

Factly Monthly

Compilation

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

May 2026

INDEX

New Bidding Regulations for HAM Projects	6
Brain Death Certification in India & EEG and Angiogram	8
Pakistan's First Hangor-class Submarine	9
Prosopis Juliflora and Banni Grassland	10
Padma Doree and Eri Silk	12
Operation WHITE STRIKE.....	14
Operation 'Clawing Back'	15
INS Mahendragiri	15
Key Facts about Jamaica.....	17
Guidance Document on Diabetes Mellitus in Children	17
United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT)	19
Exercise CINBAX-II 2026.....	20
India's First Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) Barrier-less Tolling System	22
Fugitive Economic Offenders	22
Girmitiyas	23
Apnoea Test.....	24
Mission Drishti- World's First OptoSAR Satellite	25
Das Island, Tuapse Region and Primorsk port.....	26
Bhitarkanika National Park and Microplastics	28
Increasing the Judge Strength of the Supreme Court of India	31
Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0.....	32
Riverine Heatwaves	33
Viability Plan 2.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)	35
International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026	36
What happens if a Chief Minister refuses to relinquish office after electoral defeat?	37
Mahi River.....	38
Key Facts About Vietnam	38
India-EU Initiative to Boost EV Battery Recycling and Circular Economy	40
ANEEL Fuel.....	41
JANANI Platform	43
World Migration Report 2026	44
Ulsoor Lake	46
Key Facts about Suriname	47
Geocell	48

Factly Compilation May 2026

MERCOSUR Grouping	50
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)	51
Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) Weapon	53
Attenboroughnculus Tau	54
National Technology Day	55
RBI revises capital adequacy norms for banks	57
Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)	58
National Panchayat Awards 2025	60
Spiny-tailed Lizards	62
Sabarmati River	63
Rabindranath Tagore	64
'One Case One Data' and 'Su Sahay' chatbot	66
India's Successful test of Actively Cooled Full Scale Scramjet Combustor	68
International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)	69
Grand Slam.....	70
National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026	72
Forum of Regulators (FOR)	73
Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary	75
Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP)	76
Sirhind Fateh Divas of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Ji	79
Global Forest Goals Report 2026	80
Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)	82
Lavan Island	84
Scheme for Promotion of Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects	85
Pride of Hills: Special Development Assistance for Hill States Scheme	87
Peacock Tarantula	89
Common Criteria Development Board (CCDB)	90
Agalega Islands	92
IP Catalyst and Digital Platform	94
Thunderstorms	96
Ginger	98
Advance Authorisation Scheme.....	99
Withholding Tax	101
Neanderthals.....	103
Ebola Virus.....	104

Factly Compilation May 2026

Key Facts About Norway	107
Committee on Empowerment of Women	108
Kesar Mango	109
Operation RAGEPILL	111
Amblyceps Vayavy	112
Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (SMILE) Mission	113
3rd India-Nordic Summit	114
Kali River and Nyctibatrachus Kali	115
Padma Awards 2026	116
L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards	118
SHE-MARTs Initiative	119
Canine Distemper	121
Zonal Councils	122
Countercyclical Capital Buffer (CCyB) for Banks	124
Barda Wildlife Sanctuary	125
Veera Pasi	126
Zwan-Wolf Effect and MAVEN Mission	127
Ayush Anudan Portal	128
Amur Falcons	130
Rupa Tarakasi	131
Excelsa Coffee	132
Key facts about Netherlands	133
Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968	134
FAO Agricola Medal	135
UAV-Launched Precision Guided Missile (ULPGM)-V3	136
White-Tailed Ptarmigan	138
Pregabalin and Schedule H1	139
Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary	140
Shukrayaan mission	141
Bismarck Sea	143
Agni-1 Ballistic Missile	144
Sakura Science Programme 2026	145
Himalayan Tricarinate Hill Turtle	145
India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)	147
Ferrocene	148

Factly Compilation May 2026

National Sports Governance Board Rules and National Sports Tribunal Rules, 2026	149
Singalila National Park	150
Bay Woodpecker or Blythipicus pyrrhotis.....	151
2026 Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Invitational Tournament and 48th WorldSkills Shanghai 2026	152
Mekedatu Project and Arkavathi River	154
Cleavable Light-Erased Antibody Reporter (CLEAR) Platform	156
High-Level Committee on Demographic Change.....	157
Medical Innovations Patent Mitra: I2I Connect.....	159
Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme	160
Gynacantha khasiaca	162
India's First Indigenous Hydrogen Train and Hydrogen Fuel Cell (HFC)	163
National Health Accounts Estimates for India 2022-23	166
SARTHAK PDS Scheme.....	167
Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC)	169
Process of WTO Membership	171
Mission Queen Pineapple and Queen Pineapple	172
'Nirbhay Raho' Initiative	174
NeSDA 2025 Portal	175
Key Highlights Of National Family Health Survey-6.....	176
Khajuraho Group of Temples.....	178
Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI) for FY 2024-25 and Maritime Digital Reforms	180
Chandra River	182
Hog Deer.....	183

Election of Secretary-General of United Nations (UN)

News: The election of the next United Nations Secretary-General is underway, and on April 21-22, four candidates pitched before the UN General Assembly in informal, interactive dialogues.

About Election of Secretary-General of United Nations (UN)



Source: UN

- **Appointed by:** The Secretary-General of United Nations (UN) is appointed by the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Security Council (UNSC).
 - In practice, the Security Council first agrees on a candidate, requiring at least nine votes and no veto from its five permanent members.
 - The General Assembly then formally appoints the candidate by a majority of Member States.
- **Process of selection:**
 - Candidates for the United Nations Secretary-General must be formally proposed by one or more Member States.
 - Each candidate presents a vision statement outlining their priorities for the role.
 - Candidates participate in interactive dialogues, which are public sessions with Member States and civil society.
 - The Security Council recommends a candidate after securing at least nine votes and no veto from any permanent member.
 - The General Assembly appoints the Secretary-General with majority support from its 193 Member States.
- **Term:** The Secretary-General is appointed for a term of five years and may be reappointed for a second term.
 - In practice, most Secretaries-General have served a maximum of two terms.
- **Rotation:** The position also rotates among different world regions: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and Latin America & the Caribbean.
 - Currently, it is the turn of Latin America and the Caribbean, where different countries may support different candidates based on regional interests.
- **Role:** The United Nations Secretary-General is the chief administrative officer who manages the UN Secretariat and carries out tasks given by major UN bodies like the General Assembly, Security Council, and Economic and Social Council.
 - The Secretary-General can also bring important global issues, especially those affecting peace and security, to the attention of the Security Council.

- They can appoint special representatives, called Personal Envoys, to handle specific conflicts or issues.
- The Secretary-General is often called the world's "chief diplomat."
- Main candidates vying to become the United Nations Secretary-General 2026: Michelle Bachelet, Macky Sall, Rafael Grossi and Rebecca Grynsman
 - The new Secretary-General will take office on January 1, 2027.

About United Nations (UN)

- **Formation:** The United Nations is an international organisation founded in 1945.
 - There were 51 founding member states of the United Nations in 1945.
 - India was one of the original founding members.
- **Membership:** It is currently made up of 193 Member States.
 - All UN Member States are members of the General Assembly.
 - States are admitted to membership by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.
- **Structure:** The main bodies of the UN are the [General Assembly](#), the [Security Council](#), the [Economic and Social Council](#), the Trusteeship Council, the [International Court of Justice](#), and the UN Secretariat.
 - UN Secretariat: The Secretariat carries out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organisation's other main bodies.
- It is dedicated to promoting peace, human rights, and social progress, enhancing the quality of life and raising living standards for individuals worldwide.

New Bidding Regulations for HAM Projects

News: New Bidding Regulations for HAM Projects were introduced by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to prevent catastrophic failures from construction defects.

About Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM)



Source – Constro

- Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) is a Public-Private Partnership model used mainly for road and highway projects in India, where both government and private sector participate.
- It is a mix of the EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) and BOT (build, operate, transfer) models.
- It was introduced to revive private participation after challenges in earlier models like Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT).
- Financial Structure: It is a variant of the Public-Private Partnership model, where the government pay 40% of the project cost during construction and the balance 60% as annuity payments over the operations period.
- Risk Sharing: The government bears traffic risk, while the private developer handles construction and maintenance.
- Upon the completion of the concession period, ownership of the project reverts to the government.

About New Bidding Regulations for HAM Projects

- These regulations introduce stricter eligibility and disqualification norms for contractors in Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM)-based highway projects.
- Introduced by: The regulations are introduced by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).
- Aim: It aims to strengthen construction quality, ensure structural integrity, and prevent catastrophic failures in national highway projects.
- Key Changes:
 - Catastrophic Failure Clause: If a bidder was involved in serious construction failures such as collapse of bridge, flyover, embankment damage, pavement failure, construction deaths, or long tunnel entrapment within the last two years, then the bidder may face disqualification or a minus 30 mark penalty.
 - Wider Applicability: This rule applies to both ongoing and completed highway projects, ensuring that past performance is considered during bidding.

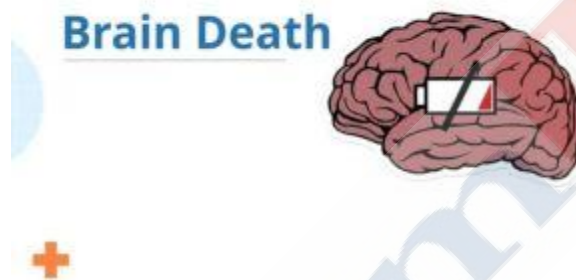
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- **Expanded Coverage:** Provisions earlier used for EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) projects are now extended to Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) contracts, with mandatory bidder declarations.
- **Significance:** It creates a preventive filter at the bidding stage to improve quality and reduce failures.

Brain Death Certification in India & EEG and Angiogram

News: The Supreme Court of India is seeking expert opinion from AIIMS on using EEG and angiogram in brain death certification.

About Brain Death Certification in India



Source – PIMS

- **Brain Stem Death:**
 - **Definition:** Brain death or brain stem death is an irreversible condition where all brain activities, including automatic functions such as breathing, completely cease, even though the body is maintained on life support systems.
 - **Cause:** It is mainly caused by severe injuries such as road accidents and falls that cut off oxygen supply to the brain, leading to permanent loss of brain function.
 - **This condition is crucial for organ donation** as organs such as heart and lungs can be donated.
- **Legality:** Brain death certification in India is primarily governed by the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994.
- **Guided by:** The process of brain death certification is guided by the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO).
- **Protocol of Brain Death Certification:**
 - **The Medical Board:** A four-member board including hospital in-charge, neurologist or neurosurgeon, and treating physician certifies brain death.
 - **Mandatory Testing:** Doctors must identify the cause and rule out reversible conditions like drug use, hypothermia, or metabolic imbalance.
 - **The Apnea Test:** It checks if the patient can breathe independently, though it is considered subjective and not always properly videographed.
 - **Repetition:** Brain death must be confirmed at least twice with a 12-hour interval.
 - **Concerns:** Lack of training among doctors and inconsistent protocols reduce proper certification and organ donation.
- **Role of EEG and Angiogram:**

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- **EEG:** Electroencephalogram (EEG) is a test that records electrical signals in the brain using small electrodes attached to the head, and in a brain dead patient, it shows absence of any electrical activity.
- **Angiogram:** Angiogram is a test that uses contrast dyes and X-rays to examine blood flow in the brain, and in a brain dead patient, it shows that blood flow to the brain has completely stopped.

Pakistan's First Hangor-class Submarine

News: Pakistan has inducted its first Hangor-class submarine into the navy, marking a major step in its maritime capability upgrade program.

About Pakistan's First Hangor-class Submarine



Source – Pak Observer

- It is Pakistan's first advanced submarine inducted under an agreement with China to modernize naval capabilities.
- **Designed by:** The submarine is based on China's Type 039A design.
- **Built under a contract:** It is built under an agreement between Pakistan and China for acquiring eight Hangor-class submarines.
- **Naming:** The name "Hangor" refers to a submarine that sank INS Khukri during the 1971 conflict.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Speed and Mobility:** It can achieve a speed of about 20 knots, which allows effective movement in operational areas.
 - **Displacement and Size:** It has an estimated surfaced displacement of about 2,800 tons and a length of around 76 meters.
 - **Crew Capacity:** It carries a crew of around 36 personnel, ensuring operational efficiency during missions.
 - **Armament capability:** It carries six 533 mm torpedo tubes capable of deploying torpedoes and anti-ship cruise missiles for multi-role missions.

- **Advanced propulsion system:** It uses diesel-electric propulsion integrated with air-independent propulsion (AIP) to extend underwater endurance beyond conventional limits.
- **Advanced Sensors:** It has advanced sensors that improve detection and surveillance capability.
- **Operational Role:** It is designed to secure vital sea lanes and protect maritime interests.

Prosopis Juliflora and Banni Grassland

News: Prosopis juliflora, which is a non-native and invasive tree species, has encroached over half of Banni Grassland in Gujarat.

About Prosopis Juliflora

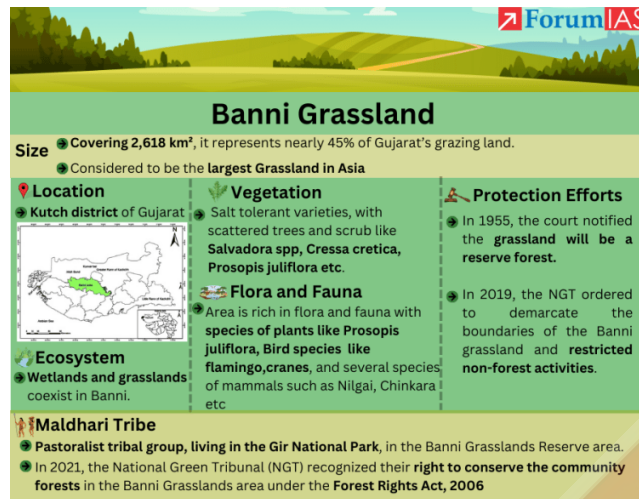


Source: India Biodiversity Portal

- Prosopis juliflora is one of the most widespread **hyperaccumulating, phreatophytic, perennial tree/shrub species**.
- **Family:** It is a member of the **Fabaceae family**.
- It is a **representative species** of the **Sonoran Desert ecosystem**.
- **Distribution:** It is a **Mexican-origin shrub**.
 - There are approximately **40 species of Prosopis** distributed throughout **Asia, Africa and America**.
 - The plant was **first introduced by the British in the 1920s to 'green' Delhi** and by the **Gujarat forest department in 1961** to halt the encroaching salt desert in the Rann.
 - It is now found in many states, including **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal** and in almost all districts of **Haryana, Gujarat and Rajasthan**.
 - It is known as **gando baval** in the **Kutch region**, **Vilayati keekar** in **North India** and **Velikathan** in **Tamil**.
 - Now, Maldharis local pastoral community living in the Banni Grasslands Reserve area are **dependent on widely grown Prosopis juliflora for two main reasons:**
 - Prosopis is a **major grazing option for cattle**, especially buffaloes, for the community.
 - They use **Prosopis trees to make charcoal**, which has become an important way to earn money.

- **Geographical conditions:**
 - **Soil:** It is capable of growing on **inhospitable habitats such as rocky and saline soils, under adverse climatic conditions.**
 - **Climate:** It is well adapted to warm and dry tropical climates.
 - **Rainfall:** It grows well in areas receiving 250-600 mm annual rainfall.
- **Characteristics:**
 - It is a **thorny, deciduous, large-crowned, and deep-rooted bush.**
 - **Height:** It grows up to a **height of about 10 m.**
 - **Bark:** It has a **thick, rough, grey-green bark** that becomes scaly with age.
 - **Stem:** The plants are **often multistemmed with many sharp thorns that measure up to 5 cm.**
 - The stems of it are **often “mild zigzag” in shape**, with one or two thorns present at each turn.
 - **Flower:** It **flowers twice a year**, in February-March and August-September, and is a **prolific seeder.**
 - The **regional adaptation of the species, easy dispersion, and lack of proper management** have led **P. juliflora to be considered an invasive species.**
 - This weed is to become **the feedstock for India’s first green methanol production plant**, designed to fuel ocean-going ships.
- **Threat associated with it:**
 - It is a non-native and invasive tree species, thus impacting **habitat specialist species** such as the desert fox, Houbara bustard and spiny-tailed lizard.
 - It **depletes groundwater availability, increases soil salinity, and makes the grassland more susceptible to wildfires.**
- **Prevention:**
 - **Short-term restoration:** Banni Grasslands can be **managed using a mosaic approach, where** both restored grasslands and some areas of *Prosopis juliflora* are maintained.
 - **Mechanical removal of Prosopis** can be used in small areas.
 - **Long-term restoration:** The **needs and livelihoods of local communities must be considered**, as many Maldharis depend on *Prosopis* for income and grazing.
 - Scientists and policymakers should **study the long-term ecological effects, such as changes in soil, water, and wildlife**, before making large-scale restoration decisions.

About Banni Grassland



Source – Forum IAS

- **Location:** It is located in the Kutch district of Gujarat.
- It is considered to be the largest grassland in Asia.
- Click here to know more about the [Banni grassland](#)

Padma Doree and Eri Silk

News: Padma Doree was formally unveiled by NEHHDC under MDoNER, showcasing a cross-cultural textile initiative through a fashion show and exhibition.

About Padma Doree



Source – PIB

- **Padma Doree** is a unique cross-cultural textile initiative that fuses Eri silk of Northeast India with Chanderi weaving of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Launched by:** It was launched by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER).
- **Executing Agency:** It is executed by the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC).
- **Objective:** The initiative aims to promote a sustainable and integrated textile ecosystem and ensure economic empowerment of local artisans while linking different regions.

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- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Fusion of Traditions:** It combines Eri (Ahimsa) silk from Northeast India with intricate Chanderi textile motifs from Madhya Pradesh to create a unique textile blend.
 - **Sustainability and Innovation:** It highlights ethical silk production and integrates traditional knowledge with modern design and innovation.
- **Significance:** It highlights the relevance of traditional crafts, indigenous knowledge systems, and sustainable luxury in contemporary markets.

About Eri Silk

Aspects	Description
About	● Eri Silk, also known as “Peace Silk” or “Vegan Silk,” is a unique type of silk derived from the Eri silkworm (<i>Samia ricini</i>). ● Unlike other silk production processes, Eri Silk is made without harming the moth inside the cocoon
Produced by	● It is predominantly produced in the North-Eastern states of India, particularly Assam. ● It is also found in Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, and other regions.
Unique Characteristics	● Eri Silk is considered the world’s only vegan silk because the moth is not killed during the extraction process. ○ The moth naturally exits the cocoon, leaving it intact for silk production. ● The production of Eri Silk is environmentally friendly with a focus on compassion and sustainability. ● It is known for its softness, warmth, and durability. ● It has a distinct texture, often compared to wool, making it versatile for various garments and textiles. ● It is highly breathable and has excellent temperature-regulating properties, making it suitable for both warm and cool climates.
Cultural Significance	● Traditional Craftsmanship: It holds deep cultural importance in Assam, where it is traditionally handwoven by skilled artisans. ○ It is a part of the region’s rich textile heritage. ● Geographical Indication (GI) Status: It is a GI-tagged product of Assam, which means it is recognized for its authenticity and regional significance.
Contributions to Sustainable Fashion	● Oeko-Tex Certification: It recently obtained the prestigious Oeko-Tex certification, which ensures that the textile is free from harmful substances and produced under environmentally friendly conditions.

	● International Market Potential: The certification enhances its credibility on the global stage, paving the way for its expansion into international markets
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Operation WHITE STRIKE

News: The Narcotics Control Bureau uncovered a transnational cocaine syndicate and seized 349 kg cocaine worth ₹1,745 crore under Operation WHITE STRIKE.

About Operation WHITE STRIKE



Source – IBG News

- Operation WHITE STRIKE is a large-scale anti-narcotics operation targeting an international cocaine trafficking syndicate operating through India's logistics networks.
- **Executing Agency:** The operation is executed by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) through intelligence-based enforcement actions.
- **Objective:**
 - To dismantle organised narcotics supply chains and disrupt transnational drug networks.
 - To implement India's zero-tolerance policy against drug trafficking through coordinated operations.
- **Key Aspect:**
 - **Coordinated Multi-Location Action:** The agency carried out linked operations in Kalamboli and Bhiwandi after sustained intelligence and surveillance for more than six months.
 - **Large-Scale Seizure Through Follow-Up:** Interrogation of one accused led to another hidden consignment, resulting in a total seizure of 349 kg cocaine.
 - **Use of Logistics and Concealment Methods:** The network used warehouse systems and concealed transport, including hiding cocaine inside machinery and packaging it in multiple layers.

Operation 'Clawing Back'

News: The Himachal Pradesh Forest Department conducted raids in Rohru and arrested six persons for illegal trade of wildlife body parts.

About Operation 'Clawing Back'



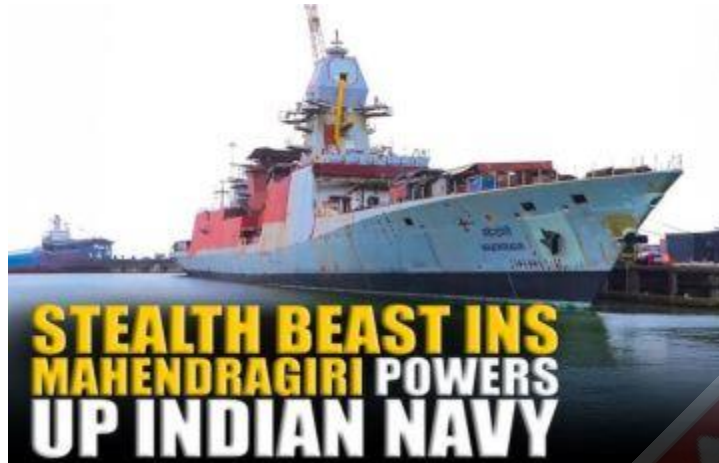
Source – IE

- Operation 'Clawing Back' is a special operation launched to bust organised trade of wildlife body parts.
- Launched by: The operation was launched by the Himachal Pradesh Forest and Wildlife Department.
- Objective: The objective is to curb illegal trade of protected wild animal body parts and identify supply sources.
- Legal Action: A case was registered under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Key Aspects:
 - Coordinated Raids: Six teams conducted simultaneous raids on six jewellery shops and seized 85 leopard claws and five canines.
 - Illegal Trade Pattern: Wildlife body parts were concealed in jewellery items like amulets and lockets, showing ongoing demand driven by superstition and profit motives.
 - Forensic Examination: Seized items will be examined at the Wildlife Institute of India to trace origins.
- Significance: The operation highlights strict enforcement against wildlife crime and illegal trade.

