Other regions:** Bangladesh, Canada, Argentina, and Australia.
  - **India:** Tornadoes are rare in India, they mostly occur in eastern states, including Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, and Assam.

### Atlas Drone Swarm System

**News:** Recently, the Chinese People's Liberation Army unveiled the new Atlas drone swarm system with mass launch and single-operator control capability.

#### About Atlas Drone Swarm System



Source – WION

- It is a mobile battlefield platform designed to deploy and coordinate large numbers of drones from a single command point.

- **Designed by:** The system has been manufactured by China's China Electronic Technology Group Corporation (CETC).
- **Purpose:** The system is intended for reconnaissance, electronic disruption, communication, deception, and coordinated strikes across a large perimeter using a single operator.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Integrated Unit Structure:** The system consists of three units — a Swarm-2 ground combat vehicle, a command vehicle, and a support vehicle working together.
  - **Launch and Control System:** Drones are truck-launched at intervals of less than three seconds, and a single command vehicle can control up to 96 drones simultaneously.
  - **Mass Launch and Rapid Deployment:** The system can launch up to 96 drones and deploy them within around 300 seconds for reconnaissance or attack missions.
  - **Algorithm-based Swarm Coordination:** The drones operate as a coordinated swarm, where they can adapt formations, identify and reidentify targets, and change routes without continuous human input.
  - **Flexible Operational Capability:** The drones can form defensive structures and precision strike patterns based on mission requirements.
  - **Multi-role Payloads:** Each drone can carry electro-optical reconnaissance payloads, strike munitions, and communication relay systems for varied battlefield roles.
- **Significance:** The system highlights a shift toward intelligent, swarm-based warfare with high coordination, autonomy, and operational flexibility.

### **'Abhilekh Patal' Portal**

**News: Prime Minister** Narendra Modi recently highlighted a digital archive by the National Archives of India and encouraged people to explore the 'Abhilekh Patal' portal to better understand India's history.

#### **About 'Abhilekh Patal' Portal**



Source: ET

- It is an online portal that provides **access to the digitised collections and reference materials of the National Archives of India.**
- **“Abhilekh” is a Sanskrit term meaning records, while “Patal” refers to a board or surface.** Together, they form the acronym for **Portal for Access to Archives and Learning.**
- **Curated by: It is curated by the National Archives of India (NAI).**
- **Nodal Ministry: It functions under the Ministry of Culture.**
- It is still being developed, and more data is regularly added.
- **Mission: It is to provide easy access to India’s historical archives, which include around 7 million records.** As part of this effort, these records are **being digitised to make them accessible in the modern era.**
- **Purpose: Its main purpose is to make historical records easily accessible to people across the world.**
  - Researchers, students, and curious learners can use it **to study original sources that provide insights into events, people, and social changes.**
- **How it works:**
  - It provides **access to an index of about 7 million records** through its “Reference Tools” collection.
  - To make access easier, **users can request copies through the Page on Demand (POD) service** for records that are already digitised.

- For records listed but not yet digitised, **users can use the Digitise on Demand (DOD) service.**
- If **records are only in the reference tools and not yet in the database**, users can contact the **research room for assistance.**
- **Coverage:** The archival collections available through this portal cover a **wide range of historical records** preserved by the NAI. These include:
  - **Public records** transferred from various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India
  - **Private papers** of eminent personalities
  - **Archival reference media** such as photographs, maps, microfilms and rare documents
  - **Digitised historical government files and archival collections** maintained by NAI

