

Factly Weekly

Compilation

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

3rd Week

May 2026

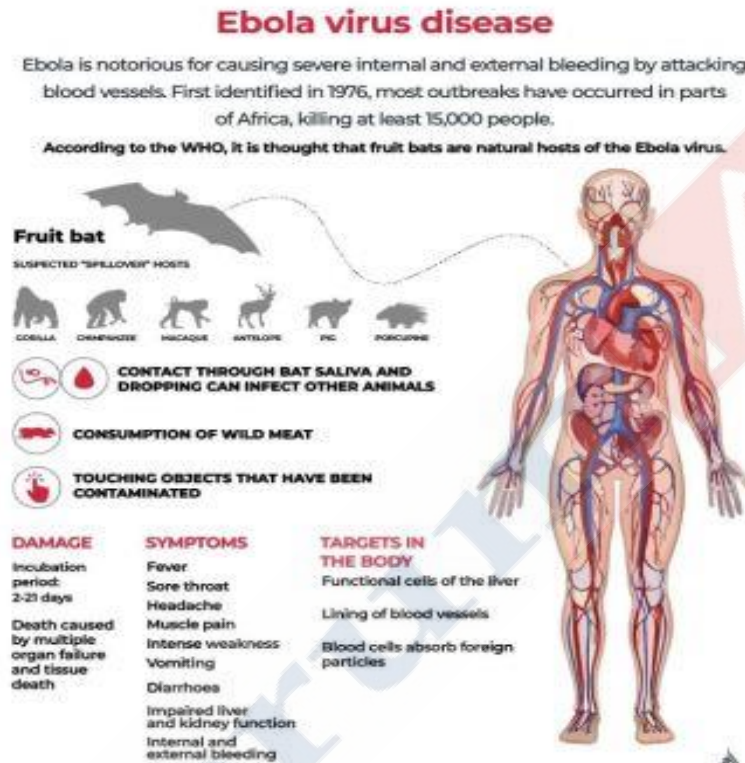
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Ebola Virus

News: The WHO declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a public health emergency after 80 deaths.

About Ebola Virus



Source - Al Jazeera

- Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains.
 - Ebola can cause disease in humans and nonhuman primates (monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees).
- **The Pathogen:** It is caused by viruses belonging to the Orthoebolavirus genus of the Filoviridae family.
- **Ebola Virus Viral Strains:** Six species of Orthoebolaviruses have been identified.
 - Zaire, Sudan, Bundibugyo, and Tai Forest viruses are known to cause disease in humans,
 - while Reston and Bombali viruses have not caused disease in humans.
- **Natural Reservoir:** Fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family are considered the natural hosts of the Ebola virus.
- **Incubation period:** The incubation period of Ebola disease ranges from 2 to 21 days, while symptoms usually begin within 5 to 15 days after exposure.

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- **Transmission:**
 - **Animal-to-Human Transmission:** The virus spreads through contact with infected wild animals such as fruit bats, monkeys, gorillas, porcupines, and forest antelopes.
 - **Human-to-Human Transmission:** Infection spreads through direct contact with blood, secretions, organs, or other bodily fluids of infected persons.
 - **Contaminated Materials:** The disease also spreads through contaminated surfaces, clothing, bedding, and burial practices involving infected bodies.
- **Symptoms:**
 - **Early Symptoms:** Patients may develop fever, fatigue, headache, sore throat, muscle pain, and malaise.
 - **Advanced Symptoms:** Vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, rash, and impaired kidney and liver functions may appear later.
 - **Severe Condition:** Some patients may develop internal or external bleeding, confusion, irritability, and aggression.
- **Diagnosis:**
 - **Laboratory Tests:** Ebola infection is confirmed through polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) assay, ELISA, antigen detection tests, and virus isolation methods.
 - **Clinical Difficulty:** Early symptoms resemble diseases such as malaria, typhoid, and meningitis, making diagnosis difficult.
- **Treatment:**
 - **Supportive Care:** Early rehydration, fluid balance, pain management, and treatment of co-infections improve survival chances.
 - **Approved Therapeutics:** WHO recommends monoclonal antibodies such as mAb114 (Ansuvimab™) and REGN-EB3 (Inmazeb™) for Ebola virus disease.
 - **Current Limitation:** There is no approved treatment for Sudan virus disease or Bundibugyo virus disease.
- **Prevention:**
 - **Avoid Direct Contact:** People should avoid contact with infected persons, body fluids, contaminated objects, and infected wild animals.
 - **Isolation and Monitoring:** Confirmed cases should be isolated immediately, while contacts should be monitored for 21 days.

About Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)

- **PHEIC is the highest level of health alert issued by the World Health Organization under the International Health Regulations (IHR).**
- **Governed by:** PHEIC is governed under the International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005, which is a binding international legal agreement involving 196 countries.
- **Criteria for Declaring a PHEIC:**
 - **Unusual or Unexpected Event:** An outbreak qualifies as a PHEIC when the event is serious, sudden, unusual, or unexpected.
 - **Risk of International Spread:** The disease must have the potential to spread internationally and affect other countries.
 - **Need for Immediate International Action:** The crisis may require urgent and coordinated international response to control the spread of disease.
 - **Scope Beyond Infections:** A PHEIC is not strictly limited to viral or bacterial contagions.

- It can be triggered by critical exposure to chemical agents or radioactive materials.

Key Facts About Norway

News: Trade and energy cooperation are expected to dominate discussions for the first bilateral visit to Norway by an Indian Prime Minister.

Key Facts About Norway



Source: World Atlas

- **Location:** Norway is a northern European country located on the Scandinavian Peninsula.
 - It is bounded by the Barents Sea to the north, the Norwegian Sea and the North Sea to the west, and the Skagerrak (Skager Strait) to the south.
 - Most of the region of Norway is above the Arctic Circle.
- **Bordering nations:** It has land borders only to the east with Sweden, Finland, and Russia.
- It is geographically positioned in both the Northern and Eastern hemispheres of the Earth.
- **Capital:** Oslo is the capital of Norway.
- **Geography:**
 - Norway occupies part of northern Europe's Fennoscandian Shield.

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- It is **extremely hard bedrock**, which consists mostly of granite and **other heat- and pressure-formed materials, and ranges from one to two billion years in age.**
- Its **mountainous plateau** consists of **bare rock smoothed by glaciers.**
 - **Hardanger Plateau (Hardangervidda)**, which is **Europe's largest highland plain**, rises in this region.
- **Islands:** The **Lofoten and Vesteralen Islands** are the **largest groups of islands.**
 - They are known for **their cod fisheries.**
 - **It also includes the islands of Svalbard and Jan Mayen.**
- **Climate:** In the **northern part of Norway**, winters are **long and cold**, and in the **southern part**, it is **milder due to the coastal climate.**
- **Tidal Current:** The **Maelstrom**, the **strongest tidal current in the world**, flows between the two outermost Lofotens islands, which creates dangerous whirlpools.
- **Highest point:** **Galdhopiggen (2,469 m)**
- **Largest lake:** **Lake Mjøsa (365 sq. km)**
- **River:** Major rivers include the **Glama**, the country's longest river, along with the **Dramselva**, the two **Lagen** rivers, and the **Tana** in the far north.
- **Significance:** Norway is the **fourth largest exporter of natural gas in the world**, behind **U.S.A, Russia and Qatar.**

Committee on Empowerment of Women

News: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla constituted the Committee on Empowerment of Women and appointed Dr Daggubati Purandeswari as Chairperson.