INS Mahendragiri

News: INS Mahendragiri, the sixth Project 17A frigate, was delivered to the Indian Navy at Mumbai on April 30, marking a milestone.

About INS Mahendragiri



Source – ANI

- Mahendragiri (Yard 12654) is the sixth indigenous stealth frigate of the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) delivered to the Indian Navy.
- Construction & Delivery: It was built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai and officially delivered to the Indian Navy on April 30, 2026.
- Designed by: It was designed by the Warship Design Bureau and overseen by the Warship Overseeing Team (Mumbai).
- Naming: It is named after a prominent mountain peak in the Eastern Ghats of Odisha.
- Aim: The project aims to create versatile multi-mission platforms to address current and emerging maritime challenges while promoting Aatmanirbharta in warship building.
- Key Features:
 - Advanced Systems: It is equipped with a potent weapon system and cutting-edge sensor suite for multiple warfare roles.
 - Propulsion: It uses Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion with diesel engine and gas turbine driving Controllable Pitch Propellers.
 - Integrated Management: It has a state-of-the-art Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS).
 - Multi-role Capability: It supports anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare operations.
 - Indigenous Content: It has about 75% indigenous content, involving over 200 MSMEs and generating significant employment.
- Significance: It reflects India's growing capability in design, shipbuilding, and engineering with strong focus on self-reliance.

About Project 17A

- Programme Details: It consists of seven advanced stealth guided-missile frigates known as the Nilgiri-class.
- The seven ships are: INS Nilgiri, INS Himgiri, INS Udaygiri, INS Taragiri, INS Vindhyagiri, INS Mahendragiri, and a seventh unnamed ship.
- Technological Leap: It represents a quantum leap in naval design, stealth, firepower, automation, and survivability compared to earlier projects.
- Built by: It is built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), with four ships by MDL and three by GRSE.

Key Facts about Jamaica

News: In a significant step towards strengthening India-Caribbean relations, India has deployed its flagship Aarogya Maitri portable healthcare infrastructure in Jamaica.

Key Facts about Jamaica



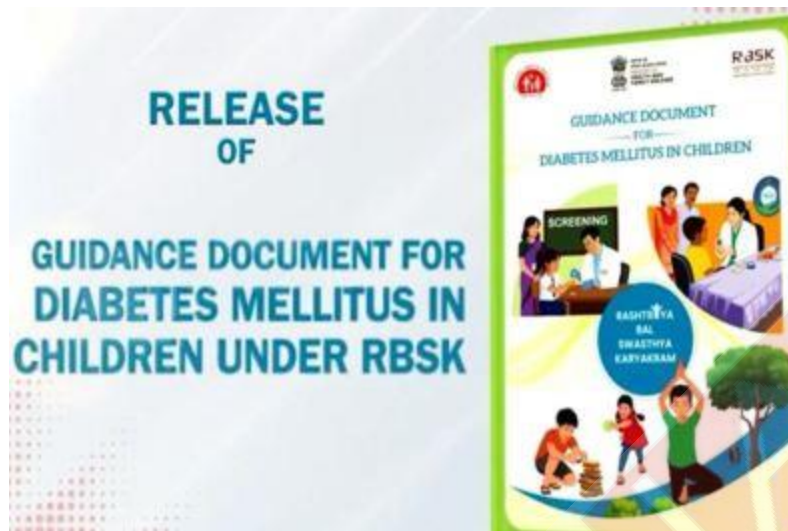
Source: World Atlas

- **Jamaica** is an **island country** of the **West Indies**.
- **Location:** It is located in the **west-central Caribbean** in the **Greater Antilles** archipelago.
- It is the **third-largest island** in the **Caribbean Sea**.
- **Boundaries:** It is situated to the **south of Cuba**; to the **west of the Hispaniola Islands (Haiti & the Dominican Republic)** and to the **northwest of the Cayman Islands**.
- **Bordering sea:** It is surrounded by the **Caribbean Sea**.
- **Capital:** Its national capital is **Kingston**.
- **Geography:** It is divided into **three primary geographic regions: the Coastal Plains, the Limestone Plateau, and the Blue Mountains**.
- **Highest peak:** **Blue Mountain Peak** is the **highest point of the island**.
- Many parts of Jamaica have **limestone landscapes with ridges, valleys, and sinkholes**, especially in the **John Crow Mountains, Dry Harbour Mountains, and Cockpit Country**.
- **Mountain ranges:** In the southwest, important mountain ranges include the **Don Figueroa Mountains, Santa Cruz Mountains, and May Day Mountains**.
- **River:** The **Rio Minho** is the **longest river**, about 60 miles (100 km) long. The **Black River** in the west and the **Rio Cobre** are also important rivers.
- **Climate:** It has a **tropical climate**, influenced by the sea and steady northeast trade winds.

Guidance Document on Diabetes Mellitus in Children

News: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released a national framework for childhood diabetes at the National Summit on Public Healthcare Service Delivery.

About Guidance Document on Diabetes Mellitus in Children



Source – AIR

- It is a structured and standardized national framework for screening, diagnosis, treatment and long-term management of childhood diabetes.
- Released by: It was released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Aim: The document aims to ensure universal screening of children from birth to 18 years with early detection and timely treatment through community and school platforms.
- Key Aspects of the Guidance Document:
 - Universal Screening: It ensures screening of all children through community and school-based platforms for early identification of diabetes.
 - Testing and Referral System: Suspected cases undergo immediate blood glucose testing and are referred to district-level facilities for confirmation and treatment.
 - Free Comprehensive Care Package: It provides free screening, diagnostics, lifelong insulin therapy, glucometers, test strips and follow-up care at public health facilities.
 - Integration with RBSK 2.0: The framework is integrated into Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK 2.0), which expands screening to include non-communicable diseases like diabetes and ensures a continuum of preventive, promotive and curative care.
 - Integrated Continuum of Care: It links community screening with district hospitals and medical colleges to ensure continuous and seamless care.
 - 4Ts Awareness Framework: It promotes Toilet, Thirsty, Tired and Thinner signs to support early detection of Type 1 Diabetes.
 - Family and Caregiver Training: It includes structured training on insulin use, glucose monitoring, emergency response and daily disease management.
- Significance: It will reduce mortality, prevent complications and improve quality of life while strengthening public health capacity for managing childhood non-communicable diseases.

United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT)

News: The United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT) raised serious concerns over Pakistan's mass deportation of Afghan refugees under the 2023 Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan, citing lack of individual protection assessments and risks of refoulement.

About United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT)



Source: National Campaign Against Torture

- It is the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by its States parties.
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland, operating under the [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#).
- Composition: The CAT is composed of 10 independent experts serving in their personal capacity, and not as representatives of a State.
 - Eligibility: They must have high moral standing and recognised competence in the field of human rights.
 - Membership: The States determine committee membership.
 - Term: Each member is nominated by a State Party to the Convention and elected by States Parties for a four-year term.
 - They may be re-elected if re-nominated.
 - Equitable geographical distribution and the usefulness of the participation of some persons having legal experience have to be taken into account.
- How the committee works:
 - All States parties are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights are being implemented.
 - States must report initially one year after acceding to the Convention and then every four years.
 - The Committee examines each report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the State party in the form of "concluding observations".
 - In addition to the reporting procedure, the Convention provides three other mechanisms through which the Committee carries out its monitoring functions:
 - It can consider individual complaints from persons alleging violations of their rights.
 - It can undertake inquiries.
 - It can consider inter-state complaints.

- **Session:** It meets three times per year in Geneva. Each session lasts two to four weeks.
- **Functions:** The Committee against Torture (CAT) monitors State compliance with the Convention through five key functions.
 - Under State Reporting (Article 19), each State must submit a report within one year of joining the Convention and then every four years.
 - Under the Inquiry Procedure (Article 20), the Committee can conduct a confidential inquiry if there is reliable information that torture is being systematically practised in a State.
 - However, this inquiry cannot happen if the State has not accepted the Committee's authority under Article 20.
 - Under Inter-State Communications (Article 21), one State can complain against another State for not following the Convention, but only if both States accept this system.
 - So far, no such complaint has been made.
 - Under Individual Communications (Article 22), individuals can file complaints if their rights under the Convention are violated, provided the State has accepted this procedure.
 - Through General Comments, the Committee explains the meaning and scope of the Convention's provisions.

About Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the "Torture Convention") was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1984.
- The Convention entered into force in 1987.
- **Membership:** It currently has 114 States as signatories.
 - India has been a signatory to it since 1997, but India has not ratified it.
- **Definition of Torture:** Article 1 of the Convention defines torture as the deliberate infliction of severe physical or mental pain for purposes such as obtaining information, punishment, or intimidation, with the involvement or consent of a public official.
- **Universal Jurisdiction:** Article 5 requires States to either prosecute or extradite persons accused of torture, regardless of where the crime was committed or the nationality of the offender.
- It is to ensure protection for all individuals from torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.

Exercise CINBAX-II 2026

News: The Indian Army contingent departed for the second edition of India – Cambodia Bilateral Military Exercise CINBAX-II 2026.

About Exercise CINBAX-II 2026



Source: PIB

- It is conducted between the Indian Army and the Cambodian Army.
- First edition: Its first edition was conducted in 2024.
- Present edition: The present edition is the second edition of the exercise.
- Scheduled at: It is scheduled to be conducted at Techo Sen Phnom Thom Mreas Prov Royal Cambodian Air Force Training Centre (Camp Basil), Kampong Speu Province, Kingdom of Cambodia.
- Duration: It is to be conducted from 04 to 17 May 2026.
- Objective: Its primary objective is to enhance interoperability, coordination and operational synergy between the contingents of both nations.
- Broad Framework: It will be conducted under the framework of Chapter VII of the UN Mandate, showcasing company-level joint training for the conduct of operations in a sub-conventional environment.
- Participants:
 - Indian Army contingent: It comprises 120 personnel, mainly from a Battalion of the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment.
 - Cambodian contingent: It comprises 160 personnel from the Royal Cambodian Army.
- Features:
 - It will be aligned with the current dynamics of Counter-Terrorism operations encountered by the peacekeeping forces during the UN peacekeeping operation.
 - A series of practical, in-depth discussions and tactical exercises will be carried out, culminating in a comprehensive validation exercise.
 - Special skill training, including that of Drone operations, mortar, and sniper tactics, will be practised as part of the exercise.
 - It will showcase the capability of both nations towards maintaining global peace.
 - It will also facilitate in exchanging best practices and sharing of operational experiences gained during various operations against hostile forces in Semi-Urban environment.
- Significance: It reflects the growing Defence Co-operation between India – Cambodia and will further enhance the bilateral relations between the two nations.

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India's First Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) Barrier-less Tolling System

News: Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari announced the launch of India's first Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) barrier-less tolling system at the Chorayasi Toll Plaza on the Surat-Bharuch section of NH-48 in Gujarat.

About India's First Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) Barrier-less Tolling System

- **Initiated at:** It has been initiated at the Chorayasi Toll Plaza on the Surat-Bharuch section of NH-48 in Gujarat.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It has been initiated by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- **Developed by:** It has been developed by ICICI Bank under an agreement with the Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCL).
- **Operating agency:** It is operationalized by the [National Highway Authority of India \(NHAI\)](#).
- **How it works:**
 - This advanced system relies on high-performance Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) readers and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras.
 - These technologies work together to read FASTag details and vehicle registration numbers (VRN) even at high speeds, unlike earlier systems that functioned effectively only at speeds of 10–12 km/h.
- **Implementation measures:** To support the rollout of MLFF, several policy and regulatory measures were introduced:
 - Mandating High Security Registration Plates (HSRP) to ensure accurate number plate reading.
 - Implementing the "One Vehicle, One FASTag" rule to prevent misuse.
 - Vehicles that pass without payment must pay double the toll unless the fee is cleared within 72 hours.
 - A grievance redressal mechanism has also been established.
- **Benefits:** MLFF is expected to significantly reduce travel time, ease congestion at toll plazas, improve fuel efficiency, and lower vehicular emissions.

Fugitive Economic Offenders

News: The Enforcement Directorate reported declaring 21 individuals as fugitive economic offenders and initiating proceedings against 54 persons under the law.

About Fugitive Economic Offenders



Source – IE

- A fugitive economic offender is a person against whom a warrant for a scheduled offence of ₹100 crore or more is issued and who avoids returning to India.
- **Legality:** The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 provides the legal framework to declare fugitive economic offenders.
- **Special Court:** A Special Court designated under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002 examines such cases and declares individuals as offenders.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Threshold:** An offender must face a warrant for offences involving ₹100 crore or more and must have fled India or refused to return.
 - **Application Process:** A director or deputy director files an application with reasons, property details, whereabouts, and list of interested persons before a special court.
 - **Court Proceedings:** The court issues notice for appearance, and failure to appear leads to declaration as a fugitive economic offender after due hearing.
 - **Property Confiscation:** Authorities can attach and confiscate proceeds of crime, benami properties, and other assets in India or abroad, including provisional attachment for 180 days.
 - **Legal Consequences:** Declared offenders and related entities may be barred from filing or defending civil claims, and appeals lie before the High Court.

Girmitiyas

News: India's External Affairs Minister is visiting Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, highlighting their special connection through Girmitiya communities.

About Girmitiyas



Source – Girmitdotorg

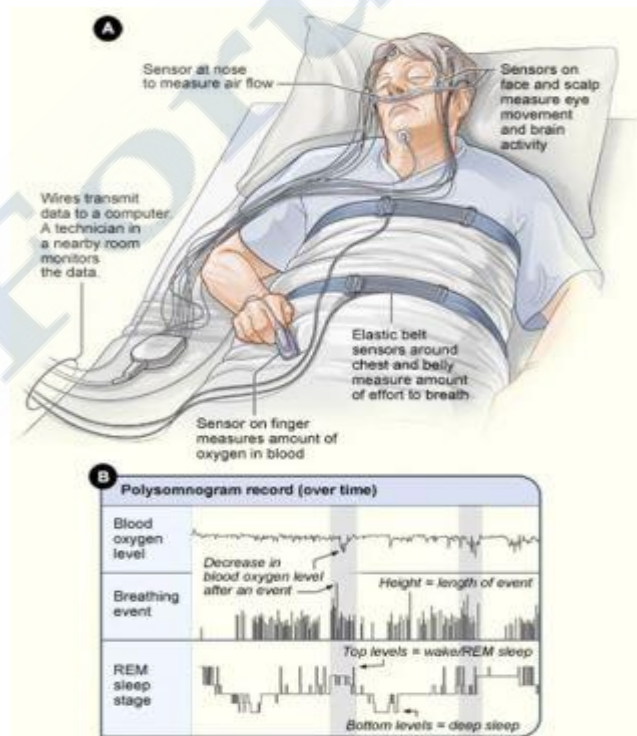
- Girmitiyas were Indian indentured labourers who migrated to British colonies in the mid to late nineteenth century for work.

- **Timeline:** Girmitiyas migrated mainly after the British Slavery Abolition Act 1833, which created labour shortages in colonies.
- **Origin of Term:** The term “Girmit” is a mispronunciation of “Agreement,” which described the labour contracts signed with the British Government.
- **Naming:** Girmitiyas were also called Jahazis or Jahajis, referring to their shared journey by ship to foreign lands.
- **Source Regions:** Most Girmitiyas came from eastern United Provinces and Bihar due to poverty, unemployment, and poor agricultural conditions.
- **Major Destinations:** They were sent to plantations in Fiji, South Africa, Mauritius, and Caribbean regions like Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, and Jamaica.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Migration Conditions:** Labourers migrated due to economic hardship but faced poverty, lack of resources, low wages, and poor living conditions after arrival.
 - **Cultural Continuity:** They preserved traditions through festivals like Diwali, Ramleela, and Hosay, and maintained folk music and instruments like dholak and harmonium.
 - **Language and Identity:** Languages such as Hindi, Bhojpuri, and Awadhi remained widely spoken in places like Mauritius, Fiji, and Suriname.

Apnoea Test

News: The Supreme Court of India observed that a plea raised concerns that the apnoea test may not conclusively determine brain death.

About Apnoea Test



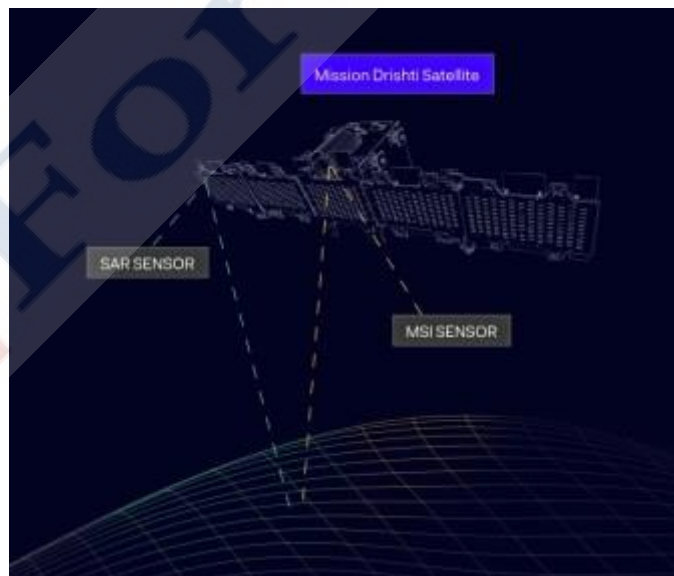
Source – CPAP

- The apnoea test is considered an essential clinical test for determining brain death by assessing loss of brainstem function.
- Aim: The aim is to confirm the absence of brainstem function by observing breathing response when carbon dioxide level rises.
- Indicators: Absence of breathing effort at a carbon dioxide level of about 60 mmHg or a 20 mmHg rise from baseline supports brain death, while any breathing effort rules it out.
- Key aspects:
 - Essential yet difficult test: It is considered a necessary condition for brain death, but it is difficult, lengthy, and may cause complications.
 - Prerequisites before test: The test requires stable conditions such as normal body temperature, proper oxygen level, normal carbon dioxide level, stable blood pressure, and absence of drugs affecting respiration.
 - Procedure and threshold: The test is considered positive when no breathing effort is seen at a carbon dioxide level of about 60 mmHg or a 20 mmHg rise from baseline.
 - Monitoring and Stopping Conditions: The test must be stopped if blood pressure falls below 90 mmHg, oxygen levels drop significantly, or cardiac arrhythmia occurs.
 - Complications and Risks: The test may cause hypotension, hypoxia, acidosis, pneumothorax, and cardiac complications, which may force stopping the test and affect diagnosis.

Mission Drishti- World's First OptoSAR Satellite

News: Indian space start-up GalaxEye has launched Mission Drishti, which is the world's first OptoSAR satellite.

About Mission Drishti- World's First OptoSAR Satellite



Source: Galaxeye

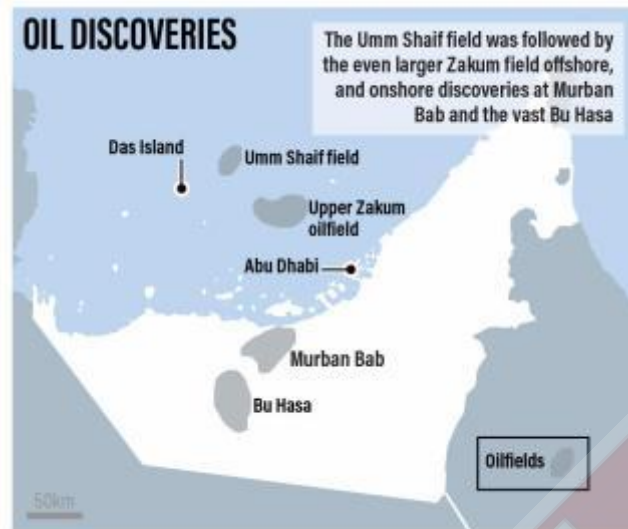
- GalaxEye has launched [Mission Drishti](#), the world's first OptoSAR satellite, using the Falcon 9 rocket from California, U.S.A.

- **OptoSAR satellite:** It is a modern satellite imaging system that combines optical cameras and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) in one satellite.
- It is designed to overcome the limitations of using only one type of imaging technology.
- **How it works:**
 - **Optical cameras:** They capture images like a regular digital camera.
 - They provide clear, detailed, and colourful pictures of the Earth.
 - However, they cannot work properly during cloudy weather, heavy smoke, or at night.
 - **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR):** It uses radar signals to create images of the Earth's surface. It can work in all weather conditions, including clouds and rain, and it can also capture images at night.
 - However, SAR images are usually black and white and can be difficult to understand.
 - OptoSAR technology combines the advantages of both systems.
 - It can capture clear and detailed images like optical cameras while also working in poor weather and darkness like SAR.
- **Uses:** This technology helps scientists, researchers, and governments get more accurate and useful information about the Earth.
 - It is especially helpful for monitoring natural disasters, agriculture, forests, and environmental changes.
- **Significance for India:**
 - It can enable continuous border surveillance, uninterrupted crop tracking during monsoons and more reliable monitoring of large-scale projects.
 - It will help in farming, disaster response, coastline monitoring, and infrastructure planning, supporting both civilian and strategic needs.

Das Island, Tuapse Region and Primorsk port

News: Ukraine intensified long-range strikes on Russian energy infrastructure including hits on Primorsk and Tuapse region. Also, LNG carrier Umm Al Ashtan resumed movement from Dahej toward Das Island via the Strait of Hormuz, signaling improving stability in the region.

About Das Island



Source: The National

- Das Island is an island of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) located in the [Persian Gulf](#).
- Size: It covers approximately 1.21 km.
- It is a strategic hub for oil and gas production in the UAE.
- It exports crude oil and liquefied natural gas by tankers to far-off nations like Japan, Europe, etc.
- It was formerly a noted breeding site for turtles and seabirds and has remained an important landfall for migrant birds.