#### About National Archives of India



राष्ट्रीय अभिलेखागार  
National Archives of India

Source: Official website of National Archives of India

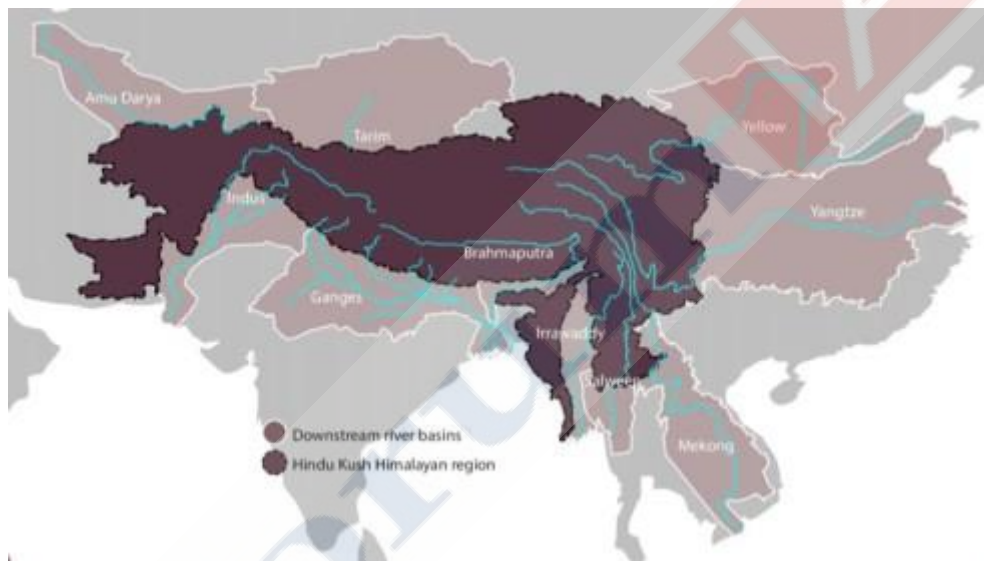
- It is the **custodian of the records of enduring value of the Government of India.** It is the **biggest archival repository in South Asia.**
- **Establishment year:** It was established on 11 March 1891 at Calcutta (Kolkata) as the Imperial Records Department.
- **Nodal ministry: Ministry of Culture**
  - **Head office: It is at New Delhi.**
  - **Regional office: It is at Bhopal.**
  - **Record centre: It has three record centers: Bhubaneswar, Jaipur and Puducherry**
- It has a vast corpus of records such as **public records, private papers, oriental records, cartographic records and microfilms**, which constitute an invaluable source of information for scholars/administrators and other users of archives.
- The **Director General of Archives, heading the Department, is responsible for the implementation of the Public Records Act, 1993 and the rules made thereunder, Public**

**Records Rules, 1997** for the management, administration and preservation of public records in the Ministries, Departments, Public Sector Undertakings etc. of the Central Government.

### Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Region

**News:** According to a new report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region has recently recorded its lowest snow persistence, at 27% below the long-term average for the winter season from November 2025 to March 2026.

#### About Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Region



Source: India Today

- **The Hindu Kush is a great mountain system of Central Asia.**
- It is also known as the **greater Himalayan region** or **'the roof of the world.'**
- **Spread:** It extends about 3,500 km and spreads across eight countries –
  - **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.**
- **Boundaries:** Its western boundary extends to **Afghanistan**, and its eastern boundary extends to **Myanmar**.
  - It runs from **northeast to southwest** and **separates the Amu Darya valley in the north** from the **Indus River valley in the south.**

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- It has the **largest area covered by glaciers and permafrost** outside the Polar Regions, and is therefore often also referred to as the **‘Third Pole’**.
- **Physiography:** It is a **geo-morphologically unique region** with the **mighty Himalayas acting as the geological buffer** protecting the lush green southern slopes **from the dry and arid winds of the north** thus supporting a unique mosaic of biota and eco-regions.
- **Rivers:** It is the **source of ten large Asian river systems** – the Amu Darya, **Indus**, **Ganges**, **Brahmaputra** (Yarlungtsanpo), **Irrawaddy**, Salween (Nu), **Mekong** (Lancang), Yangtse (Jinsha), Yellow River (Huanghe), and Tarim (Dayan).
  - It is known as the **“Water Tower of Asia”**.
- **Mountains:** The Hindu Kush is divided into three parts:
  - **The eastern section** (from Karambar Pass to Dorāh Pass near Mount Tirich Mir),
  - **The central section** (up to Shebar Pass near Kabul), and
  - **The western section**, also called the **Bābā Mountains**, which slopes down to the Kermū Pass (Afghanistan)
- **Highest peaks:** The **Terich Mir** is the highest mountain of the Hindu Kush range, and the highest mountain in the world outside of the Himalayas–Karakoram range.
- **Geology and climate:**
  - **The Hindu Kush and the Pamir mountains form the world’s most active zone for intermediate-depth earthquakes.**
  - **The area generally experiences rainy or snowy summers (July to September) and dry winters.**
  - **The central and western Hindu Kush are influenced by a Mediterranean-type climate, with hot, dry summers and cold winters.**
- **Importance:** It is home to over 240 million people, and 1.7 billion people live in the river basins downstream, while food grown in these basins reaches three billion people.
- It is home to:
  - **4 biodiversity hotspots**
  - **6 UNESCO natural World Heritage sites**
  - **30 Ramsar sites**
  - **330 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and 53 Important Plant Areas (IPAs)**

- **Threat:** The HKH region is under stress as snow in the river basins is decreasing and glaciers are shrinking quickly due to climate change.

### Key Facts About Mali

**News:** Mali's defence minister was killed in a suicide truck bombing during coordinated attacks by jihadist militants and separatist groups.

### Key Facts About Mali



Source - Britannica

- **Location:** Mali is a landlocked country of Western Africa and lies largely in the Saharan and Sahelian regions.
- **Bordered by:** It shares borders with Algeria in the north, Niger and Burkina Faso in the east, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea in the south, and Senegal and Mauritania in the west.
- **Capital:** Its capital city is Bamako, which is located on the Niger River.
- **Climate:** It has a tropical savanna climate in the south which gradually changes into a desert climate in the north.