About Committee on Empowerment of Women



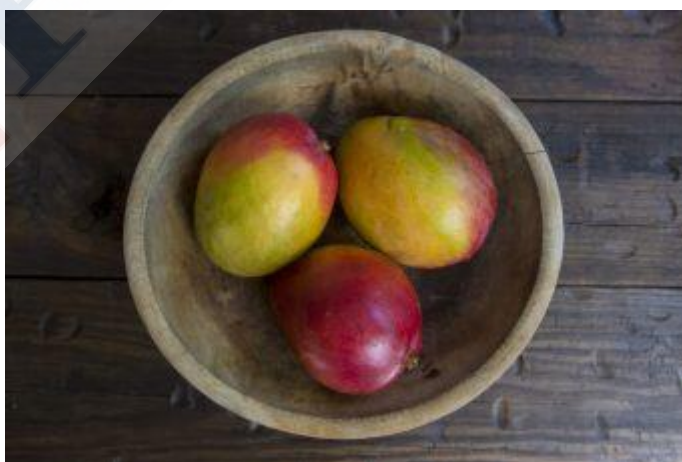
Source – AIR

- The Committee on Empowerment of Women is a Joint Parliamentary Committee formed to promote women's empowerment across party lines.
- Establishment: It was constituted for the first time in 1997 during the 11th Lok Sabha.
- Composition: It consists of 30 members, including 20 members nominated by the Speaker from the Lok Sabha and 10 members nominated by the Chairman from the Rajya Sabha.
- Tenure: The term of the committee does not exceed one year and it is reconstituted every year.
- Functions:
 - Studying Reports Related to Women: It studies the reports submitted by the National Commission for Women and suggests steps that the Union Government can take to improve the condition of women.
 - Assessing Equality Measures: It reviews the efforts made by the Union Government to ensure equality, dignity, and better status for women in different areas.
 - Reviewing Education and Representation: It examines government measures aimed at providing proper education and increasing women's participation in legislative bodies, services, and other sectors.
 - Evaluating Welfare Schemes: It assesses the functioning of welfare programmes designed for women and reviews their overall progress.
 - Checking Implementation of Recommendations: It monitors the action taken by the Union Government and Union Territory administrations on the recommendations and measures suggested earlier.
 - Examining Other Women-Related Issues: It also studies other matters connected with women's empowerment that may be referred to it by the House, the Speaker of Lok Sabha, or the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha

Kesar Mango

News: The famous saffron-coloured Kesar variety of mango has got global recognition as 'Gir Kesar' mango after being granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

About Kesar Mango



Source: DD News

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- It is a well-known variety of **mango of Gujarat**.
- **Cultivation area:** It is largely grown around the **foothills of Girnar mountains, Junagadh district, Gujarat** and some districts of **Maharashtra**.
- **Geographical condition required:**
 - **Climate:** It grows well under **tropical and sub-tropical climatic conditions**.
 - **Rainfall:** Regions with **moderate to high rainfall** followed by a **dry summer season** are considered ideal.
 - **Soil:** It requires **well-drained, deep soils rich in organic matter with good aeration** and moisture retention capacity for healthy growth and commercial production.
 - **Sandy loam to loamy soils** with an ideal pH range of **5.5 to 7.5** are considered highly suitable for optimum mango yield and fruit quality.
- **Appearance:**
 - **Tree:** The trees are **medium-sized and evergreen, with an oblong fruit that weighs between 250 and 300 grams and features a small beak**.
 - These **trees grow up to 50 feet tall and have a deep taproot and widespread root system**, allowing them to **remain productive for 200-300 years**.
 - **Fruit:** It is a **small to medium fruit with a roundish shape** and a distinct curved tip.
 - It has a relatively **unexciting appearance, with skin that is dull, slightly mottled yellow colour**.
 - The colour of the fruit is **deep green during the fruit development stage and turns to yellow with a pink spot on the shoulder**.
 - **Distinctive features:** The name of the variety **Kesar** was given **based on the saffron colour** of the fruit pulp.
 - The Kesar mango has distinctive and naturally occurring **organoleptic characteristics of taste, aroma, pulp colour, and sweetness**.
 - The **sugar/ acid blend** is excellent.
- **Geographical Indication (GI) tag:** It has got global recognition as '**Gir Kesar**' mango after being granted the GI tag.
 - The Kesar mango is the **second variety of mango in India to get GI registration** after the **Dussheri mango variety** grown in **Uttar Pradesh**.

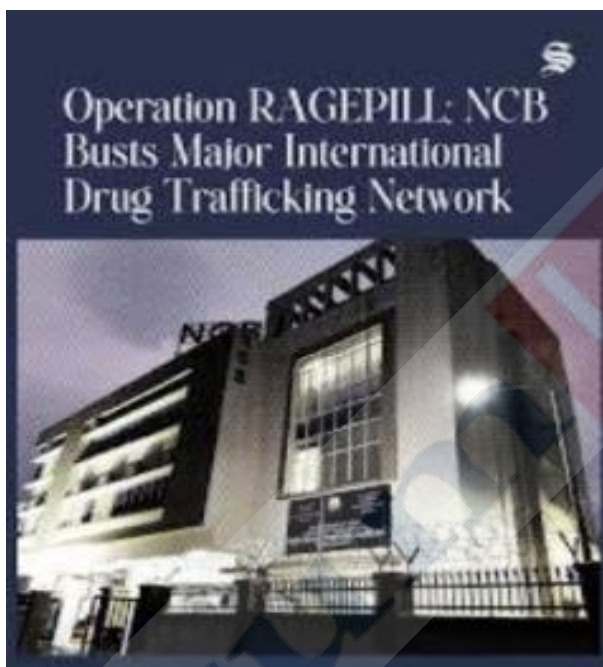
About Mango Production in India

- India ranks **1st in global mango production**, contributing over 45% of the global fresh mango production, followed by China and Thailand.
- **Production status:** The average yield of Mango is 8.39 MT/Ha for India, 8.74 MT/Ha for China and 8.36 MT/Ha for Thailand.
- **Production:** The major mango-growing states are **Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu**.
 - **Uttar Pradesh** ranks first in mango production with a share of 26.75% and the highest productivity in 2023-24.
- **Major Export Destinations (2024-25):** **United Arab Emirates, USA, U.K, Kuwait, and Qatar**.

Operation RAGEPILL

News: Under Operation RAGEPILL, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) busted an international Captagon trafficking syndicate, seizing around 227.7 kg of Captagon tablets/powder and arresting an overstaying Syrian national linked to the network.

About Operation RAGEPILL



Source – The Statesman

- **Conducted by:** Operation RAGEPILL has been conducted by Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).
- It is the first-ever seizure of Captagon by NCB.
- **About Captagon:**
 - It is a highly addictive synthetic amphetamine-type stimulant.
 - It earned the nickname “Jihadi drug” because militant groups (such as ISIS) have reportedly misused it to provide combatants with increased energy, endurance, and a reduced sense of fear in battle.
 - It is also known as the “poor man’s cocaine.”
 - It mainly contains Fenetylline and Amphetamine, which are Psychotropic Substances under the NDPS Act.
- **About the seizure:**
 - The seized Captagon is worth ₹182 crore.
 - The seizure has been made from Delhi and Mundra Port.
 - Around 200 kg of Captagon had come from Syria and was being sent to Saudi Arabia.
- The busting of the drug consignment destined for the Middle East and the arrest of a foreign national stand out as shining examples of our commitment to zero tolerance against drugs.

Amblyceps Vayavy

News: Researchers discovered a rare new catfish species, *Amblyceps vayavy*, in hill streams of the Western Ghats in Goa and Maharashtra.