About Tuapse Region

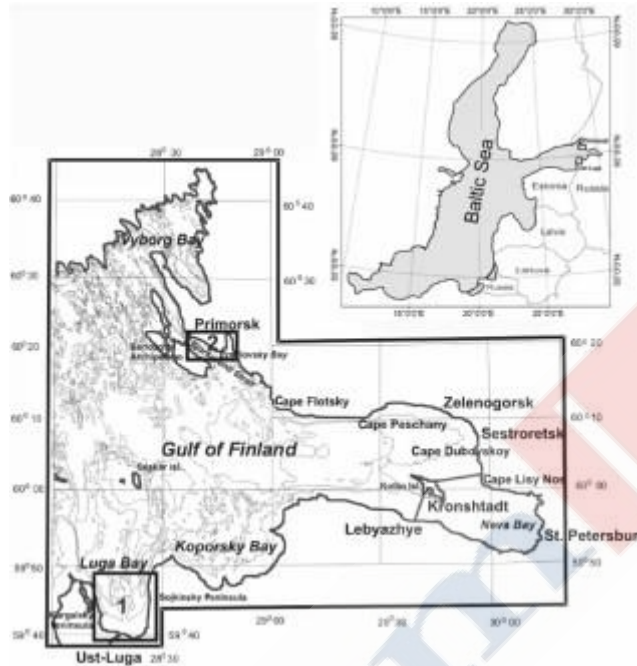


Source: Britannica

- The Tuapse Region is a coastal area in Krasnodar Krai, Russia.
- It is located on the northeast Black Sea shore, south of Gelendzhik and north of Sochi.

- It has the Tuapse Refinery, which is one of the oldest and only Russian refineries located on the Black Sea coast.

About Primorsk Port



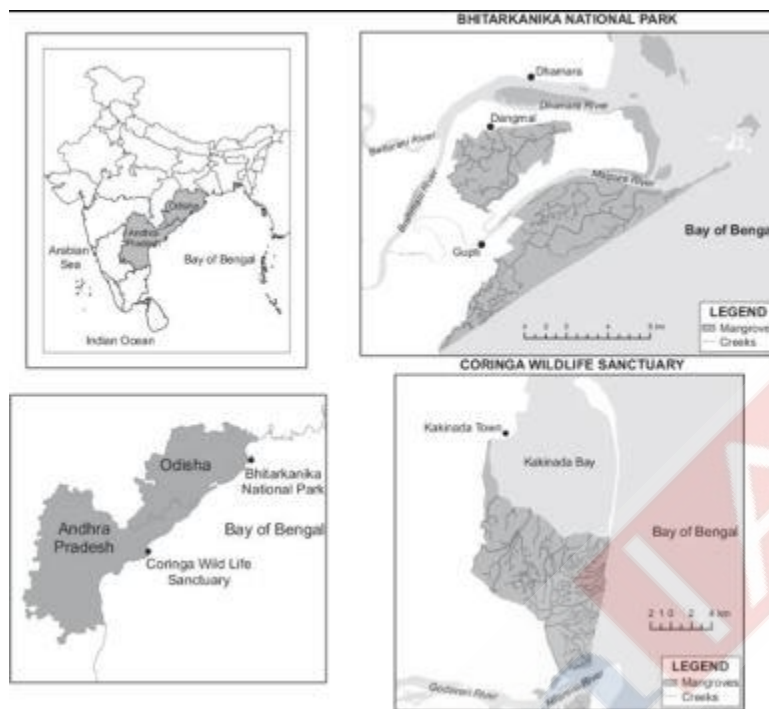
Source: Research Gate

- Primorsk Port is a major Russian oil export port.
- It is located on the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland in the [Baltic Sea](#)
- It is one of Russia's key terminals for exporting crude oil and petroleum products to Europe.

Bhitarkanika National Park and Microplastics

News: A new study found microplastics with heavy metals in sediments at all 20 sampled sites within and around Bhitarkanika sanctuary.

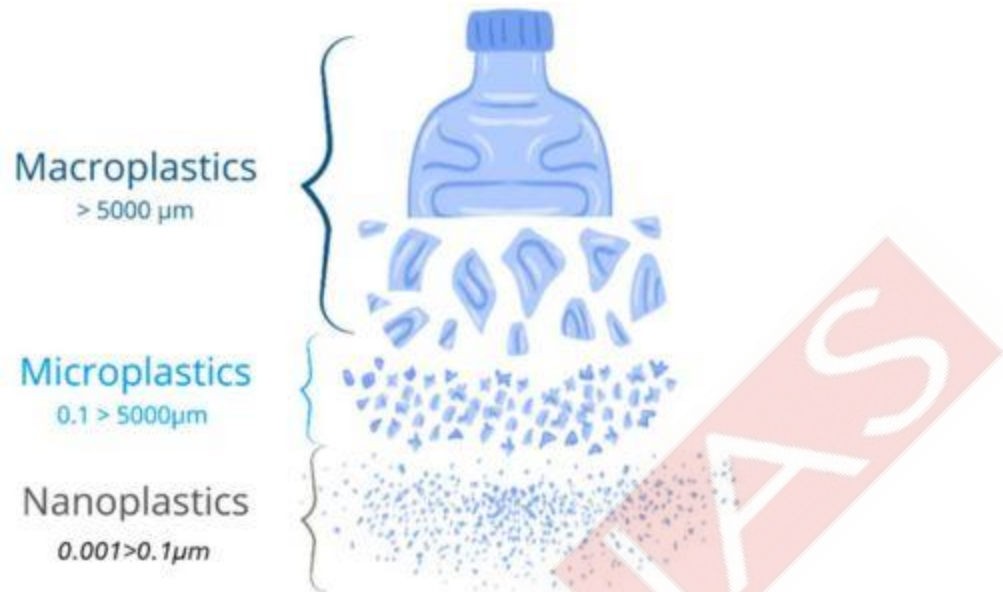
About Bhitarkanika National Park



Source – ResearchGate

- **Location:** Bhitarkanika National Park is located in the Kendrapara district of Odisha.
- **Surrounded by:** The park is surrounded by the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, while Gahirmatha Beach and Marine Sanctuary lie to the east near the Bay of Bengal.
- **Mangrove Ecosystem:** Bhitarkanika is India's second-largest mangrove ecosystem after the Sunderbans and spreads across 672 sq. km.
- **River Network:** The park is formed on the delta of the Brahmani, Baitarani, and Dhamra rivers and contains creeks, canals, estuaries, backwaters, and mudflats.
- **Intertidal Ecosystem:** The vegetation and species of the park are mainly found in tropical and subtropical intertidal regions, while proximity to the Bay of Bengal makes the soil saline.
- **Fauna:**
 - **Saltwater Crocodiles:** The park supports the largest congregation of endangered saltwater crocodiles in India.
 - **Olive Ridley Turtles:** Gahirmatha Beach near the park supports the largest colony of Olive Ridley Sea Turtles.
 - **Unique Bird Habitat:** The Bagagahana heronry near Surajpore creek attracts thousands of birds for nesting and is an important ecological feature of the park.
- **Flora:** Bhitarkanika features more than 60 mangrove species, including Avicennia and Sundari, along with casuarinas and grasses such as the indigo bush.
- **Conservation Status:** Bhitarkanika is recognised as a Wildlife Sanctuary, National Park, and Ramsar Site because of its rich mangrove ecosystem and biodiversity.

About Microplastics



Source – MDPI

- **Microplastics** are plastic particles smaller than 5 millimetres that persist in nature and accumulate in ecosystems.
- **Types of Microplastics:**
 - **Primary Microplastics:** These are intentionally manufactured small particles used in cosmetics, synthetic textiles, fishing nets, and commercial products.
 - **Secondary Microplastics:** These are formed from the breakdown of larger plastic items like bottles due to sunlight, ocean waves, and mechanical forces.
- **Applications:**
 - **Medical and Pharmaceutical:** Microplastics are used in drug delivery systems because they can absorb and release chemicals effectively.
 - **Industrial:** They are used in air-blasting technology and synthetic textile production.
 - **Personal Care Products:** They are present in facial scrubs, toothpaste, and cosmetics.
- **Impacts of Microplastics:**
 - **Environmental Impact:** Microplastics reduce soil quality, disturb nutrient cycles, accumulate in rivers and oceans, and carry toxic pollutants.
 - **Bioaccumulation:** Microplastics are ingested by marine organisms and gradually accumulate through the food chain, affecting higher predators.
 - **Impact on Animals:** They cause reduced fertility, stunted growth, and cell damage in aquatic and terrestrial organisms.
 - **Human Health Impact:** Microplastics are linked with inflammation, oxidative stress, DNA damage, and accumulation in organs like the brain, lungs, and heart.
- **India's Regulations:**
 - **Plastic Waste Management Rules:** India introduced Plastic Waste Management Rules in 2016, 2018, 2024 and 2026 to manage plastic waste.
 - **Ban on Single-Use Plastics:** India banned items such as plastic straws and cutlery to reduce plastic pollution.

- India Plastics Pact: It encourages industries to reduce plastic use and improve recycling practices.
- Global Actions:
 - UNEA (UN Environment Assembly) Resolution: It mandated the creation of the Global Plastics Treaty to address plastic pollution, including microplastics.
 - International Cooperation: Plastic pollution is also addressed through UN Ocean Conferences, WTO discussions, and the Basel Conventions.

Increasing the Judge Strength of the Supreme Court of India

News: The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, approved the proposal to introduce the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, in Parliament, increasing the Judge Strength of the Supreme Court of India.

About Increasing the Judge Strength of the Supreme Court of India



Source: Bar & Bench

- The government has recently approved the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956.
 - It will increase the strength from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India.
- The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956, was enacted under Article 124(1) of the Indian Constitution, which empowers Parliament to increase the number of judges.
- Past amendments: The Act has been amended several times to increase the maximum number of judges in the Supreme Court.
 - The strength was increased to 13 in 1960, to 17 in 1977, to 25 in 1986, to 30 in 2008, and to 33 in 2019.
- Constitutional Provision:
 - Article 124 (1): It states that there shall be a Supreme Court consisting of the Chief Justice of India and other judges, with the number of judges decided by Parliament through law.

- Article 124 (2): It states that the President appoints Supreme Court judges by warrant under their hand and seal, following consultation with designated Supreme Court and High Court judges.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0

News: The Union Cabinet approved Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0 to support businesses facing liquidity stress due to the West Asia crisis.

About Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0



Source – PIB

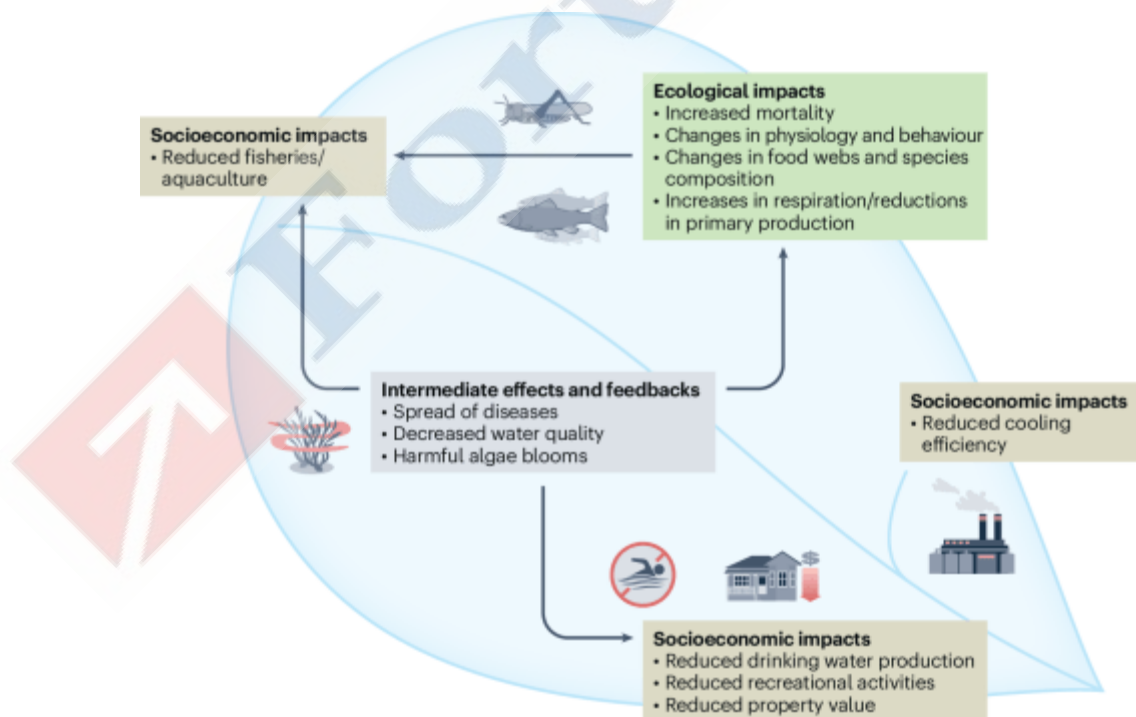
- **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0** provides government-backed additional credit support to eligible businesses facing temporary liquidity stress.
- **Commencement of the Scheme:** The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme was first commenced on 23.05.2020 to help businesses facing liquidity stress during Covid-19 restrictions.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The scheme is sponsored by the Department of Financial Services under the Ministry of Finance.
- **Nodal Agency:** The National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) acts as the nodal agency for providing guarantee coverage under the scheme.
- **Aim:** The scheme aims to provide guaranteed collateral free loans to eligible businesses to help them manage short-term liquidity mismatches arising from the West Asia crisis.
- **Key Features of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0:**

- **Eligible Borrowers:** MSMEs, non-MSMEs, and scheduled passenger airlines with standard accounts and existing working capital limits or outstanding credit facilities as on March 31, 2026 are eligible under the scheme.
- **Guarantee Coverage:** The scheme provides 100% guarantee coverage for MSMEs and 90% guarantee coverage for non-MSMEs and the airline sector through Member Lending Institutions.
- **Guarantee Fee:** The scheme provides guarantee coverage without charging any guarantee fee.
- **Quantum of Support:** Eligible borrowers can receive additional credit up to 20% of peak working capital utilized during Q4 FY26, capped at Rs.100 crore. Airlines can receive support up to 100% of outstanding credit facilities, capped at Rs.1,500 crore per borrower.
- **Loan Tenor:** Loans for MSMEs and non-MSMEs will have a 5-year tenor with a 1-year moratorium, while airline sector loans will have a 7-year tenor with a 2-year moratorium.
- **Duration and Guarantee Cover:** The scheme will remain applicable for loans sanctioned up to 31.03.2027, and the guarantee cover period will remain co-terminus with the loan tenor.

Riverine Heatwaves

News: Several studies have highlighted the increase in intensity and frequency of riverine heatwaves across rivers globally.

About Riverine Heatwaves



Source: Nature Water

- **Definition:** Riverine heatwaves are defined as periods where daily mean river water temperatures exceed the 90th percentile threshold of the locally defined and seasonally varying river temperatures, for at least five consecutive days.
 - An increase in temperatures for a shorter duration is considered a heat spike.
- **Causes:** Riverine heatwaves are mainly caused by rising air temperatures due to climate change, along with reduced snowmelt, low streamflow, and shrinking river water levels.
 - Human activities such as dams, hydropower projects, wastewater discharge by other water bodies, industrial effluents, and changes in riverbank vegetation also contribute to increasing river water temperatures.
- **Status of Riverine heatwaves:** It has been observed that between 1976 and 2005, rivers globally experienced, on average, 2.19 heatwave events per year.
 - The intensity has increased over time at a rate of 0.02°C per decade.
 - The duration of riverine heatwaves has increased to 0.09 weeks per decade.
 - Under the high climate emissions scenario, projections reveal a 95-fold increase in the duration of riverine heatwaves by the end of the 21st century.
 - **Status in the context of India:** The study also predicts that in India, more than 50% of the Ganges will experience year-round heatwaves under the high emissions scenario by the 2090s.
 - **Impact:** It will cause widespread damage to the ecosystem, and the population's exposure to heatwaves in the Ganges (impacts on drinking water, agriculture, and fisheries) will also be the highest in the world.
- **Overall impact:** Riverine heatwaves can negatively affect river ecosystems and the organisms dependent on them:
 - The heat stress to the riverine floral and faunal species can affect reproduction rates, reduce migration, and alter food webs.
 - **Example:** Studies on the Indian freshwater fish, Magur (*Clarias magur*), showed that the species displays compromised immune responses along with severe tissue and physiological damage when exposed to extreme heat stress.
 - In rohu (*Labeo rohita*), even short heat spikes cause changes in the production of proteins involved in energy metabolism and immune system regulation.
 - **Threat to vulnerable species:** Riverine heatwaves also add undue pressure on endemic and endangered species that have narrow thermal tolerances, and benefit invasive species that tolerate broader temperature ranges
 - **Indirect Impact:** Global reports also reveal that riverine heatwaves can have indirect effects, such as promoting the spread of pathogens and reducing the overall quality of river water.
 - Changes in river temperature can affect processes such as decomposition of leaf litter, carbon processing, and carbon storage, which may further impact aquatic insects, crustaceans, fish, and aquatic mammals.
- **Prevention:**
 - **Restoration approach:** There is a need to move beyond local-scale interventions and adopt restoration approaches that consider the entire river catchment.
 - Extreme events occurring in headwater regions can affect the entire river network, with ecological and biological impacts spreading downstream, making catchment-level restoration essential.

- Rehabilitating and maintaining riparian forest cover: Riparian vegetation provides shade that reduces the heating of water and also stabilises riverbanks, improving aquatic habitat.
 - However, care must be taken in selecting appropriate species and planting locations, he adds.
- Proper operation of reservoirs: There is a need to maintain sufficient flow in rivers by operating reservoirs appropriately for hydropower, drinking, and irrigation water demands.
- Locate and protect thermal refuges: There is also a need to locate and protect thermal refuges in riverine systems. It would require some basic on-the-ground monitoring, where one would explore the riverine network for natural cold-water refuges.

Viability Plan 2.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

News: The Department of Financial Services approved Viability Plan 2.0 to strengthen financial stability and improve operational efficiency in Regional Rural Banks.

About Viability Plan 2.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)



Source – ET

- **Viability Plan 2.0:** It is a revised three-year framework to improve financial sustainability and long-term competitiveness of RRBs.
- **Implementing Ministry:** Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Ministry of Finance
- **Duration:** It will be implemented for three years from 2025-26 to 2027-28.
 - The earlier plan covered the period from FY2021-22 to FY2024-25.
- **Aim:** The plan aims to enhance financial sustainability, improve operational efficiency, strengthen governance reforms, and ensure long-term competitiveness of RRBs.
- **Viability Plan 1.0:** The Viability Plan 1.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) was a 3-year board-approved framework initiated in FY 2022-23.
 - It was aimed at ensuring sustainable viability, it focused on credit expansion, NPA reduction, digital adoption, and cost rationalization, following recapitalization assistance.
- **Key Features of Viability Plan 2.0 for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs):**
 - **Performance Parameters:** The plan includes 30 performance parameters to monitor and improve the functioning of RRBs.
 - **Four Key Pillars:** The framework is based on four major pillars –

- operational excellence, asset quality, profitability, and growth.
- **Critical metrics:** The plan uses important indicators such as Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR), credit-deposit ratio, digital adoption, Non-Performing Asset (NPA) levels, recovery performance, and profitability ratios to assess the performance of Regional Rural Banks.
- **Comprehensive Monitoring Framework:** The plan provides a balanced framework to assess and monitor the overall health and efficiency of all 28 RRBs.
- **Scheme Monitoring:** The framework evaluates the performance of RRBs in implementing Central Government schemes.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026

News: Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the website and logo for the 1st International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026, in New Delhi.

About International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026



Source – PIB

- India will host the first [International Big Cat Alliance \(IBCA\)](#) Summit on 1st–2nd June 2026 in New Delhi.
- **Focus:** The Summit will be focusing on conserving seven major big cat species.
- **IBCA:** It was launched in 2023 and is a the treaty-based inter-governmental alliance includes 95 range countries, aiming to protect tigers, lions, leopards, snow leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, and pumas.
- **Key details about the 2026 summit:**
 - **Theme:** “Save Big Cats, Save Humanity, Save Ecosystem”.
 - **IBCA Summit Logo:** The logo features the seven big cat species at its core, symbolizing unity and shared responsibility and is encircled by a lotus-inspired design representing the five elements of nature.
 - The Logo captures the spirit of the initiative, reflecting harmony, balance and interconnected ecosystems.
- **Key Agenda:** Adoption of the inaugural “Delhi Declaration,” which aims to establish a shared framework for global big cat conservation and enhance transboundary cooperation.
- **Participants:** Expected to include Heads of State, government officials, and over 400 global experts, scientists, and stakeholders.

To know more about the [International Big Cat Alliance \(IBCA\)](#), [Click here](#).

What happens if a Chief Minister refuses to relinquish office after electoral defeat?

News: After the Trinamool Congress lost the West Bengal elections to the BJP, Mamata Banerjee said that she would not resign as Chief Minister, alleging that the election result was due to a “conspiracy” and misuse of central forces by the BJP.

What happens if a Chief Minister refuses to relinquish office after electoral defeat?



Source – The Sunday Guardian

- If a Chief Minister refuses to step down voluntarily, the Governor has the authority to intervene under Article 164 of the Constitution of India.
- Article 164(1): It provides that the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Governor and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister, and the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor.
- In practice, this means that if the Chief Minister clearly lacks majority support, the Governor can take the call.
- Provision of floor test: The Governor may then invite the leader of the majority party or coalition to form a new government or ask a claimant to prove their majority through a [floor test](#) in the Assembly.
- President's Rule: If no party or coalition can form a stable government, then President's Rule under Article 356 may be imposed as a last resort.
- Article 172: Another relevant provision is Article 172 of the Constitution of India, which sets the five-year term of a Legislative Assembly unless dissolved earlier.
- This defines the lifespan of the Assembly, but it does not protect a Chief Minister who has lost majority support within that period.
- Note: [Section 100 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951](#) enumerates the grounds on which the election of a candidate may be challenged and declared void.

Supreme Court's Interpretation in the Case

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- The Supreme Court has also interpreted the Governor's powers as flowing primarily from the "aid and advice" of the Council of Ministers.
- In *A.G. Perarivalan v. State Through Superintendent of Police (2022)*, Supreme Court observed that the "Governor" is a shorthand expression for the State government.
- Recognizing the Governor as "the formal head and sole repository of the executive power", the court held that the office is ordinarily bound by the aid and advice of the State's Council of Ministers.

Mahi River

News: Two persons, including an eight-year-old boy, went missing after a boat capsized in the Mahi River in Rajasthan's Banswara.

About Mahi River

- **Origin:** It originates from the northern slopes of the Vindhya Mountain Range in Madhya Pradesh.
- It is the major interstate west-flowing river of India.
- It is one of three west-flowing major rivers in India, along with the Tapti River and the Narmada River.
- **State through which it flows:** It crosses through three states – Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- **Course of the river:** After rising from the northern slopes of the Vindhya Mountain, it enters the Vagad region in the southeastern part of Rajasthan.
 - Finally, it drains into the Arabian Sea through a wide estuary near the Gulf of Khambhat, Gujarat.
- **Total Length:** Its total length is 583 km.
- **Catchment area:** Its total catchment area is 34842 sq.km.
- **Basin Topography:** The Mahi basin is marked by hilly terrain belonging to the Aravali chain in the northwestern part of the basin.
- **Tributaries:** The major tributaries of the river include Eru, Nori, Chap, Som, Jakham, Moran, Anas, Panam, and Bhadar.
- **Dams:** Major dams built on the river include the Mahi Bajaj Sagar Dam, Kadana Dam, and Panam Dam, which play an important role in water management and irrigation.