- **Terrain :** Mali is largely flat and arid and about 65% of its area is covered by desert or semi-desert.
- **Regional variation:** The Sahara Desert occupies a large part of the country, and the landscape gradually changes from desert in the north to the Sahel region and then to the Sudanian savanna in the south, showing a clear north–south transition.
- **Highest peak:** The highest point is Hombori Tondo (1,155 m).
- **Major rivers:** The Niger River flows through the interior and serves as the main trading and transport artery, while the Sénégal River also forms part of the drainage system.
- **Unique Feature:** The Prime Meridian passes through the city of Gao.
- **Vegetation:** Vegetation follows climatic zones, with savanna in the south, steppe vegetation in the Sahel, and almost no vegetation in the Sahara region.
- **Fauna:** Animal life includes gazelles, antelopes, giraffes, elephants, lions, panthers, hyenas, crocodiles, hippopotamuses, monkeys, snakes, and birds like ostrich.

### Science Panel for the Global Energy Transition (SPGET)

**News:** The Science Panel for the Global Energy Transition (SPGET) was launched on April 24, 2026 in Colombia to accelerate fossil fuel phase-out.

**About Science Panel for the Global Energy Transition (SPGET)**



Source – WeDontHaveTime

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- It is a global science-based panel that provides policy-relevant advice to accelerate transition away from fossil fuels.
- **Launched:** It was launched on April 24, 2026 in Santa Marta, Colombia.
- **Origin:** Its creation follows calls made during the plenary of COP30 in Belém, Brazil.
- **Mission:** It aims to provide fast, science-based, and policy-relevant advice to governments for accelerating energy transition efforts.
- **Objective:** It seeks to develop country and sector-level milestones aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5°C and guide fossil fuel phase-out policies.
- **Backing:** It is backed by the Brazilian COP30 Presidency and supported by the Dutch Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth and Colombia's Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.
- **Key Highlights of SPGET:**
  - **Global Participation:** The launch conference brought together representatives from more than 56 countries to build a global coalition.
  - **Policy Guidance:** It will produce analyses, policy briefs, and country-level engagement to support nationally determined contributions and sectoral strategies.
  - **Scientific Approach:** It focuses on accessible evidence, latest science, and actionable insights for just and orderly transitions.

### **RBI's New Norms for Recognizing Bad Loans**

**News:** The Reserve Bank of India issued 14 final directions on April 27 introducing new norms for recognising bad loans in banks.

**About RBI's New Norms for Recognizing Bad Loans**



Source - TH

- **Main change:** The new RBI norms shift banks from the incurred loss model, which is based on past losses.
  - Banks will now follow a forward-looking Expected Credit Loss (ECL) model that requires them to build buffers based on likely future losses.
- **Key Highlights of New RBI Norms:**
  - **Three-Stage Approach:** Loss allowance will follow three stages based on changes in credit risk since initial recognition.
    - **Stage 1:** Financial instruments where there is no significant increase in credit risk, and banks will use a 12-month Probability of Default for loss estimation.
    - **Stage 2:** Financial instruments where there is a significant increase in credit risk since initial recognition, and banks will use a lifetime Probability of Default for loss estimation.
    - **Stage 3:** Under this stage, instruments are seen as 'credit impaired' as at the reporting date, which means the loan is facing serious repayment problems.
  - **Implementation Timeline:** The norms will come into effect from April 1, 2027.
  - **Retention of NPA Definition:** A loan will still be treated as a non-performing asset if it remains unpaid for 90 days.
- **Implications for Banks and Economy:**

- **Improved Risk Management:** Banks will use data-driven models and future economic conditions, which will improve transparency and early stress recognition.
- **Higher Initial Provisioning:** Some banks may see a one-time increase in provisioning, but overall capital adequacy impact is expected to remain manageable.
- **Operational Changes:** Banks will require closer integration between finance and risk functions and investment in data systems and modelling capabilities.

### Right to Safe Travel

**News:** The Supreme Court highlighted the Right to Safe Travel while issuing a 13-point directive after two road accidents in November 2025 caused 34 deaths.

#### About Right to Safe Travel



Source - TH

- **Right to Safe Travel means that commuters should be able to use roads without facing avoidable dangers caused by unsafe conditions or poor management.**
- **Constitutional mandate:**
  - **Article 21 and Safety:** Article 21 guarantees protection of life and personal liberty, which also includes the safety of road users.
  - **Positive Duty of State:** The State has a duty to ensure a safe environment where human life is protected and valued at all times.

