

Factly Weekly

Compilation

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

2nd Week

June 2026

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About Pyroprocessing

News: Pyroprocessing is in focus as an advanced technique used for reprocessing spent nuclear fuel in fast reactor programmes.

About Pyroprocessing



Source – TH

- **Pyroprocessing is an umbrella term for high-temperature, dry, and energy-intensive industrial process (usually above 800°C) that physically or chemically alter materials.**
- **Uses:** It is primarily used in metallurgy (extracting metals from ores), cement manufacturing, and as an advanced technique for recycling used nuclear
- **Applications Across Sectors:**
 - **Cement Industry:**
 - **Process:** Finely ground limestone, clay, and iron are fed into a rotary kiln.
 - **As the temperature reaches 900°C, limestone loses carbon dioxide, and at around 1,450°C, the mixture partly melts to form marble-sized nodules called clinker.**
 - **The clinker is then ground to produce cement.**
 - **Importance:** Cement manufacturing is the largest user of pyroprocessing among the three major sectors.
- **Metallurgy & Extractive Industries**
 - **Process:** Sulphide ores are roasted to convert them into metal oxides.
 - **Smelting melts an ore to separate the metal from waste impurities called slag.**

- Heating limestone to produce lime is known as calcining.
- **Importance:** These processes are used to extract metals from ores and separate metals from waste impurities.
- **Nuclear Industry**
 - **Process:** Used nuclear fuel is processed in a salt bath containing lithium and potassium chlorides at 500°C or more.
 - An electric current separates different elements based on their electrochemical properties.
 - **Importance:** This method is used to reprocess spent nuclear fuel and forms part of programmes involving advanced fast reactors
 - Countries actively researching and coupling pyroprocessing to fast breeder reactors include India, the USA, Japan, Russia, and South Korea.

UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award

News: Major Abhilasha Barak became the first Indian woman peacekeeper to receive the 2025 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award.

About UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award



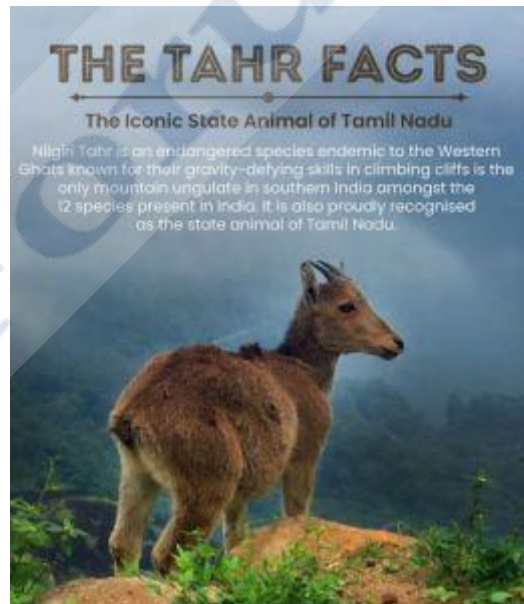
Source – NOA

- It is an annual United Nations award that recognizes military peacekeepers who advance gender inclusion in peacekeeping operations.
- **Instituted:** The award has been presented annually since 2016.
- **Objective:** The award recognizes military peacekeepers who advance the goals of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which promotes women's participation in peace and security efforts.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Gender Equality Promotion:** The award honours peacekeepers who promote gender equality in conflict-affected areas.
 - **Community Engagement:** The award recognises efforts that strengthen trust between peacekeepers and local communities and improve support systems for women.

Nilgiri Tahr and 'Varudai' App

News: Tamil Nadu Forest Department developed the Varudai mobile application for the synchronized Nilgiri Tahr survey conducted from April 24 to 27.

About Nilgiri Tahr



Source – TN Government

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About	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is a mountain ungulate endemic to the southern part of the Western Ghats.● It is also known as the Nilgiri Ibex or Varayaadu.● It is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.
Scientific Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It's scientific name is Nilgiritragus hylocrius.
Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The species inhabits open montane grasslands and shola forests at elevations ranging from 1,200 to 2,600 m.● It thrives on grassy slopes and rocky cliffs in the Western Ghats.
Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is distributed across a roughly 400 km stretch of the Western Ghats in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.● Eravikulam National Park in Kerala supports the highest density and the largest surviving population of the species.
Physical Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Nilgiri Tahr is a stocky goat with short, coarse fur and a bristly mane.● Males are larger and darker than females, and both sexes possess curved horns that are larger in males.
Ecological Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Nilgiri Tahr serves as an important prey species for tigers and leopards.● It is also an indicator of montane grassland health and coexists with endemic species such as the Nilgiri langur and lion-tailed macaque.

Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The species faces threats from habitat loss caused by deforestation, hydroelectric projects, and monoculture plantations.● Livestock competition, poaching, and forest fires also affect its survival.
Conservation Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.● It is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

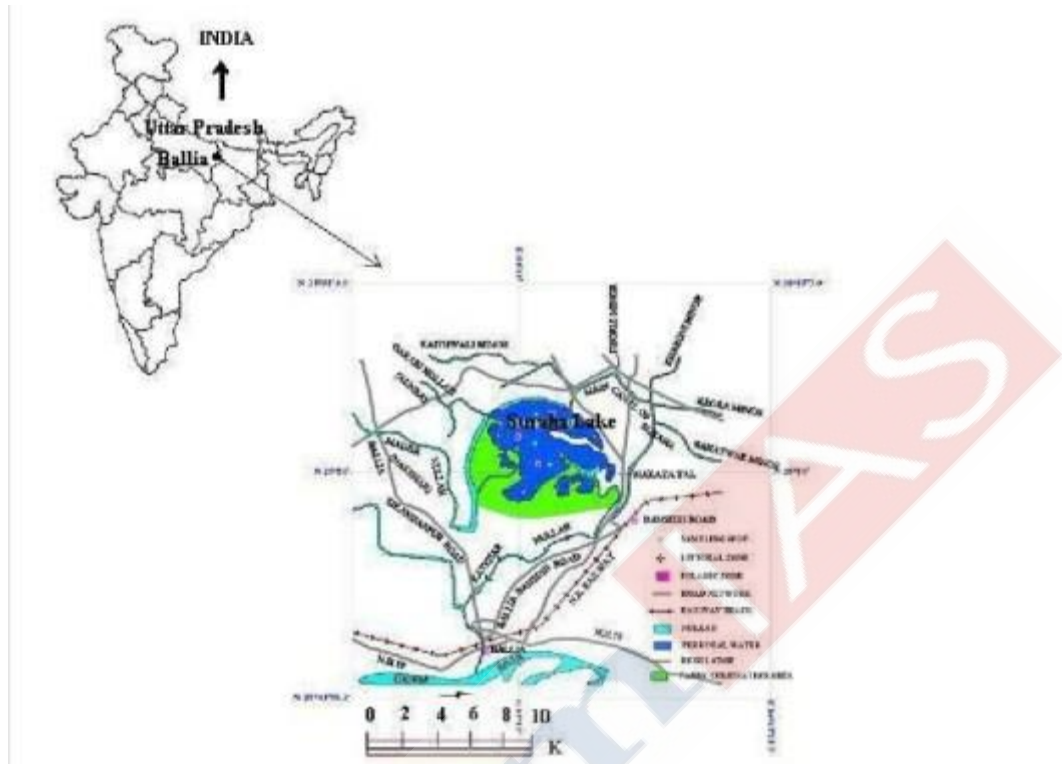
About Varudai App

- **Developed by:** The application has been developed by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department under Project Nilgiri Tahr.
- **Aim:** The app aims to improve the accuracy of Nilgiri Tahr surveys through digital data collection and GPS-based monitoring.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Scientific Data Collection:** Forest staff can digitally mark GPS locations and record the distance covered during the survey, which helps in obtaining accurate data.
 - **Reduction of Manual Work:** The application removes the need to manually record sightings and indirect signs of the Nilgiri Tahr during the census.
 - **Important Achievement:** This is the first mobile application developed for the survey of any mammalian species in Tamil Nadu.

Surha Tal

News: Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Tal) has been designated as India's 100th [Ramsar site](#).

About Surha Tal



Source: Research Gate

- **Location:** It is the largest floodplain lake located in the Ballia District of eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- **Official name:** It is officially known as the Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary.
- **Type of lake:** It is an open-type oval 'U'-shaped ox-bow lake.
- **River associated:** It is a perennial and natural lake fed by the river Ganga.
- **Flora and Fauna:** It supports a rich diversity of species such as 221 plant species, 66 fish species and a few reptile and amphibian species.
 - Notable fish found here include the vulnerable Wallago attu and Bagarius bagarius.
 - It is also a feeding ground for the [fishing cat \(Prionailurus viverrinus\)](#)
- It attracts several migratory and resident bird species due to its rich avifaunal biodiversity.
- **Avifauna:** It provides habitat for over 310 bird species (including 125 waterbirds) and hosts up to 200,000 individual migratory birds during the winter.
 - It falls on the Central Asian Flyway, through which migratory birds travel from Central Asia to the Indian subcontinent.

