

Factly Weekly

Compilation

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

1st Week

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Famous Megalithic Site of Chokahatu

News: Researchers and local groups renewed efforts to secure UNESCO World Heritage status for the megalithic site of Chokahatu in Jharkhand.

About Famous Megalithic Site of Chokahatu



Source - DTE

- **Chokahatu is a famous megalithic burial site associated with the Munda tribe, where stones were erected in honour of the deceased as part of a long-standing cultural tradition.**
- **Location:** It is located in Bundu–Sonahatu area of Ranchi district in Jharkhand.
- **Naming:** The name Chokahatu is of Austric Mundari origin and means “a place of mourning.”
- **Time Period:** According to a Munda folktale, the community settled in the area over 2,800 years ago and brought their megalithic traditions with them.
- **Archaeological Discovery:** Col E.T. Dalton visited the site in 1872 after receiving information from T.F. Peppe and documented it in an article published in 1873.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Living Megalithism:** Communities continue to add new memorial stones for ancestors, making it a rare example of an uninterrupted living tradition.
 - **Large Megalithic Complex:** The site contains thousands of megalithic structures, including dolmens, cromlechs, standing stones, burial slabs, cairns, and stone circles.
 - **Multiple Functions:** The stones were used for burials, ancestor remembrance, rituals, boundary marking, and in some cases astronomical observations.

- **Adivasi Heritage:** The site is closely associated with the traditions of Munda and other Adivasi communities and reflects their social and cultural practices.
- **Significance:** Chokahatu is significant because its unique combination of living tradition, large-scale megalithic landscape, and cultural continuity strengthens its case for UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

AI-enabled Voice Chatbot 'Samadhan Didi'

News: Dr Jitendra Singh launched the CPGRAMS AI-enabled Voice Chatbot "Samadhan Didi" at Kartavya Bhawan, New Delhi.

About AI-enabled Voice Chatbot 'Samadhan Didi'



Source - CNBC

- **'Samadhan Didi'** is an AI-enabled voice chatbot that makes public grievance redressal simpler, more accessible, and multilingual.
- **Developed by:** The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) developed it in collaboration with [Bhashini](#).
- **Platform Integrated:** It is fully integrated into the [Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System](#) (CPGRAMS).
- **Key Features:**
 - **Voice-Based Grievance Filing:** Citizens can lodge grievances by simply speaking in their own language and describing their concerns in plain words.

- **Automatic Grievance Classification:** The chatbot understands the concern, asks relevant clarifying questions, identifies the appropriate Ministry, Department, category, and sub-category, and files the grievance with the correct authority.
- **Multilingual Accessibility:** The system supports the 22 languages of the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, and additional languages such as Bhojpuri, Garo, Khasi, Mijo, and Bodhi are being added in phases.
- **AI and Language Integration:** The chatbot combines Bhashini's language capabilities with grievance-classification models trained on CPGRAMS data to provide a seamless experience across Indian languages.

Babesia Infection

News: Eight Asiatic lions died and 17 others were infected during a recent outbreak of Babesia disease in Gujarat's Gir forest.

About Babesia Infection

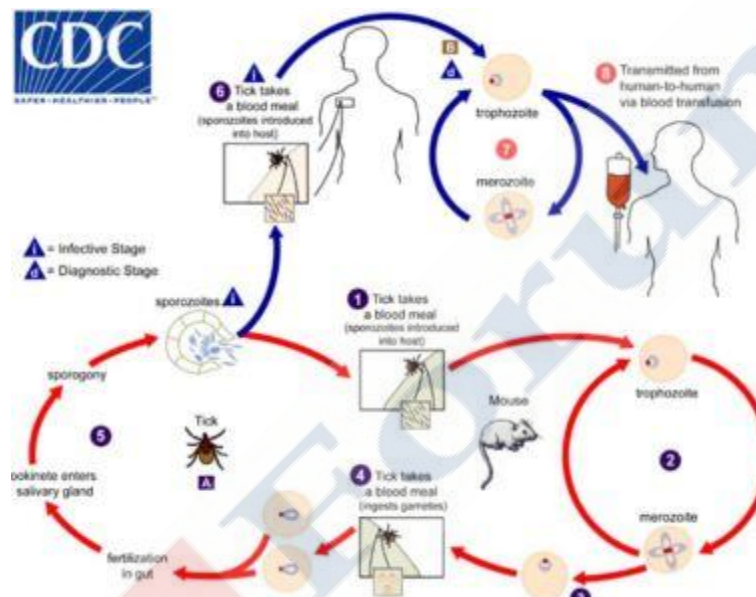


Figure 1. Source – CDC

- **Babesia is a genus of microscopic protozoan parasites that infect the red blood cells of animals and humans, causing the disease known as babesiosis.**
- **Causative Organism:** The disease is caused by eukaryotic intraerythrocytic parasitic protozoa belonging to the genus Babesia.
- **Mechanism:** The parasites invade, multiply, and survive inside the red blood cells (erythrocytes) of the host.
- **Primary Vectors:** The disease is mainly transmitted through the bites of infected hard-bodied ticks (such as Rhipicephalus, Ixodes, Dermacentor, and Haemaphysalis species).
- **Zoonotic Nature:** The disease naturally circulates in animals (cattle, rodents, and wildlife reservoirs) but can spill over into humans.
- **Alternative Transmission:** It can also spread via contaminated blood transfusions, organ transplantation, or vertically from mother to fetus (congenital)
- **Health Impacts :** The disease can cause severe destruction of red blood cells and may lead to anemia, jaundice, inflammation, blood coagulation disturbances, and capillary blockage.

- In severe cases, it can result in life-threatening complications.
- **Symptoms:** Symptoms include weakness, fever, coughing, nasal discharge, respiratory distress, anemia, jaundice, hemoglobinuria, and severe illness in some cases.
- **Treatment:** Treatment includes anti-protozoal medicines such as imidocarb dipropionate and diminazene aceturate, while tick control measures help reduce transmission.
- **Distribution:** The disease is distributed globally and is highly prevalent in tropical, subtropical, and temperate regions where tick vectors thrive.
- Wildlife strains are also found in biodiversity-rich areas such as the Gir landscape in Gujarat.

Blue Micromoon

News: A rare astronomical phenomenon will appear in the night sky, featuring a micromoon that will also be a blue moon.