About *Amblyceps Vayavy*



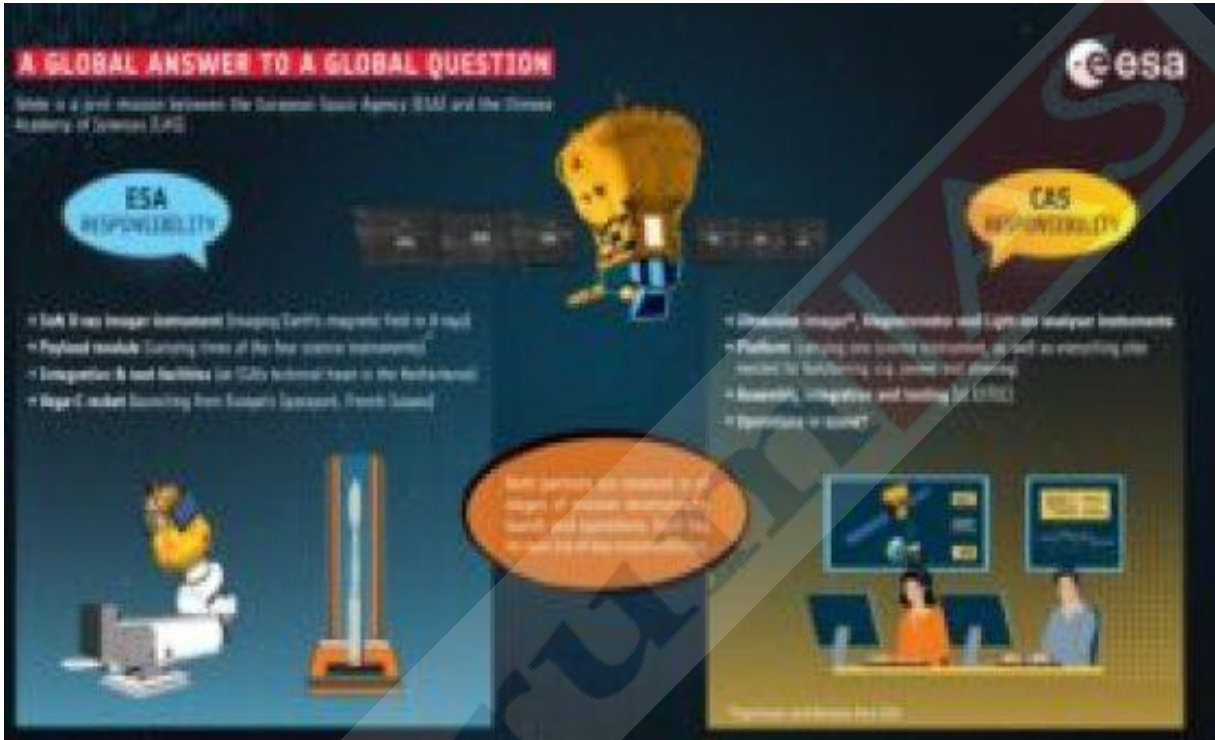
Source - Mongabay

- **Amblyceps vayavy** is a newly identified species of freshwater catfish from the northern Western Ghats.
- **Name Origin:** The word 'vayavy' means 'northwest' in Marathi and Konkani, referring to its distribution in the northwestern Western Ghats.
- **Habitat:** The fish lives in clear, fast-flowing, well-oxygenated hill streams with sand, pebbles, and stones that create microhabitats for hiding and feeding.
- **Rivers associated with:** The species has been recorded from the Kundalika River in Maharashtra and the Ragada River in Goa in the northern Western Ghats.
- **Distinct Features:** The species can be identified through features such as a bifurcated caudal fin, incomplete lateral line, absence of centrally projecting hooks in the tail veins, and a distinct adipose fin structure.
- **Ecological Sensitivity:** The species is highly sensitive to pollution, siltation, habitat disturbance, and changes in river flow.
- **Conservation Concern:** Construction activities and habitat changes in the Western Ghats may threaten such specialised freshwater fish species.
- **Significance:** The discovery highlights the rich endemism and fragile freshwater biodiversity of the Western Ghats.

Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (SMILE) Mission

News: China and European space agencies are launching the joint SMILE mission on May 19 to study Earth's magnetic shield against solar activity.

About Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (SMILE) Mission



Source – ESA

- **SMILE Mission** stands for 'Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer Mission'.
- **Implemented by:** The joint mission is implemented by European Space Agency (ESA) Science Programme and the Chinese National Space Science Centre (NSSC) under Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).
- **Aim:** This mission is designed to study the interaction between solar wind and earth's magnetosphere.
 - The mission aims to capture the first X-ray images of earth's magnetic shield as it deflects harmful charged particles and energies coming from the Sun.
- **Launched through:** The mission will be launched on a European Vega-C rocket.
- **Position:** SMILE will be positioned about 1.21 lakh km above Earth's north pole.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Satellite weighs:** The satellite weighs about 2,600 kg.
 - **Mission Life:** It has a mission life of about three years.
 - **Payload Instruments:**

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- **Total payload :** The mission is carrying four payload.
- **Payload weight:** Payload weight is 70 kg in total.
- **Developing Agencies:** ESA developed the Soft X-ray Imager (SXI), while the Chinese team developed other three.
 - **Soft X-ray Imager (SXI):** ESA developed this instrument to capture X-ray images of the magnetosphere.
 - **Magnetometer:** This payload will study magnetic field changes near Earth.
 - **Light Ion Analyser (LIA):** This instrument will analyse charged particles near Earth.
 - **Ultraviolet aurora Imager (UVI):** This payload will observe auroras in ultraviolet wavelengths.
- **in situ observations:** All these payloads will use remote sensing and make in situ (on site) observations along the near-Earth regions.
- **Space Weather Forecasting:** The mission is expected to improve forecasts of solar storms and space weather disturbances.
- **Protection of Infrastructure:** Better forecasts can help protect satellites, GPS, communication systems, airline operations, electricity grids, and astronaut safety.
- **Previous Similar Mission:** Earlier ESA missions such as Swarm and Cluster also studied Earth's magnetosphere and related space processes.

3rd India-Nordic Summit

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Norway for the 3rd India-Nordic Summit and bilateral engagements on 18-19 May 2026.

About 3rd India-Nordic Summit



Source – The Europe India Journal

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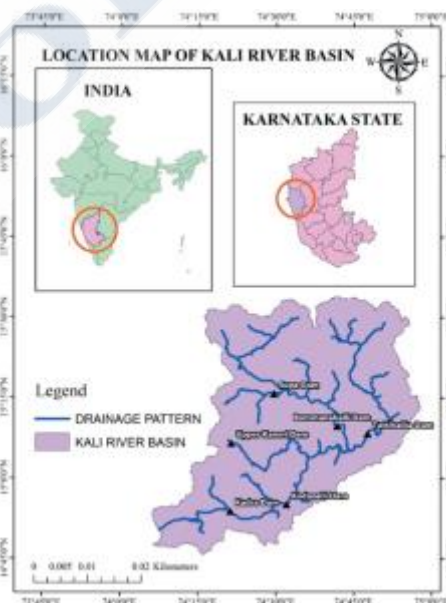
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- **The Summit is a high-level meeting between India and Nordic countries to strengthen strategic cooperation.**
- **Venue :** The 3rd India-Nordic Summit will be held in Norway (Oslo) in May 2026.
- **Previous Summits:** The earlier Summits were held in Stockholm in April 2018 and Copenhagen in May 2022.
- **Key Participants:** The Summit will be attended by India and the 5 Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.
- **Key Aspect:**
 - **Technology and Innovation:** The summit will strengthen cooperation in technology and innovation between India and Nordic countries.
 - **Green Transition and Renewable Energy:** Discussions will focus on clean and green technology, renewable energy, and sustainability.
 - **Trade and Investment:** The visit will support bilateral trade, India-EFTA TEPA, resilient supply chains, and investment cooperation.
 - **Blue Economy and Strategic Areas:** The summit will promote cooperation in blue economy, defence, space, and the Arctic region.
 - **Norway Investment in India:** The visit will help increase investments by Norway's Government Pension Fund (GPF), which has invested close to USD 28 billion in the Indian capital market.

Kali River and Nyctibatrachus Kali

News: A new night frog species, *Nyctibatrachus kali*, has been identified in the Kali river basin of Karnataka's central Western Ghats.

About Kali River



Source: Springer Nature

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- **Location:** River Kali is located in Uttara Kannada District of Karnataka.
- **In the old texts,** it is also called “Kalindi” or “Kali Nadhi.
- **Named after:** It is named “Kali” for its colour attributed to the manganese-rich river bed.
- **Origin:** It originates near the village of Kushavali of Joida Taluka in the Western Ghats.
 - The river flows through Uttara or North Karnataka for about 184 km before falling into the Arabian Sea.
- **Tributaries:** Its tributaries are Pandri, Kali, Tattihala, Vaki, Kaneri, Thananala, Kariholé, etc
- **Catchment area:** It has a catchment area of 5085.9 sq.km.
- **Associated dams:** Dams such as Supa Dam, Bommanalli, Kodasalli, and Kadra, generate hydroelectricity for Karnataka.
- **Sports activities:** The town of Dandeli, situated on the Kali River’s banks is Karnataka’s adventure tourism capital.

About Nyctibatrachus Kali



Source: Mongabay

- A night frog species named Nyctibatrachus kali has been discovered in the Kali river basin of Karnataka’s central Western Ghats.
- The species is commonly known as the Kali night frog.
- Frogs of the genus Nyctibatrachus are endemic to the Western Ghats.
- **Note:** Around 70% of Nyctibatrachus species have highly restricted distributions.
 - The Kali night frog is a cryptic species, meaning it closely resembles other frog species externally, but is genetically distinct.

Padma Awards 2026

News: President Droupadi Murmu will present Padma Awards for the year 2026 on the 25th of May month.

About Padma Awards 2026



Source – AIR

Aspects	Details
History	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The Government of India instituted two civilian awards–Bharat Ratna & Padma Vibhushan in 1954.2) Padma Vibhushan had three classes namely Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg.3) These were subsequently renamed as Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri vide Presidential Notification issued on January 8, 1955.
About	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India.2) They are announced annually on the eve of Republic Day.3) These Awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March / April every year.
Ministry	The awards come under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
Objective	To acknowledge achievements in all fields of activities or discipline where element of public service is involved.
Categories	<p>The Awards are given in three categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service),2) Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher-order) and3) Padma Shri (distinguished service). <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Padma Vibhushan is highest in the hierarchy of Padma Awards followed by Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

Discipline	The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, music etc.
Eligibility	All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these Awards.
Selection process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) All nominations received for the Padma Awards are placed before the Padma Awards Committee constituted by the Prime Minister every year.2) The Padma Awards Committee is headed by the Cabinet Secretary and includes the Home Secretary, the Secretary to the President and four to six eminent persons as members.3) The recommendations of the committee are submitted to the Prime Minister and the President of India for approval.
Some important facts	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The total number of awards to be given in a year (excluding posthumous awards and to NRI/foreigners/OCIs) should not be more than 120.2) The award does not amount to title and cannot be used as a suffix or prefix to the awardees' name.3) These were discontinued in 1978 and 1979 and from 1993 to 1997.