Key Facts About Vietnam

News: The President of India received the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Key Facts About Vietnam



Source: World Atlas

- **Location:** Vietnam is located on the eastern edge of mainland Southeast Asia along the eastern coast of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula.
- **Boundaries:** It has land borders with three countries – China to the north, and Cambodia and Laos to the west.
 - The Gulf of Tonkin, with the Island of Hainan Dao (China) lies to the northeast of Vietnam.
 - To the south and east, the country is bordered by the South China Sea.
 - The Gulf of Thailand lies to the southwest.
- **Capital:** Its capital is Hanoi.
- **Area:** It covers an area of around 331,211.6 sq. km.
- **Coastline:** The coastline of mainland Vietnam is about 3,260 km long.
- **Climate:** It is a country of tropical lowlands, rolling green hills, and densely forested mountains.
- **Rivers:** Two extensive alluvial deltas are formed by the Red (Hong) River in the north and the Mekong (Cuu Long) River in the south.
 - The Red River Delta is surrounded by hills that slowly rise into the high mountains in the northwest.
 - A narrow and fertile coastal plain stretches from the Red River Delta to the Mekong Delta.
 - The Annam Highlands cover most of central Vietnam.
 - In the south, the coastal plains connect with the Mekong River Delta.
- **Highest Point:** Its highest point is Phan Xi Pang, which is 3,144 m high.

India-EU Initiative to Boost EV Battery Recycling and Circular Economy

News: India and the European Union (EU) have jointly launched a ₹169 crore initiative to strengthen electric vehicle (EV) battery recycling and promote a circular economy, marking a significant step in their growing partnership on clean and green technologies.

About India-EU Initiative to Boost EV Battery Recycling and Circular Economy



Source – PIB

- The Initiative has been launched under the framework of the India-EU Trade & Technology Council (TTC) – Working Group 2 on Green and Clean Energy Technologies.
- **Aim:** It aims to secure critical raw materials, accelerate the global transition to a circular economy, and strengthen bilateral relations between India and the European Union (EU).
- **Funding and Implementing Agency:** With a combined funding pool of €15.2 million (₹169 crore), the initiative will be funded through the EU's Horizon Europe programme, while the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) will support the Indian component.
- **Focus Areas of Initiative**
 - The programme will focus on developing advanced recycling technologies, including high-efficiency material recovery, safe and digitalized collection systems, and pilot-scale demonstration of innovative processes.
 - It will support the establishment of a joint India-EU pilot line in India to enable real-world validation and industrial deployment, bringing together leading researchers, industries, and startups.
 - It will focus on High Recovery Rates; Mixed Chemistry Handling; Logistics & Inclusion and Safety & Second Life for critical minerals like lithium, graphite, and cobalt.
 - A key component of the initiative is the establishment of a joint India-EU pilot line in India, which will facilitate real-world validation and industrial deployment of recycling technologies.
 - The programme will bring together researchers, industry stakeholders, and startups from both regions.

- The initiative will prioritize areas such as high recovery rates, handling of mixed battery chemistries, logistics and inclusion, and ensuring safety and second-life applications for critical minerals like lithium, graphite, and cobalt.

About EU's Horizon Europe Programme



Source – EU

- **Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation.**
- **Focus areas:** It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth.
- **The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges.**
- **It supports the creation and better diffusion of excellent knowledge and technologies.**
- **Pillars:** The programme is organized into three main pillars:
 - **Excellent Science:** Supporting top-level research via the European Research Council (ERC).
 - **Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness:** Funding research on climate change, digital technologies, and health.
 - **Innovative Europe:** Boosting market-creating innovations through the European Innovation Council (EIC).

ANEEL Fuel

News: Chicago-based nuclear fuel company Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE) announced that its patented 'ANEEL' fuel has completed its high burnup irradiation test in an Advanced Test Reactor (ATR) at Idaho National Laboratory (INL).

About ANEEL Fuel



Source: The Hindu

- ANEEL stands for 'Advanced Nuclear Energy for Enriched Life'.
- It is a new nuclear fuel that combines thorium and uranium to create a cleaner, safer, and more efficient energy source.
- It is designed to be used in pressurized heavy water reactors (PHWR).
- Naming: ANEEL is named after Dr. Anil Kakodkar, a prominent nuclear scientist and former chairman of the [Atomic Energy Commission \(AEC\)](#), India.
- Developed by: It has been developed by Clean Core Thorium Energy, a Chicago-based company.
- Composition: ANEEL is a proprietary fuel blend composed of two key materials:
 - Thorium-232 is the only naturally occurring isotope of thorium and is considered 'fertile' for fission.
 - [HALEU \(High-Assay Low-Enriched Uranium\)](#) is used as the initiating fuel source or "spark plug" to activate the thorium-based reaction cycle.
 - Together, these materials are designed to combine thorium's long-term fuel potential with the ignition capability provided by HALEU.
- ANEEL has the following advantages:
 - It can be used in the existing Pressurised Heavy-Water Reactors (PHWRs), which are an indigenous reactor system.
 - It provides an easier and quicker alternative for the deployment of thorium, leveraging imported HALEU, especially for nations which lack the infrastructure to install natural gas, wind, solar or hydro.
 - By utilizing this fuel, the operation cost and nuclear waste can be reduced significantly as compared with the currently used natural uranium.
 - The fuel bundle lasts much longer and burns more efficiently.
 - The spent ANEEL fuel cannot be used for weapons.
 - With this, India can guarantee green energy security for the subcontinent by fast-tracking the use of Thorium in nuclear reactors.
- Challenges:
 - Expensive: Thorium is costly to extract from the ground, and building and testing thorium reactors is also very expensive.
 - Not directly usable as fuel: Thorium itself is not fissile, so it cannot start a nuclear reaction on its own. It requires uranium or plutonium to maintain the reaction.

- **Complex fuel process:** Thorium must first be converted into Uranium-233 before use.
- **Difficult handling:** Thorium fuel systems are technically challenging to manage.
- **Limited experience:** Most nuclear systems are designed for uranium, not thorium.
- **Regulatory challenges:** Thorium fuels still need approvals and commercial acceptance.
- **Limited supply economics:** Thorium is mostly obtained as a by-product of rare earth mining, so production is limited.

JANANI Platform

News: Recently, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the JANANI Platform to strengthen maternal and child healthcare at the National Summit on Innovation and Inclusivity – Best Practices Shaping India's Health Future.

About JANANI Platform



Source – MoHFW

- JANANI is a service-oriented digital platform designed to comprehensively monitor and maintain digital health records of women during their reproductive age.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It has been developed as an upgraded version of the existing RCH portal.
- **Aim:** The platform aims to ensure seamless tracking of maternal and child health services, covering antenatal care, delivery preparedness, delivery, postnatal care, newborn care, home-based newborn and young child care, and family planning.
- It strengthens service delivery and ensures continuity of care at every stage by enabling continuous monitoring and timely interventions.
- **Features:**
 - **Introduction of QR-enabled digital Mother and Child Health (MCH) Cards:** This enables portability and easy access to health records.
 - **Automated alerts:** It also incorporates automated alerts for high-risk pregnancies, real-time dashboards for supervisory review, and due-list generation, enabling timely tracking, monitoring, and targeted interventions.
 - **Strong interoperability features:** It is designed with strong interoperability features, enabling integration with national platforms such as U-WIN and [POSHAN](#).
 - This is to facilitate seamless data exchange, improved coordination across programmes, and comprehensive monitoring of beneficiaries across sectors.

- **Registration of beneficiaries:** The platform enables registration of beneficiaries using unique identifiers such as ABHA, Aadhaar (OTP and biometric), and mobile number, along with pan-India search functionality.
 - This ensures continuity of care for migratory populations and prevents duplication of records.
 - It also provides self-registration facilities through web and mobile platforms, empowering beneficiaries to actively engage with their healthcare journey.
- **Timely Healthcare Support:** It supports citizens by enabling the timely scheduling and monitoring of antenatal care visits and immunisations, along with alerts and reminders to ensure that no critical health milestone is missed.
- **Access to Digital Health Services:** It provides access to digital MCH cards, information on nearby healthcare facilities, expected place of delivery, and supports informed decision-making through health education and nutritional guidance.
- **Coverage:** Till date, JANANI has achieved
 - 1.34 crore beneficiary registrations
 - Over 30 lakh pregnant women registered
 - More than 30 lakh MCH cards generated
 - Over 1 lakh biometric verifications.

About Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Portal

- Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Portal is designed for early identification and tracking of the individual beneficiary throughout the reproductive lifecycle of women.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **Aim:** To strengthen the monitoring of RCH indicators – Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) through name-based tracking of health services delivered to eligible couples, pregnant women & children.
- It helps in ensuring the timely delivery of antenatal and postnatal services to mothers and the immunisation of children.
- It also promotes, monitors, and supports the reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) schemes/programme delivery and reporting.

World Migration Report 2026

News: The World Migration Report 2026 was released recently by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

About World Migration Report 2026



Source: IOM UN Migration

- Released by: The report is released by the [International Organisation for Migration \(IOM\)](#).
- First edition: The first World Migration Report was released in 2000.
 - This report is the thirteenth in the series.
- Frequency: It is published biannually.
- It has been produced in line with IOM's Environment Policy.
- This edition presents key data and information on migration and thematic chapters on highly topical migration issues.
- It is structured to focus on two key contributions:
 - Part I: Key information on migration and migrants (including migration-related statistics)
 - Part II: Balanced, evidence-based analysis of complex and emerging migration issues.

Findings of Report

- Reduced benefits of migration: The persistent marginalisation of migrants throughout the migration cycle, growing inequality in mobility, the narrowing of regular migration pathways, and the weaponisation of migration in political discourse have threatened the role of migration in development.
- Importance of Migration: The report highlighted the continued importance of migration in the global economy alongside emerging challenges.
 - Trend: By mid-2024, the number of international migrants reached 304 million, accounting for 3.7 per cent of the global population.
 - The number of migrant workers has also risen significantly, increasing by more than 30 million between 2013 and 2022.
 - These trends underscore migration's growing role in supporting labour markets, addressing skill shortages and fostering innovation worldwide.
 - Migrants contribute through their labour, financial transfers and transnational networks that strengthen both origin and destination economies.
- Benefits of migration: The report highlighted the benefits of migration:

- **Remittances:** Global remittance flows in 2024 are expected to reach \$905 billion, out of which \$685 billion will go to low- and middle-income countries.
 - These remittances are now greater than official development assistance and foreign direct investment combined, making them an important financial support for developing nations.
 - At the household level, remittances help improve access to education, healthcare and nutrition, which supports human development and reduces poverty.
- **Knowledge transfer:** Migration also encourages the sharing of knowledge and skills.
 - Migrants contribute both professional expertise and practical experience, increasing productivity and innovation across countries.
- **Diaspora engagement:** Diaspora communities strengthen the developmental impact of migration by acting as economic and cultural links between countries.
 - They encourage trade, investment and entrepreneurship, and also support education, healthcare and cultural activities.
- **Uneven access to opportunities:** The report emphasises that access to migration opportunities remains highly uneven.
 - High-income countries tend to offer more structured and regular migration pathways, while individuals from lower-income countries face greater barriers.
- **Global displacement:** By the end of 2024, over 120 million people were forcibly displaced, including refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, with 83.4 million displaced within their own countries.
 - These movements are driven by conflict, environmental stress, and structural inequalities, requiring both humanitarian and long-term development responses.
- **Weaponisation of migration in political discourse:** Migration is increasingly politicised and restricted.
 - Limited access to safe and regular migration pathways pushes many migrants into irregular routes, exposing them to exploitation and life-threatening conditions.
 - Dangerous routes, such as those across the Mediterranean, continue to claim thousands of lives annually.
 - Survivors often face abuse, poor health conditions and limited economic opportunities, which diminish migration's positive developmental impact.
- **Suggestions:** The report called for urgent action to safeguard migration as a global public good.
 - Key recommendations include expanding safe and regular pathways, reducing remittance costs, supporting skills mobility and strengthening reintegration policies.
 - It also emphasised the need for enhanced regional cooperation, improved data systems, and inclusive, evidence-based policymaking to ensure migration continues to benefit societies worldwide.

Ulsoor Lake

News: As Ulsoor Lake has been drained and the desilting process has been taken up after more than three decades, lake conservation activists have taken objection to the lakebed being desilted by only 0.6 m, arguing that it is insufficient.

About Ulsoor Lake



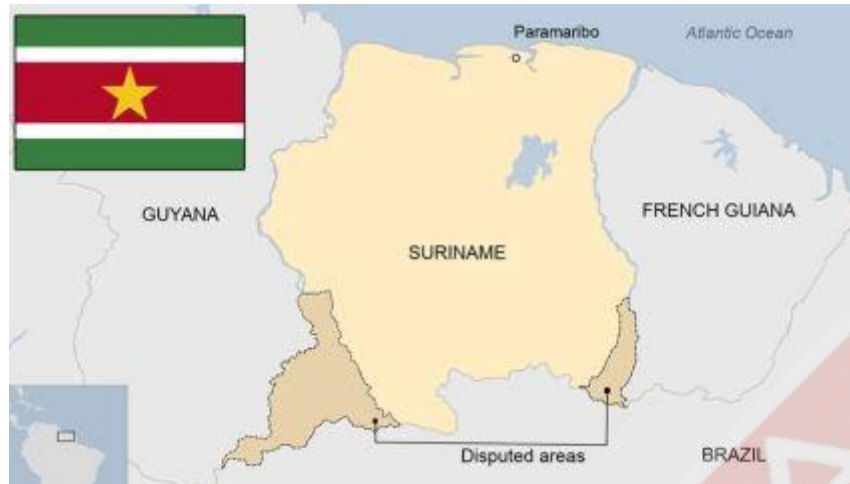
Source – TH

- **Location:** Ulsoor Lake is one of the biggest lakes in Bangalore, located on the eastern side of the city.
- It is also known as the Halasuru Lake.
- **Naming:** It derives its name from the name of the locality it is situated, namely, Halasuru, close to M G Road.
- **Type:** It is an artificial freshwater lake.
- **Area:** It is spread over 50 ha (123.6 acres) and has several islands.
- **Construction:** The Lake is believed to have been constructed during the reign of Kempe Gowda I in the 16th century.
- It was later expanded and developed by the British during colonial rule.
- **Control:** A part of the lake is controlled by the Madras Engineer Group, and the rest by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).
- **Pollution:** Like many urban lakes in India, the Lake faces challenges:
 - Water pollution due to sewage inflow
 - Eutrophication (excess nutrients causing algal blooms)
 - Encroachment and urban pressure
 - Periodic fish deaths due to low oxygen levels

Key Facts about Suriname

News: Indian External Affairs Minister reviewed the full spectrum of India-Suriname relations during the 9th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) held in the capital city of Paramaribo.

Key Facts about Suriname



Source – BBC

- **Location:** Suriname is a country in northern South America located slightly north of the equator on the Guiana Shield.
- It is also considered as part of the Caribbean and the West Indies.
- **Unique feature:** Over 90% of its territory is covered by rainforest, the highest proportion of forest cover in the world.
- **Boundaries:** Suriname is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, French Guiana to the east, Brazil to the south, and Guyana to the west.
- **Size and population:** It is the smallest country in South America by both population and territory, with around 612,985 inhabitants in 2021 in an area of approximately 165,940 sq. km.
- **Capital:** The capital and largest city is Paramaribo, which is home to roughly half the population.
 - It was inscribed on the list as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, for its outstanding collection of Dutch colonial architecture.
- **Climate:** Suriname has a tropical climate, with a large and small rainy season, as well as a large and small dry season.
- **Rivers:** The major rivers include the Corantijn (bordering Guyana), Marowijne (bordering French Guiana), Coppename, Suriname, Saramacca, Commewijne, and Nickerie rivers.
- **Mountains:** The two main mountain ranges are the Bakuys Mountains and the Van Asch Van Wijck Mountains.
- **Highest peak:** Julianatop is the highest mountain in the country at 1,286 m.
- **International cooperation:** Suriname is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Organization of American States.

Geocell

News: CSIR-CRRI and BPCL received record recognition for constructing the first roadblock section using geocell made from end-of-life plastic waste.

About Geocell



Source – Vocal Media

- **Geocell:** It is a three-dimensional cellular confinement system used in geotechnical engineering to improve soil stability and load-bearing capacity.
- **Structure:**
 - **Cell Design:** Geocells consist of interconnected honeycomb-like cells made from geosynthetic materials such as high-density polyethylene (HDPE) or polyester.
 - **Filling Material:** These cells are expanded on site to form a mattress-like layer and are filled with soil, sand, aggregate, clay, gravel, concrete, or recycled materials for ground stabilization.
- **Working Principle:**
 - **Soil Reinforcement:** Once filled and compacted, the geocell layer integrates with the underlying soil to create a stable and reinforced structure with improved durability and structural integrity.
 - **Performance Validation:** Extensive material characterization, performance evaluation, and validation studies were conducted to assess the field applicability of the developed geocell system for road applications.
- **Applications:**
 - **Pavement Load Support:** Geocells reinforce the soil in the subgrade-based interface or within the base course for road construction applications.

- **Slope and Channel Protection:** Three-dimensional lateral confinement along with anchoring techniques ensures long-term stability of slopes, river channels, and embankments using vegetated topsoil, aggregate, or concrete surfacing.
- **Earth Retention and Infrastructure:** Geocells are used for constructing steep vertical mechanically stabilized earth structures, airport runways, and urban green infrastructure.

MERCOSUR Grouping

News: Recently, India and Brazil agreed to significantly expand their existing trade agreement with the MERCOSUR regional trade bloc.

About MERCOSUR Grouping



Source – Britannica

- **MERCOSUR:** MERCOSUR stands for Mercado Común del Sur, which means “Common Market of the South” in Spanish. It is a regional trade bloc of South American countries. **Established:** It was established in 1991 through the signing of the Treaty of Asunción.
- **Aim:** The grouping aims to ensure the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people, and it became a customs union in January 1995.
- **Members:**

- **Founding Members:** Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay were the founding members.
- **Later Members:** Bolivia and Venezuela joined MERCOSUR later, (Venezuela has remained suspended from the grouping since December , 2016.)
- **Associate Members:** Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname are associate members and participate in activities and meetings of the bloc.
- **Headquarters:** The headquarters is located in Montevideo, Uruguay.
- **Key Aspects:**
 - **Integrated Market:** MERCOSUR is the fourth largest integrated market after the European Union (EU), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and ASEAN.
 - **International Cooperation:** The bloc has signed commercial, political, and cooperation agreements with several countries and organizations across all five continents.
 - **Official Languages:** Spanish and Portuguese are the official working languages of the bloc, while Guarani was added as one of its languages in 2006.
- **Governance Structure:**
 - **Composition:** The Common Market Council includes foreign and economic ministers of member states.
 - **Decision-Making:** The Council takes decisions through consensus among member countries.
 - **Rotating Presidency:** The presidency of the bloc rotates every six months among full members.
 - **Critical Mineral Resources:** MERCOSUR countries possess critical minerals such as lithium, nickel, and rare earth elements that are important for Europe's industrial and clean energy ambitions.

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

News: The Government has appointed Lieutenant General N S Raja Subramani as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) after General Anil Chauhan completes his tenure on 30 May.

About Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)



Source – The Statesman

- The CDS is the highest-ranking four-star military officer and permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- Genesis: The idea of CDS was recommended in 2001 by the Group of Ministers after studying the Kargil Review Committee report of 1999.
- Creation: The post of CDS was created in 2019 on the recommendations of the committee headed by Lt General DB Shekatkar.
- First CDS: General Bipin Rawat became the first CDS in 2019.
- Precedence: The CDS is placed at 12th in the Table of Precedence.
- Appointed By: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister appoints the CDS.
- Eligible Officers: Serving or retired Air Marshals, Air Chief Marshals, Army Commanders, Navy Commanders, and equivalent three-star and four-star officers of the tri-services can be appointed as CDS.
- Age Condition: Retired officers can be appointed as CDS only if they have not attained the age of 62 years on the date of appointment.
- Tenure: The CDS serves up to the age of 65 years and there is no fixed tenure limit.
- Roles and Responsibilities:

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- **DMA Head:** The CDS heads the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and oversees tri-service policy, staffing, training, and reforms.
- **Military Adviser:** The CDS acts as the principal military adviser to the Defence Minister on joint operational matters.
- **Tri-Service Coordination:** The CDS promotes operational synergy and reduces inter-service friction among the three armed forces.
- **Procurement Role:** The CDS prioritises inter-service procurement and capital acquisition proposals.
- **Nuclear Role:** The CDS performs an advisory role in the Nuclear Command Authority.
- **Tri-Agency Oversight:** The CDS supervises Cyber, Space, and Special Operations agencies.
- **Command Reforms:** The CDS facilitates theatre command creation and restructuring of military commands.

Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) Weapon

News: DRDO and the IAF successfully conducted the maiden flight-trial of the Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) weapon off Odisha coast.



Source- NOA

About The Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) Weapon

- TARA is India's first indigenous glide weapon system that converts unguided bombs into precision-guided weapons.

- **Developed by:** TARA has been designed and developed by the Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, along with other DRDO laboratories.
- **Aim:** The system aims to improve the lethality, accuracy, and stand-off strike capability of low-cost weapons against ground-based targets.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Indigenous Glide System:** TARA is India's first indigenous glide weapon system developed to provide gliding capability to conventional bombs.
 - **Modular Design:** The system uses a modular range-extension and precision-guidance kit that can be fitted onto existing High-Speed Low Drag (HSLD) and General Purpose (GP) bombs.
 - **Precision Guidance:** The weapon uses inertial navigation, GPS-assisted guidance, and electro-optical seekers to achieve high targeting accuracy.
 - **Extended Strike Capability:** TARA-equipped bombs can strike targets at ranges of 150–180 km when released from an altitude of around 5 km at speeds approaching Mach 0.8.
 - **Multi-Platform Integration:** The system can be integrated with Jaguar, Mirage-2000, Sukhoi Su-30MKI, and Tejas aircraft for stand-off strike capability.
 - **Low-Cost Indigenous System:** The glide weapon uses state-of-the-art low-cost systems and allows the IAF (Indian Air Force) to utilise existing bomb stockpiles instead of procuring entirely new missile inventories.