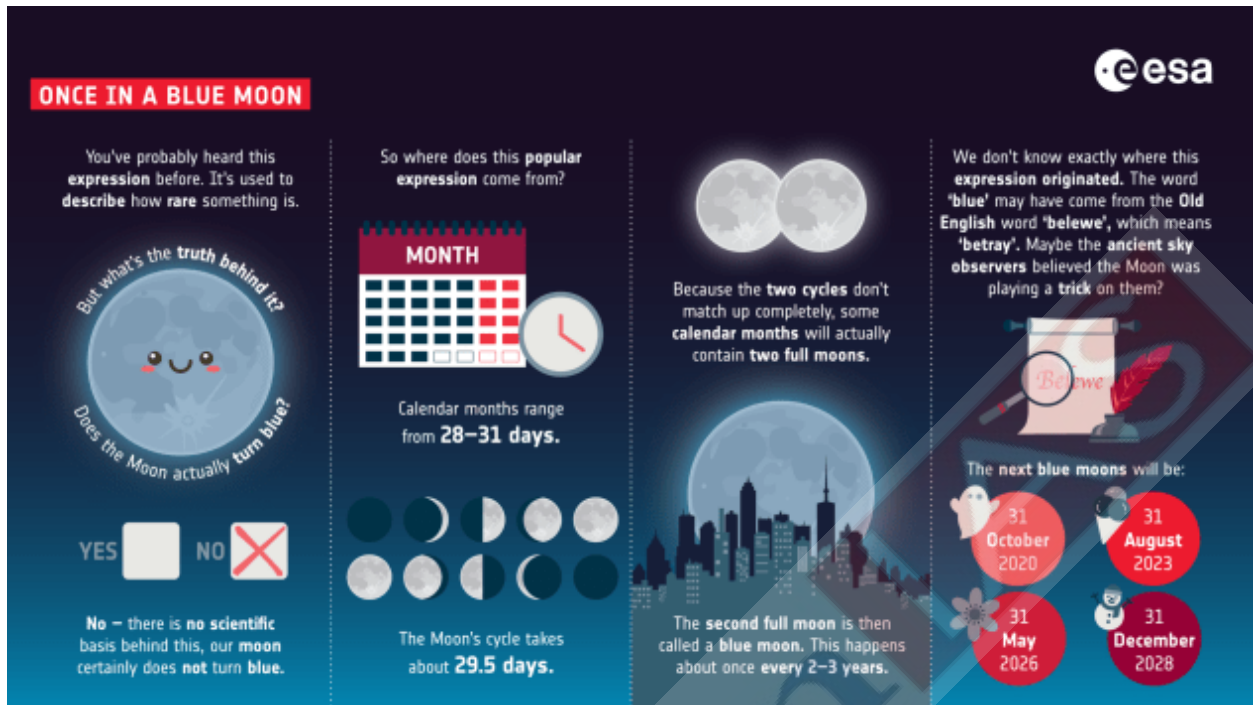
About Blue Micromoon



Figure 2. Source – NASA

- A micromoon is a full or new moon that occurs when the moon is roughly at its farthest from Earth in its orbit.
- **Why does it happen:** The moon's orbit around Earth isn't a perfect circle. It takes about a month to orbit Earth once.
- So the moon has a nearest point (perigee) and a farthest point (apogee) each month.
- When the moon reaches a fully illuminated phase within a short time of apogee, it appears smaller-than-usual. This is why it is called a full micromoon.
- **Note:** The moon is about 363,711 km away at its closest to Earth, known as perigee.
- A supermoon occurs when the moon passes through or is close to its perigee.
- At apogee, or the furthest point, the moon is about 403,945 km away.
- There's no strict definition of how close to apogee the moon should be to be called a micromoon.
- **Rare event:** A blue micromoon occurs about once every couple of decades.

About Blue Moon



Source: esa

- A Blue Moon refers to a situation in which two full moons occur within the same calendar month.
- Since the lunar cycle from one new moon to the next lasts about 29.5 days, a full moon that appears on the 1st or 2nd day of a month can be followed by another full moon on the 30th or 31st.
- This phenomenon occurs roughly every two to three years.
- The moons not really turn blue rather, in some cases, smoke or dust particles in the atmosphere can scatter red wavelengths of light, causing the Moon to appear slightly bluer than usual in certain locations.

Operation Chakravyuh

News: Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) carried out Operation Chakravyuh in Kerala and seized substantial quantities of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

About Operation Chakravyuh



Source: PIB

- **Conducted by:** Operation Chakravyuh refers to an anti-narcotics operations carried out by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).
- **Seizures Made:** 24 kilograms of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances have been seized in these operations from Kochi, Malappuram and Thiruvananthapuram.
 - The seized substances included methaqualone, methamphetamine and hashish oil, intended for illicit distribution and trafficking.
 - Five individuals, including key operatives involved in the trafficking networks, have been apprehended under the provisions of the [Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances \(NDPS\) Act, 1985](#).

About Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)



Source: DRI

- The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) serves as India's apex anti-smuggling agency, functioning under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Ministry of Finance.
- It is primarily responsible for detecting and preventing smuggling activities, including drug trafficking, illicit international trade in wildlife, and environmentally sensitive goods.
- The DRI also plays a crucial role in combating commercial frauds related to international trade and preventing evasion of customs duties, thereby safeguarding the nation's economic and environmental interests.

22nd Asian U20 Athletics Championships

News: India finished second at the 2026 Asian U20 Athletics Championships in Hong Kong China with a historic tally of 19 medals.

About 22nd Asian U20 Athletics Championships



Source - Asian Athletics

- **The 2026 Asian U20 Athletics Championships** was the 22nd edition of the international athletics competition for Asian under-20 athletes.
- **Host Venue:** The championships were held at the Kai Tak Youth Sports Ground in Hong Kong, China.
- **Governing Body:** The event was organized by the Asian Athletics Association.
- **Duration:** The competition was conducted over four days from May 28 to May 31, 2026.
- **Event Featured:** Athletes born between 2007 and 2009 competed in 45 events.
- **Global Pathway:** The championships served as a qualifying tournament for the World Athletics U20 Championships 2026, scheduled to be held at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon, USA, from August 5 to 9.
- **Key Indian Performers :**
 - **Historic Achievement:** India finished second (China secured 1st) with 19 medals, including 10 gold, five silver and four bronze, matching its highest-ever placing in the competition's history.
 - **Opening Medals:** Nipam won bronze in the women's 100m, while Nitin Gupta secured India's first gold in the men's 5000m race walk.
 - **National Record:** Pooja Singh won gold in the women's high jump with a 1.93m effort, setting a new senior national record.

- Decathlon Success: Rahul Jakhar won gold with a new U20 national record of 7185 points, while India secured one-two finish (first and second positions) in the event.
- Junior National Records: Nischay won silver in the men's discus throw,
 - while India's Men's 4x400m Relay Team won Bronze.
- Meet Record: The women's 4x400m relay team (quartet of Neeru Pathak, Bhumika Sanjay Nehate, Tahura Khatua, and Sehnoor) won gold with a new meet record.
- Significance: The performance reflected the determination and excellence of India's young athletes and marked the country's best-ever result at the championships outside home soil.

MAHA (Missions for Advancement in High-impact Areas) Water Mission

News: The ₹200-crore MAHA Water Mission was launched to support startups and multidisciplinary consortia in developing high-impact water solutions.

About MAHA Water Mission



Figure 3. Source – PIB

- MAHA (Missions for Advancement in High-impact Areas) Water Mission is a national programme that accelerates innovation in the water sector by linking research, technology development, validation, and field deployment.
- Nodal Ministry: The Ministry of Jal Shakti is the nodal ministry for the mission.
- Organisations involved:
 - Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF): It expands research funding opportunities and supports mission-oriented innovation.
 - Department of Space/ISRO: It contributes satellite technologies and geospatial applications for water resource mapping and assessment.
- Objectives: The mission aims to support innovations from laboratory research to field deployment and generate scalable and localised solutions for long-term water security.
- Funding: The mission has a projected outlay of ₹200 crore over five years, jointly contributed by ANRF and the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Target beneficiaries: The programme supports universities, national laboratories, research organisations, startups, MSMEs, and industry partners.

- **Support:** Selected multidisciplinary consortia can receive up to ₹20 crore for technology development, field assessment, validation, and deployment.
- **Focus Areas:**
 - **Water Resource Assessment and Sustainable Management:** It promotes sustainable management of water resources.
 - **Drinking Water:** It supports solutions related to drinking water.
 - **Water Quality and Ecological Health:** It focuses on improving water quality and ecological health.
 - **Water Use Efficiency and Circular Economy:** It encourages efficient water use and circular economy practices.
 - **Climate Resilience and Adaptation:** It supports solutions for climate resilience and adaptation.

On-Screen Marking (OSM) System

News: CBSE's new digital On-Screen Marking (OSM) system for Class 12 examinations faced criticism over blurred scans, missing pages, and portal glitches.

About On-Screen Marking (OSM) System



monitoring of evaluators.

- **OSM Process:**
 - **Answer Book Collection and Coding:** All answer books are marked with a secret code and moved from examination centres to regional offices.
 - **Scanning and Uploading:** The answer books are scanned and uploaded onto a secure digital portal for evaluation.
 - **Anonymisation:** Student roll numbers and barcode identifiers are digitally masked before evaluators access the answer books.

- **Digital Evaluation:** Teachers evaluate answers directly on computer screens according to a predefined marking scheme.
- **Automated Tabulation:** The system calculates the total marks automatically, eliminating manual addition errors.

Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) Instrument

News: The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has enhanced India's nascent Social Stock Exchange (SSE) ecosystem by allowing companies to use a portion of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending through Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) instruments.

About Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) Instrument



Integrating Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) Instruments



Source - UN

- **Definition:** They are financial instruments or securities issued by not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) registered on the Social Stock Exchange segment of a recognised stock exchange in accordance with regulations framed by the [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\)](#).
- **Features:**
 - Such organisations registered on the Social Stock Exchange segment of a recognised stock exchange will be permitted to undertake projects with a duration of not more than three succeeding financial years from the date of issuance.
 - The NPOs registered on a Social Stock Exchange may also make private issuance of Zero-Coupon Zero-Principal Instruments.
 - In the event of delisting or termination of the instrument, any unspent amount will have to be transferred to funds specified under the approved list of [Corporate social responsibility](#) (CSR) activities.