L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards

News: Five women scientists were named laureates of the 2026 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards in Paris on May 19, 2026.

About L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards



Source – UNESCO

- **Establishment:** The Awards were created in 1998 through a joint partnership between the French cosmetics company L'Oréal and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- **Aim:** The awards aim to recognize women researchers, support women in science, and encourage greater participation of women in scientific research.
- **Structure:** The awards honour five women scientists every year, with one laureate selected from five different regions of the world:
 - Africa and the Arab States
 - Asia and the Pacific
 - Europe
 - Latin America and the Caribbean
 - North America
- **Alternating Fields:** The scientific disciplines alternate every other year:
 - Even Years: Life and Environmental Sciences.
 - Odd Years: Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Science.
- **Grant Value:** Each laureate receives a monetary prize of €100,000 to support ongoing scientific research.

About L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards 2026

- **Awards Ceremony:** It will take place at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in June 2026.
- **Eligibility:** The 2026 awards recognised eminent women researchers working in Life and Environmental Sciences.
- **Extended Partnership:** UNESCO and Fondation L'Oréal renewed their partnership for another six years to support girls and women in science across 140 countries and territories.
- **Winners Represent Five Major Regions:**
 - **Africa and the Arab States:** Professor Liesl Zühlke was recognised for improving care for children with heart conditions.
 - **Asia and the Pacific:** Professor Felice Jacka was honoured for contributions to nutritional psychiatry.
 - **Europe:** Professor Sarah A Teichmann was recognised for research in single-cell biology and genome science.
 - **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Professor Raquel Lia Chan was honoured for developing drought-tolerant crop varieties.
 - **North America:** Professor Gordana Vunjak-Novakovic was recognised for work in tissue engineering and regenerative medicine.

SHE-MARTs Initiative

News: The Ministry of Rural Development initiated a nationwide roadmap for women-led rural marketing ecosystems through the SHE-MART initiative.

About SHE-MARTs Initiative



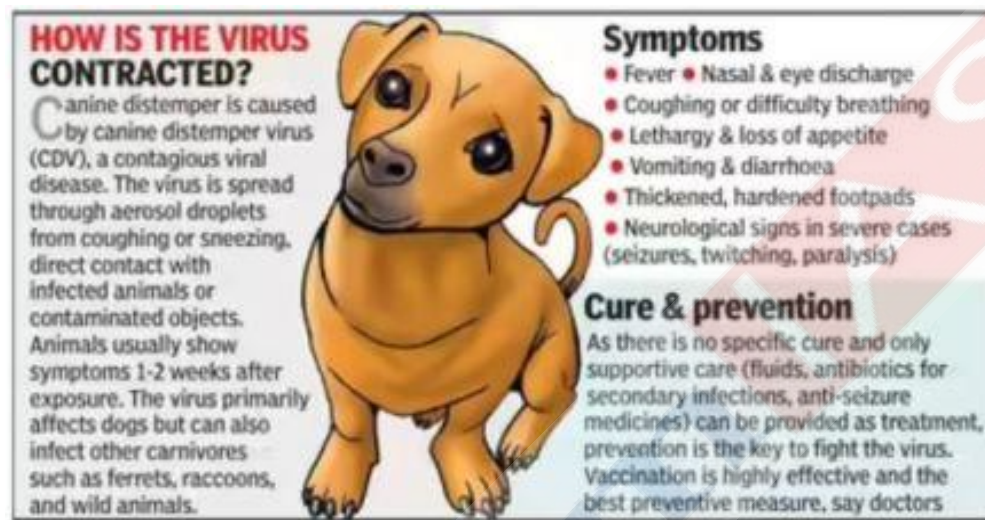
Source – PIB

- **SHE-MART (Self Help Entrepreneur Marts)** is an initiative to empower women entrepreneurs by creating community-owned retail outlets within cluster-level federations of self-help groups.
- **Announced in:** It was announced in the Union Budget 2026–27.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)
- **Implemented under:** The initiative is being implemented under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- **Aim:** The initiative aims to strengthen market access, improve branding, support women entrepreneurs, and increase rural incomes through women-led enterprises.
- **Key Features :**
 - **Community-Owned Retail Outlets:** The initiative creates women-led retail stores and aggregation hubs managed by self-help group federations.
 - **Direct Market Access:** The initiative provides structured retail platforms for women entrepreneurs to sell products without intermediaries.
 - **Enterprise Development:** The initiative helps women move from income generation to enterprise ownership.
 - **Permanent Infrastructure:** The initiative establishes permanent retail points for SHG-made goods, including handicrafts, textiles, food products, and agricultural produce.
 - **Professional Management:** The initiative provides digital inventory systems, branding, packaging support, and professionally managed retail systems.

Canine Distemper

News: Another tiger was found dead in Kanha Tiger Reserve, and authorities suspect the sixth CDV-related death within one month.

About Canine Distemper



Source – ToI

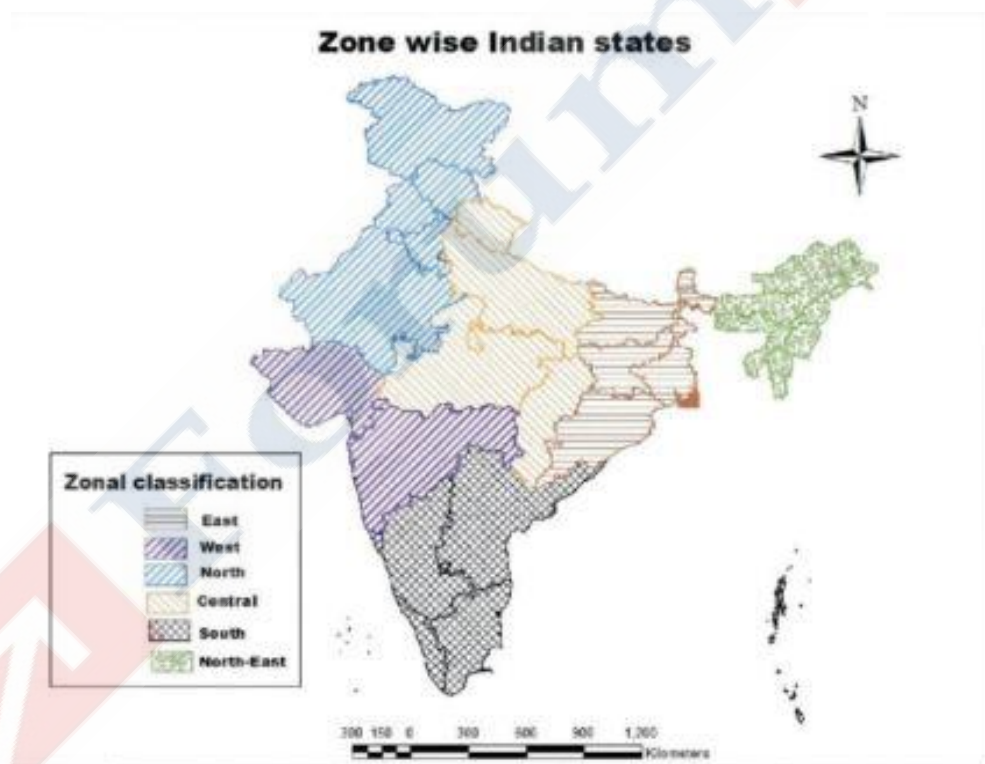
- **Canine Distemper** is a contagious and serious viral disease caused by the **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)** that affects dogs and several mammals, but it does not affect humans.
- **Virus Type:** It is caused by a single-stranded RNA virus of the family **Paramyxoviridae**.
- **Affected Species:** CDV affects dogs, foxes, wolves, ferrets, raccoons, felines, and several wildlife species.
- **Transmission:** The disease spreads through droplets, direct contact, and infected bodily fluids such as saliva, urine, and feces.
- **Symptoms:** Common symptoms include fever, cough, lethargy, diarrhoea, runny eyes, seizures, paralysis, and thickened nose.
- **Diagnosis:**
 - **PCR Test (Polymerase Chain Reaction):** This test helps detect the genetic material of the virus in the dog's body.
 - **Serology Test:** This test checks antibody levels in the blood to understand whether the dog may be protected against infection.
 - **Immunity Indicator:** High antibody levels with a negative PCR test indicate that the dog is likely immune to infection.
 - **Blood Tests:** Veterinarians may recommend blood tests to examine the dog's overall health and identify secondary infections.
 - **Chest X-rays:** Chest X-rays help doctors check the lungs and detect other health problems linked to the infection

- **Treatment:** There is no cure or antiviral treatment, and care mainly focuses on symptom management and secondary infections.
- **Prevention:** Vaccination is the most effective protection, and proper hygiene and isolation measures should also be maintained.
- **Key aspects:**
 - **High Mortality:** It has a very high mortality rate, especially in unvaccinated animals.
 - **Immune Weakening:** The virus weakens the immune system and increases secondary infections.
 - **Body Systems Affected:** The virus can damage the respiratory, gastrointestinal, skin, spinal cord, and central nervous systems.