Attenboroughnculus Tau

News: Scientists at the Natural History Museum in London, United Kingdom, have discovered a new species of wasp in Chile and named it Attenboroughnculus tau.

About Attenboroughnculus Tau



Source: CNN

- It is a **tiny parasitic wasp** discovered in **Chile**.
- It was collected from **Chile's Valdivia Province in 1983**.
- It has been named after the famed British naturalist and broadcaster **Sir David Attenborough**.
- **Features:**
 - **Size:** It is a small wasp, **measuring about 3.5 millimetres**.
 - It has a **T-shaped marking on its abdomen** that inspired the species name, "**tau**."
 - It has a **unique combination of anatomical features** that make it different from already established genera.
 - It has a **strongly curved abdominal segment, toothlike structures on the ovipositor** (which they use to lay eggs), and **distinctive wing and leg morphology**.

National Technology Day

News: Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** extended greetings on National Technology Day and recalled the **successful Pokhran nuclear tests of 1998**.

About National Technology Day



Source – PIB

- **National Technology Day:** It is observed on May 11 every year to commemorate India's technological achievements and honour scientists and innovators.
- **Origin:** The day marks the successful nuclear tests conducted at Pokhran on May 11, 1998, which showcased India's scientific excellence and capabilities.
- **Aim:** The celebration aims to encourage innovation, promote indigenous technologies, support research, and honour innovators contributing to national development.
- **Organizing Body:** It is primarily organised by the Technology Development Board, a statutory body under the Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India.
- **Theme 2026:** The theme for this year is 'Responsible Innovation for Inclusive Growth'.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Recognition of Scientists:** The day honours scientists and innovators who contributed to India's technological progress and national pride.
 - **Promotion of Indigenous Technology:** The celebrations highlighted cost-effective indigenous technologies that provide solutions suitable for Indian needs.

- **Technology Awards:** National Awards carrying Rs. 10 lakh and a trophy each are instituted by the Technology Development Board to recognise excellence in commercialization of indigenous technologies.
 - **Category A:** The award is given for successful commercialization of indigenous technology.
 - **Category B:** The award is presented for successful technology commercialization by MSMEs.
 - **Category C:** The award recognises excellence in technology start-ups.

RBI revises capital adequacy norms for banks

News: The Reserve Bank of India has revised guidelines related to the inclusion of quarterly profits in banks' core capital calculations, removing an earlier condition linked to provisioning for non-performing assets (NPAs).

RBI Revises Capital Adequacy Norms for Banks



Source: DD News

- The Reserve Bank of India has **revised the Capital Adequacy Norms for Banks.**
- **Aim:** This aimed at **simplifying the framework** used to assess banks' financial strength and **capital adequacy.**
- Under the revised guidelines, **the RBI has removed an earlier condition related to provisions for non-performing assets (NPAs) while calculating Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) capital for the Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR).**

- **Note:** The Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR), also known as the Capital-to-Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR), is a key indicator of a bank's financial health. It is the ratio of a bank's capital to its Risk-Weighted Assets (RWA).
- A **higher CAR** means the bank has **more capital buffer** relative to the risk it is taking.
- **Earlier Rule:** Previously, **commercial banks except local area banks and regional rural banks** could include quarterly profits in CRAR calculations **only if the increase in NPA provisioning during any quarter of the previous financial year did not exceed 25%** of the average provisions made across all four quarters.
 - This condition was intended to ensure consistency in **provisioning practices and prevent banks** from overstating profits.
- **Changes made:** As per the **Reserve Bank of India (Commercial Banks – Prudential Norms on Capital Adequacy) Fifth Amendment Directions, 2026**, banks need to ensure that **quarterly financial statements are either fully audited or subjected to a limited review before profits** can be considered for regulatory capital purposes.
 - The RBI has also **prescribed a revised formula for determining “eligible profit”** that can be included in CET1 capital.
- **Impact on Banks:** The Amendment is likely:
 - To provide banks with **greater flexibility** in recognizing interim profits for capital adequacy purposes
 - To ensure that **dividend expectations** and **potential losses** are adequately **factored** into regulatory capital calculations.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

News: India is chairing the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and maritime security after the West Asia war remains a major agenda.

About Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)



Source – TH

- **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):** It is an inter-governmental organisation for regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.
- **Origin:** The vision of IORA originated during Nelson Mandela's 1995 visit to India for socio-economic cooperation and peaceful endeavours.
- **Established:** It was established in 1997.
- **Objective:** It aims to facilitate economic cooperation and expand mutually beneficial cooperation among member states.
- **Members:** IORA currently comprises 23 member states, including –
 - **India, Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.**
- **Dialogue Partners:** It has 12 official Dialogue Partners , including China, Egypt, European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.
- **Headquarter:** The headquarters is located at Cyber City, Ebène, Mauritius.
- **Key Features:**

- **Six Priority Areas:** IORA works in six priority areas, namely Maritime Safety & Security, Trade & Investment Facilitation, Fisheries Management, Disaster Risk Management, Tourism & Cultural Exchanges, and Academic, Science & Technology.
- **Cross-Cutting Issues:** Blue Economy and Women's Economic Empowerment are recognised as important cross-cutting issues.
- **Institutional Structure:**
 - **Council of Ministers (COM):** The COM is the highest decision-making body of IORA and includes Foreign Ministers of all member states.
 - **Committee of Senior Officials (CSO):** The CSO works under the COM and reviews implementation, coordination, and priorities of cooperation programmes.
 - **TROIKA Mechanism:** TROIKA consists of the current Chair, Vice-Chair, and Previous Chair, and it keeps member states informed on important matters.
 - **IORA Chair and Secretariat:** The Chair coordinates meetings and agendas, while the Secretariat supports the functioning of the organisation from Mauritius.
- **India's Role:** India is the Chair of IORA for the 2025–2027 period and will host several important meetings before the 2027 summit.

National Panchayat Awards 2025

News: Recently, the government has announced the winners of the National Panchayat Awards 2025.

About National Panchayat Awards 2025



Source: news on air

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- The winners of the **National Panchayat Awards 2025** have been announced, with **42 Panchayats from across the country** being selected for the honours.
- **Conferred by:** It has been conferred by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**.
- **Frequency:** It is conferred **annually** to recognize and incentivise **best-performing Panchayats** and promote inclusive, participatory, and sustainable development in rural India.
- **Aim:** Its aim is to **encourage Panchayats to improve local governance, service delivery, and progress towards Sustainable Development Goals** through community-led initiatives, reinforcing Panchayats' role in translating national priorities towards Viksit Bharat 2047.
- The awards are being given under the **Incentivization of Panchayats scheme of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**.
- **Winner:** **Karnataka** has secured the **highest number of awards** with six Panchayats being selected, followed by **Andhra Pradesh** and **Odisha** with five awards each.
- **Categories:** The awards are being conferred under **two categories** –
 - **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar:**
 - It recognises outstanding Gram Panchayats for their performance across themes **linked to Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty-free livelihoods, health, water sufficiency, sanitation, women-friendly governance and social justice**.
 - A total of 34 Gram Panchayats from 17 States and Union Territories have been selected under this category.
 - **Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar:**
 - It will be given to the best-performing Panchayats at the district, block and gram levels.
 - Eight Panchayats have been selected under this category, including **three district Panchayats, two block Panchayats and three Gram Panchayats**.
- **Prize:** The winning Panchayats **will receive financial incentives ranging from 50 lakh rupees to five crore rupees**, depending on the category and tier.

Spiny-tailed Lizards

News: A recent study examined seasonal nutrient intake, dietary adaptations, and foraging behaviour of Spiny-tailed Lizards in the Thar Desert.

About Spiny-tailed Lizards



Source – Mongabay

Introduction

- The Indian Spiny-tailed Lizard (*Saara hardwickii*) is a herbivorous, burrow-dwelling desert reptile adapted to harsh arid environments.
- It is locally known as sanda or sandho.

Habitat

The species inhabits arid and semi-arid sandy plains, rocky hillocks, and open grounds with grasses, shrubs, khejri, and ker trees.

Distribution

- The species is found in the Thar Desert of northwestern India and in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- In India, it is mainly restricted to the desert regions of northwest India.
- It is locally extinct in Uttar Pradesh, while its population is declining in Madhya Pradesh.

Characteristics

- **Diet:** The species mainly feeds on plants, but it also consumes insects during breeding periods to meet changing nutritional demands.
- **Burrow System:** The lizard lives in colonies with burrows having a single opening and spoon-shaped tunnels for safety and protection.
- **Seasonal Adaptation:** The species feeds actively after hibernation and stores additional fat before winter hibernation during September and October.

- **Territorial Behaviour:** Male lizards protect productive feeding patches and often chase intruding lizards despite living close to each other in colonies.
- **Ecological Role:** The species supports the desert ecosystem through seed dispersal and also serves as prey for several predators.

Threats

- **Illegal wildlife trade**
- **Poaching for meat and oil**
- **Habitat fragmentation**
- **Urbanisation**
- **Agricultural expansion**
- **Canal irrigation**
- **Industrial projects**
- **Climate change**

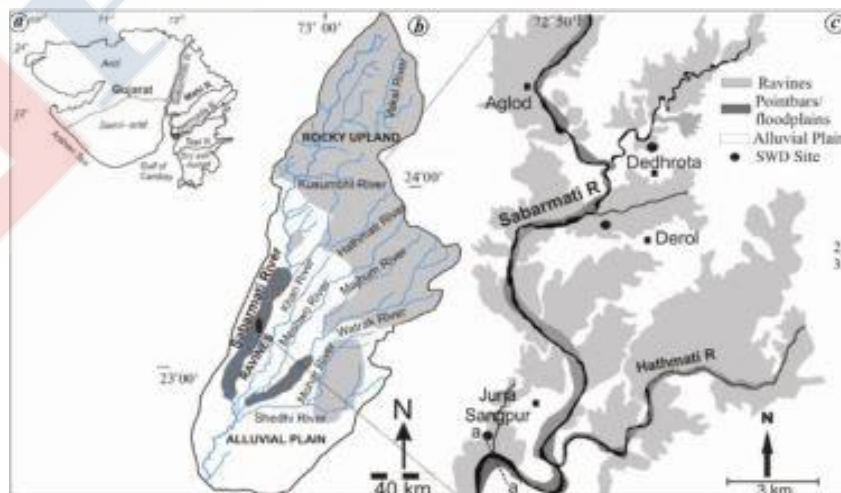
Conservation Status

- **IUCN Status: Vulnerable**
- **CITES Listing: Appendix II**
- **Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**

Sabarmati River

News: The Sabarmati River in Ahmedabad remains dry after Vasna barrage repairs halted water flow for bridge and barrage construction works.

About Sabarmati River



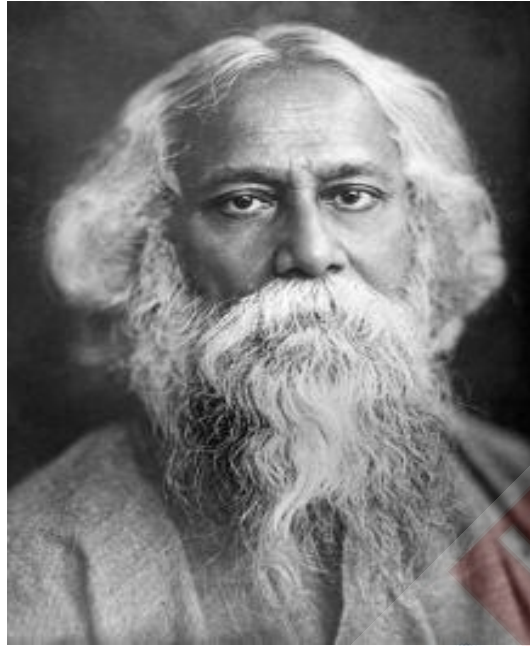
Source – ResearchGate

- It is a major west-flowing and monsoon-fed river flowing through Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- **Origin:** The river originates from the Aravalli hills near village Tepur in Udaipur district of Rajasthan.
- **Boundaries:** The basin is bounded by Aravalli hills on the north and north-east, Rann of Kutch on the west, and Gulf of Khambhat on the south.
- **Course:** The Sabarmati River flows in a south-west direction from Rajasthan into Gujarat, passes through the Dharoi gorge, flows across the plains, and later passes through Ahmedabad city.
- **Falls into:** The river finally falls into the Gulf of Khambhat in the Arabian Sea.
- **Length:** The total length of the river is 371 km, including 48 km in Rajasthan and 323 km in Gujarat.
- **Tributaries:** Left bank tributaries include Wakal, Harnav, Hathmati, and Watrak, while Sei is the major right bank tributary.
- **Ecological Zones:** It has three distinct ecological zones consisting of rocky uplands in Rajasthan, middle alluvial plains, and a lower estuarine zone near the Gulf of Khambhat.
- **Major Water Infrastructure Projects:** Important projects include Dharoi Dam, Vasna Barrage, Hathmati Dam, Harnav Dam, Guhai Dam, Watrak Dam, Meshvo Reservoir, and the planned Kalpasar Project.

Rabindranath Tagore

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Suvendu Adhikari paid tributes on Rabindranath Tagore's 165th birth anniversary on Pochishe Boishakh.

About Rabindranath Tagore



Source – Britannica

Introduction

- **Rabindranath Tagore** was a Bengali poet, writer, philosopher, composer, playwright, painter, and social reformer who transformed Indian literature and culture.
- **Early Life and Education:**
 - **Birth:** Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861, in Calcutta.
 - **Influence of Family:** His father, Debendranath Tagore, was a leading figure of the Brahmo Samaj.
 - **Education:** Tagore received education at home and later attended schools and University College London

Key Contributions to Art and Culture

- **Transformation of Bengali Literature:** Tagore introduced new prose and verse forms and used colloquial language in Bengali literature.
- **Contribution to Music:** His songs, including Jana Gana Mana and Amar Shonar Bangla, became the national anthems of India and Bangladesh.
- **Contribution as a Painter:** In the late 1920s, Tagore began painting and created more than 2,500 artworks based on nature, spirituality, and human emotions.
- **Rabindra Sangeet:** He composed more than 2,000 songs, now a distinct genre of music called Rabindra Sangeet, a cornerstone of Bengali culture.

Role in the Freedom Movement

- **Support for Nationalism:** Tagore opposed imperialism and supported the cause of Indian independence through literature and philosophy.
- **Criticism of Narrow Nationalism:** He criticized extreme nationalism and promoted universal human values and global peace.
- **Inspirational Songs:** His works like *Ekla Chalo Re* and *Where the Mind is Without Fear* inspired the freedom movement.
- **Protest Against Jallianwala Bagh Massacre:** In 1919, he renounced his knighthood in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

Key Contributions to Literature

- **Nobel Prize Achievement:** Tagore became the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for *Gitanjali*.
- **Major Literary Works:** His important literary works include *Gitanjali*, *Manasi*, *Sonar Tari*, *Gora*, *Ghare-Baire*, and many short stories.

Philosophy and Vision

- **Holistic Education:** Tagore believed education should support physical, emotional, and intellectual development together.
- **Educational Reform:** In 1901, he established an experimental school at Shantiniketan based on open-air and creative learning.
- **Global Outlook:** He founded Visva-Bharati University to combine Indian traditions with international values.
- **Universal Humanism:** Tagore promoted humanity, spirituality, cultural confidence, and harmony beyond boundaries of nationality and religion.

Titles

- He was honoured with titles such as Gurudev, Kobiguru, Biswokobi, and the Bard of Bengal for his literary and cultural contributions.

Death

- Rabindranath Tagore died on August 7, 1941, in Calcutta.

'One Case One Data' and 'Su Sahay' chatbot

News: Supreme Court launched 'One Case One Data' Initiative and 'Su Sahay' chatbot to strengthen judicial data integration and improving public access to court services.

About 'One Case One Data' Initiative

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Source: The Law Advice

Introduction

- The 'One Case One Data' is a major digital initiative to integrate the judicial administration at every level.
- Aim: It aimed at strengthening judicial data integration and improving public access to court services across the country.

Features

- It will integrate multi-level information from all the high courts, district courts and taluka courts into a unified system.
- The new module would automate data retrieval from the databases of concerned courts and facilitate swift online verification of case-related information.
- Reciprocal access to case information would also be provided to High Courts and government departments whenever required.

Impacts

- The initiative is expected to streamline case management by creating a more comprehensive and interconnected digital database across the country's courts.
- It would also ensure data integrity, improve accuracy, and enhance transparency in the judicial system.

About 'Su Sahay' Chatbot

- It is an Artificial Intelligence-powered assistance chatbot integrated with the Supreme Court website to facilitate easier access to justice and court-related services for litigants.

- Developed by: It has been developed by the [National Informatics Centre \(NIC\)](#) in collaboration with the Supreme Court Registry.
- It will provide a simple and convenient interface for citizens to seek front-end guidelines and guidance in accessing essential services of the Supreme Court.

India's Successful test of Actively Cooled Full Scale Scramjet Combustor

News: Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL) of DRDO has achieved a path-breaking milestone in the development of Hypersonic Missiles by successfully conducting an extensive long-duration test of its Actively Cooled Full Scale Scramjet Combustor.

About India's Successful test of Actively Cooled Full Scale Scramjet Combustor



Source: PIB

Introduction

- Conducted by: The Defence Research and Development Organisation successfully conducted a 1,200-second ground test of an actively cooled scramjet combustor in Hyderabad.
- The [scramjet engine](#) is designed to power [hypersonic cruise missiles](#) capable of travelling at speeds greater than Mach 5.
- It successfully demonstrated active cooling technology that protects the engine from extreme heat generated during hypersonic flight.
 - Scientists achieved stable combustion inside the engine even when air flowed through it at supersonic speed.

- India also developed an indigenous liquid hydrocarbon endothermic fuel specially designed for hypersonic propulsion systems.
 - This advanced fuel helps cool the engine and improves ignition performance under extreme conditions.
- Researchers developed special ceramic thermal barrier coatings to withstand temperatures higher than the melting point of steel.
- The successful test validated both the scramjet combustor design and India's advanced hypersonic testing infrastructure.
- This achievement places India among the leading countries working on advanced hypersonic weapon technologies, alongside U.S.A, Russia, and China.

International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)

News: Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India, organised the 35th Plenary and Working Groups meetings of the ISO TC 20 / SC 14 'Space Systems and Operations' subcommittee of International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) at New Delhi.

About International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)

Introduction

- The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) is an independent non-governmental international organisations that develops and publishes standards across industries to ensure safety, efficiency, and quality of products, services, and systems around the world.
- **Founding year:** It was founded in 1946.
- **Headquarters:** It is headquartered in Geneva.
- **Members:** It has over 172 member countries.
 - India is a member of ISO, represented by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).
- It has over 25,000 standards and brings experts from around the world together to agree on the best ways of making products and managing processes.
- **Scope:** It set standards to enhance quality of life by promoting ease, safety, and improvement across various sectors.
 - Their standardisations for compliance serve as benchmarks for best practices, helping organisations meet industry-specific requirements and international regulations.

Activities of ISO

- It develops and publishes international standards for products, materials, and processes.
- It creates standards for many fields such as healthcare, technology, agriculture, and engineering.
- It publishes technical reports, technical specifications, and guides.
- It helps improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of products and services.
- Its standards are used worldwide to ensure consistency and reliability.

About ISO/TC 20/SC 14

- It is a subcommittee of the ISO. It develops international standards for the entire lifecycle of space systems from design and production to launch, operations, and space-based services, ensuring safety, interoperability, and sustainability in global space activities.

About Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- **Established:** It is the national standard body of India established under the BIS Act 2016.
- **Objective:** Its objective is to ensure harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods.
- **Concerned ministry:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- **Headquarters-** New Delhi, and its 5 regional Offices (ROs) are at Kolkata (Eastern), Chennai (Southern), Mumbai (Western), Chandigarh (Northern) and Delhi (Central).

Grand Slam

News: Italy's recent dominance in tennis has revived demands to recognise the Italian Open as a fifth Grand Slam tournament.

About Grand Slam



Source – U.S. Open

Introduction

- Grand Slam in tennis refers to winning all four major championships — Australia, France, Britain (Wimbledon) and the United States — in the same calendar season.
- Modern Meaning of Grand Slam: In the modern era, the term Grand Slam is also used to describe each of the four major tennis tournaments individually.

Four Grand Slam Tournaments

- The four Grand Slam tournaments are the Australian Open, French Open (Roland Garros), Wimbledon Championships and the US Open.
 - Australian Open:
 - Location: The Australian Open is held in Melbourne, Australia.
 - Surface: The tournament is played on hard courts.
 - Time of the Year: It is organised annually in January as the first Grand Slam of the year.
 - Organised By: The tournament is organised by Tennis Australia.
 - French Open (Roland Garros):
 - Location: The French Open is held in Paris, France.
 - Surface: It is played on clay courts.
 - Time of the Year: The tournament is organised annually from late May to early June.
 - Organised By: It is organised by the Fédération Française de Tennis (FFT).
 - Important Feature: It is the only Grand Slam played on clay courts and demands stamina, endurance and strategic play.

- **Wimbledon Championships:**
 - **Location:** Wimbledon is held in London, United Kingdom.
 - **Surface:** The matches are played on grass courts.
 - **Time of the Year:** It is held annually from late June to early July.
 - **Organised By:** The championship is organised by the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC).
 - **Important Feature:** Wimbledon is the oldest tennis tournament and is famous for strict traditions and all-white attire.
- **US Open:**
 - **Location:** The US Open is held in New York City, USA.
 - **Surface:** It is played on hard courts using DecoTurf surface.
 - **Time of the Year:** The tournament is organised annually from late August to early September.
 - **Organised By:** It is organised by the United States Tennis Association (USTA).

Achievement of Grand Slam

- **The feat of winning all four major championships in a single calendar season has been achieved six times by five different players. These players are:**
 - **Don Budge (1938, United States)**
 - **Maureen Connolly (1953, United States)**
 - **Rod Laver (1962 and 1969, Australia)**
 - **Margaret Court (1970, Australia)**
 - **Steffi Graf (1988, Germany)**

National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026

News: The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards for the year 2026 to the nursing personnel, on the occasion of International Nurses Day, at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

About National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026



Source: Florence Nightingale Awards

About

- The Florence Nightingale Awards are India's most prestigious recognition for exceptional nurses and healthcare professionals.
- Instituted by: The National Florence Nightingale Awards were instituted in 1973 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- Frequency: It is held annually on May 12th which is also celebrated as International Nurses Day and Florence Nightingale's birth anniversary.
- It recognise individuals who exemplify the spirit of Florence Nightingale through their selfless service, clinical excellence, and compassionate care.
- It brings together healthcare leaders, policymakers, and the nursing community to honour those who have gone above and beyond in their commitment to patient care and public health.
- Prizes: Each awardee received a certificate of merit, cash reward of Rs 1 lakh and a medal.