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- It carries neither interest payments nor repayment of principal, effectively making it a philanthropic funding mechanism routed through a market framework.
- Form of issuance: It shall be issued in dematerialised form only.
- **Limitations:**
 - **No Independent Impact Assessment Requirement:** ZCZP instruments are exempt from independent impact assessments. The exemption is based on the assumption that SSE disclosure requirements provide adequate transparency.
 - However, listing on the SSE does not necessarily guarantee independent verification of social impact, which may concern company boards seeking greater assurance.
 - **Limited Supply of Credible Listed Non-Profits:** The number of reputable non-profit organisations currently listed on the Social Stock Exchange is relatively small.
 - This raises concerns about whether there will be enough high-quality ZCZP issuances to meet the increased demand generated by the new CSR framework.
- **About the Amendment:**
 - Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has facilitated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through Zero Coupon Zero Principal Instrument by expanding the scope of Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013.
 - Also, to facilitate the implementation Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through Zero Coupon Zero Principal Instrument, amendments to the CSR Policy Rules, 2014 have been made.
 - **Aim:** This amendment is aimed at providing significant ease of compliance to the companies and will also help Not-for-Profit Organisations (NPOs) to raise funding for public welfare projects in a transparent and regulated manner.
 - **Limits:** Expenditure incurred by the CSR-mandated companies for such instruments shall not exceed ten per cent of the total Corporate Social Responsibility expenditure for that financial year

About Social Stock Exchange (SSE)

WELFARE SET FOR A MARKET MAKEOVER		
Concept Of Social Stock Exchange <p>Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, as part of the Budget Speech for FY 2019-20, had proposed the idea of an electronic fund-raising platform "Social Stock Exchange", under the regulatory ambit of SEBI for listing social enterprises and voluntary organisations working for the realisation of a social welfare objective so that they can raise capital as equity, debt or as units like a mutual fund</p>	Objectives of social stock exchange <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Regulated platform that brings together social enterprises and donors▶ Facilitate funding and growth of social enterprises▶ Enabling mechanism to ensure robust standards of social impact and financial reporting	Social stock exchange segment on NSE <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The Social Stock Exchange segment (SSE) on the National Stock Exchange provides social enterprises non-profit organisations (NPOs) and for-profit enterprises (FPES) engaged in eligible activities the opportunity to register themselves, and raise funds on a recognised exchange platform▶ Social enterprise shall target underserved or less privileged population segments or regions recording lower performance in the development priorities of central or state govts

- Social Stock Exchange (SSE) is a separate segment of the existing Stock Exchange that helps Social Enterprises to raise funds from the public through the stock exchange mechanism.
- SSE identifies the two forms of social enterprises that are engaging in the activity of creating positive social impact and that meet the primacy of their social intent.
 - Not-for-profit organization
 - For-profit social enterprise
- SSE acts as a medium between Social Enterprises and fund providers, and that can help them to select those entities that are creating measurable social impact and reporting such impact.

All About Elections for State Legislative Councils

News: The Election Commission of India announced elections to 27 Rajya Sabha seats and State Legislative Council seats in three states.

About State Legislative Council



Source - HT

- **The State Legislative Council, also known as the Vidhan Parishad, is the upper house in the bicameral legislature of some states.**
- **6 Bicameral States: Currently, six states have a Legislative Council.**
 - **These states are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh.**
- **Permanent Body: The Legislative Council is a permanent house and cannot be dissolved.**
- **Duration: Members serve for six years, and one-third retire every two years.**
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 169: It empowers Parliament to create or abolish a State Legislative Council by a simple majority after a special majority resolution of the State Legislative Assembly.**
 - **However, the resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly is not binding on Parliament.**
 - **Article 171: It lays down the composition of the State Legislative Council.**
 - **Article 172: It provides that members serve for six years, with one-third retiring every two years.**
- **Composition:**
 - **Nature: The Legislative Council consists of nominated and indirectly elected members.**

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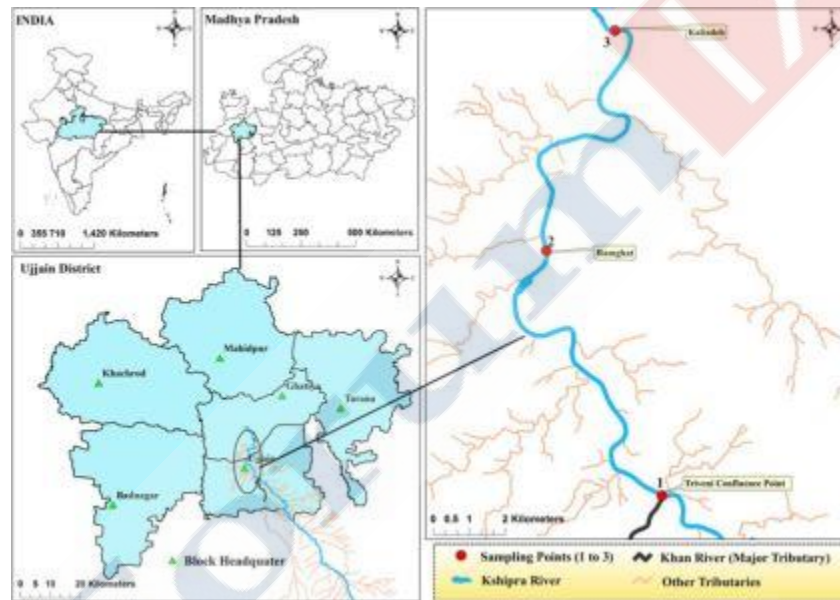
- **Strength:** The total membership cannot exceed one-third of the strength of the Legislative Assembly and must have a minimum of 40 members.
- **Presiding Officers:** The Council elects a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman from among its members.
- **Electorate Breakdown:**
 - **Legislative Assembly:** One-third of the members are elected by the Legislative Assembly.
 - **Local Authorities:** One-third of the members are elected by municipalities and other local authorities.
 - **Graduates:** One-twelfth of the members are elected by graduates.
 - **Teachers:** One-twelfth of the members are elected by teachers.
 - **Governor:** About one-sixth of the members are nominated by the Governor.
- **Voting System :** Elections are conducted through proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote under Article 171.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - **Must be a citizen of India.**
 - **Must be 30 years of age or above.**
 - **Must make an oath or affirmation of allegiance to the Constitution.**
 - **Must be an elector in an Assembly constituency of the concerned state.**
- **Disqualifications:**
 - **Office of Profit:** A person holding a paid office under the Union or State Government is disqualified, except in cases exempted by law.
 - **Unsound Mind:** A person declared to be of unsound mind by a competent court is disqualified.
 - **Insolvency:** An undischarged insolvent is disqualified.
 - **Foreign Citizenship:** A person who acquires foreign citizenship or acknowledges allegiance to a foreign State is disqualified.
 - **Anti-Defection:** A person who defects to another party or violates the party whip under the Tenth Schedule is disqualified.

- **Statutory Violations:** A person disqualified under laws made by Parliament is disqualified (e.g, if they are convicted of a serious crime and sentenced to 2 or more years of imprisonment, fail to lodge election expenses, or commit corrupt electoral practices).
- **Prolonged Absence:** A member absent from all House meetings for sixty days without permission is disqualified (Article 190(4)).

Kshipra River

News: The Kshipra riverine system in Madhya Pradesh is facing a major crisis due to the drying up of its tributaries.

About Kshipra River



Source - ResearchGate

- The Kshipra, also known as the Shipra, is a sacred river in Madhya Pradesh and is often called the “Ganga of Malwa”.
- **Origin:** It originates from Kakri-Tekdi hill in the Vindhya Range, which is located north of Dhar and near Ujjain.
- **Length :** The river is 195 km long.
- **Course:** It flows north across the Malwa Plateau through the holy city of Ujjain before merging with the Chambal River.
- **Major Tributaries:** It’s major tributaries are Khan and Gambhir.

- **Key Aspect of Kshipra River:**
 - **River System Under Stress:** The Kshipra riverine system includes 22 tributaries such as Chandrabhaga, Swat, Gandaki, Kaliadaha, Lakheri and Pipaliya, many of which have disappeared or become seasonal drains.
 - **Importance of Tributaries:** These tributaries support thousands of villagers, help irrigation, and recharge groundwater levels.
 - **Narmada-Kshipra Link Project:** To maintain its perennial flow, a massive river-linking project was completed to pump water from the Narmada River into the Kshipra during dry spells.
 - **Growing Environmental Concerns:** Encroachment, pollution, degradation of water sources, erratic rainfall and intense heat have led to the drying up of tributaries, causing drinking water shortages and environmental imbalances.
- **Religious Significance:** According to Hindu texts, the Kshipra River originated from heart of Varaha, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and Krishna studied at Sage Sandipani's ashram on its banks.
 - The river is also mentioned in Buddhist and Jain scriptures and hosts the famous Kumbh Mela at Ujjain every 12 years.

Project UDAYAK

News: Border Roads Organisation celebrated the 37th Raising Day of Project UDAYAK on June 01, 2026, at Doomdooma in Assam.