Zonal Councils

News: A high-level meeting of the Central Zonal Council took place at Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh under Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah.

About Zonal Councils



Source - ResearchGate

Origin

- Prime Minister Nehru introduced the concept of zonal councils in 1956 during the debate on the States Reorganisation Commission report.

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- **Legality:** They were established under States Reorganisation Act, 1956 as statutory (extra-constitutional) advisory bodies.
- **Objectives:** It was introduced as a mechanism to promote inter-state cooperation and resolve issues arising from state linguistic reorganizations.
- These councils serve as advisory and cooperative platforms between states and the Centre.

The 5 Zonal Councils & Their Headquarters

- The country is divided into 5 zones to foster balanced regional development:
 - Northern Zonal Council: Headquarters in New Delhi (Includes: Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Chandigarh, and Ladakh).
 - Central Zonal Council: Headquarters in Allahabad / Prayagraj (Includes: Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh).
 - Eastern Zonal Council: Headquarters in Kolkata (Includes: Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha).
 - Western Zonal Council: Headquarters in Mumbai (Includes: Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu).
 - Southern Zonal Council: Headquarters in Chennai (Includes: Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry).

North-Eastern Council: This is a distinct body created by a separate act i.e. the North Eastern Council Act, 1971. It includes the Northeastern states and its functions are more expansive, relating to regional planning.

Composition of Zonal Councils

- Each Zonal Council consists of:
 - Union Home Minister – Chairman of all councils.
 - Chief Ministers of the states in a zone – Vice-Chairman (on a rotational basis for one year).
 - Two Ministers from each state – Nominated by the respective Governor.
 - Two representatives from Union Territories in the zone.
 - One Planning Commission nominee for each council.
 - Chief Secretaries and senior officials from the states.
- Standing Committees
 - Each council has a Standing Committee comprising Chief Secretaries of member states.
 - These committees meet periodically to resolve issues and prepare the groundwork for council meetings.
 - Representatives from Central Ministries and NITI Aayog attend based on necessity.

Functions and Role of Zonal Councils

- It acts as a platform for resolving Centre-State and inter-state disputes.
- It facilitates regional cooperation in economic and social planning.
- It discusses and resolves issues related to:
 - Border disputes.
 - Linguistic minorities.
 - Inter-state transport
 - Other matters under the States Reorganisation Act.
- It fosters cooperative and competitive federalism.

Countercyclical Capital Buffer (CCyB) for Banks

News: The Reserve Bank of India has said it will not activate the countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB) as the measure is not required in the current circumstances.

About Countercyclical Capital Buffer (CCyB) for Banks



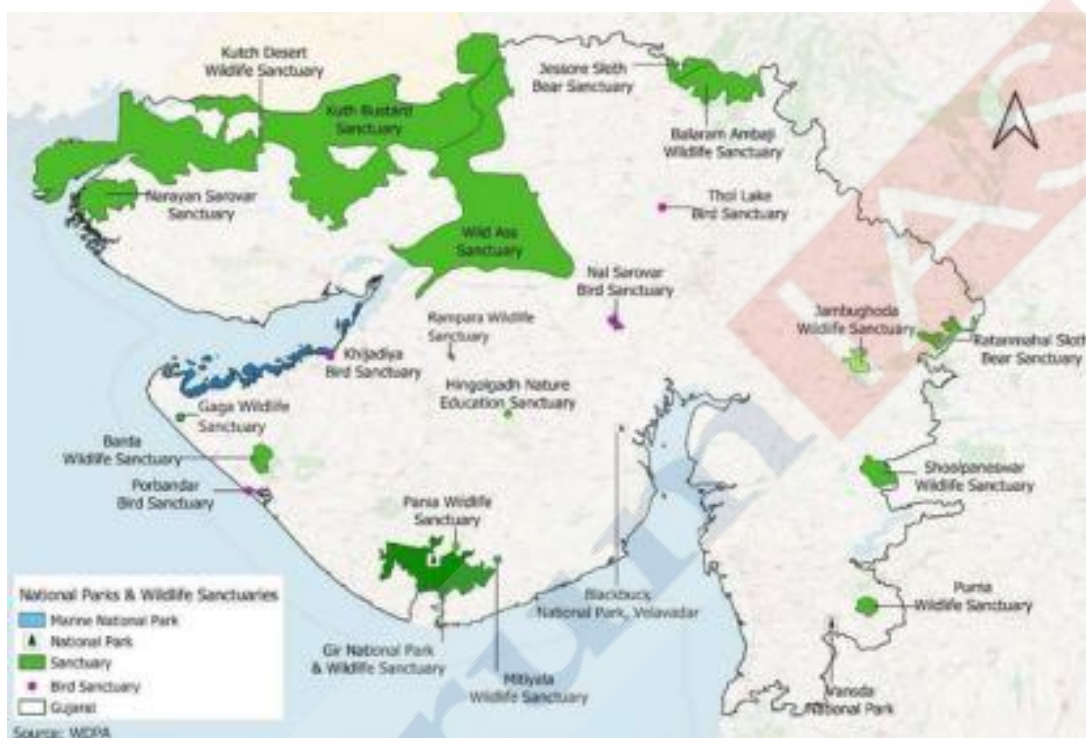
Source: Economic times

- **Countercyclical Capital Buffer (CCyB) for Banks** is a macro-prudential tool that requires banks to build up additional capital during periods of excessive credit growth.
- It is part of the Basel III norms to build resilience during credit booms.
- **How it was introduced:** In the backdrop of the 2008 global financial crisis, the Group of Central Bank Governors and Heads of Supervision (GHOS), the overseeing body of the standards set by the Basel Committee, envisaged the introduction of a framework on countercyclical capital measures.
- **Aim:** The aim of the Countercyclical Capital Buffer is two fold –
 - It requires a bank to build up a buffer of capital in good times, which may be used to maintain the flow of credit to the real sector in difficult times.
 - It achieves the broader macro-prudential goal of restricting the banking sector from indiscriminate lending in the periods of excess credit growth that have often been associated with the building up of system-wide risk.
- **Framework on countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB):** As per the framework on countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB) laid out in the RBI (Commercial Banks – Prudential Norms on Capital Adequacy) Directions, 2025, CCyB would be activated as and when circumstances warranted, and the decision would normally be pre-announced.
 - The framework envisages the credit-to-GDP gap as the main indicator, which may be used in conjunction with other supplementary indicators.

Barda Wildlife Sanctuary

News: Barda Wildlife Sanctuary is being developed as a second habitat for Asiatic lions to reduce extinction risk from Gir Forest concentration.

About Barda Wildlife Sanctuary



Source – WDPA

- **Location:** It is located in the Barda Hills near the coastal city of Porbandar in the Saurashtra region in Gujarat.
- **Area:** The sanctuary spreads across 192.31 sq. km.
- **Terrain:** The terrain of Barda is almost hilly and semi-arid, and it is surrounded by agricultural fields, wastelands, and forests.
- **Water sources:** The sanctuary has the Bileshvary River and the Joghri River, along with the Khambala and Fodara dams.
- **Flora:** About 650 plant and tree species are found here, including Babul, Bamboo, Amli, Jamun, Ber, Gorad, Rayan, and Dhav.
- **Fauna:** The sanctuary shelters leopards, wolves, sambar deer, chinkara, hyenas, blue bulls, and many resident and migratory birds.
- **Conservation:** The state government launched the Gir-Barda Project in 1979 to develop Barda as the second home for Asiatic lions.
- **Tribes:** Different ethnic groups such as Maldharis, Bharvads, Rabaris, and Gadhvis live in this area.

- **Significance:** It provides ecological security for Asiatic lions by reducing the danger of keeping the entire wild population confined to Gir Forest alone.