Forum of Regulators (FOR)

News: The Forum of Regulators (FOR) conducted its 100th meeting at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, completing its 21-year journey.

About Forum of Regulators (FOR)

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Source – PIB

Introduction

- **Forum of Regulators (FOR)** is a statutory platform that coordinates and improves regulatory practices in the power sector.
- **Establishment:** It was constituted in 2005 as per the Electricity Act, 2003.
- **Aim:** The Forum aims to improve coordination, harmonisation of regulations, consumer protection, and efficiency in the power sector.
- **Composition:**
 - It consists of the Chairperson of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) and Chairpersons of the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs).
 - The Chairperson of CERC acts as the Chairperson of the Forum.
- **Headquarters:** It's headquarters is located at New Delhi.
- **Secretary:** The Secretary to the Central Commission shall be the ex-officio Secretary to the Forum.
- **Finances of the Forum:** The Central Commission may collect financial contributions from State Commissions for Forum activities and maintains separate accounts for these activities.
- **Meetings:** The Forum meets at least twice every year and frames its own business rules.
- **Annual Report:** The Forum prepares an annual report summarizing its activities and submits it to the Central Government.

Key Functions

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** The Forum analyses tariff orders and examines compliance with the Electricity Act, tariff policy, prudent costs, and subsidy accounting.
- **Subsidy Accounting:** The Forum prepares quarterly statements on subsidy demands, payments, and subsidy gaps for distribution licensees.
- **Renewable Purchase Compliance:** The Forum monitors renewable electricity purchase targets of distribution licensees, captive consumers, and open access consumers.
- **Regulatory Coordination:** The Forum promotes harmonisation of regulations, information sharing, research work, and consumer interest protection.

Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary

News: The forest department has started a scientific wildlife census in Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary to study wildlife population and movement patterns.

About Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary



Source – ResearchGate

Location

- Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Central Himalayan region in the Almora district of the Kumaon region in Uttarakhand.

Specifications

- **Area:** The sanctuary spreads across about 47.59 sq km in the Kumaon region.
- **Topography:** The sanctuary has rugged ridges and deep gorges, while the altitude ranges from 900 metres to 2,500 metres.

- **Zero Point:** Zero Point or Jhandi Dhaar is the highest point of the sanctuary and offers panoramic views of Nanda Devi, Kedarnath, Trisul, Panchachuli and Shivling peaks.
- **Vegetation:** The sanctuary is dominated by dense oak and deodar forests along with rhododendrons that bloom ruby-red during spring.
- **Flora:** The sanctuary contains about 25 tree species and 24 bush species, which support rich Himalayan biodiversity.
- **Fauna:** The sanctuary is home to leopards, Himalayan gorals, musk deer, Sumatran serow, red foxes and wild boars.
- **Bird Diversity:** The sanctuary is an Important Bird Area with more than 200 bird species, including Himalayan Monal, Kalij pheasant, Koklass pheasant and Eurasian jay.

Significance

- **Historical Significance:**
 - Binsar served as the summer capital of the Chand rulers of Kumaon between the 11th and 18th centuries.
 - During the British period, Sir Henry Ramsay established administrative centres in the region.
- **Religious Significance:** Locals believe that Binsar was named after the Bineshwar Mahadev Temple, a 16th century temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- **Ecological Significance:** The sanctuary protects the fragile Himalayan ecosystem and provides habitat to several rare and threatened species.

Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP)

News: The Government of India, in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) launched a new eight-year Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP).
About Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP)



Source: PIB

About

- It is an initiative to empower rural communities, scaling proven development models, and strengthening grassroots institutions.
- Launched by: It has been launched by the Government of India, in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
- It was launched during the IFAD–India Partnership for Rural Prosperity event at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

Aim

- It aimed at enhancing rural incomes, strengthening resilience, and scaling sustainable livelihood opportunities across the country.
 - It also seeks to establish India as a global knowledge hub in rural development by sharing successful models of inclusive rural finance, cooperative governance, digital agriculture services, and climate-resilient value chains.
 - Through this initiative, India aims to strengthen partnerships and exchange best practices with countries across Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America.
- Duration: It is an eight-year programme for the period 2026–2033.

Features

- It is aligned with the Viksit Bharat@2047 vision and focuses on two major priorities:
 - Enhancing the social, economic and climate resilience of rural communities

- Strengthening knowledge systems to scale successful development models across India and other countries of the Global South.
- It places strong emphasis on strengthening grassroots institutions such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), and cooperatives, which serve as key platforms connecting finance, technology, infrastructure, and markets.
- India's Partnership with IFAD:
 - IFAD and NABARD signed a strategic partnership agreement to further strengthen rural finance systems and support innovation in agricultural and allied sectors.
 - India's partnership with IFAD spans nearly five decades, with 35 rural development projects implemented across multiple states, supporting millions of rural households and contributing significantly to inclusive growth.

About International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

About

- The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is an international financial institution and a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- Establishment: It was established in 1977 and is one of the major outcomes of the 1974 World Food Conference.
- Headquarters: It is headquartered in Rome, Italy.
- Governing body: Member States govern through the Governing Council and the Executive Board. These two bodies make all major decisions, including policy, finance and membership.

Role

- It invests in rural people by empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience.
 - It provides low-interest loans and grants to developing countries to finance innovative agricultural and rural development programmes and projects.
- Coverage: It spans 4 regions and operates in 92 countries.
- Report: It brings out the Rural Development Report every year.

Membership

- Any country that is a member of the United Nations, its specialised agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency can become an IFAD Member State.
- It has membership of 180 countries, categorised into three lists:

- Member States on List A are primarily high-income countries that contribute to IFAD's resources.
- Those on List B also contribute to IFAD's resources, with some eligible for IFAD financing and services.
- Those on List C are primarily developing countries that receive IFAD financing and services, and also contribute to IFAD resources.
- India is a founding member of the IFAD.

Sirhind Fateh Divas of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Ji

News: Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah extended greetings on the occasion of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Ji's Sirhind Fateh Divas.

About Sirhind Fateh Divas of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Ji



Source – PIB

- Sirhind Fateh Divas is observed annually to commemorate the victory of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur over Sirhind on May 14, 1710.
- Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Ji: He was a great Sikh warrior and commander who established the first independent Khalsa rule in Punjab .

- **Origins:** He was born as Lachman Dev in the Rajouri region of present-day Jammu & Kashmir and later became a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh.
- **Key Contributions:**
 - **Military Achievements:** He defeated the Mughals and liberated large parts of North India from oppressive Mughal rule.
 - On May 14, 1710, his forces captured Sirhind and ended the oppressive Mughal regime in the region.
 - **Support for Farmers:** He organized farmers against injustice and promoted more equitable access to resources.
 - **Land Reforms:** He abolished the Zamindari system and granted property rights directly to cultivators.
 - **Economic Measures:** He introduced Nanak Shahi coins as a symbol of Sikh sovereignty.
 - **Message of Courage and Faith:** He was captured by Mughal ruler Farrukhsiyar, but despite severe torture, he refused religious conversion and attained martyrdom at Mehrauli, Delhi.

Global Forest Goals Report 2026

News: The United Nations released the Global Forest Goals Report 2026 during the 21st session of the UN Forum on Forests.

About Global Forest Goals Report 2026



Source – UN

- It is a UN assessment report on progress under the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030.
- Released by: The report was released by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat.
 - UN Forum on Forests: It is an intergovernmental body established in 2000 that includes all UN member states and members of specialised agencies for promoting conservation, sustainable management, and development of all types of forests.
- Key Findings and Trends:
 - Global Forest Cover: Forests cover 4.14 billion hectares, which accounts for nearly 32 per cent of the world's land area and around 0.50 hectare per person.
 - Forest Distribution: Around 45 per cent of forests are located in tropical regions, followed by 28 per cent in boreal regions, 17 per cent in temperate regions, and 11 per cent in subtropical regions.
 - Concentration in Few Countries: Nearly 54 per cent of global forests are concentrated in five countries, including the Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United States of America, and China.
 - Primary Forest Loss: The world lost nearly 16 million hectares of primary forests between 2015 and 2025, while South America recorded the largest decline.
 - Major Drivers of Degradation: Agricultural expansion, rising demand for fuelwood and charcoal, illegal trade, and weak governance continued to increase forest degradation.
 - Climate-linked Pressures: Droughts, heatwaves, wildfires, pests, and diseases accelerated forest degradation in many regions.
 - Restoration and Finance Gap: Although 91 countries pledged to restore 190 million hectares, only 44 million hectares were restored, while sustainable forest finance remained far below the required annual target.
- Recommendations: The report recommends stronger coordination, higher forest financing, deforestation-free supply chains, cleaner energy access, restoration of degraded lands, and stronger forest governance for sustainable management.

About UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030

- It is a global framework adopted by the UN General Assembly to promote sustainable forest management, stop deforestation, and reverse forest degradation through six voluntary Global Forest Goals and 26 targets to be achieved by 2030.
- Six Global Forest Goals (GFGs):
 - GFGs 1: It focuses on reversing forest loss through sustainable forest management and restoration.
 - GFGs 2: It aims to enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits.
 - GFGs 3: It seeks to increase protected forests and sustainably managed forests worldwide.
 - GFGs 4: It focuses on mobilising financial resources for sustainable forest management.
 - GFGs 5: It aims to promote governance frameworks for sustainable forest management.
 - GFGs 6: It seeks to strengthen cooperation and coordination on forest-related issues.

Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)

News: The Endocrine Society has renamed Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) as Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS) through a global medical consensus.

About Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)



Source – PMOS org

- **PMOS is a hormonal and metabolic disorder that affects endocrine functions, metabolism, ovulation and overall women's health.**
- **Key Aspects of PMOS:**
 - **Hormonal and Metabolic Disorder:** PMOS affects multiple hormone systems and is strongly linked with insulin resistance, obesity, diabetes risk and metabolic complications.
 - **Major Symptoms:** Common symptoms include irregular or absent periods, excess androgen hormones, acne, facial hair growth, weight gain, difficulty losing weight and fertility challenges.
 - **Broader Health Impact:** PMOS increases long-term risks of Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, fatty liver disease, sleep disorders, depression and anxiety.

- **Reproductive and Psychological Effects:** The condition may lead to ovulatory dysfunction, infertility, pregnancy complications, anxiety, depression and poor quality of life.
- **Diagnosis Challenges:** Experts noted that PMOS is often underdiagnosed because symptoms vary widely and are frequently treated as cosmetic or lifestyle-related concerns.
- **Indian Scenario:** India is witnessing a rise in PMOS cases, especially among adolescents and young urban women, with studies showing prevalence ranging from 3.7% to over 22%.
- **New Name Signifies:**
 - **Earlier Name Was Misleading:** The earlier term “Polycystic Ovary Syndrome” mainly focused on ovarian cysts, even though many women with the condition do not actually develop ovarian cysts.
 - **New Name Reflect:** The new term “Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome” was introduced to reflect the multisystem nature of the disorder, which affects hormone systems, metabolism, ovulation, reproductive health and long-term overall health.

Lavan Island

News: The United Arab Emirates secretly carried out military strikes on Lavan Island of Iran during the recent Middle East conflict.

About Lavan Island



Source: ScienceDirect

- **Location:** It is an Iranian island in the Persian Gulf, near the Strait of Hormuz.
- It is strategically located 18 km south of Bandar Mogham (Hormozgan Province) in the Persian Gulf.
- It is also known as the *Hidden Pearl Island*, which has long been home to pearl fishing.
- **Area:** It is 25 kilometres in length and 5 kilometres in width.
- **Climate:** It has hot and humid weather.
- **Rainfall:** The average annual rainfall on this island is about 114 millimetres.
- **Economy:** The main occupation of the people of Lavan port is working in the oil and fishing industry.
- **Strategic importance:** It is now one of the most important oil export terminals in Iran.
 - It is the operating base for three offshore fields of Iran, namely, Salman, Resalat and Reshadat.
 - **Infrastructure:** The Iranian Offshore Oil Company operates processing facilities, storage tanks, and a jetty on the island that handles crude oil exports. These facilities make the island an important hub for petroleum logistics and offshore oil operations.
 - Also, Salman Field, located 144 kilometres south of Lavan Island, has one of the largest offshore installations in the Persian Gulf.

Scheme for Promotion of Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects

News: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved a Scheme for Promotion of Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects.

About Scheme for Promotion of Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects



Source: Ministry of Coal

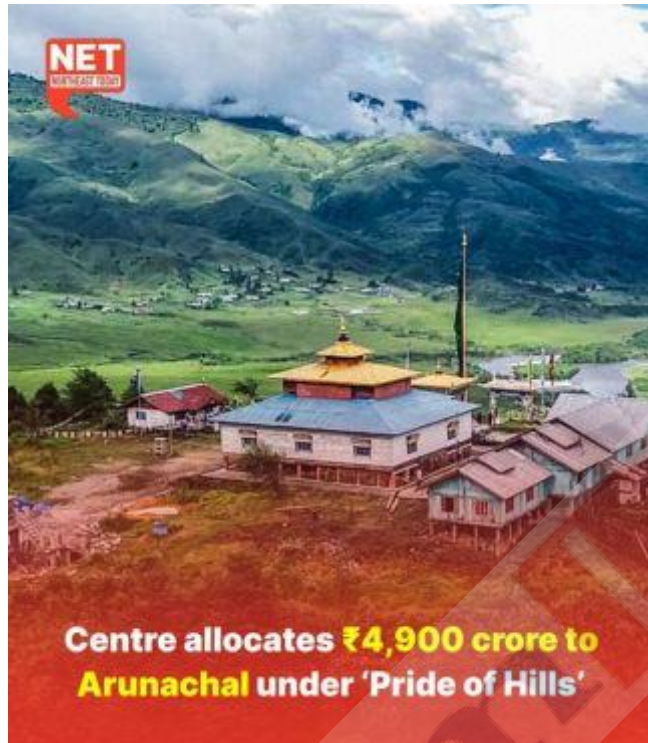
- It is a scheme to promote coal and lignite gasification projects.
- It is a major step towards cleaner coal utilisation, energy security and import substitution.
- Aim: The scheme aims to accelerate the conversion of coal and lignite into synthesis gas, or syngas, which can be used for power generation, fertilisers, chemicals and other downstream industrial products.
- Nodal ministry: The Ministry of Coal is the nodal ministry implementing it.
- Budget outlay: It has a budget outlay of Rs. 37,500 crore.
- Features:
 - Incentivisation: It is to incentivise new surface coal/lignite gasification projects for the production of syngas and its downstream products, targeting gasification of approximately 75 million tonnes of coal/lignite.
 - Financial incentive provided at a maximum of 20% of the cost of Plant and Machinery.

- Disbursement method: Incentive disbursed in four equal instalments, linked to project milestones.
- Capped financing: Financial incentive for:
 - Any single project capped at Rs. 5,000 crore
 - For any single product (except Synthetic Natural Gas and Urea) is capped at Rs. 9,000 crore
 - Any single entity group is capped at Rs. 12,000 crore across all projects.
- Incentive under this Scheme is in addition to, and does not restrict access to, incentives under the commercial coal mining regime or schemes of other Central/State Government ministries.
- Selection: Selection through a transparent and competitive bidding process, with an evaluation framework benchmarking project cost, coal input, and syngas output.
- Technology adoption: The Scheme is technology-agnostic and encourages the adoption of indigenous technologies.

Pride of Hills: Special Development Assistance for Hill States Scheme

News: The Centre allocated ₹4,900 crore to Arunachal Pradesh under the newly launched “Pride of Hills” initiative for 2026-27.

About Pride of Hills: Special Development Assistance for Hill States” Scheme



Source – NET

- “Pride of Hills: Special Development Assistance for Hill States” is a special initiative launched under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) framework for 2026-27 to address infrastructure and development gaps in hill and Himalayan states.
- **Total Outlay:** The scheme has a total outlay of ₹25,000 crore for nine hill and Himalayan states.
- **Objective:** The scheme aims to address structural and geographical disadvantages such as difficult terrain, weak connectivity, sparse population, high infrastructure costs, weaker fiscal indicators, and limited revenue-generation capacity.
- **Beneficiary States:** The nine beneficiary states are Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Uttarakhand, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Mizoram.
- **Permissible Utilization of Funds:** The funds allocated under this scheme may be utilized by the States for the following purposes:
 - **Repayment of Loans:** Repayment of the principal amount of loans availed from the Government of India, banks, and other agencies, including loans for Externally Aided Projects (EAPs).

- Funds released under this part will not impact the Gross Borrowing Ceiling of the State as determined under the Borrowing Guidelines for 2026–27.
- **State Share of Projects and Schemes: Meeting the State share of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and the State share of infrastructure projects of Central agencies such as Railways, highways, etc.**
- **Counterpart funding for Externally Aided Projects (EAPs)**

About Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) Framework

- **Ministry Involved:** The SASCI framework is implemented by the Department of Expenditure under the Ministry of Finance.
- **Financial Support:** The SASCI framework provides 50-year interest-free loans to States and Union Territories for capital investment projects.
- **Objective:** The framework aims to increase capital expenditure, improve productive capacity, and support economic growth through infrastructure development.

Peacock Tarantula

News: A conservation survey of the critically endangered Peacock Tarantula has been launched in the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve.

About Peacock Tarantula



Source – Mongabay

- **The Peacock Tarantula (*Poecilotheria metallica*) is a rare arboreal spider famous for its metallic blue colour and ornamental patterns.**

- **Taxonomy:** The species belongs to the Theraphosidae family and is classified as a tarantula species under the genus Poecilotheria.
- **Alternate names:** The species is also known as the Gooty Ornamental Sapphire Tarantula and Gooty Sapphire Ornamental Tarantula.
- **Habitat:** The species prefers dry deciduous forests with large mature trees and lives in tree holes, bark crevices and elevated surfaces.
- **Distribution:** The species is endemic to India.
 - It is mainly found in the Nandyal and Giddalur forest divisions and parts of the Seshachalam hills in Andhra Pradesh.

Characteristics

- **Appearance:** The spider has a bright metallic blue body with yellow and white markings forming geometric patterns on its legs and abdomen.
- **Nature:** The species is purely arboreal and lives mainly on trees across hill slopes, valleys, and plains.
- **Behaviour:** It is a nocturnal and fast-moving predator that captures insects and small animals using speed and venom instead of webs.
- **Size and Lifespan:** It can grow up to 6–8 inches in size, while females can live up to 15 years.

Threats

- **Illegal pet trade**
- **Logging**
- **Deforestation**
- **Habitat loss**

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered

Common Criteria Development Board (CCDB)

News: India was nominated to serve as the Chair of the Common Criteria Development Board from April 2026 to April 2028.

About Common Criteria Development Board (CCDB)



Source – CC Lab

- **The Common Criteria Development Board is the technical body that manages international standards for IT security evaluation under the Common Criteria framework.**
- **Operates under:** The CCDB operates under the Common Criteria Recognition Arrangement (CCRA).
- **Aim:** The main aim of the CCDB is to develop and maintain the Common Criteria (CC) and the Common Methodology for IT Security Evaluation (CEM) for secure IT products.
- **Key Aspects of CCDB**
 - **Technical Core of CCRA:** The CCDB manages the international work programme for the Common Criteria (CC) and the Common Methodology for Information Technology Security Evaluation (CEM).
 - **Focus on Security Standards:** The board develops technical standards and evaluation criteria for secure global IT products.
 - **Portal Management:** It maintains the Common Criteria Portal, which is the authoritative global repository for certified secure IT products.
 - **Global Security Evaluation:** The board ensures that IT security standards remain robust, consistent, and capable of addressing emerging cyber threats.
- **India's Status:** India has been a Certificate Authorizing Nation since 2013.
 - India participates through the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
 - The Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC) acts as India's official Certification Body.

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About Common Criteria Recognition Arrangement (CCRA)

- **International Framework:** The CCRA is an international arrangement for mutual recognition of IT security certificates among member countries.
- **Mutual Recognition System:** Certificates issued by member countries are accepted without re-certification, which supports seamless international trade in secure IT products.
- **Member Countries:** The CCRA includes 20 certificate-authorizing nations and 18 certificate-consuming nations.

Agalega Islands

News: Agalega Island is becoming a key part of India's strategy to strengthen its naval presence and monitor important trade routes in the Indian Ocean.

About Agalega Islands



Source: IE

- The Agalega Islands are two islands situated in the Indian Ocean.
- It is surrounded by the Seychelles to the north, the Maldives, the US base Diego Garcia and Chagos Island to the east, and Madagascar, the Mozambique Channel, and the entire eastern coast of Africa to the west.
- It lies approximately 1,050 km north of Mauritius and about 3,400 km southwest of India's southern tip.
- **Composition:** The archipelago comprises two low-lying coral islands –

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- North Island, the main inhabited island, and South Island.
- North Agalega houses the capital Vingt Cinq and the island's airstrip and Ste Rita is the only village in South Agalega.
- The two islands are connected by a natural sandbank that can be crossed on foot during low tide.
- Total area: It has a total area of 26 sq. km.
- Administration: Administratively, it is part of the territories and dependencies of the Republic of Mauritius.
- Population: The islands are home to a small population of around 300 residents, whose daily lives revolve around fishing, coconut cultivation.
- Flora and fauna: The endemic plant is the coconut and Agalega Island Day Gecko is a native species.
- Strategic significance for India: This chain of islands is emerging as one of India's biggest strategic projects in the Indian Ocean region.
 - The infrastructure developed there over the past few years is giving India a stronger military and maritime position across a large stretch of the ocean.
 - Strategically, it also gives India direct access to monitoring activity around the Mozambique Channel, an important sea route through which a large volume of trade moves between Asia, Europe and Africa.

About Mozambique Channel



Source: World Atlas

- The Mozambique Channel is a part of the Indian Ocean in the west.
- It lies between Mozambique and Madagascar.
- The channel separates Madagascar from mainland Africa.
- It shares land borders with five countries, namely Tanzania, Madagascar, Comoros, Mozambique, and France (through its territories).
- Length: It is about 1,600 km long.
- It is an important sea route through which a large volume of trade moves between Asia, Europe and Africa.

IP Catalyst and Digital Platform

News: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched the IP Catalyst initiative and its accompanying digital platform.