About Project UDAYAK



Figure 4. Source – PIB

- Project UDAYAK is a specialized territorial wing of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for developing and maintaining strategic road infrastructure in Northeast India.
 - **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Defence
 - **Launched in:** The project was established in 1989 and was raised on 01 June 1990 at Doomdooma, Assam.
 - **Naming:** The project was named 'Udayak', meaning the Rising Sun.
- **Key Aspects of Project UDAYAK:**

- **Area of Responsibility (AOR):** The project manages more than 1,457 km of strategic roads in the easternmost regions of Arunachal Pradesh and parts of Assam, covering Anjaw, Lohit, Dibang Valley, Longding, Tirap, and Changlang districts.
- **Border Connectivity and Security:** The project enhances connectivity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the Indo-Myanmar border, improving accessibility in strategically important regions.
- **Road and Border Fencing Construction:** The project is undertaking road construction and border fencing works along the Indo-Myanmar border.
- **Community Outreach Activities:** The project conducts medical camps, Swachhata Abhiyan, road safety awareness campaigns, and other community welfare activities for local populations.

VYOMA Innovation Challenge

News: The Digital India BHASHINI Division, in collaboration with Current AI and Kalpa Impact, has launched the VYOMA Innovation Challenge.

About VYOMA Innovation Challenge



Figure 5. Source – NewsX

- **VYOMA Innovation Challenge** is an innovation initiative that promotes the development of open-source, multilingual, voice-first AI solutions for offline and low-connectivity environments.
- **Launched by:** The challenge has been launched by the Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under the Digital India Corporation (DIC), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with Current AI and Kalpa Impact.
- **Aim:** The challenge aims to encourage the development of practical AI solutions that address language accessibility, digital literacy, and connectivity challenges through multilingual AI technologies.
- **Key Features of VYOMA Innovation Challenge:**
 - **Built on:** The challenge is built on Sunno Sutra, a multilingual, voice-first, open-source handheld AI reference device jointly developed by BHASHINI and Current AI.

- **Target Sectors:** Potential applications cover education, agriculture, healthcare, governance, and public service delivery, with a focus on expanding AI access across India's linguistic and geographic diversity.
- **Eligibility:** The challenge invites startups, researchers, students, academic institutions, MSMEs, industry partners, and independent innovators to participate and develop new solutions on the Sunno Sutra platform.
- **Process:** The challenge will be conducted in multiple stages, and 20 shortlisted teams will receive developer kits, access to the Sunno Sutra platform, and technical mentorship.
- **Awards:** Winning teams will be eligible for prizes worth up to ₹80 lakh and may receive opportunities for deployment with central and state government departments.

2026 Food Planet Prize

News: Andhra Pradesh's community-led natural farming programme has won the 2026 Food Planet Prize.

About 2026 Food Planet Prize

FOOD
PLANET
PRIZE



WINNER
2026

Figure 6. Source – PBS

- About Food Planet Prize is the world's largest environmental award.
 - **Presented by:** It is presented annually by the Curt Bergfors Foundation in Sweden.
 - It rewards innovative initiatives that will improve the global food system within ten years while supporting a resilient biosphere and feeding a growing world population.
 - The prize is given for two categories, namely:
 - Existing scalable solution for sustainable foods and
 - Innovative initiatives that could transform the global food sector.
 - **About nominations:** Nominations are submitted through the website's nomination form, which remains open throughout the year.
- The nominations team evaluates each submission using publicly available information, considering factors such as impact, evidence, and relevance to the food system.
 - Nominations may remain under consideration for multiple years if they continue to show potential.

About 2026 Food Planet Prize

- **Winner:** The Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) programme won the 2026 Food Planet Prize.
- **Finalists:** The other finalists, Conscious Kitchen of the United States, NoPalm Ingredients of the Netherlands and the Savanna Institute of the U.S.A.
- **Prize 2026:** The prize carries an award of 1.5 million USD to the winner and 150,000 USD to each finalist.
- **APCNF was recognised by the Curt Bergfors Foundation for promoting farming practices that:**
 - Reduce dependence on synthetic inputs.
 - Support climate-resilient agriculture.
- The competition received more than 1,000 nominations from around the world.
- APCNF was selected as one of four finalists from a longlist of 35 initiatives representing 19 countries and six continents.

About Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF)

- **Launched by:** It was launched in 2016 by Rythu Sadhikara Samstha, under Andhra Pradesh's agriculture department.
- **Objective:** Its objective was to help farmers transition from conventional agriculture to natural farming practices.
- **Features:** It has grown into one of the world's largest community-led agroecology movements.
 - It currently supports approximately 1.8 million farming families across Andhra Pradesh.
 - It also works with around 340,000 women's self-help groups.
 - It also works with around 340,000 women's self-help groups.
 - APCNF's natural farming model is now being shared across 22 Indian states and internationally in Sri Lanka and Zambia.

Mission Senehjori and Assam's Muga silk

News: The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) has launched Mission Senehjori to transform Assam's renowned Muga silk sector into a globally competitive luxury textile ecosystem.

About Mission Senehjori



Figure 7. Source: North East India 24

- It is a comprehensive cluster-based initiative designed to strengthen the entire Muga silk value chain.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).
 - It has been launched in collaboration with the Government of Assam, the Central Silk Board, the Ministry of Textiles and other central agencies.
- **Aim:** It aims at transforming Assam's renowned Muga silk sector into a globally competitive luxury textile ecosystem.
 - It seeks to strengthen the entire Muga silk value chain, from host-plant cultivation and silkworm seed production to weaving, branding, exports, digital traceability and tourism promotion.
 - It also seeks to expand Muga silk exports and promote silk heritage tourism through initiatives such as a Muga Silk Trail, a Silk Tourism Park and annual Muga Utsav festivals.
- **Outlay and timeline:** It has an estimated investment of ₹396-411 crore over three years.
- **Key Features**
 - The mission will adopt a cluster-based approach across key Muga-producing districts, including Jorhat, Sivasagar, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Majuli and Sualkuchi.
 - It envisages strengthening host-plant ecology, modernising reeling infrastructure, promoting Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), establishing Common Facility Centres and enforcing GI authentication under the unified "Senehjori" brand.
 - It will establish five modernised Muga reeling units and a Muga Spun Mill, create 30 FPOs and over 1,180 Farmer Interest Groups, regenerate 5,000 hectares of host plants and digitally connect more than 8,000 households.

- A key component of the mission is the introduction of digital traceability and QR-enabled GI authentication, ensuring consumers can verify the authenticity of Muga products and helping curb illegal imitation.

About Assam's Muga silk

- Muga silk is one of the most exquisite and rarest silks in the world.
- It is often referred to as the “golden silk” of India.
- Cultivation region: It is cultivated mostly in the Garo hills of Assam.
- How it is cultivated
 - It contains fibroin, a core protein, and sericin, a protective waxy layer.
 - It is extracted from the cocoons of *Antheraea assamensis*. It is wild in variety and fed on *som, sualu, mejankari, pan-chapa* tree leaves.
 - Depending on the season, it acquires a rich golden yellow or light brown colour.
- Production: Typically, it takes about 1000 cocoons to produce 125 grams of silk and about 1000 grams of silk for one saree.
- Properties: It is known for its unique properties like natural golden brilliance, a super fine texture which is resilient, has humidity absorption quality, thus having a long shelf life.
- Use: Recently, there has been a lot of product innovation in muga silk, and it is currently seen as a potential raw material for aircraft tyres, bulletproof jackets and parachute ropes.
- G.I. Tag: Muga Silk of Assam was officially awarded its Geographical Indication (GI) status in 2007.
- Cultural significance: Traditional garments made from Muga silk include:
 - Mekhela Sador – The traditional Assamese attire worn by women, often adorned with intricate motifs and golden embroidery.
 - Gamosa – A woven rectangular cloth used in religious ceremonies and as a mark of respect.
 - Sherwanis and Kurtas – Muga silk is also used for elegant men's wear, including traditional outfits for weddings and festivals.
 - It is considered a symbol of purity and is often worn during auspicious occasions like weddings, Bihu (the Assamese New Year festival), and religious ceremonies.
- Production: The average production per acre of land is 400 grams of silk.

- A notable cluster in weaving in Assam is the Sualkuchi Textile Park.

Potato Patch

News: Researchers have documented the “Potato Patch” near Kadmat Island, which could be the world’s largest known living coral colony.