Veera Pasi

News: Rahul Gandhi unveiled a statue of Veera Pasi in Raebareli and addressed a “Bahujan Swabhiman Sabha” in his memory.

About Veera Pasi



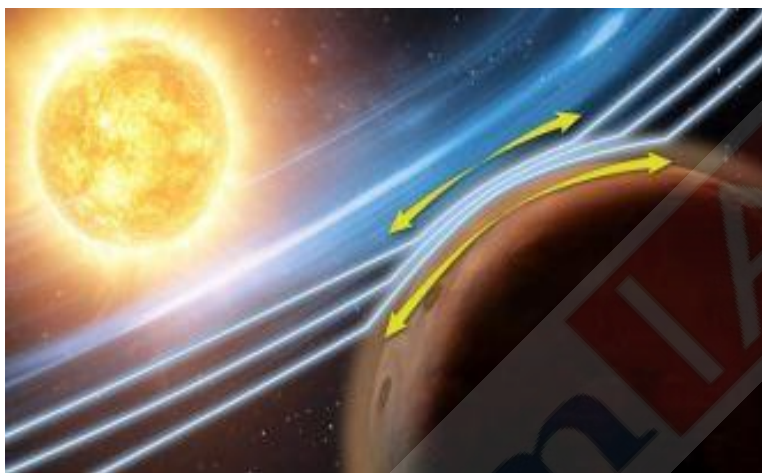
Source – IE

- **Veera Pasi** was a Dalit freedom fighter and trusted commander of Rana Beni Madhav Singh during the Revolt of 1857.
- **Origin:** Veera Pasi was born as Shivdeen Pasi on 11 November 1835 in Lodhawari village of Raebareli district in an impoverished Pasi family.
- **Early Life:** He lost his parents at an early age and later lived with his sister.
- **Association:** Veera Pasi joined the army of Rana Beni Madhav Singh of Shankarpur Estate and later became his trusted lieutenant and personal bodyguard.
- **Historical Significance:** During the 1857 revolt, Veera Pasi reportedly rescued Rana Beni Madhav Singh from British captivity through a clever prison escape plan.
- **British Crackdown:** The British government announced a reward of Rs. 50,000 for Veera Pasi's capture.

Zwan-Wolf Effect and MAVEN Mission

News: NASA's MAVEN spacecraft recorded the Zwan-Wolf effect inside Mars' atmosphere for the first time during a solar storm.

About Zwan-Wolf Effect



Source - NASA

- **Zwan-Wolf effect** is a fundamental plasma physics phenomenon where magnetic pressure gradients compress plasma, squeezing and channeling charged particles along magnetic flux tubes.
- It was first described in 1976.
- **Working mechanism:**
 - **Solar Wind Interaction:** The solar wind, which is a stream of charged particles flowing outward from the Sun, approaches the magnetic boundaries of a planet and becomes compressed near them.
 - **Pressure Gradient Formation:** This compression creates a pressure gradient that squeezes charged particles along magnetic structures and pushes them away from the solar wind stream.
 - **Low-Density Region Formation:** As the charged particles move away from the stream, a region with lower charged particle density forms near the stream, and this process is known as the Zwan-Wolf effect.
- **Key observations on Mars:**
 - **First Atmospheric Observation:** Earlier, the Zwan-Wolf effect had only been observed in planetary magnetospheres, but MAVEN detected it for the first time within Mars' atmosphere below 200 km altitude.
 - **Impact of Solar Storm:** A powerful coronal mass ejection intensified magnetic structures and reduced local particle density by around 50%.
 - **Mars Without Global Magnetic Field:** The finding showed that even unmagnetized planets like Mars can experience complex magnetic phenomena.

- **Continuous but Weak Activity:** Researchers stated that the Zwan-Wolf effect may remain continuously active on Mars, although it is often too weak to be detected by scientific instruments.
- **Planetary Importance:** The discovery may help scientists study similar solar wind interactions on unmagnetized bodies like Venus and Saturn's moon Titan.

About MAVEN Mission



Source – NASA

- **Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (MAVEN)** is NASA's first spacecraft mission dedicated to studying Mars' upper atmosphere and its interaction with the Sun.
- **Launch:** It was launched on November 18, 2013, and entered Mars orbit on September 21, 2014.
- **Goal:** The mission aims to understand atmospheric loss, climate history, liquid water, and how solar wind changed Mars over time.
- **Key Features of MAVEN's Mission:**
 - **Upper Atmosphere Study:** MAVEN studies Mars' upper atmosphere and ionosphere to understand atmospheric changes.
 - **Solar Wind Observation:** One instrument package studies solar wind and its impact on Mars' ionosphere.
 - **Scientific Instruments:** The spacecraft carries ultraviolet and mass spectrometers to study atmospheric composition.
 - **Climate Understanding:** MAVEN data helps scientists study the transformation of Mars from warm and wet conditions to cold and dry conditions.
 - **Atmospheric Loss Finding:** MAVEN data showed that Mars lost about 2/3rd of its early atmosphere to space.

Ayush Anudan Portal

News: Ayush Anudan Portal was launched recently to strengthen digital governance and enhancing transparency in the Ayush sector.

About Ayush Anudan Portal



Source: PIB

- It is a digital initiative to strengthen digital governance and enhancing transparency in the Ayush sector.
- Developed by: It has been developed by the Ministry of Ayush under the Ayush Grid initiative.
- Aim: It aimed at establishing an integrated, transparent, and citizen-centric digital ecosystem for the Ayush sector through the use of modern technology.
 - It also aims to ensure transparency, operational efficiency, accountability, and ease of access in grant management processes.
- It has been integrated with the NGO Darpan Portal, would make authentication and verification of applicant organisations faster, automated, credible, and error-free.
- Accessibility: It can be accessed through the Ministry of Ayush's MAISP (My Ayush Integrated Services Portal), the Ministry's single-window digital initiative, or directly through the Ayush Anudan Portal link.
- Features:
 - Scheme-wise application management system: It enabling proposals to be categorized, processed, and monitored according to the specific requirements of different Central Sector Schemes of the Ministry.
 - It also incorporates a real-time application tracking mechanism, allowing applicants and officials to monitor proposal status at every stage of processing.
 - It facilitates seamless authentication and verification of applicant organisations, ensuring enhanced institutional credibility and streamlined validation procedures.
- It enables organisations and institutions to submit funding proposals online through a structured and user-friendly interface, thereby eliminating dependency on manual and paper-based systems.

About Ayush Grid Initiative

- The Ayush Grid project is an Ayush-centric Digital Health Platform (DHP) created by the Ministry of Ayush in 2018.
- It works in sync with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)-India's national digital health infrastructure platform.
- Aim: It aims to connect all hospitals and research labs to record case histories so that a huge amount of evidence can be generated through data analytics about the efficacy of traditional medicine including Ayurveda.
- Features:
 - Components: Its component cover all the verticals of the Ayush Sector, namely Health Services, Education, Ayush Research, Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Training Programmes, Citizen Centric Services, Drug Licencing Portal, and Media Outreach.
 - Verticals: It covers verticals through four distinct layers namely the core layer, National Layer, State Layer, and Citizen access.
 - It digitizes the AYUSH ecosystem by connecting hospitals, laboratories, and research centers to generate robust evidence for traditional medicine.

Amur Falcons

News: Three Amur falcons tagged in Manipur were recently seen wintering in Africa. They have been tracked since November 2025 as part of a Manipur Amur Falcon Tracking Project by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).

About Amur Falcon



Source: E-Bird

- It is a small migratory bird of prey belonging to the family Falconidae.

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- It is known for its remarkable long-distance migration.
- Scientific name: Its scientific name is *Falco amurensi*.
- Named after: It is named after the Amur River, which runs through its breeding grounds in the Far East.
- Habitat: It is found in open forests, grasslands, wetlands and agricultural landscapes.
- Distribution: In India, it is primarily found during their migration in the northeastern states, especially in Nagaland, Manipur, and parts of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
 - It is locally known as 'Kahuaipuina.'
 - Note: The Doyang Reservoir in Nagaland is particularly famous as a significant roosting site for tens of thousands of Amur Falcons during their annual migration.
 - It breeds in southeastern Siberia, northern China, and Mongolia, and winters in southern Africa.
- Diet: Its diet primarily consists of insects, particularly locusts and termites, which they catch in flight.
- Characteristics:
 - Appearance: It is small in size, with males and females differing slightly in appearance.
 - Males have slate-gray plumage with reddish-brown thighs and undertail coverts, and reddish-orange feet.
 - Females are larger and have a more mottled, brownish-gray appearance with streaked underparts, making them more camouflaged.
 - Both sexes have distinct black eye masks and yellow ceres (the soft tissue at the base of their beaks).
- Migration:
 - After the breeding season, it undertake a remarkable migration of approximately 22,000 km to southern Africa.
 - Its route includes an incredible non-stop flight over the Arabian Sea, where they travel more than 3,000 kilometers without resting. This migration is one of the longest recorded for any raptor species.
- Threat: It is primarily threatened by hunting during migration and habitat loss at roosting sites, and changing weather patterns.
- Conservation status:
 - IUCN: Least Concern
 - Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule IV

Rupa Tarakasi

News: Recent restrictions on silver imports and rising silver prices have severely affected the livelihood of Rupa Tarakasi artisans in Cuttack.