NZP Saathi App

News: The National Zoological Park (NZP), New Delhi, has introduced the new 'NZP Saathi App' along with self-ticketing kiosks to improve the visitor experience by providing smart navigation features and simplifying the online ticket booking process

About NZP Saathi App

- **'NZP Saathi'** is a mobile application aimed at transforming the zoo-going experience by helping visitors navigate the premises, learn about animals and access facilities without depending on human guides
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **Features:**
 - **Interactive digital map and smart navigation system:** It features an interactive digital map and smart navigation system that enables visitors to locate animal enclosures, washrooms, buggy points, exits and other facilities.
 - **Thematic tour options:** It also offers thematic tours, including Express Tour, Family Tour, Grand Zoo Tour and personalised "My Tour" options.
 - **AI Guide Box:** It has an AI Guide Box feature that responds to visitor queries in real time.
 - **Digital mapping:** It also includes a 2D digital map displaying the location of animals and birds across the zoo, along with their distance from the visitor's current point.
 - **Compatibility:** It is available on both Android and iOS platforms.
 - **Digital booking:** The app also allows users to purchase zoo tickets online through a login-based booking system.

Island of Mindanao

News: A 7.8-magnitude earthquake off the southern coast of Mindanao triggered tsunami warnings and caused deaths and injuries.

About Island of Mindanao



Source – Nikkei Asia

- **Location:** Island of Mindanao is located in the southern region of the Philippine archipelago.
- It is the second-largest island in the Philippines after Luzon and is the seventh-most populous island in the world.
- **Surrounding Water Bodies:** It is surrounded by the Sulu Sea in the west, the Philippine Sea in the east, the Celebes Sea in the south, and the Mindanao Sea in the north.
- **Plateaus:** It contains extensive upland plateaus in the Bukidnon and Lanao del Sur provinces.
 - These plateaus are formed by basaltic lava flows inter-bedded with volcanic ash and tuff, and their edges are cut by deep canyons and waterfalls.
- **Mountain Systems:** The mountains of Mindanao can be grouped into ten ranges, which include both complex structural mountains and volcanic mountain ranges.
- **Highest Peak:** Mount Apo, is the highest peak in Mindanao and the highest point in the Philippines.
- **Major Rivers:** The major rivers include the Agusan River and the Rio Grande de Mindanao.
- **Seismic Activity:** Located along the Pacific Ring of Fire, Island of Mindanao experiences frequent tectonic action.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2026

News: The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2026 on the state of armaments, disarmament and international security.

About Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2026



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

- Released by: It is an annual assessment released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).
- It provides an overview of developments in international security, weapons and technology, military expenditure, arms production and the arms trade, and armed conflicts and conflict management, along with efforts to control conventional, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.
- First edition: SIPRI has been publishing its flagship SIPRI Yearbook since 1969.
- Key findings related to India:
 - Expansion of nuclear arsenals: India is estimated to have moderately expanded its nuclear arsenal in 2025 while continuing the development of new nuclear delivery systems.
 - According to estimates, India's nuclear stockpile grew to approximately 190 warheads by early 2026, up from around 180 warheads in 2025.

- **Nuclear modernisation:** India's ongoing nuclear modernisation efforts are increasingly directed toward developing longer-range capabilities that can reach targets throughout China, while also addressing security challenges stemming from its long-standing rivalry with Pakistan.
- It describes Operation Sindoor as an "unusually severe military crisis" between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.
 - SIPRI reported that during the conflict, India conducted strikes on Pakistani air and missile bases that were likely associated with nuclear-related functions.
 - It also noted that both nations took steps to avoid further escalation despite the heightened tensions.
 - It also observed that India and Pakistan incorporated cyber operations into active military conflict for the first time during the crisis, highlighting the changing character of modern warfare in South Asia.
- **Increased military expenditure:** India maintained its position as the world's fourth-largest military spender in 2025. SIPRI estimated the country's military expenditure at \$92.1 billion, representing an 8.9% increase compared with the previous year.
 - In terms of defence spending, India ranked behind only the United States, China, Russia, and Germany.
- **Major importer:** India also remained the world's second-largest importer of major arms during the 2021–25 period, accounting for 8.2% of total global arms imports.
 - SIPRI identified Ukraine, India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Pakistan as the five largest arms importers, together accounting for 35% of global arms imports during the period.
- **Finding related to other countries:**
 - All nine nuclear-armed states, U.S.A, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel continued to modernise their arsenals and increasingly relied on nuclear weapons as instruments of national power.
 - Globally, the nine countries possessed an estimated 12,187 nuclear warheads at the start of 2026, of which around 9,745 were held in military stockpiles for potential use.

About Stockholm International Peace Research Institute



STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Source: SIPRI

- **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.**

E85 Fuel

News: Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister recently launched the “E85 fuel” at a retail fuel outlet in New Delhi.

About E85 Fuel

- E85 is a high-ethanol blended fuel comprising 80-85% ethanol and 14-19% petrol.
- Difference between standard E20 petrol and E85:
 - **Composition:** The standard E20 petrol contains up to 20% ethanol mixed with 80% conventional petrol. E85 fuel contains a mix of 80%-85% ethanol blended with 14% to 19% petrol.
 - **Price:** E85 is nearly Rs 20 per litre cheaper than conventional petrol to ensure that the economic benefits of domestically produced ethanol are passed on to consumers.
- **Use:** E85 is engineered exclusively for specialised [flex-fuel vehicles](#), or FFVs.
 - **Note:** Regular petrol vehicles cannot use E85 fuel.
- **Advantages:**
 - **Environmental impact:** FFVs operating on E85 can reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions by around 61% compared with conventional petrol vehicles.
 - Ethanol-based FFVs, including vehicles running on high ethanol blends such as E85, have been classified as zero-emission vehicles by Niti Aayog.
 - E85 fuel also produces near-zero particulate matter emissions, making FFVs a promising solution for addressing the country’s growing air pollution challenge.
 - Its use will also boost farmers’ income, reduce dependence on crude oil imports, and strengthen the country’s energy security.

About Ethanol

- Ethanol is an anhydrous ethyl alcohol having chemical formula of C_2H_5OH .
- Source: It can be produced from sugarcane, maize, wheat, etc. which are having high starch content.
- In India, ethanol is mainly produced from sugarcane molasses by fermentation process.
- Ethanol can be mixed with gasoline to form different blends.
- As the ethanol molecule contains oxygen, it allows the engine to more completely combust the fuel, resulting in fewer emissions and thereby reducing the occurrence of environmental pollution.
- Since ethanol is produced from plants that harness the power of the sun, ethanol is also considered as renewable fuel.

Key Facts about Armenia

News: Armenia's ruling Civil Contract party won just under half of the votes in a parliamentary election seen as a test of its handling of a peace deal with Azerbaijan.

Key Facts about Armenia



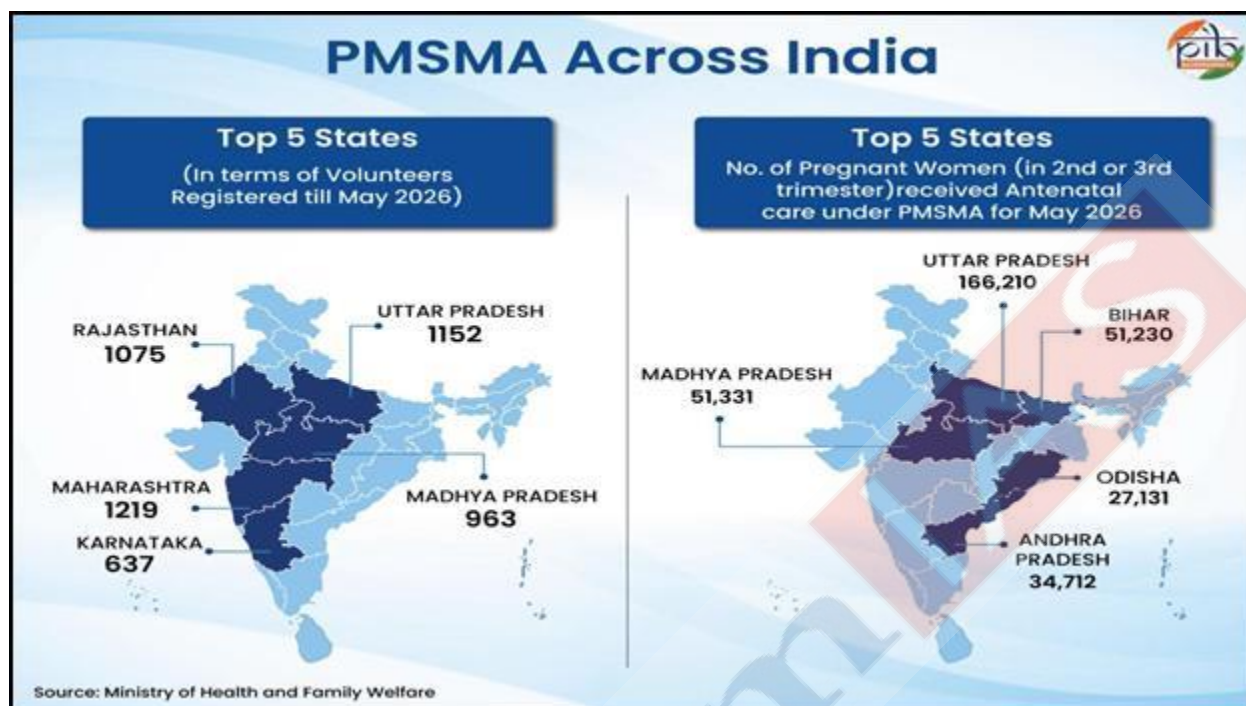
Source: World Atlas

Aspects	Description
Location	Armenia is a landlocked country in the South Caucasus region between Europe and Asia.
Bordering nations	It is bounded by Georgia in the north, Azerbaijan in the east, Iran in the southeast and Turkey in the west.
Capital	The capital of Armenia is Yerevan.
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its climate is dry and continental. • It has hot, dry summers and cold winters, with sharp climatic variation by altitude.
Terrain	It has a highly rugged and mountainous terrain.
Soil formation	A significant portion of its soil has been formed in part from volcanic lava deposits and is abundant in nitrogen, potash, and phosphates.
Mountain	Its larger area is dominated by the Lesser (or Little) Caucasus Mountains.
Highest Point	The highest point is Mt. Aragats at 13,418 ft. (4,090m). It is an extinct volcanic peak.
Major River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Araks and Debed Rivers are the two most important rivers. • The Araks act as a natural border between Iran and Turkey to the south. • Armenia is rich in springs and wells, some of which possess medicinal properties.
Major Lake	Lake Sevan is the largest lake, and it is 6,000 ft. (2,000 m) above sea level.
Natural Resources	It has mineral resources such as small quantities of gold, copper, molybdenum, zinc, and alumina ores.