About Potato Patch



Source – DTE

- **Potato Patch** is a continuous meadow-like coral colony of the species *Pavona clavus* (potato coral).
- **Location:** The colony is located in the south-eastern waters of Kadmat Island in the Lakshadweep archipelago.
- **Formation Process:**
 - **Continuous Coral Growth:** The coral colony formed through centuries of calcium carbonate deposition by coral polyps and is preliminarily estimated to be 700–1,800 years old, although its age is yet to be scientifically confirmed.
 - **Adaptation to Wave Action:** The colony developed thick calcareous columns on a steep reef slope, which helped it withstand strong wave action, ocean currents, and tropical cyclones over time.
- **Features:**
 - **Depth Range:** The coral formation begins on a reef flat at a depth of 5.2 m and extends down a steep slope to about 20 metres.

- **Area:** The coral colony covers about 4,250 sq. m and appears to be the largest known living *Pavona clavus* colony documented so far.
- **Relatively Healthy Condition:** Surveys found that 58.47% of the coral tissue remains alive, indicating a relatively healthy state while continuing to support diverse fish assemblages.
- **Scientific and Ecological Value:** The colony functions as a natural time capsule for studying coral longevity, reef resilience, climate adaptation, and past ocean conditions, while highlighting Lakshadweep as a possible refuge for long-lived coral colonies.
- **Threats:** The colony faces risks from repeated tropical cyclones, major El Niño events, prolonged bleaching episodes, and marine heatwaves, which can increase coral mortality and reduce live coral cover.

Yellow-Throated Marten

News: A yellow-throated marten was photographed for the first time in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve during routine camera trapping.

About Yellow-Throated Marten



- The yellow-throated marten (*Martes flavigula*) is a marten species found in forested regions across Southern and Eastern Asia.
- It is also known as 'the kharza'.
- **Habitat:** It lives in diverse habitats, including coniferous and broad-leaved forests, mountain forests, tropical forests, shrublands, lowland swamps, and treeless mountainous areas.

- **Distribution:** The species is found across the Himalayan region and extends from Indonesia in the south to the Korean Peninsula and the China–Russia border in the north.
 - In India, it occurs mainly in the Himalayas and Northeast.
- **Characteristics**
 - **Physical Features:** It is the largest species among the Old World martens and is known for its golden-yellow throat, long tail, and scent glands used for defence.
 - **Appearance:** The head is black or dark brown, while the chest and throat are bright yellow or golden.
 - **Size:** Adult males measure between 50 and 71.9 cm in length, while the tail makes up nearly two-thirds of the total body length.
 - **Behaviour:** It is a fearless, highly social, diurnal, and arboreal animal that often hunts in pairs or small groups.
- **Ecological Role:** It functions as a mesopredator, controls rodent populations, and aids seed dispersal.
- **Threats**
 - Habitat fragmentation
 - Deforestation
 - Human encroachment
- **Conservation Status**
 - IUCN Red List: Least Concern
 - Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Dark Patterns

News: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed penalties on PhysicsWallah Limited and McAfee Software India Private Limited for using dark pattern practices that misled consumers and influenced their choices on digital platforms.

About Dark Patterns



Source: Guidelines for the Department of Consumer Affairs

- [Dark patterns](#), also known as **deceptive patterns**, involve using **design and choice architecture** to deceive, coerce, or influence consumers into making choices that are not in their best interest.
- It encompasses a **wide range of manipulative practices**.
- **Legal remedies:** Such practices fall under the **category of “unfair trade practices”** as defined in **Sub-section 47 under Section 2 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.
- **Guidelines:** **Central Consumer Protection Authority**, in exercise of the powers conferred by **Section 18 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, issued **“Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023”** for **prevention and regulation** of dark patterns, **listing 13 specified dark patterns identified in the e-commerce sector**.
- These dark patterns include:
 - **False Urgency:** This involves creating a **fake sense of scarcity, popularity, or time pressure** to push users into making quick purchases or decisions that they might not otherwise make.
 - **Basket Sneaking:** This includes **automatic addition of a donation during checkout**.
 - **Confirm Shaming:** This involves **emotional messaging that discouraged users from removing the donation**.

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- **Forced Action:** This involves **requiring users to share personal information before accessing courses** advertised as free.
- **Nagging:** This includes **repeatedly interrupting or pressuring users** with requests, prompts, or offers to make a purchase or complete a transaction, causing annoyance or disruption.
- **Subscription Traps:** Under this, parties **make it easy to sign up for a service but difficult to cancel**, such as by **hiding cancellation options**, requiring unnecessary steps, or **automatically charging** users after a “free” trial without clear consent.
- **Bait & switch:** This includes **advertising a service but delivering another**, often of lower quality.
- **Rogue Malware:** This involves **malicious software that falsely claims a device is infected and pressures users to pay for fake security tools**, which may actually install malware or cause further harm.
- **Disguised ads:** It is **designed to look like content**, such as news articles or user-generated content.
- **Interface Interference:** It involves **designing the interface to emphasize certain options** while hiding or obscuring important information, influencing users to make unintended choices.
- **Drip Pricing:** It involves **revealing additional charges, fees, or costs only later in the purchase process** instead of showing the full price upfront.
- **Trick Question:** It includes **using confusing wording, double negatives, or ambiguous language to mislead users** into taking actions they did not intend.
- **SaaS Billing:** It involves **using recurring subscription charges in a way that makes payments continue automatically** and unobtrusively, making it difficult for users to notice, manage, or cancel them.

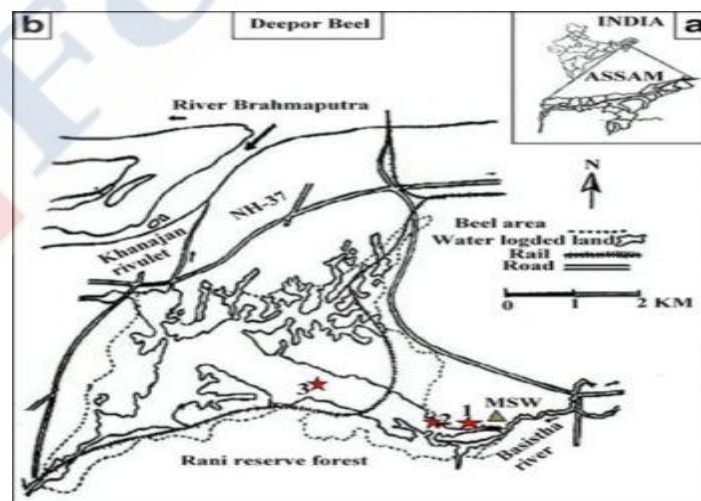
About Central Consumer Protection Authority

- It has been **constituted under Section 10(1) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.**
- **Composition:** It consists of a **Chief Commissioner and such number of other Commissioners** as may be prescribed, to be appointed by the Central Government to exercise the powers and discharge the functions under this Act.
- It has the **power to inquire or investigate matters relating to violations of consumer rights or unfair trade practices suo motu, or on a complaint received, or on a direction from the central government.**
- The **power to make rules to provide for the qualifications for appointment, term of office, salaries and allowances, resignation, removal, and other terms and conditions of the service of the Chief Commissioner and Commissioners of the Central Authority is bestowed upon the Central government.**
- It also has an **Investigation Wing that is headed by a Director General.**
- **District Collectors, too, have the power to investigate complaints of violations of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and false or misleading advertisements.**

Deepar Beel Wildlife Sanctuary

News: NGT directed authorities to respond to complaints of unauthorized tree felling in Deepar Beel Wildlife Sanctuary and its eco-sensitive zone.

About Deepar Beel Wildlife Sanctuary



Source - ResearchGate

- **Location:** It is located on the western boundary of Guwahati city in Assam.
- **Established:** The sanctuary was notified in 1989 to protect the unique wetland ecosystem of Deepor Beel.
- **Area:** It is spread in an area of 4.14 km².
- **River System:** It receives water from the Basistha and Kalmani rivers and local monsoon runoff.
 - The Khonajan channel drains the wetland into the Brahmaputra River.
- **Designation:** It is the only Ramsar Site in Assam and an important bird sanctuary.
- **Flora:** The wetland supports hydrophytic vegetation such as Giant Water Lily, Water Lily, Water Hyacinth and aquatic grasses.
 - The surrounding forests contain species such as Teak (*Tectona grandis*), Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*), Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and *Bombax malabaricum*.
- **Fauna:** Deepor Beel supports a rich diversity of birds, including the Greater Adjutant Stork, Lesser Adjutant Stork, Spot-billed Pelican, Pallas's Sea Eagle, Siberian Crane and Pheasant-tailed Jacana.
- **Ecological Significance:** The wetland functions as a critical elephant corridor, a biodiversity hotspot and a natural flood buffer for Guwahati city.
 - It also supports local livelihoods and hydrological stability.
- **Major Concerns:** The sanctuary faces threats from garbage dumping, encroachment, railway track doubling and electrification, and the deterioration of water quality and aquatic vegetation.