About Rupa Tarakasi

- Rupa Tarakasi is one of the most exquisite and centuries-old silver filigree crafts practised in the Cuttack, the silver city of Odisha.
- Origin: The art form has a rich history, dating back as far as the 12th century, and it received considerable patronage under the Mughals.

- It changed its form with change in ruler.
- **Naming:** In Odia, “tara” means wire and “kasi” means to design.
- **The Process:**
 - **Transformation of Silver:** Silver bricks are transformed into thin fine wires or foils for making jewellery, artefacts, and showpieces.
 - **Use of Metals:** Craftsmen use different grades of silver along with metals like copper, zinc, cadmium, and tin in the alloy.
- **Role of Artisans:** The artists involved in this craft are called “Rupa Banias” or “Roupyakaras” in Odia.
 - They create various items, including jewellery worn by Odissi dancers, decorative artefacts, accessories, and religious and cultural pieces.
- **GI Tag:** It received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2024.

Excelsa Coffee

News: Rising climate stress on Arabica and Robusta coffee has increased attention towards climate-resilient coffee species like Excelsa.

About Excelsa Coffee



Source – Mongabay

- **Excelsa coffee (*Coffea liberica* var. *dewevrei*):** It is a lesser-known coffee species gaining importance for climate resilience and unique flavour.
- **Native to:** It is native to parts of Tropical and West Africa as well as Southeast Asia.
- **Known as:** In India, Excelsa is locally called Mara Kaapi, which means Tree Coffee.

- **Introduced to India:** Excelsa was introduced to India in the late 1800s by a British planter, Colonel Benson, as an alternative to Arabica following pest and disease outbreaks. .
- **Key Aspects of Excelsa Coffee:**
 - **Climate Resilience:** Excelsa is considered better suited to climate variations and changing rainfall patterns than Arabica and Robusta.
 - **Low Caffeine Content:** Excelsa contains lower caffeine levels ranging from 0.7% to 1.1%, making it suitable for people preferring low-caffeine coffee.
 - **Tree Profile:** Excelsa is a large woody tree that can grow up to 20 metres tall with large dark green leaves and a straight trunk.
 - **Long Gestation Period:** It takes around 11-12 months from flowering to fruit maturation depending on climatic conditions.
 - **Commercial Interest:** Coffee growers in India, Uganda, and Vietnam are increasingly experimenting with Excelsa for climate-resilient coffee farming.
- **Cultivation Challenge:** The tall height and dense branching of Excelsa made estate-scale management and harvesting difficult.
- **Significance:** Excelsa is gaining importance as researchers and farmers search for climate-resilient coffee species to support the future of global coffee cultivation.

Key facts about Netherlands

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has arrived in the Netherlands for the second leg of his five-country tour.

Key facts about Netherlands



Source – BBC

- **Location:** The Netherlands is located in Northwestern Europe.
- It is also known as Holland.

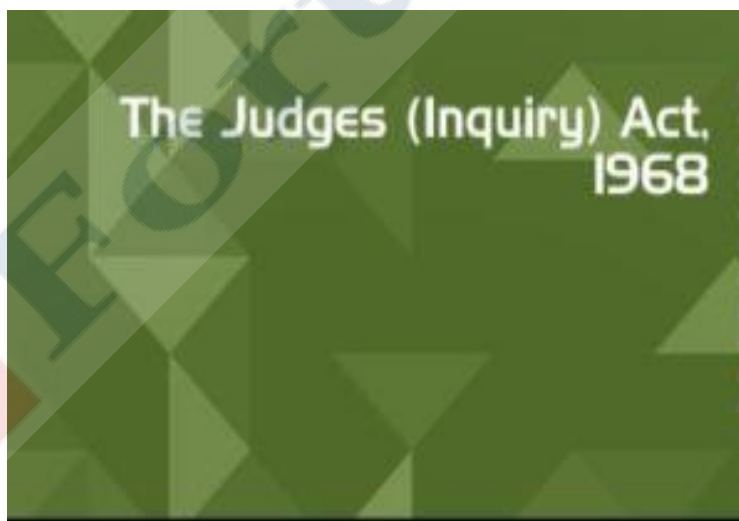
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- It is geographically positioned in both the Northern and Eastern hemispheres of the Earth.
- **Boundary nations:** The Netherlands is bordered by Germany in the east and Belgium in the south.
 - It is bounded by the North Sea in the north and west.
 - It shares its maritime borders with UK and France.
- **Capital:** Amsterdam is the capital of the country.
- **Geography:** It has three primary geographic regions: The Lowlands, The Veluwe and Utrecht Hill Ridge, and The Limburg Hills.
- **Highest point:** Its highest point is Vaalserberg.
- **Lake:** The IJsselmeer is a large freshwater lake in central Netherlands.
 - It was once called the Zuiderzee, which was a saltwater inlet.
 - The Afsluitdijk dam separates it from the North Sea, changing it into freshwater.
- **Major Rivers:** Rhine River, Meuse (Maas) River and Scheldt River are major rivers of Netherlands.
- **Port of Rotterdam** located along the North Sea have historically been crucial for trade and commerce.

Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968

News: The Judges Inquiry Committee submitted its report on allegations against Justice Yashwant Varma to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

About Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968



Source – Lawmint

- **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968** explains the procedure for the removal of judges from office through parliamentary process.

- **Constitutional Backing:** The Constitution provides that a judge can be removed only by an order of the President based on a motion passed by both Houses of Parliament.
 - Article 124 deals with the removal of a Supreme Court judge, while
 - Article 218 deals with the removal of a High Court judge.
 - **Note:** The Constitution does not use the word 'impeachment', but the term is commonly used for these proceedings.
- **Grounds for Removal:** A judge may be removed from office on the grounds of 'proven misbehaviour or incapacity'.
- **Initiating the Motion:** An impeachment motion may originate in either House of Parliament.
 - At least 100 Lok Sabha members or 50 Rajya Sabha members must submit a signed notice to the Speaker or Chairman respectively.
 - The Presiding Officer may admit or reject the motion after examining the material.
- **The 3-Member Inquiry Committee:** If the motion is admitted, a three-member committee is formed consisting of a Supreme Court judge, the Chief Justice of a High Court, and a distinguished jurist.
- **Parliamentary Procedure:**
 - **The Investigation:** The committee conducts the investigation and allows the judge to present a written defence.
 - **Report Submission:** The committee submits its report to the Speaker or Chairman, who lays it before Parliament.
 - **Special Majority:** The motion must be passed by a majority of the total membership and by at least two-thirds of members present and voting in both Houses.
 - **Presidential Order:** After approval in both Houses, the motion is sent to the President for removal of the judge.

FAO Agricola Medal

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the prestigious FAO Agricola Medal by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nation in recognition of his contribution to food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development.

About FAO Agricola Medal



Source: FAO

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- **Conferred by:** It is one of the highest honours awarded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.
 - **Year:** It has been conferred since 1977.
- It is conferred to distinguished individuals who have played an exceptional role in advancing efforts toward global food security, improved nutrition and agricultural development.
- It is conferred by the FAO Director-General on extraordinary leaders who have demonstrated commitment and action in support of FAO's mandate to eradicate hunger, reduce poverty, and ensure food security and nutrition for all.
- The medal which is in the form of a coin is being issued in gold and silver and the proceeds are utilized for sponsoring projects for the advancement of the rural people.
- **Recepients from India:** Apart form Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indian personalities such as former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was conferred with it in 2008.
 - Additionally, in 1979, Jayaprakash Narayan was selected for the medal.
- The first "Agricola" medal was issued to honour Dr B. R Sen, a former Director-General of FAO, who was instrumental in launching the "Freedom From Hunger" campaign.
- The award has been conferred upon several distinguished global leaders, including King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, former French President Jacques Chirac, former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

About Food and Agriculture Organisation

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- **Objective:** The goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.
- **Established:** It was established in 1945.
- **Membership:** It has a membership of 194 countries and the European Union.
 - It works in over 130 countries worldwide.
 - **Note:** India is a founding member of FAO.
- **Headquarters:** Rome, Italy
- **Governing body:** It is composed of the Conference, Council, Council Committees, Technical Committees, and Regional Conferences.
- **Reports published by the FAO:** It publishes numerous reports such as The State of the World's Forests (SOFO), The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA), The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO), The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI), [State of Food and Agriculture \(SOFA\) Report](#).
- **Important initiatives of FAO:** World Food Price Index, State of the World's Forests Report, Codex Alimentarius, Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).