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)

News: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched nationwide celebrations to commemorate “10 Years of Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan – A Decade of Care”.

About Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)



Source: PIB

Aspect	Details
About	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a flagship initiative to provide free, comprehensive antenatal care to pregnant women, particularly those in their second and third trimesters, at designated government health facilities on the 9th of every month. It is a vital pillar of the Government's Continuum of Care approach under the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) Strategy.
Launched by	It was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016.
Aim	It aims to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality by facilitating early detection and prompt management of high-risk pregnancies.

<p>Objective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is to ensure that every pregnant woman receives at least one check-up by a physician/specialist during the second or third trimester. ● It is to improve the quality of care during antenatal visits. ● It is to identify and manage high-risk pregnancies (HRP) at an early stage. ● It is to ensure appropriate birth planning and complication readiness for each pregnant woman. ● It also ensures appropriate management of women with malnutrition. ● It provides special focus on adolescent and early pregnancies.
<p>Components of service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The PMSMA service package includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clinical examinations ○ Laboratory investigations (blood and urine tests) ○ Ultrasonography ○ Medicines, and ○ Counselling on nutrition, birth planning, and safe pregnancy practices.
<p>Key Features of PMSMA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comprehensive Antenatal Care: Minimum one comprehensive and quality antenatal checkup by an Obstetrician & Gynaecologist or Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC) / Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEmONC) trained doctor during the second or third trimester.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mobilising the pregnant women for specialist Antenatal care services at Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan clinics/ designated government health facility centre.● High-Risk Pregnancy (HRP): HRP identification by screening for 25 high-risk factors and management at an early stage.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A sticker indicating the condition and risk factor of pregnant women is added to Mother and Child Protection cards for each visit:○ Linking of HRPs to the nearest first referral unit (FRU) for a safe delivery.● Minimum Package of Services: A minimum package of investigations and medicines, such as Iron Folic Acid and calcium supplements, is provided to all pregnant women at Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan clinics.● Doctor Volunteer System: The initiative actively welcomes OB-GYN specialists, radiologists, and physicians from the private sector to volunteer their time on the 9th of every month.● Nutrition focus: Counselling on nutrition along with appropriate birth planning and complication readiness for each pregnant woman.● Note: The E-PMSMA strategy was rolled out in January 2022 to ensure tracing and tracking of High-Risk Pregnant (HRP) women till a safe delivery is achieved by provisioning financial incentivization for the identified HRP women and accompanying Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) for extra 3 visits over and above the PMSMA visit.
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Performance	More than 7.50 crore pregnant women have received antenatal services under PMSMA in addition to routine ANC checkup services.
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Land Port Management System (VINIMAY)

News: Union Home Minister launched the Land Port Management System (LPMS) 'Vinimay,' to modernise operations across India's land ports.

About Land Port Management System (VINIMAY)



Figure 1. Source: Land Ports Authority

- Land Port Management System (LPMS), Vinimay, is a unified digital platform that integrates operations across India's land ports.

- Developed by: It has been developed by the Land Ports Authority of India under the

vision of Smart Borders.

- Aim: It aimed at modernising operations across India's land ports and improving coordination between border agencies.
- It has been designed to streamline cargo and passenger movement and strengthen border security and trade management.
- Features:
 - Secure and Real-Time Information Sharing: It allows secure and real-time sharing of logistics and regulatory information.
 - End-to-End Digital Workflows: It introduces end-to-end digital workflows for cargo and passenger processing, including slot booking, online payments, shipment tracking and single-window clearances.
 - It will enhance coordination among various agencies and make the exchange of information seamless.

- Integration with National Digital Platforms: It has also been integrated with key national platforms such as ICEGATE, ULIP and the motor vehicle ecosystem to improve interoperability and reduce delays.
- Benefits: It will significantly reduce paperwork and enhance ease of doing business and ensure seamless movement of goods and passengers across India's international land borders.
 - Also, the Single Electronic Window and Automatic Number Plate Recognition-based gate operations will significantly reduce processing time.

About Land Ports Authority of India



- Nodal ministry: Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) is a statutory body under the Department of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Establishment: It was formally established in 2012.
- Objective: Its objective is to reduce dwell time and trade transaction costs, promote regional trade and people-to-people connectivity, and adopt global best practices in border infrastructure and operations.
- Responsibilities: It is responsible for developing and managing modern land ports along India's international borders to ensure seamless and efficient movement of cargo and passengers.

- Currently, LPAI operates 15 land ports across India's international borders. These are:
 - Attari (Punjab) and Dera Baba Nanak (Punjab) along the India-Pakistan border
 - Rupaidiha (Uttar Pradesh), Raxaul (Bihar) and Jogbani (Bihar) along the India-Nepal border
 - Darranga (Assam) along the India-Bhutan border

- Petrapole (West Bengal), Dawki (Meghalaya), Sutarkandi, Golakganj and Mankachar (Assam), Agartala, Srimantapur and Sabroom (Tripura) along the India-Bangladesh border; and
- Moreh (Manipur) along the India-Myanmar border.

Tezpur Litchi

News: APEDA facilitated the first export consignment of GI-tagged Tezpur litchi from Assam to Dubai on 7 June 2026.

About Tezpur Litchi



Source - Open Mag

Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tezpur litchi is mainly grown in the Sonitpur district of Assam.● Other major varieties cultivated in the region include Bombaya, Bilati, Elaichi, Piyaji, and Sahi.
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Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Appearance: It is known for its bright-red appearance, and the fruit colour varies from dull brick red to attractive red.● Pulp Quality: The fruit has white to greyish-white juicy pulp with superior eating quality.● Size: It weighs around 70–80 g and is the largest among the litchi varieties grown in Assam.● Nutritional Value: It is a rich source of Vitamin C and contains a fair amount of potassium, phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, iron, and Vitamin B.
Climate Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Climate Type: Tezpur litchi thrives best under a humid sub-tropical climate.● Temperature: It grows well where temperatures are around 30°C in June and 21°C in February, and it is sensitive to frost and dry heat.● Rainfall & Humidity: It flourishes under moist conditions with abundant rainfall and humidity.● Altitude: It generally prefers low elevations and can be grown up to 800 m.
Soil Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The crop is well suited to loamy soil enriched with organic matter and having good drainage properties.
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tezpur litchi received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2013.

Berobenatide – New Obesity Drug

News: Pharmaceutical company Pfizer announced mid-stage trial results of berobenatide, an experimental once-monthly anti-obesity and diabetes drug.

About Berobenatide – New Obesity Drug



Figure 2. Source – IE

- Berobenatide is an experimental anti-obesity and diabetes drug that is designed to be administered as a once-monthly injection.
- Developed by: It has been developed by Pfizer.
- Working Mechanism:
 - GLP-1 Receptor: Berobenatide is a GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) weight-loss therapy that mimics the gut hormone GLP-1 to regulate blood sugar, slow stomach emptying, and reduce appetite.
 - Appetite & Digestion: The drug helps reduce appetite and slows stomach emptying, which supports weight management and blood sugar regulation.
 - Extended Circulation Design: The drug has been engineered to remain in circulation much longer than conventional GLP-1 therapies, allowing sustained activation of GLP-1 receptors throughout the month.
- Dosing: Patients would initially receive weekly doses before transitioning to a single injection every month, reducing the number of injections from 52 per year to 12 per year.
- Efficacy: Patients without diabetes lost up to 12.3% of their body weight, and weight loss continued after the shift to monthly dosing.
- Limitation: Experts have stated that long-term data, particularly on cardiovascular outcomes, are still needed.
- Significance: Less frequent dosing may reduce treatment fatigue, improve treatment persistence, and help patients remain on therapy for longer periods.
- Other Obesity Drug:
 - Semaglutide (branded as *Ozempic/Wegovy*) – developed by Novo Nordisk
 - Tirzepatide (branded as *Mounjaro/Zepbound*) – developed by Eli Lilly

SAPLING Dialogue and Initiative

News: The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), in collaboration with the World Bank Group-led SAPLING initiative, inaugurated the SAPLING Dialogue.