Price Stabilization Fund for Scheduled Indian Airlines

News: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved Price Stabilization Fund for Scheduled Indian Airlines to provide ATF price stabilisation support to Scheduled Indian Airlines for their domestic and international operations.

About Price Stabilization Fund for Scheduled Indian Airlines



Source: PIB

- It is a **one-time budgetary support of ten thousand crore rupees for Oil Marketing Companies to provide ATF price stabilisation support** to Indian Airlines for their domestic and international operations.
- **Objective:** The budgetary support shall be **in the form of interest-free advances to OMCs** through the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
 - The support **will be provided to companies to facilitate stable ATF pricing for airlines** during the ongoing period of exceptional fuel price volatility arising from the West Asia crisis.
- **Key component of Price Stabilisation Fund:**
 - **Interest-Free advance to OMCs:** It provides **for a one-time budgetary support of up to Rs.10,000 crore, which** shall be provided as an **interest-free advance to OMCs to support ATF price stabilisation for Scheduled Indian Airlines.**
 - The **corpus shall compensate OMCs for losses arising from elevated international ATF prices** whenever the prevailing Import Parity Price exceeds the benchmark price determined under the approved mechanism.
 - **Recovery and True-Up Mechanism:** When international ATF prices moderate, the differential amount shall be recovered from OMCs and returned to the Consolidated Fund of India.
 - The arrangement **shall continue until the entire support amount is fully recovered and settled.**

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- **Coverage of Domestic and International Operations:** The scheme shall be available to all willing Scheduled Indian carriers for both domestic and international operations.
- **Fixed ATF Price Arrangement:** The mechanism provides **greater predictability in fuel costs by adopting a fixed-price arrangement for domestic and international operations**, thereby reducing the airline's exposure to sudden fuel price spikes
- **Exclusive rights of ATF supply to OMCs:** The arrangement will be **implemented through an MoU between participating Indian airlines and OMCs**, with the **Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas as signatories**.
 - Under this arrangement, **participating airlines will procure ATF only from OMCs for up to three years**, subject to annual review or until the advance amount is fully recovered, whichever is earlier.
- **Implementation, Monitoring and Audit:** A **Monitoring Committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas and the Department of Expenditure** shall **oversee implementation, claim verification, reconciliation and settlement**. All claims and recoveries shall be subject to audit.
- **Duration of Price Stabilisation support:** ATF price stabilisation support will be in force for a **period of thirty-six months**, with provision for annual review or until the advance amount is fully recovered/settled, whichever is earlier.
 - The proposal **may be extended beyond thirty-six months with the approval of the Competent Authority** in case the corpus is not fully trued up within this period.
- **Key Benefits:** It will **supports employment across the aviation ecosystem while maintaining passenger and cargo connectivity to sustain economic activity**.
 - It will also **strengthens tourism, trade, regional development, and global market integration through efficient utilisation of airport infrastructure**.

Key Facts About Zimbabwe

News: India and Zimbabwe held the first meeting of their Joint Defence Committee in New Delhi on June 04, 2026 and discussed expanding defence cooperation.

Key Facts About Zimbabwe



Source – Britannica

- **Location:** Zimbabwe is a landlocked nation in Southern Africa, located between the Limpopo River to the south and the Zambezi River to the north.
- **Bordered by:** Zimbabwe shares boundaries with 4 countries –
 - South Africa in the south, Zambia in the north, Botswana in the west, and Mozambique in the east and north-east.
- **Capital:** Harare serves as the capital city of Zimbabwe.
- **Climate:** Despite being located within the tropical zone, Zimbabwe experiences subtropical weather because of its relatively high elevation.
- **Physical Landscape:** Much of the country consists of an elevated plateau region known as the Highveld, which forms an important grassland area.
- **Distinct Geographic Regions:** Parts of the country extend into the Kalahari Desert, while the Great Dyke contains valuable deposits of platinum, chromium, and other minerals.
- **Highest Elevation:** Mount Nyangani (2,592 metres) is the highest point in the country.
- **Water Bodies:** Important rivers include the Zambezi, Limpopo, Sabi, and Runde.

- It also includes Lake Kariba along the Zambia border.
- **Mineral Wealth:** It has rich reserves of coal, chromium ore, vanadium, lithium, tin, and platinum.
- **Currency:** Zimbabwe uses a multi-currency framework, and since April 2024 the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) currency has been used along with the US Dollar (USD).

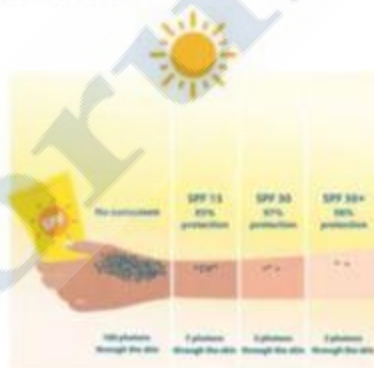
Sun Protection Factor (SPF)

News: Sun Protection Factor (SPF) is being discussed due to concerns about its actual protection, correct application, and the limits of higher SPF values.

About Sun Protection Factor (SPF)

What is SPF in Sunscreen?

SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor and it measures the level of protection a sunscreen product offers against UVB radiation. Sunscreens come in various SPF levels, such as SPF 15, SPF 30, and SPF 50. Each SPF level provides a different degree of protection



SPF 15 sunscreen filters out approximately 93% of UVB radiation

SPF 30 sunscreen blocks around 97% of UVB radiation

SPF 50 sunscreen keeps out nearly 98% of UVB radiation.

Source – Nourish Mantra

- **Sun Protection Factor (SPF)** is a relative measure that indicates how much Ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation is needed to cause sunburn on sunscreen-protected skin compared to unprotected skin.
- **Key Ingredients:**
 - **Chemical Filters:** Ingredients such as avobenzone, octocrylene, and homosalate absorb UV radiation and convert it into heat.
 - **Physical Filters:** Ingredients such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide reflect and scatter UV rays away from the skin.
- **Efficiency Curve of SPF**
 - **SPF 30** blocks about 95–97% of UVB rays, **SPF 50** blocks about 97–98%, and **SPF 80** blocks close to 99%, showing that protection gains become smaller at higher SPF levels.
- **Advantages:**
 - **Sunburn Protection:** SPF helps measure and compare the level of sunburn protection provided by different sunscreens.
 - **Adequate Coverage:** SPF 30 provides adequate protection for most people when applied correctly.
 - **Higher-Risk Use:** SPF 50 or higher is recommended for outdoor sports, extended sun exposure, or photosensitive skin conditions.
- **Limitations:**
 - **Limited Protection Measure:** SPF measures UVB protection only and does not indicate protection against Ultraviolet A (UVA) radiation.
 - **Consumer and Formulation Challenges:** Higher SPF values provide diminishing returns and may create a false sense of security, while high-SPF formulations can face stability, spreadability, and texture issues.
 - **Environmental Concerns:** Some chemical UV filters, such as oxybenzone and octinoxate, can harm marine ecosystems and contribute to coral bleaching.

Neglected Displacement Crises Report

News: The Norwegian Refugee Council released the tenth edition of the Neglected Displacement Crises Report, highlighting worsening neglect of major displacement crises.

About Neglected Displacement Crises Report

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Source – NRC

- **Neglected Displacement Crises Report tracks the gap between the scale of displacement crises and the adequacy of international response.**
- **Published by:** It is published by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).
- **2025 Edition:** The 2025 report is the tenth edition.
- **Assessment Criteria:** The report evaluates crises using funding, media attention, political and diplomatic engagement, and scale of displacement.
- **Key Findings of 2025 Report**
 - **Geopolitical Bias:** The report finds that international attention and funding often follow political, commercial, and strategic interests rather than the scale of human suffering.
 - **Protracted Displacement:** The report highlights that many neglected crises involve prolonged or repeated displacement, with some countries appearing on the list for several years.

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- **Top:** Sudan ranked as the most neglected crisis in 2025, with more than 9 million internally displaced people, up to 4 million refugees, and nearly 19.5 million people facing hunger.
- **DR Congo's Long-Term Neglect:** The Democratic Republic of Congo has appeared in all ten editions of the report.
- **Global Funding Gap:** Humanitarian funding coverage fell to its lowest level in the last decade, leading to reduced or discontinued support programmes.
- **The ten most neglected crises in 2025** are Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Honduras, Ecuador, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Mozambique.