UAV-Launched Precision Guided Missile (ULPGM)-V3

News: DRDO successfully completed final development trials of the UAV-Launched Precision Guided Missile (ULPGM)-V3 in air-to-ground and air-to-air modes.

About UAV-Launched Precision Guided Missile (ULPGM)-V3



Source – Swarajya Mag

- **ULPGM-V3 is the third variant of the indigenous drone-launched precision guided missile developed for modern drone warfare operations.**
- **Developed by:** It has been developed by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad along with other DRDO laboratories.
- **Production Agencies:**
 - **Public Sector Agency:** Bharat Dynamics Limited is involved in the development and production of the missile.
 - **Private Sector Agency:** Adani Defence Systems and Technologies Limited is participating in missile production.
- **Platform Used:** The missile system has been integrated on unmanned aerial vehicles developed by Newspace Research and Technologies, Bengaluru.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Dual Combat Capability:** The missile can operate in both air-to-ground and air-to-air modes against targets including drones and helicopters.
 - **Advanced Seeker System:** It is fitted with a high-definition dual-channel seeker and advanced multi-sensor guidance system for accurate target tracking.
 - **All-Weather Operations:** The missile can operate during day and night in plains as well as high-altitude regions.
 - **Two-Way Data Link:** Operators can update or change targets even after missile launch.
 - **Multiple Warhead Options:** The missile supports anti-armour, penetration-cum-blast, and pre-fragmentation warheads for different battlefield roles.
 - **Precision Strike Capability:** It can accurately attack both stationary and moving targets in combat conditions.

White-Tailed Ptarmigan

News: The white-tailed ptarmigan is in news because scientists are studying its survival challenges in changing alpine habitats.

About White-Tailed Ptarmigan



Source - Money Control

- The white-tailed ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucura*), also known as the snow quail.
- It is the smallest bird in the grouse family.
- **Habitat:** It lives mainly above or near the alpine tree line in rocky slopes, tundra vegetation, snowfields, and cold alpine mountain regions.
- **Location:** The species is found in mountain regions across western North America.
- **Characteristics**
 - **Physical Appearance:** It is a stocky bird with rounded wings, a square-ended tail, a small black beak, and short feather-covered legs.
 - Adults are about 31 to 34 cm long and weigh around 325 grams.
 - **Seasonal Camouflage:** The bird changes its plumage from white in winter to brown and grey in warmer months to avoid predators.
 - **Cold Adaptation:** Its compact body and feather-covered legs and toes help reduce heat loss and support movement on snow.
 - **Limited Migration:** Unlike many mountain birds, it usually remains in alpine zones with only small seasonal shifts in elevation.

- **Survival Strategy:** The bird often remains motionless and depends on camouflage rather than escape for protection.
- **Threats**
 - Rising temperatures
 - Changing snow cover
 - Habitat fragmentation
 - Shifting predator activity
- **Conservation Status**
 - IUCN Red List: Least Concern

Pregabalin and Schedule H1

News: The Union Health Ministry included Pregabalin under Schedule H1 of the Drugs Rules, 1945 after reports of misuse and illegal sale.

About Pregabalin



Source – Voice of Chandigarh

- Pregabalin is a drug used for the treatment of chronic pain, neuropathies, fibromyalgia, and certain neurological conditions.
- **Misuse of Pregabalin:**
 - **Misuse Among Youth:** Reports from certain States showed misuse and abuse of Pregabalin, particularly among youth.

- **Sedative and Euphoric Effects:** The drug was reportedly misused for its sedative, euphoric, and dissociative effects.
- **Illegal Stocking and Sale:** Recent seizures of illegally stocked and unauthorisedly sold Pregabalin were reported from some parts of the country.

About Schedule H1 of the Drugs Rules, 1945

- **Legal Provision:** Schedule H1 is a part of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 and was introduced through Gazette notification in 2013.
- **Regulated Drugs:** It includes certain 3rd and 4th generation antibiotics, certain habit-forming drugs, and anti-TB drugs.
- **Legal Conditions for Sale:** The supply of Schedule H1 drugs must be recorded in a separate register with prescription and patient details, and records must be maintained for three years.
- **Mandatory Warning Requirement:** These drugs must carry the red “Rx” symbol and the prescribed Schedule H1 drug warning label on the packaging.

Inclusion of “Pregabalin” under Schedule H1

- **Stricter Regulation:** Pregabalin will now be regulated under stricter Schedule H1 provisions instead of Schedule H.
- **Prescription Requirement:** The drug can be sold only against a valid prescription issued by a Registered Medical Practitioner.
- **Supply Chain Monitoring:** Retailers must maintain a separate register of prescriptions and sales details.
- **Public Health Protection:** The measure aims to prevent unauthorized access, curb illegal trafficking, and safeguard public health from drug misuse.

Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary

News: Haryana’s first constellation garden, named ‘Nakshatra Vatika’, has been developed at the Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary.

About Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary



Source: International Journal of Fauna and Biological Studies

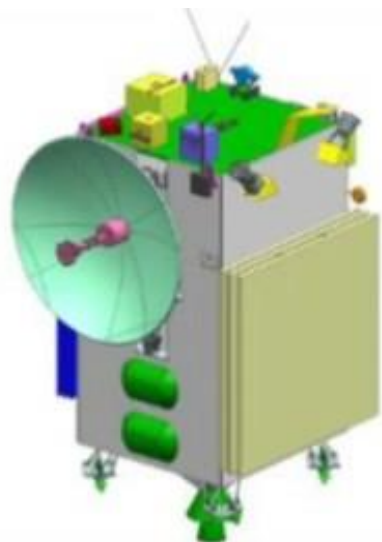
- Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary is located between two districts (Kurukshetra and Kaithal) of Haryana.
- It was established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1988.
- It holds the distinction of being the third-largest forest in Haryana.
- Area: It occupies an area of 11,003 acres.
- River associated: The [Saraswati River](#) is historically and mythologically believed to have flowed through the sanctuary.
- Climate: The climate of the area is subtropical, semi-arid type.
- Vegetation: The vegetation is categorized as a Subtropical deciduous forest.
- Flora: Its rich plant life, featuring numerous trees, shrubs, and herbs, provides a thriving ecosystem.
- Fauna: It is home to diverse wildlife such as wild boars, spotted deer, wild cats, snakes, Nilgai, monkeys, owls and various migratory bird species.
- Archaeological importance: It contains ancient archaeological remains.
 - Bricks discovered at the site date to the Kushan and Gupta periods, indicating that the area was inhabited more than 1,500 years ago.
 - It also features a 400-year-old water well constructed with small lakhauri bricks, which are associated with the Mughal era.

Shukrayaan mission

News: ISRO and the Swedish National Space Agency signed an MoU for Sweden's role in Shukrayaan mission during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Sweden visit.

About Shukrayaan mission

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Source: ISRO

- **Shukrayaan mission is India's first dedicated mission to Venus and one of ISRO's most complex planetary exploration projects.**
- **Launched by:** It will be launched by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **It will be launched on an LVM3 into a 170×36,000 km Earth Parking Orbit in March 2028.**
- **Aim:** It aims to study Venus' dense atmosphere, volcanic surface, weather systems and mysterious super-rotating clouds.
 - It seeks to investigate whether Venus once possessed conditions suitable for liquid water before evolving into an extreme greenhouse world.
 - The mission also aims to deepen the understanding of how planetary climates evolve over time.
- **Payloads:**
 - The spacecraft will be equipped with cutting-edge instruments, such as –
 - Synthetic aperture radar
 - Infrared and ultraviolet cameras
 - Sensors to study the planet's ionosphere
 - These tools will assist in unravelling the mysteries of Venus's thick, carbon dioxide-rich atmosphere and investigate the potential of active volcanoes on Venus's surface.
- **Sweden collaboration:** As part of the mission, Sweden's Swedish Institute of Space Physics will develop a scientific instrument called the Venusian Neutrals Analyser (VNA), which will fly aboard India's Venus orbiter.
 - The instrument is designed to study the interaction between charged particles emitted by the Sun and the atmosphere of Venus, one of the most scientifically intriguing aspects of the planet.