- **Key Highlights of the Supreme Court Ruling:**
  - **Accountability of Agencies:** The Court criticized road agencies like National Highways Authority of India and state PWDs for administrative lapses and infrastructural gaps.
  - **Right to Life Interpretation:** The Court stated that even one avoidable death reflects failure of the State's protective role.
  - **Use of Constitutional Power:** The Court exercised its extraordinary powers under Article 142 to address the issue effectively.
  - **Concern on Road Practices:** It highlighted dangers like illegal parking, black spots, and roadside dhabas causing accidents.
- **Supreme Court Directions:**
  - **Restriction on Parking:** No heavy or commercial vehicle shall park on highways except at designated areas.
  - **Technology Use:** Authorities must use Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) for tracking vehicles and integrating alerts with e-Challan systems.
  - **Removal of Illegal Structures:** Unauthorized dhabas and commercial structures within highway limits must be demolished.
  - **Land Use Control:** States must restrict land use changes within specified distances from highways.
  - **Highway Monitoring:** Dedicated surveillance teams must ensure round-the-clock monitoring.
  - **Emergency and Safety Measures:** Deployment of ambulances, cranes, truck lay-byes, and installation of lighting, cameras, and warning signs must be ensured.

### **Luzon Island**

**News:** China's military recently conducted military drills, including live-fire exercises in waters east of the Philippines' Luzon Island.

#### **About Luzon Island**



Source: World Atlas

- It is located in the **northern part of the Philippines**.
- It is the **largest and most populous island** in the **Philippines**.
- **Boundary:** The island is bordered by the **Philippine Sea to the east, the South China Sea to the west, and the Luzon Strait to the north, which separates it from Taiwan**.
- **Capital:** **Manila**, the capital of the Philippines, is **situated on this island**.
- **Area:** It covers an area of about **42,458 sq. miles** and is the **15th largest island in the world**.
  - It has a **coastline over 5,000 km long**.
- It is divided into **Northern, Central, and Southern regions, along with the National Capital Region**.
- **Landforms:** It features varied **landforms** such as **mountains, plains, rivers, lakes, peninsulas, bays, and gulfs**.
- **Mountains:** Major mountain ranges include the **Cordillera, Sierra Madre, and Zambales Mountains**.

- Its **highest peak** is **Mount Pulag**, rising to 9,612 feet (2,930 m).
- **Gulf and Bays:** **Lingayen Gulf and Manila Bay on the west**, and **Lamon Bay and Lagonoy Gulf on the east**.
- **Rivers:** The major rivers are **Cagayan, Abra, Agno, Pampanga, and Bicol**.
- **Lake:** **Laguna de Bay, which is the largest lake in the Philippines, is located in Luzon**.
- **Volcanoes:** The island has active volcanoes, including **Mayon Volcano**, known for its **near-perfect cone shape**.
- **Cities:** Major cities include **Manila, Quezon City, Pasay, Cabanatuan, Legazpi, Baguio, Batangas, and Laoag**.

### **B'nei Menashe**

**News:** Approximately 250 members of the B'nei Menashe community from Northeast India have recently reached Israel, becoming the first group to arrive under "Operation Wings of Dawn."

#### **About B'nei Menashe**



Source: Hindustan Times

- The Benei Menashe is a small ethnic community evolved **within Chin-Kuki-Mizo tribes**, known collectively as the **"Zo."**
- **Distribution:** They are located in **North East India, particularly within Manipur and Mizoram, and neighbouring areas of Myanmar and Bangladesh.**

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- **About five thousand Bnei Menashe live in Israel, scattered between Kiryat Arba, Nof HaGalil, Sderot, Nitzan, Akko and a few other towns.**
- They are known as the **Shinlung in India**. Around **10,000 members of the community** live in India.
- **Origin:** According to their belief, **they are descendants of the tribe of Manasseh (regard themselves as “Children of Menashe”)**, one of the **ten lost tribes of Israel** who are believed to have **gone into exile after the Assyrian conquest of Israel around 722 BCE**.
  - They believe **their ancestors migrated eastward through regions like Persia (modern-day Iran) and Afghanistan** before settling in Northeast India.
  - Before British rule in the late 19th century, **they followed an ancestral tribal religion featuring a figure called Manasia or Manmasi**.
  - Over time, during British rule, many of them **converted to Christianity due to missionary influence**.
- **Religion:** They largely follow **Judaism**.
- **Language:** The languages they speak belong to the **Tibetan-Burmese family**.
- **Tradition:** Men typically wear **kippahs or hats**, while married **women cover** their heads.
- **Bnei Menashe movement:** The **Bnei Menashe movement** began in 1951 when **Challianthanga (Challa)**, a Mizo Pentecostal leader in India, had a vision that his people’s homeland was Israel.
  - This sparked a **shift among the Chin-Kuki-Mizo people in Northeast India**, leading them to embrace their identity as **descendants of the lost tribe of Manasseh**.
  - In the 1970s, a **Judaizing movement inspired by the Hebrew Bible began, with limited contact with global Judaism**.
  - In the 1980s, **Eliyahu Avichail** guided the community and introduced Jewish traditions.
  - However, those moving to **Israel must convert again to Judaism to gain citizenship**.

### Sacrifice Ratio

**News:** Recent steps to curb inflation in India, U.S.A., and U.K show that lowering inflation has economic costs, which are measured using the sacrifice ratio.