About SAPLING Dialogue



Why this matters

- Up to 40% of food is lost post-harvest - need for stronger processing and market linkages.
- Smallholders and SMEs dominate, but lack access to finance, technology, and markets.
- Strengthening farms-firms-finance connections can turn these challenges into jobs and growth.

Focus

- Stronger farm-to-market value chains
- Improving food safety & market access
- Advancing regional collaboration
- Scaling innovation
- Mobilizing public & private investment
- Support for SMEs & agribusiness growth

What this means for countries

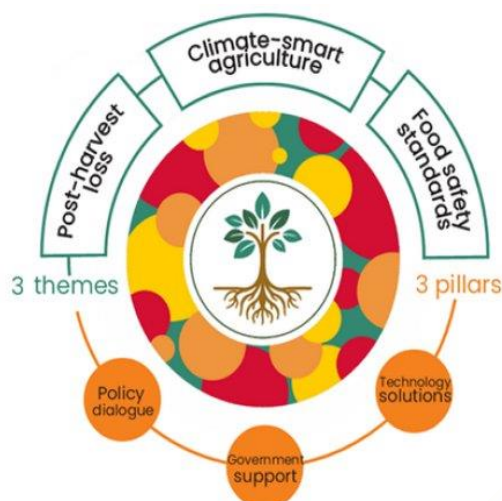
- More jobs, especially for youth and women.
- Stronger connections between producers, firms, and markets.
- Increased private sector participation and investment.
- Opportunities for SMEs to scale and formalize.

Source: World Bank

Aspects	Details
About	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Held at: The SAPLING Regional High-Level Policy Dialogue was held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. ● Title: “Unlocking Value: Advancing Food Processing for Employment Generation and Sustainable Growth in South Asia”. ● Objective: It is a two-day regional dialogue that brings together around 200 participants to discuss strengthening food processing ecosystems and building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems. ● Aligned with: It is aligned with the World Bank Group’s AgriConnect initiative and SAPLING platform. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These initiatives aim to accelerate resilient and nutrition-focused food systems across South Asia through policy reform, investment mobilization, and technology-driven solutions.

Inaugurated by	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It has been inaugurated by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) in collaboration with the World Bank Group-led SAPLING initiative.
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Participants include policymakers, industry leaders, development partners, innovators, researchers, startups, and representatives from South Asian countries.
Thematic sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The dialogue includes thematic sessions on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Think Big, Act Local: Unlocking South Asia's Food Processing Opportunity.○ From Farm to Factory: Strengthening Agricultural Supply Chains for Food Processing.○ From Shadow to Spotlight: Formalizing informal food processors (<i>Bringing small processors into regulate value chains</i>).○ Smart Tech, Bold Innovations: Transforming Food Processing Through Technology.○ Safe food, strong markets: Health, Quality and Standards for competitive Trade.○ Farm, Firm and Finance: Mobilizing Investment for Food Processing Growth.○ Shaping a Shared Food Future: Regional Collaboration and Policy Action in South Asia
Key Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Food Systems Transformation● Infrastructure and Market Linkages● Collaborative Investment Agenda

About SAPLING Initiative



Source: World Bank

Aspects	Descriptions
<p>About</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SAPLING stands for ‘South Asian Policy Leadership for Improved Nutrition and Growth’. ● It is a regional engagement and partnership platform to accelerate the transformation of resilient, nutrition-focused food systems across South Asia. ● It is aligned with the World Bank Group’s AgriConnect initiative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AgriConnect is a global platform that aims to connect 300 million farmers to markets by 2030 through investments in infrastructure, policy reforms, and private capital mobilisation.
<p>Led by</p>	<p>It is led by the World Bank Group.</p>
<p>Themes</p>	<p>It functions on three themes: Post-harvest loss, climate-smart agriculture and Food safety standards.</p>

Pillars	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It has three thematic pillars: Policy Dialogue, government support and technology solution● SAPLING fosters dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange through these thematic pillars.● This enables countries to identify and advance scalable, investment-ready, and innovation-driven solutions for the future of food systems in South Asia.
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It convenes governments, private sector actors, innovators, researchers, and development partners to advance policy reform, mobilize investment, and scale technology and innovation that strengthen food systems, improve nutrition outcomes, and enhance climate resilience.● It also supports greater private sector participation in food system value chains and helps unlock investment for sustainable growth.

Skagerrak Strait

News: Archaeologists have recovered large quantities of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain, along with fragments of chandeliers, goblets, textiles and grain, from a depth of about 600 meters in the Skagerrak Strait.

About Skagerrak Strait



Source: Britannica

- **Location:** Skagerrak Strait is located between Norway, Sweden, and Denmark and connects the North Sea with the Kattegat sea.
- **Size:** It is about 240 km long and 130–145 km wide.
 - It narrows between Cape Skagen (the Skaw) in Denmark and the Swedish coast.
 - From there, it turns south into the Kattegat, leading toward the Danish Sounds and the Baltic Sea.
- It is shallow along the Danish shore and deepens toward the Norwegian coast.
- **Importance:** It is an important and busy shipping route.
 - Major ports on the Skagerrak include Oslo and Kristiansand in Norway, and Uddevalla and Strömstad in Sweden.
- **Historical significance:** The Battle of Jutland which was a major naval battle during World War I, was fought near the Skagerrak in 1916.

Limnonectes motijheel

News: Recently, researchers discovered *Limnonectes motijheel*, a new species of fanged frog, in Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh.

About *Limnonectes motijheel*

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Aspects	Details
About	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Limnonectes motijheel is a newly discovered species of fanged frog belonging to the genus <i>Limnonectes</i>.
Discovered In	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The species was discovered in Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh.
Naming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is named after the Motijheel Lake, a wetland within the Namdapha Reserve.
Physical Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The “Fangs”: Male frogs possess small fang-like projections on the lower jaw, a feature that gives fanged frogs their name and may aid feeding or territorial behaviour.● Body Markings: The frog has a dark-brown line between its eyes, an inverted “V”-shaped ridge on its back, and broken folds running along both sides of its body.● Size: It generally measure 2.3 to 3.5 cm as adults.
Unique Nesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Unlike most frogs that lay eggs in water or on leaves, this species builds a mud nest beneath leaf litter on the forest floor.● This behaviour has not previously been recorded in this group from India.
Unique Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Vocalizations: Males produce distinctive calls while remaining hidden beneath leaf litter in their nests.● Offspring Protection: Eggs and tadpoles remain protected inside the nest under leaf litter, and researchers suggest parental care may exist in this species.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (Akademi Ratna) and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards (Akademi Puraskar)

News: The General Council of Sangeet Natak Akademi selected seven Akademi Fellows and 108 Akademi Award recipients for 2024 and 2025.

About Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (Akademi Ratna)



Source – SNA

- Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (Akademi Ratna) is the highest, most prestigious and rare honour conferred by the Sangeet Natak Akademi for sustained contribution in performing arts.
- Origin: The first Fellow of the Akademi was elected in 1954.
- Categories: The Fellowship may be conferred on artistes of outstanding merit in the fields of music, dance and drama, and on persons who have rendered outstanding service to the cause of music, dance and drama through scholarship, research, or original contributions.
- Eligibility:
 - The honour is open to all regardless of nationality, race, caste, religion, creed, or sex.
 - Persons below 50 years of age are ordinarily not considered.
 - An association institution or organization is not eligible for Akademi Ratna or Akademi Puraskar (Akademi Award.)
 - If a person dies after the General Council has taken the decision, the honour may be conferred posthumously.
 - A recipient of Akademi Ratna will not be eligible for an Akademi Puraskar (Akademi Award) at any stage.

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- **Seat Limit:** The Fellowship is restricted to 40 living Fellows at any given time.
 - Earlier, the limit was 30.
- **Prize Details:** Each Fellow receives ₹3 lakh, a Tamrapatra, an Angavastram, a citation, and annual medical insurance coverage up to ₹1.5 lakh.
- **Ceremony:** The President of India/Vice-President of India/Prime Minister of India or any eminent personality in the field will be invited to confer the honours.
- **Recent Honorees:** In March 2026, the General Council unanimously elected seven eminent personalities as Akademi Fellows:
 - Ramlal Bareth – Kathak Dance
 - Rita Ganguly – Vocal Music and Dance
 - A. V. Anand – Carnatic Music
 - Puru Dadheech – Kathak Dance
 - Chittaranjan Jyotishi – Vocal Music
 - Pasumarthi Rattaiah Sarma – Kuchipudi Dance
 - Sudharani Raghupathy – Bharatanatyam Dance

About Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards (Akademi Puraskar)

- **Parent Body:** The Awards are conferred by the Sangeet Natak Akademi.
- **Origin:** The Awards were instituted in 1951 as Presidential Awards and later became Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards after the formation of the Akademi.
- **Categories:** The Awards may be given in five Field of activity:
 - Music
 - Dance
 - Theatre
 - Other Traditional/Folk/Tribal/Dance/Music/Theatre and Puppetry
 - Over all contribution/ Scholarship to Performing Arts.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Akademi Puraskar are open to all regardless of nationality, race, caste, religion, creed, or sex.
 - A person considered for the Award should ordinarily be at least 35 years of age.