Viksit Vibrant Village Program 2026

News: The Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, through Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), commenced the first phase of the Viksit Vibrant Village Program (VVVP) 2026.

About Viksit Vibrant Village Program 2026



Source: PIB

- **It is a pioneering youth-led initiative** aimed at strengthening grassroots engagement, fostering national integration, and promoting sustainable development in India's border villages.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, through [Mera Yuva Bharat \(MY Bharat\)](#).
- **Implemented by:** The programme is being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).
 - **Coordination mechanisms** involving MY Bharat, ITBP, State Governments, District Administrations, and local stakeholders have been established.

- **Implementation mechanism:** Volunteers representing all States and Union Territories are being deployed in two phases across identified border villages in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.
 - During Phase-I, 250 volunteers are participating in immersive engagements across 43 villages.
 - The remaining 250 volunteers will join Phase-II activities in 50 villages.
- **Participation:** A total of 500 MY Bharat volunteers, selected through a nationwide online quiz competition have been chosen to take part in the programme.
- **Key Features**
 - It provides a unique opportunity for young citizens to reside in border villages and engage directly with local communities.
 - Participants will gain firsthand exposure to the socio-economic realities, cultural heritage, developmental aspirations, and strategic significance of India's frontier regions.
 - **Thematic coverage:** It is a seven-day immersion programme that has been structured around thematic areas including border awareness, cultural exchange, community living, governance, socio-economic assessment, village development planning, volunteerism, and national integration.
 - **Nation First Challenge:** A significant component of the programme is the promotion of the Nation First Challenge.
 - It is a nationwide campaign encouraging responsible citizenship and sustainable lifestyle practices.
 - **Key themes:** MY Bharat volunteers will actively advocate five key themes of the campaign – adoption of Swadeshi products, healthy cooking practices, public transport usage and fuel conservation, promotion of natural farming, and vocal support for local tourism.

Navachar Mantra Initiative

News: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the Navachar Mantra initiative to strengthen grassroots entrepreneurship and expand opportunities for innovators across emerging India.

About Navachar Mantra Initiative



Source – PIB

- It is a national initiative focused on strengthening grassroots entrepreneurship and expanding opportunities for innovators across emerging India.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)
- Implemented by: It is being implemented by the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), with Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT).
 - IIT Delhi serving as the Technical Knowledge Partner.
- Aim: It aims at identifying, nurturing, and amplifying India's most promising grassroots innovators and early-stage entrepreneurs.
 - It also aims to strengthen India's innovation ecosystem and contribute to the vision of a self-reliant, entrepreneurial, and innovation-driven Viksit Bharat by building a robust pipeline of grassroots innovators and connecting them with the country's leading institutions and networks.
- It seeks to create pathways for innovators from Tier-2 and Tier-3 towns, aspirational districts, and underserved geographies to access mentorship, visibility, and growth opportunities.
- It is designed to provide a structured ecosystem of support for innovators working across priority sectors such as Agritech, HealthTech, EdTech and Skilling, Climate and Sustainability, Rural Commerce, and MSME Enablement.
- Features:

- Through Navachar Mantra, innovators will gain direct access to policymakers, industry leaders, investors, and domain experts, enabling them to refine their ideas, strengthen business models, and accelerate their journey from innovation to enterprise.
- Registrations are open for applications from innovators and entrepreneurs across the country through a dedicated digital platform.
- Selected innovators will be inducted into a year-long engagement programme.
- It will also facilitate opportunities for pilot projects, partnerships, and market linkages to help promising innovations translate into sustainable enterprises.

Biomimicry

News: Biomimicry has gained attention following renewed discussions on the Sagrada Familia, a notable example of nature-inspired architecture.

About Biomimicry



Figure 8. Source – ET

- Biomimicry is the intersection of biology and engineering that learns from nature to solve complex problems and create sustainable solutions.
- Levels of Biomimicry
 - Form (Organism) Level: This level involves imitating the physical structure of living organisms.
 - For example, the Shinkansen bullet train's nose was inspired by the kingfisher bird, while shark skin inspired surfaces that repel superbugs without chemicals.
 - Process (Behaviour) Level: This level involves learning from the way natural systems function.
 - For example, Antoni Gaudi borrowed the structural intelligence of trees while designing the Sagrada Familia, where the columns branch and distribute weight in a manner similar to natural tree structures.
 - System (Ecosystem) Level: This level involves applying ecosystem principles to organisations and larger systems.
 - For example, The Habitats Trust viewed its organisation as a natural ecosystem and reassessed projects based on sustainability, shifting its focus from expansion to depth and stewardship.
- Key Features of Biomimicry:

- **Nature as a Teacher: Biomimicry** focuses on learning from nature rather than merely learning about nature.
- **Innovation Through Natural Principles:** It draws upon solutions refined through 3.8 billion years of planetary research and development.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** It combines biology and engineering and can also be applied in management, human resources, administration, social sciences, and the arts.
- **Sustainable Problem Solving:** It encourages the development of solutions that support a sustainable way of life.

Azov Sea

News: Five Azerbaijanis were killed and three were wounded in a drone attack on two foreign cargo ships in the Sea of Azov.

About Azov Sea



Source – World Atlas

- **Location:** The Sea of Azov is an inland sea in Eastern Europe and is often regarded as a northern extension of the Black Sea.
- It is situated off the southern shores of Ukraine and Russia in Eastern Europe.
- **Boundary:** The sea is bounded by Ukraine in the north and west and by Russia in the east.

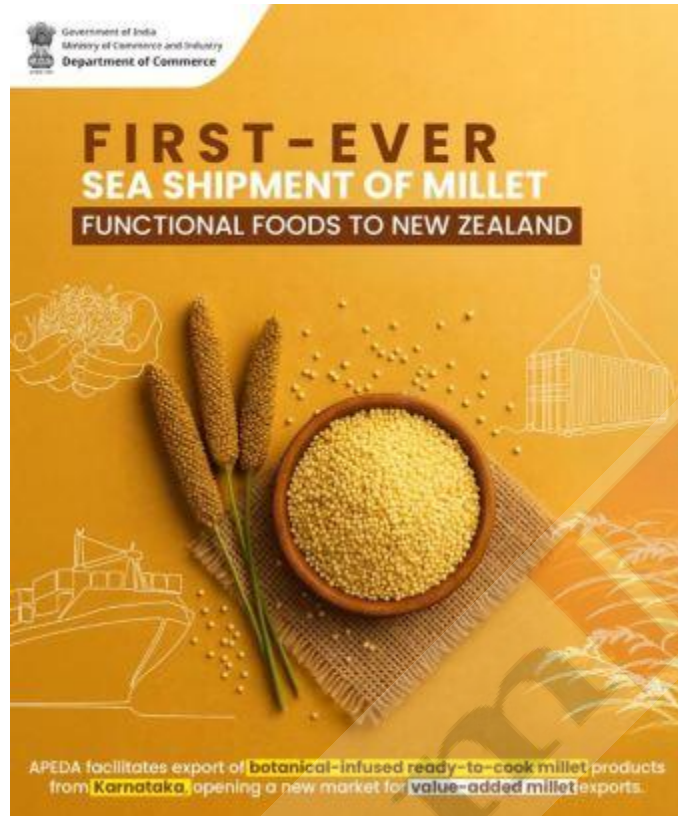
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- **Depth:** It is the shallowest sea in the world, with depth varying between 0.9 and 14 m and a maximum depth of about 14 m.
- **Connectivity:** It is connected to the Black Sea through the narrow Strait of Kerch, which is about 4 km wide at its narrowest point.
- **River Inflows:** The Don and Kuban rivers are the major rivers flowing into the sea and contribute more than 90% of the water inflow.
- **Climate:** The sea has a continental climate with cold winters, warm summers, frequent fogs, and seasonal ice formation.
- **Salinity:** The sea has low salinity (10–12 Practical Salinity Scale (PSS)) and is almost fresh in some areas because of large river inflows.
- **Coastal Features:** The coastline has low shores, lagoons, shallow gulfs, sandbanks, and long sand spits such as the Arabat Spit.
- **Shipping Routes:** The sea serves as an important access route linking Central Asia through the Volga–Don Canal and supports freight and passenger traffic.
- **Key Ports:** Important ports include Taganrog, Mariupol, Yeysk, and Berdyansk.
- **Conflict Zone:** The sea is shared by Russia and Ukraine and has witnessed modern geopolitical developments.
- **Biodiversity:** It contains more than 300 species of invertebrates and about 80 species of fish, including sturgeon, perch, bream, herring, sea-roach, gray mullet, minnow, shemaja, and bullheads.
- **High Biological Productivity:** The sea has rich marine biodiversity because of its shallow waters, effective mixing and warming of water, and the large supply of nutrients brought by rivers and the abundance of plankton and algae that support marine life.