### About Sacrifice Ratio



Source: Investopedia

- The sacrifice ratio is an economic ratio that measures the effect of rising and falling inflation on a country's total production and output.
- It reflects the trade-off between price stability and economic growth.
- How it is calculated:
  - The ratio is derived by dividing the cost of lost production by the percentage change in inflation.
  - It measures the loss in output for each 1% change in inflation.
- Indication: Higher sacrifice ratios indicate that reducing inflation leads to greater short-term costs, such as higher unemployment and lower industrial output.
- How it is utilized:
  - By studying past sacrifice ratios, governing bodies like the Reserve Bank of India can evaluate the effectiveness of fiscal policies.
  - It helps central banks decide their monetary policies, whether to control inflation or support growth.

### Virli Khandar Excavation

**News:** Recent excavation at a megalithic site in Virli Khandar has revealed distinctive burial architecture, rare artefacts and unusual pottery arrangements in Vidarbha.

#### About Virli Khandar Excavation



Source - IE

- It is an ongoing excavation at a megalithic burial site in Virli Khandar that is revealing important details about ancient funerary practices and cultural patterns.
- **Location:** The site is located in Pauni tehsil of Bhandara district in Maharashtra.
- **Period:** Preliminary observations suggest a timeline of around 500 BCE (about 2,500 years ago), while radiocarbon dating indicates a broader range from 1000 BCE to 300 CE.
- **Key Findings:**
  - **Distinct Burial Patterns:** The site shows a composite megalithic structure with stone circles and menhirs, unlike nearby dolmen burial sites such as Pimpalgaon Nipani and Tirota Kheri.
  - **Documented Burials:** Researchers have recorded 69 megalithic burials, out of which four are selected for excavation.
  - **Significant Artefacts:** Important finds include copper necklace, iron tools (axes, chisels, ladles, arrowheads), etched carnelian beads, a gold earring, and bone remains.
  - **Unique Pottery Arrangement:** Nearly 50 pots were arranged systematically in inverted position, with larger bowls covered by smaller ones.
  - **Soil Engineering:**

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- The pots were placed over a layer of black cotton soil above the natural lateritic (murum) base.
- The sticky nature of this soil helped to stabilise the vessels.
- It kept the pots largely in position despite breakage caused by the weight of the overlying soil.
- **Unusual Practice:** Almost all pots were placed upside down, and the reason is still under study.
- **Significance:** The findings provide fresh insights into megalithic culture and funerary practices in the Vidarbha region.

### About Menhirs

- **Definition:** A menhir is a large, man-made upright stone, usually tapered at the top and erected as a monument.
- **Occurrence:** Menhirs can be found individually or as part of larger megalithic complexes.
- **Uses:** Menhirs are intentionally erected by humans as monumental landmarks, often associated with burial or megalithic structures.
- **Examples:** The Grand Menhir Brisé in France (20.6 m) and Mudumal Megalithic Menhirs in Telangana, on UNESCO's tentative World Heritage list, are notable examples.

### Operation Global-Hunt

**News:** Recently, the NCB secured the return of Mohammad Salim Dola, an alleged international drug trafficker and a close associate of fugitive don Dawood Ibrahim, from Turkey, who was the first target under Operation Global-Hunt.

### About Operation Global-Hunt



Source: The Hindu

- **Operation Global-Hunt** is a mission launched to dismantle 100 drug networks run by India's fugitives abroad, including in Dubai, Canada and Europe.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).
- **Aim:** It aims to track down traffickers through coordinated efforts among central agencies and using Interpol Red Notices and seize their assets within India.
- **Note:** India is a signatory to the single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.
- **Focus:** The mission focuses on a most-wanted list of traffickers involved in the supply of fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, and synthetic drugs entering India.
- **Implementation strategy:** NCB has submitted a three-year roadmap to the Union Home Ministry for Operation Global-Hunt:
  - It was decided that all stakeholder departments across states will jointly launch a three-year nationwide campaign against drug abuse.
  - The operational framework for each pillar of the anti-drug strategy will be clearly defined, specific and measurable targets will be set, and regular reviews will be conducted to ensure accountability.

### About Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

- **Formation:** NCB was constituted by the Government of India in 1986 under the [Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985](#).
- **Nodal Ministry:** It is the apex coordinating agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Headquarters:** It is located in New Delhi.
- **Motto:** It has the motto of Intelligence, Enforcement, and Coordination.
- **Mission:** Its mission is to prevent and combat the abuse and illicit trafficking of drugs.
- **Functions:** Following functions are performed by NCB:
  - Coordination among various Central and State Agencies engaged in drug law enforcement;
  - Assisting States in enhancing their drug law enforcement effort;
  - Collection and dissemination of intelligence;
  - Analysis of seizure data, study of trends and modus operandi;
  - Preparation of National Drug Enforcement Statistics
  - Liaison with International agencies such as UNDCP, INCB, INTERPOL, Customs Cooperation Council, RILO etc;
  - National contact point for intelligence and investigations

### Swamp Deer

**News:** A study reports that translocated hard-ground swamp deer from Kanha to Satpura are increasing and breeding successfully, reducing extinction risk.