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- An association institution or organization is not eligible for Akademi Ratna or Akademi Puraskar (Akademi Award.)
- If a person dies after the General Council has taken the decision, the honour may be conferred posthumously.
- **Nature of Honor:** The Awards recognize sustained individual achievement of a high professional order in performing arts.
- **Seat Limit:** The total number of Awards in a year shall not exceed 46.
- **Prize Details:** Each awardee receives ₹1 lakh, a Tamrapatra, an Angavastram, a citation, and medical insurance coverage up to ₹1 lakh per annum.
- **Ceremony:** The President of India/Vice-President of India/Prime Minister of India or any eminent personality in the field will be invited to confer the honours.
- **Recent Honorees:** The General Council selected 108 artists for the Awards for the years 2024 and 2025.

About Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA)

- **Establishment:** The Sangeet Natak Akademi was established in 1953 as the apex body dedicated to preserving and promoting India's intangible heritage in music, dance, and drama.
- **Creation:** It was created through a resolution of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, in 1952, with P. V. Rajamannar as its first Chairman.
- **Administration:** The Akademi is managed by its General Council, and its Chairman is appointed by the President of India for a five-year term.
- **Institutional Status:** It functions as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture.
- **Promotion of Performing Arts:** The Akademi presents the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar, introduced in 2006, and is reviving more than 100 rare art forms through the 'Kala Deeksha' training programmes.

Tapanuli Orangutan

News: As per a new report, deadly floods and landslides in Indonesia's Sumatra last year wiped out at least 7% of the total population of the critically endangered Tapanuli Orangutan.

About Tapanuli Orangutan



Source: DTE

Aspect	Details
About	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Tapanuli Orangutan is a species of orangutan found on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia.● They are one of three known species of orangutan, alongside the Sumatran orangutan and the Bornean orangutan.
Scientific name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Their scientific name is <i>Pongo tapanuliensis</i>.
Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● They live in tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests.
Distribution	They are endemic to North Sumatra, Indonesia and are only found in the Batang Toru Ecosystem within North Sumatra.
Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● They resemble Sumatran orangutans in body build and fur colour.● Their hair is frizzier than that of other orangutans, with smaller heads, and flatter and wider faces.● Dominant males have prominent moustaches and large flat cheek pads, known as flanges, covered in downy hair.● Both male and female Tapanuli orangutans have beards.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Males are larger than females.
Diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● They are omnivores and have a unique diet that contains unusual items like caterpillars and conifer cones.● They also consume fruits such as figs, mangoes, lychees, durian, and other plants.
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● They are exclusively arboreal species and spend most of their time high up in the trees.● They lead a solitary life and can be seen in pairs only when a mother is raising her young.● They are active during the day, moving slowly in search of food through the trees.● At night, they build a nest for sleeping up high in the canopy out of folded branches.● They communicate with various sounds.
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● They face severe survival threats due to rapid habitat fragmentation, flooding, and human development.
Conservation status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● They were described as a distinct species in 2017.● IUCN: Critically endangered

Blue Valley Cluster Initiative

News: The Assam Government and the European Union recently launched the Blue Valley Cluster initiative.

About Blue Valley Cluster Initiative



Figure 3. Source: Assam CMO

- **Launched by:** It is an initiative launched by the Assam Government and the European Union.
- **Aim:** It aimed to expand cooperation in bioeconomy sectors such as natural flavours, fragrances, and AYUSH, and to create new avenues for investment, innovation, and industrial partnerships between Europe and Northeast India.
- **Features**
 - It aligns with the priorities outlined in the EU-India Comprehensive Strategic Agenda agreed at the January 2026 EU-India Summit, and in particular with the Blue Valleys initiative.
 - It is designed to serve as a platform connecting European and Indian enterprises, research institutions, entrepreneurs and communities to promote sustainable industrial growth and value-chain development.
- **Significance:** It is expected to demonstrate a new model of sustainable industrial cooperation by connecting local biodiversity, innovation and enterprise with international value chains and market opportunities.
 - It will also strengthen cooperation among Europe, Assam, and the wider North-East region of India by developing ecosystems and value chains in sectors of mutual interest.

Key Facts about Tajikistan

News: India and Tajikistan discussed strengthening trade, investment, market access, regulatory cooperation, and business engagement at the 12th Joint Commission meeting.

Key Facts about Tajikistan



Source – Britannica

Aspects	Details
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a landlocked country located in the heart of Central Asia.
Bordered By	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is bordered by Kyrgyzstan in the north, China in the east, Afghanistan in the south, and Uzbekistan in the west and northwest.
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capital city of Tajikistan is Dushanbe.
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tajikistan has a sharply continental, semi-arid, and subtropical climate that varies drastically depending on altitude. The country features hot summers and cold winters in the lowlands, while the high-altitude Pamir Mountains experience alpine, near-arctic conditions year-round.
Soil Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The soil is generally poor in humus but rich in mineral nutrients.

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Terrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● More than nine-tenths of the country's territory is mountainous, and about half of the land lies above 3,000 m.
Mountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Roof of the World: The Pamir Mountains are known as the "Roof of the World" and form a major mountain system in the country.● Highest Peak: The Ismoil Somoni Peak is the country's highest mountain.
Glaciers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fedchenko Glacier is the longest glacier in the world outside the polar regions.● It is a defining feature of Tajik National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the heart of the Pamir Mountains.
Major Rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The major rivers of Tajikistan include the Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Vakhsh, and Kofarnihon rivers.
Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Important lakes include Lake Karakul, Lake Sarez, and Lake Iskanderkul, which are mainly located in mountainous regions.
Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Grasses, bushes, and shrubs form the dominant natural vegetation of the country.
Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Wild tulips, almond trees, and several unique mountain plants are found in the Pamir, Zeravshan, and Hissar ranges.● Nearly 30% of the flora is endemic or sub-endemic.
Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Notable animals include the snow leopard, markhor, Himalayan brown bear, Pamir argali, bearded vulture, deer, jackal, and wild goat.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The 1,250-km Pamir Highway (M41) follows the ancient Silk Route and is the second-highest international road on Earth.

NITI Aayog Governing Council

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 11th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog on the theme “Inclusive Human Development for Viksit Bharat@2047.”

About NITI Aayog Governing Council



Source – DD India

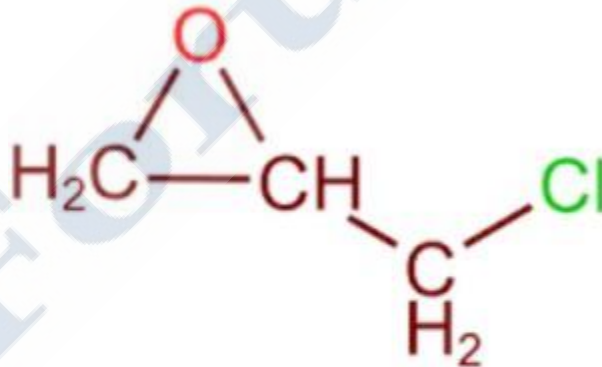
- **NITI Aayog Governing Council:** It is the apex body of NITI Aayog that provides a platform for cooperative federalism and national development discussions.
- **Legal Basis:** NITI Aayog was formed through a resolution of the Union Cabinet in January 2015.
 - The Governing Council came into effect in February 2015 through a notification of the Cabinet Secretariat .
 - It was reconstituted in February 2021 through another Cabinet Secretariat notification.
- **Objectives:** The Governing Council aims to evolve a shared vision of national priorities and strategies with the active involvement of States.
- **Structure & Composition**
 - **Chairperson:** The Prime Minister of India serves as the Chairperson of the Governing Council.
 - **Members:** The Council comprises Chief Ministers of all States, Chief Ministers of Union Territories with legislatures, and Lt. Governors of other Union Territories.

- **Additional Members:** The Council includes Ex-Officio Members, the Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog, Full-time Members of NITI Aayog, and Special Invitees.
- **Functions:**
 - **Policy Direction:** The Council sets national priorities, facilitates policy dialogue between the Centre and States, and reviews major policy initiatives.
 - **Cooperative Federalism:** The Council provides a structured platform for Centre-State engagement, resolves federal issues, and promotes innovation and best practices.
 - **Monitoring and Strategic Planning:** The Council reviews development performance, assesses programme implementation, discusses long-term goals such as Viksit Bharat@2047, and aligns State plans with national priorities.

Epichlorohydrin

News: India has banned epichlorohydrin and chlorine in tea bags, while BIS has issued safety, quality, and traceability norms for tea bags.

About Epichlorohydrin



Epichlorohydrin
2-(chloromethyl) oxirane

Source - India Mart

- **Epichlorohydrin (ECH)** is an organochlorine compound and an epoxide in which one of the methyl hydrogens is substituted by chlorine, and it is used in the manufacture of various industrial chemicals and materials.
- **Nature:** It is a volatile and flammable, clear, colorless, liquid chlorinated cyclic ether with an irritating, chloroform-like odor.
- **Physical Traits:** It releases toxic fumes of hydrochloric acid and other chlorinated compounds when heated to decomposition.
- **Solubility:** It is soluble in water.
- **Reactivity:** It emits hazardous chlorinated compounds during decomposition.
- **Applications:**
 - **Epoxy Resins:** It serves as a primary precursor for manufacturing epoxy resins used in coatings, adhesives, and composites.
 - **Synthetic Glycerin:** It acts as an industrial intermediate for the production of synthetic glycerol.
 - **Water Treatment:** It is used in manufacturing ion-exchange resins and chemicals required for water purification systems.
 - **Paper Reinforcement:** It is used to provide structural strength to specialized paper and filter products.
 - **Health Impacts:** Epichlorohydrin is classified as a potential carcinogen.
 - Exposure to it irritates the eyes, skin, and respiratory tract and can cause chemical pneumonitis, pulmonary edema, and renal lesions.

About Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- The Bureau of Indian Standards is the national standards body of India.
- **Legality:** It was established under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016, and succeeded the Indian Standards Institution created in 1947.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- **Objective:** It was established for the harmonious development of standardization, marking, and quality certification of goods and related matters.
- **Key Functions and Responsibilities:**
 - **Standardization:** It promotes the development of standards for goods.
 - **Quality Certification:** It undertakes quality certification activities for products.
 - **Marking:** It supports marking activities related to standards and quality.
 - **International Representation:** It represents India in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).
 - **Regulatory Oversight:** It has set safety, quality, and traceability requirements for tea bags sold in India.

Oilseeds Kisaan Mitra

News: India's First Nationwide WhatsApp AI Advisory, 'Oilseeds Kisaan Mitra,' has been launched for Oilseed Farmers.

About Oilseeds Kisaan Mitra



Source: PIB

- Oilseeds Kisaan Mitra is India's first nationwide WhatsApp AI advisory for oilseed farmers.
- Developed by: It has been developed by ICAR-Indian Institute of Oilseeds Research (ICAR-IIOR), Hyderabad.
 - Its knowledge base has been built collaboratively with ICAR-Indian Institute of Groundnut Research, Junagadh (ICAR-IIGR), ICAR-Indian Institute of Rapeseed and Mustard Research, Bharatpur (ICAR-IIRMR) and PC-Unit (Sesame & Niger).
- Features:
 - Comprehensive Crop Coverage: It covers end-to-end guidance for all 9 major annual oilseed crops from sowing to harvest, including groundnut, sunflower, soybean, mustard, sesame, etc.
 - 24×7 Accessibility: The AI-powered chatbot responds instantly with research-based guidance on variety selection, crop management, pest and disease control, irrigation, and post-harvest practices, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, free of cost.

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- **Regional Language Support:** It is functional in regional languages & replies in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and English, breaking language barriers for every farmer.
- **Trusted Scientific Knowledge:** It offers reliable and research-based guidance backed by ICAR-IIOR, ICAR-NSRI, IIGR, DRMR, AICRPs & knowledge partners.
- **No App Installation:** It enables any oilseed farmer in India to access free, trusted, and instant crop advisory simply through WhatsApp, without needing to download any additional application.
- **Instant Solutions:** It offers immediate troubleshooting for crop cultivation, pest & disease management, boosting farm productivity.
- **Crop cycle Coverage:** The chatbot covers the entire crop cycle, including variety selection, agronomic practices, pest and disease management, irrigation scheduling, and post-harvest guidance and seed availability.

Sukhnag River

News: According to the joint panel's report to the NGT, the extraction of an estimated 10.6 lakh to 15.3 lakh tonnes of riverbed material in the Sukhnag River area has led to irreversible damage to the area's hydrogeological systems.

About the Sukhnag River

Dried up

Illegal riverbed mining has wreaked havoc across south and central Kashmir, with tributaries originating in the Pir Panjal range bearing the brunt. These streams are crucial for feeding local springs and sustaining the Jhelum river

- Waterbodies impacted by riverbed mining and
- Major locations where riverbed mining takes place



Source: Based on interactions with experts; map not to scale

Source: DTE

- It is a **glacial river** that flows through the **Budgam district of central Kashmir**.
- **Naming:** Sukhnag comprises **two Kashmiri Sanskrit words** – ‘Sukh’ means calm and ‘Naag’ means spring.
- **Origin:** It rises in the **Tosa Maidan area of the Pir Panjal Range**, fed by the **Ashtar spring and the Shin Mahnew glacier**, before descending through forested valleys onto the **Karewa plains**.
- **Course:** From there, it passes through **Arizal, Zanigam, Sail, Beerwah, Rathsun, Makhama, Kawoosa and Narbal**.
 - It finally joins **Jhelum in the lower valley** after skirting the marshy lowlands west of the **[Hokersar Wetland](#)**.
- **Tributary of:** It is a **54-km-long tributary of the Jhelum River**.

- **Water system: Ahji and Lar canals** in Budgam district are located on this river.

National e-Governance Awards (NAeG) 2026

News: Four Panchayati Raj-related initiatives out of 17 projects across seven award categories have been selected for the National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) 2026.

About National e-Governance Awards (NAeG) 2026

- **Conferred at:** It will be conferred at the 29th National Conference on e-Governance, scheduled to be held on 1-2 July 2026 in Rajasthan.
- **Award Categories 2026:** There are a total of 16 awards under 7 categories of the Award Scheme.
 - Categories include 10 Gold Awards, 6 Silver Awards, and 1 Jury Award.
 - **Prizes:** It consists of:
 - a Trophy
 - a Certificate and
 - Gold awardee receives Rs. 10 lakh, and Silver Awardees get Rs. 5 lakh which is to be utilized for the implementation of the project of public welfare.
- **Notable Awardees**

Awards	Award Category	Awardee	State / Level
Gold Award	Digital Transformation by Use of Data Analytics in Digital Platforms by Central Ministries/States/UTs	Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) - Data Driven Governance for Viksit Bharat, Ministry of Panchayati Raj	National Level
Gold Award	Grassroots Level Initiatives by Gram Panchayats for Deepening/Widening of Service Delivery	Kadepur Gram Panchayat, Sangli District, Maharashtra	Maharashtra
Silver Award	Grassroots Level Initiatives by Gram Panchayats for Deepening/Widening of Service Delivery	Bijoy Nagar Gram Panchayat, West Tripura District, Tripura	Tripura
Gold Award	District Level Initiatives in e-Governance	e-Aarogya Dhamni - Transforming Healthcare	Maharashtra

		through e-Governance, Health Department, Zilla Parishad Nandurbar, Maharashtra	
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About National Awards for e-Governance

- National Awards for e-Governance are to recognise and promote excellence in the implementation of e-Governance initiatives.
- Purpose of Award:
 - Disseminate knowledge on effective methods of designing and implementing sustainable e-Governance initiatives.
 - Encourage incremental innovations in successful e-Governance solutions.
 - Promote and exchange experiences in solving problems, mitigating risks, resolving issues and planning for success.
- Frequency: The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) presents these awards every year.
- First conferred: These Awards have been given since 2003.
- Eligibility: All Central Ministries/Departments, State/UT Governments, Districts, Local Bodies, Central & State Government Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), and Academic/Research Institutions (Government and Non -Government) are eligible to apply for these awards.
- Categories of award: There will be a total of 16 awards under 7 categories of the Award Scheme.

Bundel Kesari Maharaja Chhatrasal

News: The Mahua Festival at the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum featured a special dance-drama on Maharaja Chhatrasal's life and legacy.

About Bundel Kesari Maharaja Chhatrasal



Source - Wikipedia

- **Maharaja Chhatrasal (4 May 1649 - 19 December 1731)** was a medieval Indian warrior who fought against the Mughal Empire and established an independent kingdom in Bundelkhand.
- **Birth:** He was born on 4 May 1649 to Champat Rai and Lal Kunwar in the Bundela Rajput clan.
- **Lineage:** He was a descendant of Rudra Pratap Singh of Orchha, and his ancestors were vassals of the Mughal emperor.
- **Disillusionment with Mughals:**
 - **Father's Sacrifice:** His father had raised the banner of freedom against the Mughals but was killed in battle.
 - **Struggle Against Mughal Rule:** Chhatrasal started his struggle against Mughal dominance in 1671 and continued it for about 50 years.
- **Relation with Baji Rao I:**
 - **Military Assistance:** Baji Rao I helped Chhatrasal against Muhammad Khan Bangash and enabled him to retain his kingdom.

- **Family Alliance:** Mastani, Chhatrasal's daughter, became the second wife of Baji Rao I.
- **Influence by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj:**
 - **Meeting with Shivaji:** Chhatrasal met Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Deogarh in 1671.
 - **Inspiration for Swarajya:** Shivaji inspired him to fight for self-rule and adopt guerrilla warfare tactics against the Mughal armies.
- **Rise of the Bundela Kingdom:**
 - **Modest Beginning:** He started his rebellion at the age of 22 with only 5 horsemen and 25 swordsmen.
 - **Formation of Kingdom:** He established his own kingdom at the age of 26 against Mughal dominance.
 - **Territorial Expansion:** He expanded his control from Chitrakoot and Panna in the east to Gwalior in the west.
- **Spiritual Guru:** Mahamati Prannathji was his spiritual guru.
 - He guided Chhatrasal in political, social, and economic matters and informed him about the diamond mines of Panna.
- **Title:**
 - **Maharaja:** Sant Prannathji bestowed the title of 'Maharaja' upon Chhatrasal.
 - **Raja:** Aurangzeb conferred the title of 'Raja' upon him before his rebellion against Mughal rule.
- **Patron of Literature:** His court supported noted poets such as Kavi Bhushan, Lal Kavi, and Bakhshi Hansaraj, whose writings brought him lasting fame.
- **Legacy:** The town and district of Chhatarpur in Madhya Pradesh are named after him. The Maharaja Chhatrasal Museum in Madhya Pradesh and the Chhatrasal Stadium in Delhi also commemorate his legacy.