About IP Catalyst and Digital Platform



Source: PIB

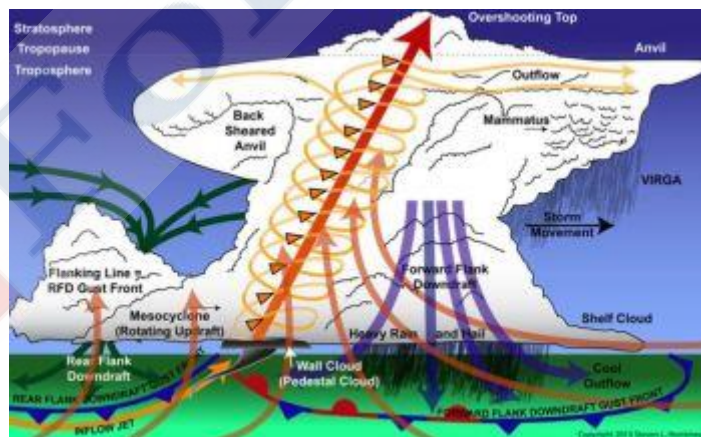
- **Launched by:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched the IP Catalyst initiative and a digital platform to accelerate intellectual property commercialization and strengthen India's innovation ecosystem in Electronics and IT.
- **Aim:** It aims to enable a comprehensive digital ecosystem supporting the complete innovation lifecycle from research and IP creation to technology transfer, commercialization, and market deployment.
 - It also aims to bridge the gap between publicly funded R&D and industry adoption.
- **Implemented by:** It is being implemented by CDAC Pune and supported by the MeitY.
- **Key features:**
 - It offers financial support for intellectual property (IP) filing to organisations under the MeitY and its grantee institutions.
 - It also provides assistance for international patent filing to startups and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
 - It enables unified digital access to technology commercialization and IP support services, making it easier for innovators to manage and protect their intellectual property.
 - It offers prior-art search facilities and expert IP advisory services.
 - It supports technology readiness and maturity assessments to evaluate how close a technology is to commercialization.

- It also provides IP valuation and commercialization support, helping innovators understand the market value of their technologies and identify commercialization opportunities.
- It further facilitates technology transfer and licensing processes.
- It promotes collaboration among industry, academia, and startups to strengthen the innovation ecosystem and accelerate research translation into market-ready solutions.
- **About Digital Platform**
 - The digital platform, cipie.in, will function as a unified online gateway for IP and commercialization support services.
 - It will also serve as a national digital repository of technologies developed through MeitY-supported R&D initiatives.
 - This will enable startups, MSMEs, and the industry to identify deployable indigenous technologies and explore collaboration opportunities.

Thunderstorms

News: At least 111 people died after a powerful storm and heavy rain hit several districts of Uttar Pradesh recently.

About Thunderstorms



Source – Weatherdotgov

- Thunderstorms are common weather events that form when warm moist air rises, cools, and condenses into towering cumulonimbus clouds.

- **Formation:** According to the National Weather Service, three conditions must exist together for a thunderstorm to develop:
 - **Moisture:** Moisture is necessary for cloud formation and heavy precipitation.
 - **Instability:** Warm air near the surface keeps rising rapidly because it remains warmer than the surrounding upper atmosphere.
 - **Lift:** A lifting mechanism such as solar heating, mountains, or cold and warm fronts pushes the air upward.
- **Life Cycle:** A thunderstorm generally passes through three stages and usually lasts from 30 minutes to one hour.
 - **Developing Stage:** Warm moist air rises continuously and forms towering cumulus clouds.
 - Strong updrafts dominate this stage, but rainfall is very limited.
 - Occasional lightning flashes may occur.
 - **Mature Stage:** Water droplets become too heavy for the updrafts to hold, and precipitation begins to fall.
 - Cool downdrafts spread along the ground and form gust fronts.
 - This stage is the most dangerous because it can produce heavy rain, hail, lightning, strong winds, tornadoes, and frequent thunder.
 - **Dissipating Stage:** The cool downdraft weakens the rising warm air and cuts off the storm's supply of moisture.
 - Rainfall gradually decreases, although lightning may still remain dangerous until the storm completely ends.
- **Structural Classification:** Thunderstorms are classified into four main types based on their structure, intensity, and duration.
 - **Single-Cell:** These are small and short-lived storms that generally last for 20–30 minutes and mainly produce light to moderate rainfall.
 - **Multi-Cell:** These storms contain several storm cells at different stages of development, allowing them to continue for many hours with heavy rain, gusty winds, and occasional hail.

- **Squall Line:** These storms form long organized lines, usually along cold fronts, and produce strong winds, heavy rainfall, and sometimes tornadoes over large areas.
- **Supercell:** These are the most severe thunderstorms with a rotating updraft called a mesocyclone, capable of producing large hail, destructive winds, flash floods, and tornadoes.

Ginger

News: The Centre launched the ₹189.79-crore Mizoram Ginger Mission to promote GI-certified pharma-grade ginger through processing, branding and exports.

About Ginger



Source – The Better India

- **Ginger** is an herbaceous perennial plant belonging to the Zingiberaceae family, which also includes turmeric and cardamom.
- **Economic Part:** The rhizome of ginger is the main economic part.
- **Key Components:**
 - **Gingerol:** It is the most abundant compound in fresh ginger, especially [6]-gingerol, and acts as a strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant agent.
 - **Shogaol:** It is formed when ginger is dried or heated, and it is more pungent with enhanced therapeutic properties.
 - **Zingerone:** It is produced during cooking and provides a milder and sweeter spiciness.
 - **Paradol:** It develops through the transformation of shogaols over time and contributes to the spice profile of aged ginger.
- **Climatic & Soil Requirements:**

- **Climate:** Ginger requires a warm and humid climate and can grow up to an altitude of 1500 m.
- **Temperature:** The crop performs well in a temperature range of 19°C to 28°C.
- **Rainfall:** It requires moderate to high rainfall of about 1,500–2,500 mm annually or reliable irrigation, but it does not tolerate frost or prolonged drought.
- **Soil:** Ginger grows best in loose, fertile, well-drained loam or sandy-loam soils rich in organic matter.
- **Uses:** Ginger is widely used as a spice for flavouring and also for medicinal purposes.
 - It is used in food preparations, confectionery, beverages, and in making ginger candy and preserves.
- **Significance:** Ginger contains a large amount of antioxidant compounds that help treat inflammatory conditions.
 - Ginger supplementation also reduces fasting blood sugar, hemoglobin A1c, and apolipoprotein B levels.
- **Other Aspects:**
 - **Global Position:** India contributes 30.48% of global ginger production, making it the world's largest producer, consumer, and exporter of ginger.
 - **Major Producing States:** Karnataka, Orissa, Gujarat, Assam, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh together contribute 65% of India's total ginger production.
 - **Mizoram's Recognition:** NITI Aayog declared Mizoram as the "Ginger Capital of India" due to its high-quality organic ginger production.

Advance Authorisation Scheme

News: Recently, the government has imposed a limit of 100 kg on gold imports under the Advance Authorisation Scheme.

About Advance Authorisation Scheme



Source: PIB

- The **Advance Authorisation Scheme** allows duty-free import of inputs, which are physically incorporated in an export product.
- In addition to any inputs, **packaging material, fuel, oil, and catalyst that are consumed/utilized in the process of production of export product**, are also allowed.
 - The inputs imported are **exempt from duties like** Basic Customs Duty, Additional Customs Duty, Education Cess, Anti-dumping duty, Safeguard Duty and Transition Product-Specific Safeguard duty, Integrated tax, and Compensation Cess, wherever applicable, subject to certain conditions.
- **Implemented by:** It is implemented by the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)**.
- **Coverage:** It covers **manufacturer exporters or merchant exporters tied to supporting manufacturers**.
- **Issued for:** It shall be issued for:
 - **Physical export (including export to SEZ)**
 - **Intermediate supply**
 - Supply of goods to the categories **specified in the categories of deemed exports**.
 - Supply of stores on **board a foreign-going vessel/aircraft**, subject to the condition that there are specific Standard Input Output Norms in respect of the item supplied.
- **Validity:** It is **valid for 12 months from the date of issue** of such Authorisation.
- **About Advance Authorisation Scheme in the jewellery sector:**

- In this sector, **the scheme enables exporters to import gold duty-free for manufacturing export products.**
- The government has **now imposed a limit of 100 kilograms on gold imports under the scheme.**
- **Advance Authorisation for gold imports** will be issued only up to a maximum permissible quantity of 100 kilograms.
- The DGFT has also made **physical inspection of manufacturing facilities mandatory for all first-time applicants** to verify their operational status and production capacity.
- Further, any additional **Advance Authorisation for gold imports will be granted only after the exporter fulfils at least 50 per cent of the export obligation** under the earlier authorisation.
- The DGFT has directed **the concerned regional authorities to submit monthly reports containing details of all Advance Authorisations** issued for gold imports.
- **Note: Earlier**, there was **no restriction on the quantity of gold** that could be imported under the Advance Authorisation Scheme.

Withholding Tax

News: India's foreign exchange reserves have fallen by nearly \$38 billion since March due to capital outflows linked to the West Asia conflict. To attract overseas investments, the government is reportedly considering reducing the withholding tax rate from 20% to 5%.

About Withholding Tax



Source: IE

- Withholding tax is **paid by foreign investors on the interest they earn on their holding of Indian bonds.**
- It is **tax collected at the source of income.**
- Instead of waiting for an investor or foreign company to pay taxes at the end of the financial year, **the government requires the payer to deduct a portion of the income before it is remitted** to the recipient.
 - The deducted amount is then **directly deposited** with the government
- It applies **to income earned through employment, investments, royalties, and other sources,** ensuring advance tax collection.
- **Impacts of Withholding Tax on Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs):**
 - It reduces **foreign portfolio investors' (FPIs) effective yields and overall investment returns** because it is deducted at the source before interest, dividends or other investment income is remitted to them.
 - This **compresses investors' post-tax returns, weakens the power of long-term compounding and limits the amount of capital available** for immediate reinvestment.
 - For large global investors operating across multiple jurisdictions, such deductions **can also create short-term liquidity constraints by locking up funds** until tax credits or refunds are processed.
 - FPIs often face significant administrative and compliance burdens in claiming relief **under Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs).**
 - Higher withholding taxes may **reduce the attractiveness of a market** by increasing transaction costs, lowering risk-adjusted returns and creating regulatory friction for overseas investors.
- **Withholding tax impact on India:** A high withholding tax is seen as a **major deterrent for foreign capital inflows at a time when India is grappling with rising external pressures,** including a sharp surge in crude oil prices.
 - Reducing Withholding tax is needed as the government has already proposed several measures **to curb outflows and manage the external account,** including cuts in

expenditure and restrictions on foreign travel, gold imports and other non-essential spending.

- Lowering the withholding tax could **improve post-tax returns for foreign investors**, make Indian debt and other financial assets more attractive, and help stabilize forex reserves amid heightened global uncertainty.

Neanderthals

News: A new study suggests Neanderthals performed a sophisticated dental procedure around 59,000 years ago using stone tools.

About Neanderthals



Source – IE

- Neanderthals were extinct relatives of modern humans who lived across Europe and parts of Asia.
- Species: The scientific name of Neanderthals was *Homo neanderthalensis*.
- Naming: The name Neanderthal came from the Neander Valley in Germany, where their fossils were first discovered.
- Genetic Legacy & Evolution:
 - Related Species: Neanderthals were closely related to another extinct human group called the Denisovans.
 - Genetic Legacy: Fossil and DNA evidence suggest that the Neanderthal genes still exist in modern human DNA.
- Physical Characteristics:

- **Physical Features:** Neanderthals had large facial structures, angled cheek bones, and a huge nose suited for cold and dry climates.
- **Body Structure:** Their bodies were shorter, stockier, and highly muscular, which helped them survive in cold environments.
- **Brain Size:** Their brains were as large as, and often larger than, those of modern humans.
- **Culture and Intelligence:**
 - **Stone Technology:** Around 300,000 years ago, they developed the innovative Levallois technique for making stone tools.
 - **Diet and Hunting:** They hunted large animals, ate plant foods, and used sophisticated tools.
 - **Art:** They occasionally created symbolic or ornamental objects and marked graves with offerings like flowers.
 - **Community Care:** Evidence suggests they cared for injured and sick members and even performed difficult dental treatment.
- **Theories of Extinction:** Neanderthals are believed to have disappeared roughly 40,000 years ago after modern humans migrated deeper into Europe.

Ebola Virus

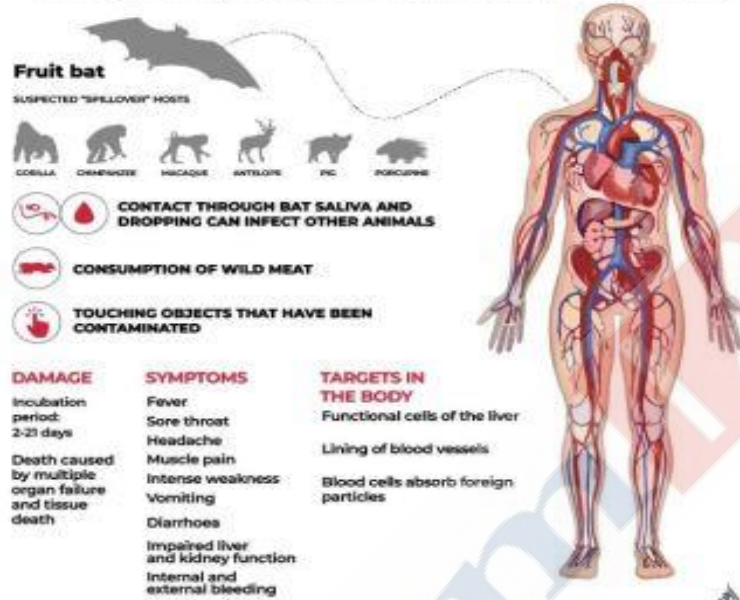
News: The WHO declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a public health emergency after 80 deaths.

About Ebola Virus

Ebola virus disease

Ebola is notorious for causing severe internal and external bleeding by attacking blood vessels. First identified in 1976, most outbreaks have occurred in parts of Africa, killing at least 15,000 people.

According to the WHO, it is thought that fruit bats are natural hosts of the 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 Taï 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.
- 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.
 - 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**.

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- **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

- It is a well-known variety of **mango of Gujarat**.

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- **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**.

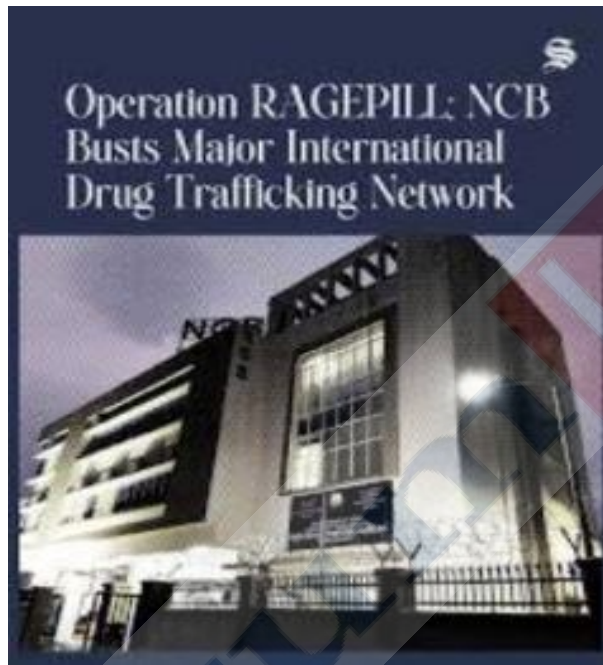
About Mango Production in India

- 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:**

Factly Compilation May 2026

- **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

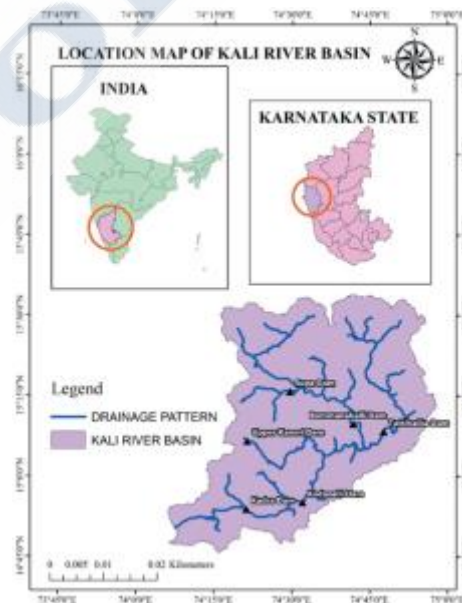
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- The Summit is a high-level meeting between India and Nordic countries to strengthen strategic cooperation.
- Venue : The 3rd India-Nordic Summit will be held in Norway (Oslo) in May 2026.
- Previous Summits: The earlier Summits were held in Stockholm 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

- **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, Kodashalli, 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	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	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	The Awards are given in three categories: 1) Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), 2) Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher-order) and 3) Padma Shri (distinguished service). ● 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	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	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



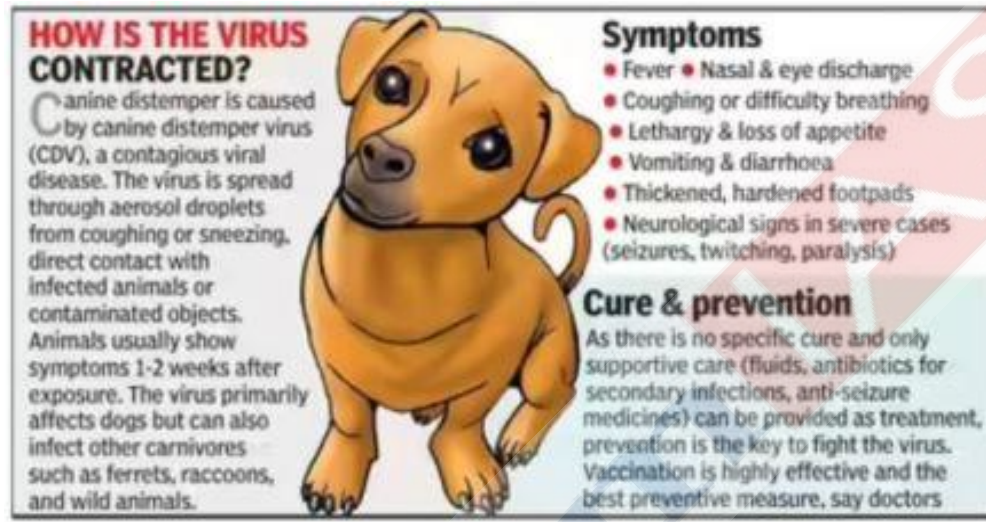
Source – PIB

- **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

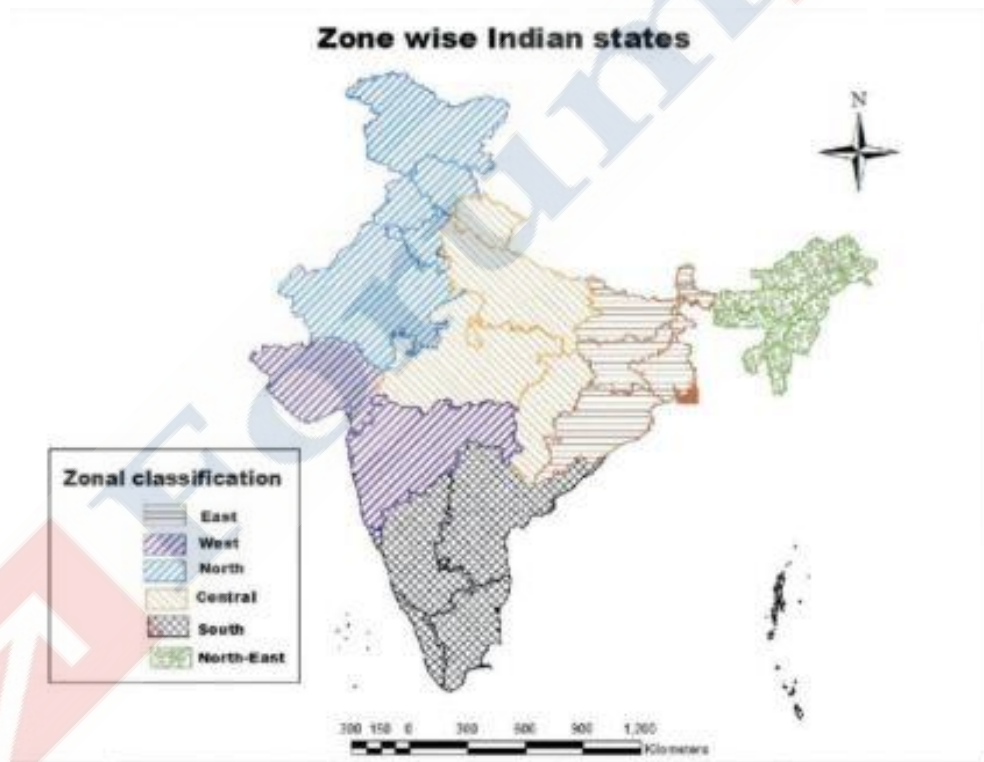
- **Canine Distemper** is a contagious and serious viral disease caused by the **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)** that affects dogs and several mammals, but it does not affect humans.
- **Virus Type:** It is caused by a single-stranded RNA virus of the family **Paramyxoviridae**.
- **Affected Species:** 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