### About Swamp Deer



Source – WII

- **Swamp deer, also called barasingha, is a deer species found in the Indian subcontinent.**
- **Subspecies: There are three subspecies of swamp deer found in the Indian subcontinent, which show regional distribution and variation.**
  - **Western Swamp Deer: The western subspecies (*Rucervus duvaucelii*) is found in Nepal.**
  - **Southern Swamp Deer (Hard-ground): The southern subspecies (*Rucervus duvaucelii branderi*) was once found widely across India, but it now survives naturally only in Kanha, which makes it highly vulnerable.**
  - **Eastern Swamp Deer: The eastern subspecies (*Rucervus duvaucelii ranjitsinhi*) is found in Kaziranga and Dudhwa National Parks.**
- **Habitat: It lives in open forests and grasslands and depends on wetland and herbaceous plants.**
- **Distribution: It is found in India and Nepal and it is extinct in Bangladesh and Pakistan.**
- **Characteristics:**
  - **Size and Body: Adult males weigh 170–280 kg, while females weigh 130–145 kg, and the shoulder height ranges from 119–135 cm, which shows clear size differences.**
  - **Coat: The coat is generally brown, with males being darker.**
    - **It changes with seasons, as a thick brown coat develops in winter and is replaced by a reddish-brown coat in summer.**
  - **Antlers: Antlers are found only in males and measure about 74 cm on average, with some reaching 104 cm, and they have multiple points.**
  - **Social Behavior:**
    - **Swamp Deer have matrilineal societies with dominant adult females usually leading mixed herds.**
    - **They are polygynous with distinctive male and female linear hierarchies.**
  - **Diet: It feeds mainly on wetland plants and herbaceous vegetation.**
- **Threats**

- Habitat alteration
- Fragmentation of grasslands
- Hunting
- Conservation Status
  - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
  - CITES: Appendix I
  - Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

### Exercise 'Pragati'

**News:** The Indian Army announced hosting 11 friendly countries for the inaugural multilateral Exercise 'Pragati' at Umroi, Meghalaya.

#### About Exercise 'Pragati'



Source – DD News

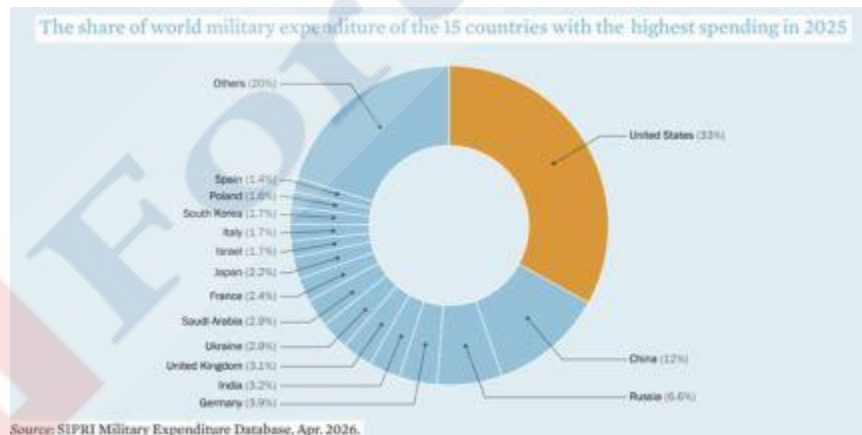
- **Pragati (Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region)** is a multilateral military exercise aimed at cooperation and capability building among regional armies.
- **Hosted by:** It is hosted by the Indian Army.
- **Location:** The exercise will be held at the Foreign Training Node in Umroi, Meghalaya.
- **Participants:** It will include military delegations and troops from 11 friendly foreign countries across Asia, Africa, and the Indo-Pacific.
- **Edition :** It is the inaugural edition of the exercise.

- **Objective:** The exercise aims to strengthen defence cooperation, enhance interoperability, and build mutual trust among participating nations.
- **Key aspect:**
  - **Joint training focus:** The exercise will include drills in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism environments, including small-unit tactics and surveillance.
  - **Operational learning:** It will involve lectures and workshops on India's doctrine, command structures, and counter-insurgency experience.
  - **Collaborative framework:** It reflects a shift to multilateral consortium-style training with standardised procedures and shared tactical understanding.
- **Significance:** It highlights India's effort to act as a regional security mentor and strengthen defence diplomacy and collective security.

### India Becomes 5th Largest Military Spender in 2025: SIPRI

News: India ranked as the fifth-largest military spender in 2025, according to a report released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

#### About India Becomes 5th Largest Military Spender in 2025: SIPRI



Source – SIPRI

- In April 2026, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute confirmed India as the world's fifth-largest military spender in its annual report.
- Reports titled: SIPRI annual report 2026 titled "Trends in World Military Expenditure".