Venus flytrap

News: Scientists have now found the physical mechanism behind the snapping action of the Venus flytrap.

About Venus flytrap



Source: Britannica

- The Venus flytrap is a **small carnivorous plant** of the **sundew family (Droseraceae)**.
- **Scientific name:** Its scientific name is **Dionaea muscipula**.
- **Native to:** It is **native to a limited region** of North Carolina and South Carolina in U.S.A.
- It **grows in nutrient-poor environments** and **supplements its nutrition by capturing and digesting insects** using **snap trap mechanism**.
- **How the snapping mechanism works:**
 - The plant **uses specialised trigger hairs located on the inner surface of the trap**.
 - When an insect touches **these hairs twice within a short period of time, the trap closes**.
 - Closure can occur in as little **as one-tenth of a second**.
 - When **the trap snaps shut, the insect is sealed inside for digestion**.
 - After **the plant absorbs the nutrient-rich liquid produced by the digestive processes, the trap reopens**, with the insect's empty exoskeleton left behind.
- **Findings of the new study**
 - The researchers found that **the trap closes because the cell walls on the outer surface of the trap suddenly become softer and more flexible (about 30–40% softer)**.
 - The trap is **already under tension, like a compressed spring**.

- When an insect touches the trigger hairs twice, the cell walls soften, releasing the stored tension and causing the trap to snap shut in as little as 0.1 seconds.

ANCHOR (Atlas of Neurochemical Characterisation of the Human Brainstem with 3D Reconstruction)

News: IIT Madras released ANCHOR, the world's most detailed three-dimensional atlas of the human brainstem, at the 3rd BRICS Neuroscience Symposium.

About ANCHOR (Atlas of Neurochemical Characterisation of the Human Brainstem with 3D Reconstruction)



Source – The Print

- ANCHOR stands for 'Atlas of Neurochemical Characterisation of the Human Brainstem with 3D Reconstruction'.
- It is the world's most detailed three-dimensional atlas of the human brainstem.
- Developer: ANCHOR was developed by the Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre (SGBC), IIT Madras.
- Technology Used:
 - Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI): MRI was integrated into the atlas to support detailed brain mapping.
 - Cellular Histology (Nissl Staining): Histological techniques were used to study cellular structures in the brainstem.

- Chemo-architecture (Immunohistochemistry): Immunohistochemistry was used to identify and map different cellular components.
- Key Features:
 - Comprehensive Coverage: The atlas includes more than 200 brainstem nuclei and fibre tracts, making it one of the most detailed brainstem maps available.
 - Advanced Reconstruction: It was reconstructed from hundreds of serial sections and more than 500 sections with 08 complementary immunostains for detailed mapping.
 - Life-Span Mapping: The atlas covers human brain development from the prenatal stage to childhood and adulthood.
 - Micron-Level Mapping: The atlas maps the brainstem at a micron-level resolution, allowing users to zoom nearly 1,000 times closer than standard MRI scans.
 - Google Earth for the Brainstem: ANCHOR functions like a “Google Earth” for the brainstem, allowing users to navigate from a complete structural view to the level of individual cells.
 - Public Accessibility: The atlas has been made publicly available through a website so that researchers, clinicians, and patients worldwide can benefit from this research.

About Solomon Islands

News: The Solomon Islands stated that the contents of its security agreement with China will remain undisclosed due to legal restrictions.

About Solomon Islands



Source – Geologydotcom

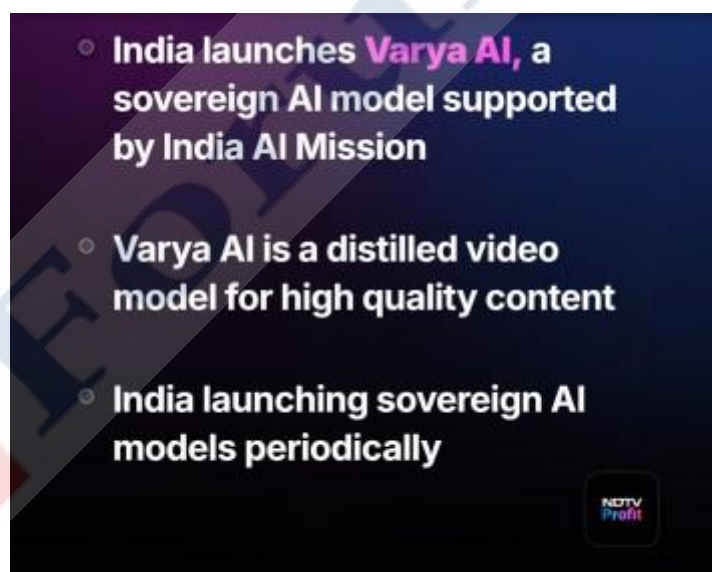
About	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Solomon Islands is a country in the south-western Pacific Ocean that consists of volcanic islands and coral atolls.
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is located in the south-western Pacific Ocean, southeast of Papua New Guinea and northwest of Vanuatu.
Archipelago Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The country consists of nearly 1,000 islands, including 6 large main islands and over 900 smaller islands, of which 147 are inhabited.● The islands lie in two parallel chains running from northwest to southeast.
Topography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The country is mainly mountainous and covered with forests, although it also has some extensive plains.
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Solomon Islands has a tropical oceanic climate that is hot and humid, with cool winds and abundant rainfall throughout the year.
Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Solomon Islands are covered by dense lowland and hill rainforests, along with extensive mangrove forests, coastal vegetation and freshwater swamp forests.
Highest Peak	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mount Popomanaseu on Guadalcanal is the highest peak, rising to 7,644 feet (2,330 m).
Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The islands contain 4,500–5,000 vascular plant species, including highly endemic palms, orchids, climbing Pandanus species, and ancient plant groups such as the Winteraceae family.

Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The islands are home to endemic species such as the megapode bird, Solomon Islands sea eagle, native bats, murid rodents, and the endangered hawksbill turtle, while surrounding waters support over 900 reef fish species and 500 coral species.● East Rennell Atoll is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and constitutes the largest raised coral atoll on Earth.
Key Resources	The islands possess significant reserves of bauxite on Rennell Island and phosphates on Bellona Island, while some gold has been extracted on Guadalcanal.

Varya

News: Avataar has launched Varya, a distilled video model built to make frontier video AI affordable, accessible and relevant for India's next generation of users.

About Varya



Source: NDTV

- Varya is a **distilled video model** built to make **frontier video AI** affordable, accessible and **relevant** for India's next generation of users.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by Avataar, an AI-native transformation company.

- It has been **developed with support from the [IndiaAI Mission](#)**.
- **Features:**
 - It uses a **distillation technique** that **reduces video generation from 50 steps to 4 steps**, while maintaining comparable output quality.
 - It **can generate video at ₹0.48 per second, making it up to 10x more cost-efficient** than several leading global video models.
 - It has been built to understand and generate culturally rich visual outputs across **India's regions, festivals, communities, food, clothing, public spaces and everyday life**.
- **How it works:**
 - Users can **type an idea, upload an image, generate a video**, and continue the story through additional clips.
 - One prompt can become a lesson, an ad, a guide, a film or a memory.

About Avataar

- Avataar is an **AI-native transformation company** building **domain-specialized AI products** that help enterprises drive efficiency, unlock new operating models and build defensible IP-led capabilities.
- The company is **focused on applying AI to real-world business and consumer use cases across high-growth markets**.
- Avataar was among the companies **selected under the IndiaAI Mission** to develop indigenous AI capabilities using subsidized national computing infrastructure.

About Distilled Video Generation

- **Distilled video generation** is a **machine learning model-compression technique** in which a **smaller, faster student model** learns to **replicate the outputs** of a larger, more computationally intensive **teacher model**.
- The process transfers the **teacher model's capabilities to the student** while reducing redundant computations and improving efficiency.
- **Traditional video generation models** often require **50 or more iterative denoising steps** to transform noisy inputs into high-quality video outputs.

- Through distillation, the student model learns to approximate the same results using only a **few denoising iterations**, significantly accelerating the generation process.
- This approach enables **faster inference**, lower computational costs, and comparable output quality to the original teacher model.

Key Facts about France

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited France to begin his two-nation European visit, which includes high-level meetings, innovation-related events, and participation in the G7 Summit.

Key Facts about France



Source: World Atlas

- **Location:** France is a country located in northwestern Europe.
- **Bordering states:** It shares land boundaries with eight countries, which encompass Italy, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Monaco, Andorra, Switzerland, and Luxembourg.
- It is also **bounded by the Bay of Biscay (North Atlantic Ocean) in the west, by the English Channel in the northwest and by the Mediterranean Sea in the south.**
- **Maritime borders:** It also shares **maritime borders** with the **UK in the north.**

- Its physiography is **composed of relatively low-lying plains, plateaus, and older mountain blocks, or massifs.**
- **Climate:** France has a **temperate climate** with regional variation.
- **Major Rivers:** The **Loire River and Seine River** are the major rivers of France.
- **Major Mountain Ranges:** France is home to the **Alps in the south, the Jura Mountains** to the north of the Alps, and the **Pyrenees**, which form the border with Spain.
- **Natural Resources:** It has significant mineral resources, including **coal, iron ore, bauxite, zinc, uranium, antimony, arsenic, potash, feldspar, flourspar, and gypsum.**

Thamirabarani River

News: The Thamirabarani River is home to otters, but their numbers are declining due to habitat loss, raising concerns about the river's ecological health.