The First Sea Shipment of Botanical-Infused Millets

News: India achieved a milestone in millet exports with the first sea-based export of botanical-infused millet functional foods to New Zealand on June 3, 2026.

About First Sea Shipment of Botanical-Infused Millets



Source – Ministry of Commerce

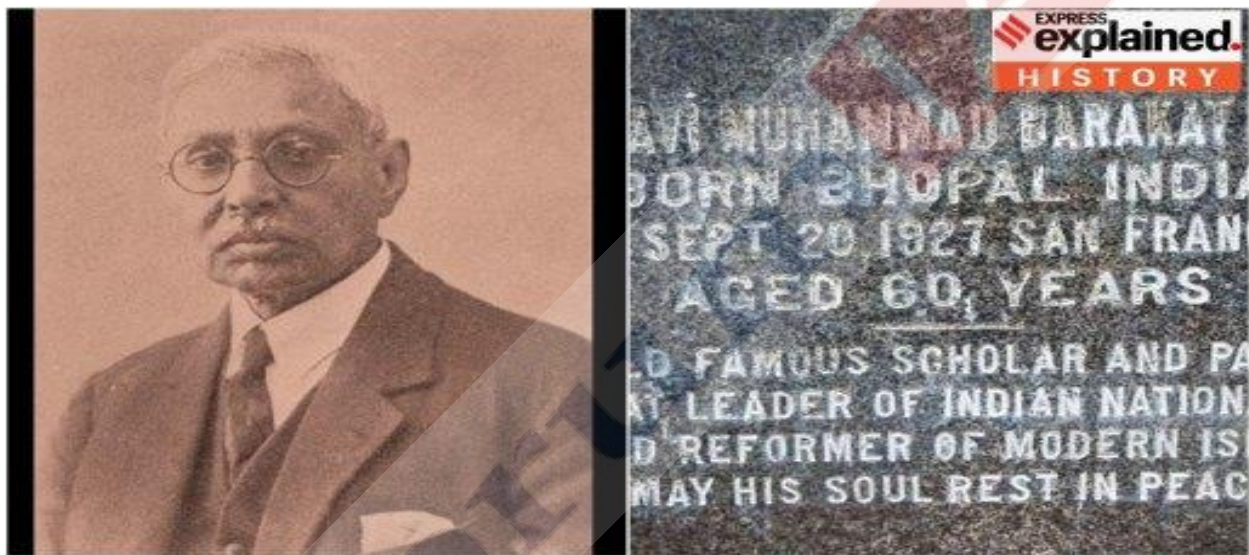
- It marks the first overseas sea shipment of botanical-infused, ready-to-cook millet functional foods produced in India.
- **Facilitated by:** The export was supported by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Exporter:** The consignment was exported by M/s Infini Agrotek LLP, an agri-technology company based in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- **Destination:** The products were shipped to New Zealand.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Value-Added Functional Foods:** These products combine traditional Indian millets with plant-based botanical extracts to create foods that offer nutritional and wellness benefits.
 - **Consumer-Friendly Product Design:** The products are available in ready-to-cook forms, making them convenient for consumers in international markets.
 - **Market Linkages Through Trade Events:** APEDA-supported global exhibitions helped the exporter connect with foreign buyers and secure the export order.

- **Compliance with Export Requirements:** The products satisfy the biosecurity, food safety, and quality requirements needed for entry into markets such as New Zealand.
- **Significance:** The initiative promotes value-added agricultural exports, strengthens the global presence of millet-based products, and supports the expansion of India's agri-food export basket.

Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali

News: The executive council of Bhopal's Barkatullah University has passed a proposal to change its name to Vagdevi Bhopal University. It was named after Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali.

About Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali



Source: IE

- Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali was a nationalist, renowned scholar, and the first Prime Minister of India's first provisional government-in-exile.
- **Birth:** He was born in Bhopal in 1854.
- **Life:** He was a meritorious student and went to Bombay and London for studies.
 - He then started teaching in Liverpool, where he came into contact with Indian revolutionaries.
 - His articles and speeches attracted the negative attention of the British government, after which he left for the U.S.A in 1899.
 - In U.S.A, he corresponded with the freedom fighter [Maulana Hasrat Mohani](#) (who coined the slogan *Inquilab Zindabad*).

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- He devoted his life to working for India's freedom abroad.
- **Ideology:** He believed that India could only be free if all its communities stood together.
 - He worked closely with Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and people from every region.
- **Activities:** He travelled to various countries such as Japan, England, U.S.A, Germany, Russia and Afghanistan, creating awareness for and building alliances to usher in India's independence.
 - During World War I, Barkatullah and his associates travelled to Germany and tried to convince Indian soldiers captured by the Germans to form an army to fight the British.
 - He also worked prominently for the Ghadar Party, founded by Lala Har Dayal in 1913, which wanted to win India's independence through armed struggle.
 - He, along with some associates, most notably Raja Mahendra Pratap, set up India's first 'government in exile' in Kabul in 1915.
 - Four years later, the leaders of this 'government' travelled to Moscow to meet Vladimir Lenin, the head of government of Soviet Russia.
 - After the British victory in the First World War, the Indian revolutionaries' plans suffered major reverses. However, Barkatullah kept travelling to Brussels, Switzerland, France, etc., working for his cause.
- He spent most of his life in exile. He connected with anti-colonial movements around the world and became one of the most well-known Indian revolutionaries of his time.
- **Death:** He died in 1927 in the U.S.A.
- **Legacy:** In his recognition, Barkatullah University in Bhopal was named after him in 1988.

Marbled Cat (*Pardofelis marmorata*)

News: Conservationists and several communities in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland gathered on March 1 to mark the first-ever International Marbled Cat Day, drawing attention to one of Asia's most elusive and least understood wild felids.

About Marbled Cat (*Pardofelis marmorata*)



Source: Round Glass Sustain

- The Marbled cat is a **small wild cat** that lives in the mountainous areas of Asia.
- **Scientific name:** Its scientific name is **Pardofelis marmorata**.
- It is closely **related to the Asian golden cat and the Bay cat**.
- **Habitat:** It is primarily found in **moist, tropical evergreen forests and have** also been recorded in **mixed deciduous forests and secondary growth areas**.
- **Distribution:** Its range extends from the **Himalayan foothills in Nepal across southwestern China and throughout mainland Southeast Asia to the islands of Borneo and Sumatra**.
 - In India, it is found in **West Bengal, Assam, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, and Tripura**.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Appearance:**
 - The marbled cat is **about the same size as a domestic cat**.
 - It has **rounded ears and a very long tail**, which is nearly equal to the combined length of its head and body.
 - The **tail is marked with black spots near its base and black rings** toward the tip.
 - Its **long, dense fur varies in colour from brownish-grey to ochreous brown on the upper body** and from greyish to buff on the underparts.

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- The **coat is thick, soft, and well adapted to its habitat.**
- The **short, rounded head is marked with distinct black stripes.** Black stripes also extend along the neck and back.
- The **flanks display irregular dark-edged blotches** that merge into larger dark patches, **creating a characteristic marbled appearance**
- The **limbs, underbelly, and tail bear solid black spots.**
- Spots on the **forehead and crown merge into narrow longitudinal stripes** on the neck and irregular stripes along the back.
- It has **unusually large feet and prominent canine teeth.**
- Its paws are **webbed between the toes, and the claws remain completely sheathed when not in use.**
- **Diet:** Its diet is largely composed of **tree-dwelling prey, including squirrels, rats, and birds.** On the forest floor, it may also **hunt reptiles, frogs, and various insects.**
- **Behaviour:** It is **primarily diurnal**, or active during the day.
 - It is **very good climbers and are semi-arboreal.**
 - **It maintains its territory by marking boundaries with urine and scent signals**
- **Threat: Habitat loss and fragmentation due to logging and agricultural expansion**, especially oil palm plantations, are the greatest threats to the Marbled Cat.
 - It is also **affected by illegal hunting and trade for its skin, meat, and bones.**
- **Conservation measures: In October 2025, the Hii:ung Hii:eng community forest in Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh, was formally declared India's first community-conserved area** dedicated to the marbled cat by the Lokpeng Welfare Society.
- **Conservation status:**
 - **CITES:** Appendix I
 - **IUCN Red List:** Near Threatened
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I