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- **Key Findings:**
  - **India's Spending Level:** India's military expenditure reached \$92.1 billion, marking an 8.9% increase over the previous year.
  - **Global Ranking:** India became the fifth-largest military spender, after the USA, China, Russia, and Germany.
  - **Regional Trends:** China increased spending by 7.4% to \$336 billion, while Pakistan increased by 11% to \$11.9 billion.
  - **Global Spending Pattern:** Total global military expenditure reached \$2,887 billion, with the top three countries contributing 51%.
  - **European Contribution:** Europe recorded a 14% rise, reaching \$864 billion, driven by war and NATO rearmament efforts.
  - **Arms Import Trends:** India's arms imports declined by 4%, yet it remained the second-largest importer with 8.2% share.

#### **About Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**

- **SIPRI is an independent international institute that conducts research on conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament, and provides data and analysis.**
- **Establishment:** SIPRI was established in 1966 based on a decision by the Swedish Parliament and is based in Stockholm.
- **Vision and mission:** Its vision is a peaceful world with reduced insecurity, while its mission includes research, policy analysis, dialogue, transparency, and providing authoritative information.
- **Funding:** SIPRI receives a substantial annual grant from the Swedish Government and also seeks support from other organizations for research activities.
- **Structure:** Its structure includes a Governing Board, Director, Deputy Director, Research Staff Collegium, and support staff, totaling around 100 people.
- **Key Publications:**
  - **SIPRI Yearbook:** It provides a definitive account of armaments and international security.
  - **Arms Transfers Database:** It tracks all international transfers of major conventional arms since 1950.

- **Military Expenditure Database:** It reports annual military spending for most countries.
- **Arms Industry Database:** It tracks the world's 100 largest arms-producing and military services companies.

### **Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0**

**News:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj released Panchayat Advancement Index 2.0 Report for FY 2023-24 on National Panchayati Raj Day 2026.

#### **About Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0**



Source – MoPR

- It is the nationwide framework to measure the progress of Rural Local Government Institutions (Gram Panchayats (GPs)/Traditional Local Bodies (TLBs)) using objective and verifiable indicators.
- **Introduced in:** The Panchayat Advancement Index was introduced in 2025, and its first baseline report was released for FY 2022-23.
- **Launched by:** It is launched by Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- **Objective:** The index aims to promote evidence-based planning, performance monitoring, and incentivisation of Panchayati Raj Institutions, while supporting Gram Panchayat Development Plans and identifying best practices.

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- **Index is anchored in:** The Index is anchored in the framework of Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs), which aggregates the 17 global SDGs into 9 thematic areas relevant to Panchayati Raj Institutions
- **Key Aspects**
  - **Nine Thematic Areas:** PAI 2.0 evaluates Panchayats across nine themes under Localization of Sustainable Development Goals, namely Poverty, Health, Child Welfare, Water, Environment, Infrastructure, Social Justice, Good Governance, and Women's Empowerment.
  - **Performance Categories:** Panchayats are classified into five categories based on scores to enable benchmarking and competition.
    - Achiever (A+ : 90 and above)
    - Front Runner (A : 75 to below 90)
    - Performer (B : 60 to below 75)
    - Aspirant (C : 40 to below 60)
    - Beginner (D : below 40)
  - **Refinement:** The framework has been simplified in comparison to PAI Version 1.0, where indicators have been reduced from 516 indicators and 794 data points to 150 indicators and 230 data points, along with features like single integrated data entry form, real-time dashboards, and validation mechanisms for better accuracy and usability.
  - **State Inclusion:** The exercise covered 33 States and UTs, though West Bengal did not participate, and Delhi and Chandigarh were excluded due to absence of Gram Panchayats.
- **Key Findings**
  - **National Participation:** The index recorded 97.30% participation, with 2,59,867 Panchayats submitting validated data, showing improvement from earlier version.
  - **Front Runner Status:** A total of 3,635 Gram Panchayats were placed in the Front Runner category (Grade A) based on composite scores.
  - **Largest Segment:** The Performer category (Grade B) includes 1,18,824 Panchayats (45.72%), making it the largest group.

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- **Highest Performing State:** Tripura emerged as the top performer, with nearly 80% Panchayats achieving Front Runner status.
- **Zero Achievers (A+):** No Panchayat achieved the Achiever (A+) category, which requires very high composite scores.
- **Maximum Participation:** Uttar Pradesh recorded full participation, with all 57,678 Panchayats submitting data.

### Naval Anti-ship Missile-Short Range (NASM-SR)

**News:** DRDO and Indian Navy successfully conducted the maiden salvo launch of NASM-SR from a naval helicopter off the Bay of Bengal coast.