About Thamirabarani River

- It is a **perennial river flowing in Tamil Nadu.**
- **Origin:** It originates from the **Agastyarkoodam peak of the Pothigai hills of the Western Ghats, above Papanasam in the Ambasamudram Taluk.**
- **Course of the river:** It flows through **Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts of the Tamil Nadu state of Southern India** into the **Gulf of Mannar.**
- **Length:** It is about **128km long.**
- **Drainage:** Along with its tributaries, **it drains an area of nearly 4,400 square kilometres.**
- **Tributaries:** It includes the **Manimuthar, Gadananathi, Pachaiyar, Chittar, Karaiyar, and Servalar**
- **Anicut situated on the river:** The **anicut** constructed on the river are **Kodaimelaalagain anicut, Nathiyunni anicut, Kannadian anicut, Ariyanayagipuram anicut, Palavur anicut, Suthamalli anicut and Marudur anicut.**
- **Associated waterfall:** The river forms waterfalls such as **Paanatheertham Falls near the Karaiyar Reservoir, Kalyanatheertham and Agasthiar Falls near Papanasam.**
- **Historical context:**
 - Sanskrit texts such as the **Mahabharata, Ramayana and various Puranas describe it as a sacred river.**

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- The **Porunai or Thamirabarani river** is mentioned several times in **Sangam-era literature**.
- It has been mentioned as **Porunai, Than Porunai, Porunal and Poruntham in Tamil literature** from the Sangam era.
- It has been referred to as Porunai in Tholkappiam, an ancient treatise on Tamil grammar.
- It is also referred to as **Porunai in the Sangam work Puranaanooru**.
- **Purananooru, Tamil Sangam literature**, describes the present-day 'Thamirabarani' as 'Than Porunai'.
- **Pandyan Kingdom:** During the Early Pandyan period, it served as a **vital centre for pearl fishing, conch collection, agriculture, and maritime commerce, fostering trade connections** between southern India and Sri Lanka.
- **Korkai, located at the mouth of the river**, was an **important Pandyan port** famous for its pearl trade.

AN-32 Aircraft

News: An Indian Air Force AN-32 transport aircraft crashed near Jorhat, Assam, resulting in the death of five personnel.

About AN-32 Aircraft



Source: India Today

- **About:** The Antonov AN-32 is a **rugged, twin-engine turboprop military transport aircraft**.
- It serves as the “**workhorse**” of the **Indian Air Force**.
- It was **built in the Soviet Union** specifically for Indian requirements.
- **Induction year:** It was **inducted in 1984**.
- The Indian Air Force **operates a fleet of about 100 of these aircraft**.
- **Features:**
 - It is **designed to excel in extreme environments**, functioning perfectly in high-altitude airfields and hot tropical climates.
 - It is **designed by mating the reliable and rugged airframe of the An-26** with more powerful engines.
 - This enables operations in **high-altitude airfields in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh**, making it indispensable for missions over the Himalayas and the Siachen Glacier.
 - It equips **six squadrons of the IAF, which are the 12, 25, 33, 43, 48 and 49 squadrons**.
 - Of these, 49 squadrons of the IAF are located in Jorhat in Assam.

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- It can **transport up to 7.5 tons of cargo, 50 passengers, or 42 paratroopers**, and conduct humanitarian missions such as disaster relief and medical evacuations.
- It has also been **part of India's green energy push, successfully flying on bio-jet fuel blends**.

About Other Transport Aircraft of Indian Airforce

Transport Aircraft	Details
Boeing C-17 Globemaster III	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is a high-wing, 4-engine, military transport aircraft.● It was inducted into service in 2013.● It is capable of carrying large equipment like armoured vehicles, supplies, and troops to a small airfield in harsh terrain anywhere in the world, either in the day or at night.
C-130 J Super Hercules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is a 4-engine, turboprop military transport aircraft.● It was inducted into service in 2011.● It is the best aircraft available for tactical airlift and a premier aircraft used during the war for frontline paradrop near border areas.● It is also the most suitable aircraft for special operations because of its short takeoff and landing capabilities.● It is also capable of taking off and landing on an unprepared runway.● Its low-flying capabilities make it favourable for para dropping, as it can easily escape from enemies' radar.● Also, it is used for dropping relief materials during disasters.

Ilyushin IL-76	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is a medium-range, 4-engine turboprop military transport aircraft.● It has been in service with the IAF since 1985.● It is capable of para drop and the carriage of troops, and combat materials with crew and armaments, including medium-sized battle tanks, cargo airlifting for troops and also transport for disaster relief operations.● It can also be operated from unpaved runways in forward areas of operation.
Dornier Do 228	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is a twin-engine turboprop, multi-role, military transport aircraft.● It is a type of STOL (Short takeoff and landing) aircraft, which requires a takeoff runway of only 792 m and a landing runway of only for 451 m.● It has been in service with the IAF since 1986.● It can be deployed in passenger and cargo transportation, as an air taxi, for aircrew training, maritime surveillance, search and rescue missions, border patrol, and medical evacuation missions.

Memflation

News: Memflation has gained attention because rising memory chip prices are increasing the prices of electronic goods and adding pressure on retail inflation.

About Memflation

- **Memflation (a combination of “memory” and “inflation”)** refers to the rapid and structural rise in the prices of semiconductor memory chips, such as **DRAM (Dynamic Random-Access Memory) and NAND flash memory.**
- **Coined by: Memflation was coined by market research firm Gartner.**
- **The Root Cause:**

- **AI Infrastructure Boom:** Rapid growth of AI systems, data centres, and high-performance computing has sharply increased demand for advanced memory chips.
- **Shift in Manufacturing Capacity:** Semiconductor companies are diverting production capacity from conventional memory chips to high-margin AI-related memory products.
- **Supply Shortage of Memory Chips:** Reduced production of DRAM and NAND memory chips has created shortages in consumer electronics markets.
- **Slow Capacity Expansion:** Semiconductor manufacturing expansion is costly and time-consuming, delaying the restoration of adequate supply.
- **Global Impact:**
 - **Higher Hardware Costs:** Rising memory prices are increasing the cost of laptops, servers, and other hardware products.
 - **Supply Chain Disruptions:** Semiconductor shortages are causing supply chain disruptions and shipment delays.
 - **Delayed Technology Demand:** Industry experts warn that non-AI technology demand may remain weak until around 2028.
- **Impact on India:**
 - **Costlier Electronic Devices:** Rising memory chip prices are increasing the prices of smartphones and other electronic goods.
 - **Pressure on Smartphone Segment:** Supply shortages are affecting budget smartphone segments and raising manufacturing costs.
 - **Import Dependence Risk:** India's dependence on imported semiconductor components increases its vulnerability to global disruptions.
 - **Challenge to Manufacturing Goals:** Persistent shortages may affect goals under Make in India, the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, and the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM).
 - **Higher Inflation Risk:** Continued increases in electronics prices may add further pressure on retail inflation in India.

Bharat Innovates 2026

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron jointly inaugurated Bharat Innovates 2026 in Nice, France.

About Bharat Innovates 2026

- **Bharat Innovates 2026:** It is a global platform that showcases India's deep-tech innovators and startups to global investors, industry leaders, universities, research organisations, corporations, and government stakeholders, while promoting innovation-led partnerships and international collaboration.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The initiative is organized by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- **Organizer:** The initiative is organized by the Ministry of Education with strategic guidance from the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)
- **Bilateral Aegis:** The initiative is organized under the India-France Year of Innovation.
- **Objectives:** The initiative aims to showcase Indian deep-tech innovations, connect startups and institutions with global investors, and promote international technology collaboration.
- **Eligibility:**
 - **Student-Faculty Teams:** Student-faculty teams working in research laboratories or pre-incubators of Ministry of Education-affiliated Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or Centrally Funded Technical Institutes (CFTIs) are eligible to apply.
 - **Innovator and Independent Teams:** Innovator teams and independent innovators associated with the innovation ecosystem of HEIs or CFTIs can participate.
 - **Startups and Ventures:** Startups must be legally registered in India, and Indian founders must hold more than 51% ownership.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Global Participation:** The summit brings together 120 selected deep-tech startups, over 15 Institutes of Excellence, and more than 350 global investors and venture capitalists.
 - **Incubator & Innovation Bridge:** It supports incubation, research translation, mentoring, and cross-border startup immersion.
 - **Industry Innovation Bridge:** It connects mature startups with corporates for PoCs, IP licensing, technology transfer, and international market entry.

- **The 13 Frontier Technology Domains:**The initiative concentrates on research and development-backed solutions across 13 technology domains, including Advanced Computing, Semiconductors, Space & Defence, Biotechnology, Healthcare & MedTech, Energy, Sustainability & Climate Change, Smart Cities & Mobility, Advanced Materials & Critical Minerals, Manufacturing & Industry 4.0, Next-Generation Communications, Blue Economy, and Agri & Food Technologies and Disaster Management.