#### About Naval Anti-ship Missile-Short Range (NASM-SR)



Source – DD News

- **NASM-SR is an advanced air-launched anti-ship missile system designed for short-range naval operations.**
- **Developer:** The missile has been developed by Hyderabad-based Research Center Imarat in collaboration with multiple DRDO laboratories and Indian industries.
- **Operational Role:** It is designed to be launched from naval helicopters to strike enemy ships with high precision, including waterline targets.
- **Key features:**

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- **Range:** It can strike targets at an approximate range of 55 km with a sea-skimming profile to avoid detection.
- **Salvo launch capability:** The system can launch multiple missiles in quick succession from the same helicopter platform.
- **Waterline hit capability:** The missile can accurately strike at the waterline of enemy ships.
- **Propulsion system:** It uses a solid propulsion booster along with a long-burn sustainer.
- **Advanced guidance system:** It includes fibre-optic gyroscope-based inertial navigation and radio-altimeter for accurate targeting.
- **Connectivity:** It has a high-bandwidth two-way data link which enables lock-on-after-launch and in-flight retargeting.
- **Control system:** It uses electro-mechanical actuator and jet vane control for better maneuverability and control.
- **Indigenous development:** Critical subsystems like seeker, avionics, and algorithms are developed indigenously by DRDO laboratories and Indian industries.

### **Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA)**

**News:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has operationalised the Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA) to bring transparency and standardisation to performance claims made by financial intermediaries.

**About Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA)**



Source: NSE

- Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA) is a regulatory initiative designed to bring transparency and standardisation to performance claims made by financial intermediaries.
- Operationalized by: It has been operationalised by the [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#).
  - Operation from: The agency will begin regular operations from May 4, 2026.
- Aim: It aimed at enhancing transparency and investor protection in the financial markets.
- PaRRVA recognised: CARE Ratings Limited has been granted recognition as the PaRRVA.
- PaRRVA Data Centre (PDC): [National Stock Exchange of India Limited \(NSE\)](#) will function as the PDC.
- Beneficiary: The following entities can use PaRRVA:
  - Investment Advisers (IA)
  - Research Analysts (RA)
  - Trading Members (TM)
  - Investors seeking verified performance data
- Function:

- Investor protection and promotion of Market integrity: It will enable regulated entities such as investment advisers, research analysts, and algorithmic trading service providers to showcase their verified performance.
- Data-driven decisions: It will also allow investors to access reliable and authenticated performance data, improving informed decision-making.
- Regulatory compliance: Regulated entities will be permitted to use PaRRVA-verified performance in their advertisements, in line with SEBI's regulatory provisions.

### Tapir

**News:** World Tapir Day is being observed globally on 30th April to raise awareness about the species of Tapir and protect it from human encroachment.

#### About Tapir



Source: News on air

- Tapirs are large herbivorous mammals.
- They are also known as “living fossils” due to their lineage dating back millions of years.
- They form one of the oldest surviving genera in the animal kingdom.
- Habitat: They live in wetlands, forests, savanna, and rainforests.
- Tapirs prefer wooded or grassy areas with places to shelter during the day and a lake, river, or pond for taking a night time dip.

- **Distribution:** They inhabit jungle and forest regions of South America, Central America, and Southeast Asia.
  - They have a range that includes Mexico, Central America, South America, and Southeast Asia's Malaya and Sumatra.
- **Species:** There are four species of Tapir found around in the world:
  - **Malayan Tapir:** They are the largest tapir species and native to Southeast Asia.
  - **Baird's Tapir:** They are the largest land mammal in Central America.
  - **Lowland Tapir:** They are the most widely distributed species. They are native to South America from Colombia to Paraguay and Brazil.
  - **Mountain Tapir:** They inhabit the high-altitude regions of the Andes. They are one of the most endangered mammals in the world.
- **Characteristics:**
  - **Appearance:**
    - Tapirs have four toes on the front feet and three on the back.
    - They have small eyes and ears, and a teardrop-shaped body that is narrow in front and wider at the back, helping them move through dense vegetation.
    - Their nose and upper lip form a short, flexible, trunk-like snout, which they use for smelling, breathing underwater like a snorkel, and grabbing leaves and fruits.
    - Males are slightly smaller than females.
  - **Diet:** They are herbivores and feed upon seeds and fruits, leaves, tree bark and aquatic plants.
  - **Behaviour:** Tapirs communicate through high-pitched whistles, defensive snorts with foot stamping, and scent marking to identify others and avoid conflict.
    - They are good swimmers and spend much of their time in water, where they cool off, find food, and escape predators.
- **Ecological role:**
  - They are important seed dispersers, or "forest gardeners".
    - They help to maintain forest diversity by transporting seeds over long distances.

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- They are now considered a barometer of ecosystem health.
- **Threat:**
  - **Hunting for their meat and hide**
  - **Habitat loss**
- **Conservation status:**
  - **Three of the four tapir species: the Malayan tapir, Baird's tapir, and mountain tapir are classified as Endangered by the IUCN.**
  - **IUCN status of Lowland Tapir is Vulnerable.**