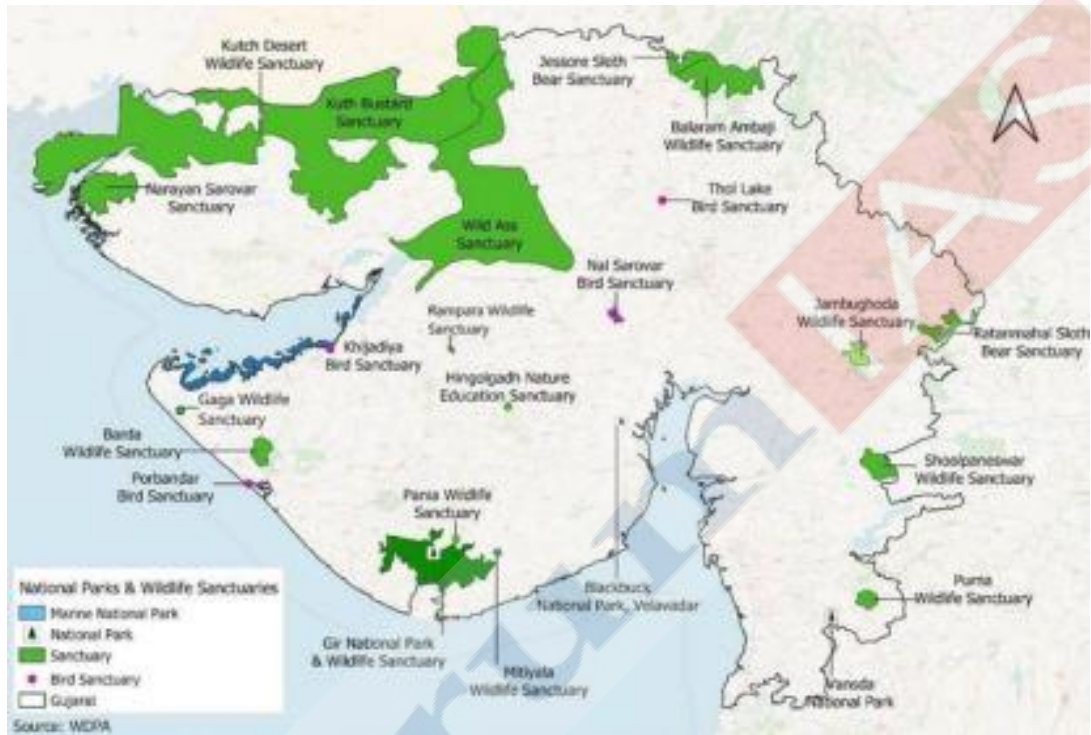
Source: Economic times

- **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



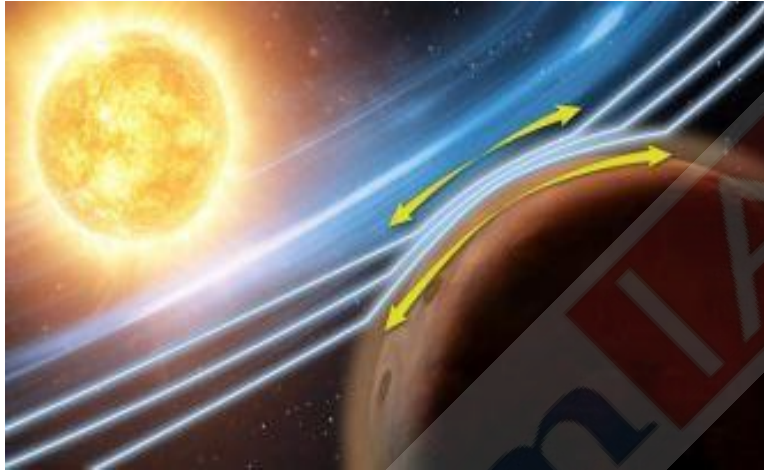
Source – IE

- **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 EvolutionN (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 cere (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 Agrícola Medal

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the prestigious FAO Agrícola 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 Agrícola 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 from 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

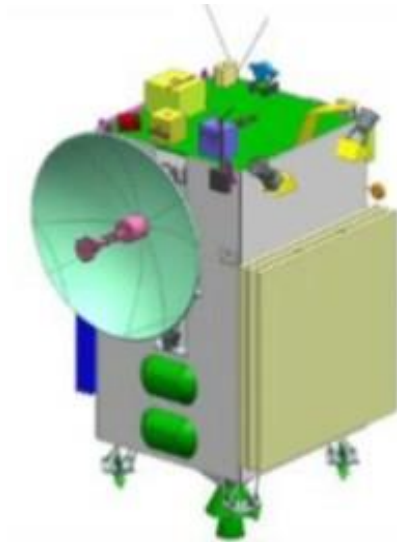
- Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary is located between two districts (Kurukshetra and Kaithal) of Haryana.
- It was established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1988.
- It holds the distinction of being the third-largest forest in Haryana.
- Area: It occupies an area of 11,003 acres.
- River associated: The [Saraswati 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 $170 \times 36,000$ 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.

Bismarck Sea

News: A submarine volcanic eruption began on 8 May along the Titan Ridge in the Bismarck Sea, highlighting poor mapping of Earth's deep ocean floor.

About Bismarck Sea



Source – Free World Maps

- **Location:** The Bismarck Sea lies in the southwestern Pacific Ocean near the northeast coast of Papua New Guinea.
- **Nomenclature:** It was named after the German statesman Otto von Bismarck.
- **Area:** It covers about 40,000 sq. km.
- **Boundaries:** It is bounded to the southwest by the northeast coast of Papua New Guinea and from the northwest to southeast by the Bismarck Archipelago.
- **Bismarck Archipelago:** It includes the Admiralty Islands (north), New Ireland (east), and New Britain (southeast).
- **Linkages:** The sea opens to the Pacific Ocean in the north and connects to the Solomon Sea through the Vitiaz and Dampier straits and St. George's Channel.
- **Depth:** The basin has a depth of about 2,000 m to 2,500 m.
- **Basin Division:** A central ridge divides the basin into the eastern New Ireland section and the western New Guinea section.
- **Tectonic Activity:** The Bismarck Sea lies in a geologically complex zone with faults, volcanic ridges, rifts, active subduction zones, and spreading zones at great depths.
- **Mineral Richness:** Such active tectonic and volcanic processes make the region important for deep-sea mineral richness.

- **Historical Importance:** During World War II, the sea witnessed major naval battles, including the 1943 Battle of the Bismarck Sea, where Allied forces stopped a Japanese convoy.

Agni-1 Ballistic Missile

News: Short-range ballistic missile Agni-1 was successfully test-launched from Chandipur, Odisha, on May 22, 2026, under Strategic Forces Command.

About Agni-1 Ballistic Missile



Source – ET

- **Agni-1 is an indigenously developed, nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Short-Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM).**
 - The Agni missile series includes Agni-I, Agni-II, Agni-III, Agni-IV, Agni-V, with Agni-V being the most advanced missile in the series.
- **Origin:** Agni-1 originated from India's 1983 Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), and its development began in the mid-1990s.
- **Developed by:** The missile was developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and produced by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- **Test and Induction:** It was first test-fired in January 2002 and inducted into the Indian Army in 2004.
- **Operational Deployment:** It was later handed over to the Strategic Forces Command for operational deployment and regular training exercises..
- **Key Features:**
 - **Missile Type:** Agni-1 is a single-stage, solid-fuelled surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missile, although it can reach medium-range capability with lighter payloads.
 - **Range:** The missile has a range of 700 km to 1200 km, depending on the payload carried during operations.
 - **Payload Capacity:** It can carry a payload of up to 1,000 kg, including nuclear or conventional warheads.
 - **Propulsion System:** The missile uses a solid-propellant booster based on ISRO's SLV-3 and employs HTPB (Hydroxyl-Terminated Polybutadiene) composite propellant with high thrust generation.

- **Mobility:** Agni-1 can be launched from rail-based platforms or road-mobile transporter erector launchers (TEs), improving survivability and rapid deployment capability.
- **Guidance and Navigation System:** The missile uses a strapdown inertial guidance system along with thrust vectoring and wingtip control surfaces for accurate maneuvering and precision targeting.

Sakura Science Programme 2026

News: The Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education (MoE), today flagged off a group of students participating in the Sakura Science Programme 2026 at a ceremony held at NCERT, New Delhi.

About Sakura Science Programme 2026



Source – JST

- The Sakura Science Exchange Program invites young minds from Asia and around the world to Japan for short-term cultural and scientific exchanges.
- **Aim:** It aims to deepen scientific curiosity, foster international collaboration, and introduce participants to Japan's cutting-edge research and technology.
- **Also known as:** Japan Asia Youth Exchange Program in Science
- **Implemented by:** Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)
- **Launched in:** 2014
- Under the programme, students are invited to Japan for one week to experience the country's advanced science and technology ecosystem and its rich cultural heritage.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Students, researchers and others engaged in science and technology who are 40 years old or younger from all countries and regions are invited.
 - Individuals cannot apply directly to the program. Participants must be nominated by their home institution in coordination with a host organization in Japan.

Himalayan Tricarinate Hill Turtle

News: The Himalayan Tricarinate Hill Turtle was recently discovered in Chhattisgarh's Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve, indicating improving ecological conditions and intact forest habitats.

About Himalayan Tricarinate Hill Turtle



Source – Conservation Optimism

- The tricarinate hill turtle or three-keeled land turtle (*Melanochelys tricarinata*) is a small terrestrial turtle species belonging to the family Geoemydidae.
- **Habitat:** The turtle mainly inhabits temperate forests, riverine grasslands, foothills of the Himalayas, moist deciduous forests, and wet evergreen forests with perennial water sources.
- **Distribution:** The species is found across the narrow sub-Himalayan belt covering northeastern India, southern Nepal, southern Bhutan, and northern Bangladesh.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Body Features:** The species has a highly domed carapace, a small olive-to-dark coloured head with a narrow snout, and robust scaly limbs adapted for terrestrial movement.
 - **Appearance:** The turtle derives its name from the three distinct keels present on its shell.
 - **Behaviour:** It is a shy, secretive, and primarily terrestrial species that is rarely spotted even within its normal habitat range.
 - **Size:** It is a small to medium-sized turtle with a carapace length reaching up to 174 mm.
 - **Reproduction:** The species lays eggs at a time during winter months, and the incubation period ranges from 60 to 72 days.
 - **Omnivorous.** Their diet consists of earthworms, insects, mushrooms, and various plant materials.
- **Major Threats:** The turtle depends heavily on dense forests, intact microhabitats, and minimal human disturbance, making habitat disturbance a serious concern for its survival.
- **Conservation Status**
 - IUCN Red List: Endangered

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

News: India and Italy agreed to further develop the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) to strengthen trade, investment and supply-chain resilience.

About India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)



Source – IMEC International

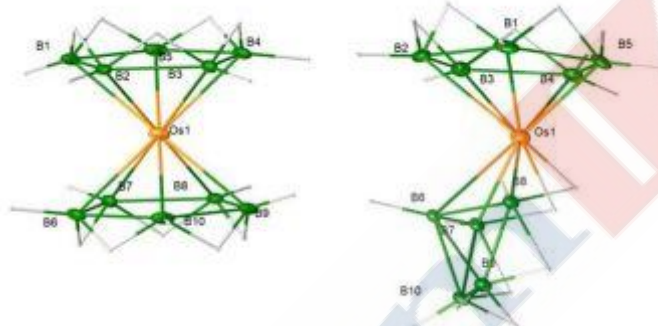
- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is a visionary, multinational infrastructure project that aims to revolutionize global trade and connectivity.
- **Announced in:** It was officially announced on September 9, 2023, during the G20 Summit in New Delhi.
- **Route:** The economic corridor consists of an infrastructure route from India to Europe through the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Greece.
- **Corridors:** The IMEC will comprise of two separate corridors –
 - The East Corridor– connecting India to the Arabian Gulf,
 - The Northern Corridor– connecting the Gulf to Europe.
- The IMEC corridor will also include an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline and a high-speed data cable.
- **Objective:** The corridor will provide reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship to rail transit network to supplement existing maritime routes.
- **Vision:** IMEC is aligned with the global shift towards sustainable infrastructure development, promoting:
 - Reduced carbon emissions through energy-efficient logistics.
 - Green tech integration across transport and supply chains.
 - Inclusive growth by connecting underserved regions.
- **Benefits:** It intends to increase efficiency, reduce costs, secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility, enhance economic cooperation, and generate jobs and lower greenhouse gas emission, resulting in a transformative integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East (West Asia).

- Part of: The project, which also forms part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), may also serve as a counter to China's economic influence in the Eurasian region.

Ferrocene

News: Researchers at IIT Madras and IISc Bengaluru synthesized a new carbon-free molecule that copies ferrocene's unusual sandwich structure.

About Ferrocene



Source – TH

- **Ferrocene:** It is an orange crystalline organometallic compound that has a unique sandwich-like molecular structure.
- **Formula:** Ferrocene has the chemical formula $\text{Fe}(\text{C}_5\text{H}_5)_2$.
- **Structure:** Ferrocene consists of an iron atom sandwiched between two flat carbon ringed-molecules, which gives it a unique structure.
- **Appearance:** Ferrocene occurs as highly stable orange crystals with a melting point of 174°C (345°F).
- **Discovery:** Ferrocene was first prepared in 1951 by the reaction of sodium cyclopentadienide with iron(+2) chloride.
- **Key Properties:**
 - **Chemical Behaviour:** Ferrocene behaves like benzene and other aromatic compounds because it undergoes substitution reactions.
 - **Solubility:** Ferrocene has good solubility in many organic solvents, but it is insoluble in water.
 - **Structural Stability:** Its sandwich-like structure has attracted major scientific interest for decades because of its stability.
 - **Scientific Importance:** The discovery of ferrocene launched the field of organometallic chemistry.
- **Key Applications:**

- Medicines and Batteries: Ferrocene is used in medicines and battery-related technologies.
- Advanced Materials and Electronics: It is used in advanced materials research and electronics.
- Significance: Ferrocene is scientifically important because its unique structure inspired decades of research into similar stable molecules.

National Sports Governance Board Rules and National Sports Tribunal Rules, 2026

News: The Union Government notified the National Sports Governance Board Rules, 2026 and National Sports Tribunal Rules, 2026 under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025.

About National Sports Governance Board Rules and National Sports Tribunal Rules, 2026



Source – DH

- These Rules provide the framework for sports governance, recognition, dispute resolution, and administrative functioning in the country.
- Notified Under: The Rules were notified under the provisions of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025.
- Key Features of The National Sports Governance Board Rules, 2026:
 - Composition of Board: The National Sports Board shall consist of a Chairperson and two Members appointed by the Central Government.
 - Selection Process: The appointments shall be made from a panel of names recommended by the Search-cum-Selection Committee constituted under the National Sports Board (Search-cum-Selection Committee) Rules, 2026.
 - Administrative Provisions: The Rules provide for the term of office, salary, allowances, service conditions, powers and functions of the Board.
 - Recognition Role: The National Sports Board will function as the central authority for granting recognition to National Sports Bodies.
 - Compliance Function: The Board will ensure compliance with governance, financial and ethical standards by National Sports Bodies.
- Key Features of The National Sports Tribunal Rules, 2026:

- **Tribunal Administration:** The Rules define appointment, re-appointment, tenure, salary, allowances and powers of the Tribunal.
- **Digital Measures:** The Rules provide for a dedicated portal, virtual hearings, publication of orders and digital maintenance of records.
- **Dispute Resolution Role:** The Tribunal will function as a dedicated adjudicatory body for sports-related disputes.
- **Single-Window Mechanism:** The Tribunal aims to ensure faster, simpler, accessible and cost-efficient disposal of disputes.

Singalila National Park

News: Communities in Darjeeling predict the arrival of rains with a bird call of Bay Woodpecker found in dense forest of Singalila National Park.

About Singalila National Park



Source: Researchgate

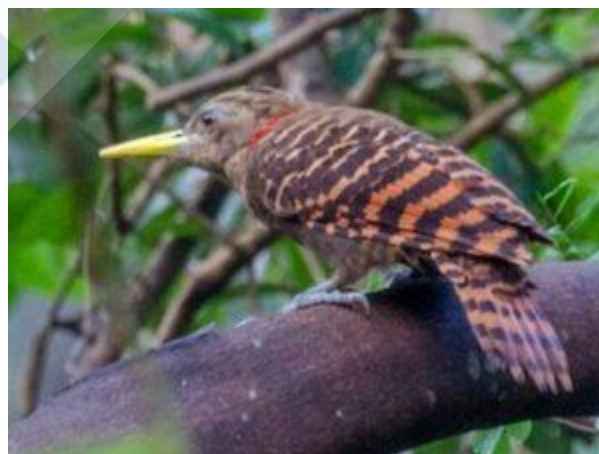
- **Location:** Singalila National Park is located on the Singalila Ridge at an altitude of more than 7000 feet above mean sea level, in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal.
 - **The Singalila Ridge** runs from north to south and separates the Himalayan region of West Bengal from the other Eastern Himalayan mountain ranges on the west side.

- The park is located in the Eastern Himalayas.
- **Boundary:** It is bordered by the state of Sikkim in the north and Nepal in the west.
- **Establishment:** It was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1986, and was made a National Park in 1992.
 - The region had long been used as the trekking route from Manebhanjyang to Sandakphu (the highest peak of West Bengal) and Phalut.
- **Peak:** The two highest peaks of West Bengal, Sandakphu (3630 m) and Phalut (3600 m) are located on the ridge and inside the park.
- **Associated rivers:** River Rammam and River Sirikhola flow through the park.
- **Flora:** Thick bamboo, oak, magnolia and rhododendron forest between 2000 and 3600 m cover the Singalila Ridge.
 - There are two seasons of wildflower bloom – one in spring when the Rhododendrons bloom, and another in the post-monsoon season, when the lower forests bloom (Primula, Geranium, Saxifraga, Bistort, Senecio, Cotoneaster and numerous orchids).
 - Sandakphu is known as the “mountain of poisonous plants” due to the large concentration of Himalayan Cobra Lilies (Arisaema), which grow there.
- **Fauna:** The park has a number of small mammals, including the Red Panda, Leopard Cat, Barking Deer, Yellow-throated Marten, Wild Boar, Pangolin and the Pika.
 - Larger mammals include the Himalayan Black Bear, Leopard, Clouded Leopard, Serow and the Takin. Tigers occasionally wander into the area.
 - The park is also on the flyway of many migratory birds.
 - The endangered Himalayan Newt frequents the region, and congregates around the lakes of Jore Pokhri, Sukhia Pokhri and nearby lakes.

Bay Woodpecker or Blythipicus pyrrhotis

News: The bay woodpecker gained attention through research linking its call with rainfall patterns and healthy forests in Darjeeling.

About Bay Woodpecker or Blythipicus pyrrhotis



Source – eBird

- The Bay Woodpecker (*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*) is a medium-sized woodpecker species belonging to the Picidae family.
- Ecological role: It acts as an ecological indicator of healthy and functioning forest ecosystems.
 - In rural Darjeeling, communities predict the arrival of rains with the call of this bird.
- Habitat: The bird lives in subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests, moist montane forests, evergreen forests, mixed deciduous forests, and heavily wooded ravines with dense growth.
- Distribution: The species is found in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Characteristics:
 - Appearance: The bird has a rich reddish-chestnut brown body with black banding on the wings and tail, a paler brown head, and a long bright yellow bill.
 - Size and weight: It measures 26.5–30 cm in length and weighs around 126–170 g.
 - Sexual Dimorphism: Only the male has a red patch on the back of the head, while the female has a paler head and a shorter bill.
 - Vocalization: The bird gives a loud descending call resembling falling laughter and also produces a long dry rattle for contact between mates.
 - Diet: Its diet mainly includes ants, termites, wood-boring beetles, and occasionally berries.
- Conservation Status
 - IUCN Red List: Least Concern (LC)

2026 Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Invitational Tournament and 48th WorldSkills Shanghai 2026

News: Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, Shri Jayant Chaudhary sent off the Indian contingent participating in 2026 Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Invitational Tournament.

About 2026 Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Invitational Tournament



Source: PIB

- It is regarded as an important international platform for vocational excellence and technical innovation.
- **Organised at:** It is being held in Taipei, Taiwan, from 26–28 May 2026.
- **Participation:** The five-member Indian contingent will compete with participants from around 15 countries in the tournament
 - The contingent comprises gold medal winners from the IndiaSkills National Competition 2025–26, along with candidates selected through the wildcard entry process.
- It will promote global skills development, technical excellence, international collaboration, and workforce innovation and will also help participants gain real-world competitive experience at an international level.
- **Nodal ministry involved from India:** Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- **Features:**
 - India will compete in five skill categories at the 2026 Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Competition.
 - Arjun Sumathi Vijayabashkar will be representing the country in Mobile Applications Development
 - Mohamed Mafaz Poonaikannan Rabi Ahamed in Software Applications Development
 - Muskan in Painting & Decorating
 - Md Seraj in Automobile Technology, and
 - Suresh Kumar Ganesan Meena in Digital Construction.
 - This year's edition of the competition features 10 skill categories spanning critical sectors linked to smart manufacturing and digital transformation, including

Industrial Mechanics, IT Network Systems Administration, Mobile Applications Development, Industry 4.0, Automobile Technology, and Digital Construction (BIM).

- **Significance:** India's participation in the tournament marks an important step in the country's preparation journey towards the 48th WorldSkills Shanghai 2026.
 - The competition will provide Team India with early exposure to international standards and act as a crucial warm-up platform ahead of the global competition.

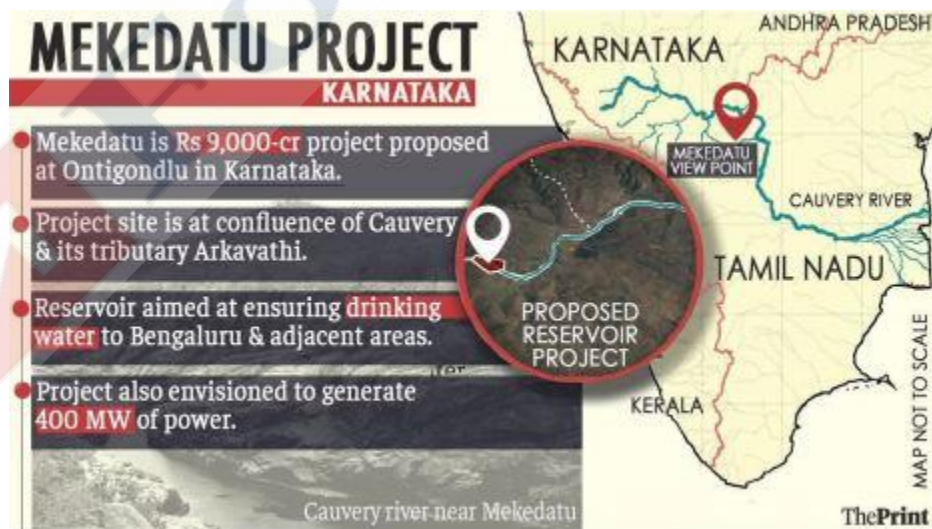
About 48th WorldSkills Shanghai 2026

- The WorldSkills Competition is the world's biggest international skills competition, bringing together young people, industry, education and government leaders from around the world to advance Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
- The 48th WorldSkills Competition will take place 22-27 September 2026.
- Hosted city: It is hosted in Shanghai, China.
- Hosted by: It is being hosted by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, the Shanghai Municipal People's Government, and WorldSkills International.
- Frequency: It is held every two years.
- Expected Participation: An estimated 1,400 Competitors from 73 countries and regions will compete in 64 skills, including seven new emerging occupations.
- Skills range from Robotics, Cloud Computing, and Cybersecurity to Aircraft Maintenance, Cooking, and Welding.

Mekedatu Project and Arkavathi River

News: The Supreme Court dismissed Tamil Nadu's review petition against the Mekedatu project and rejected its request for open court hearing.

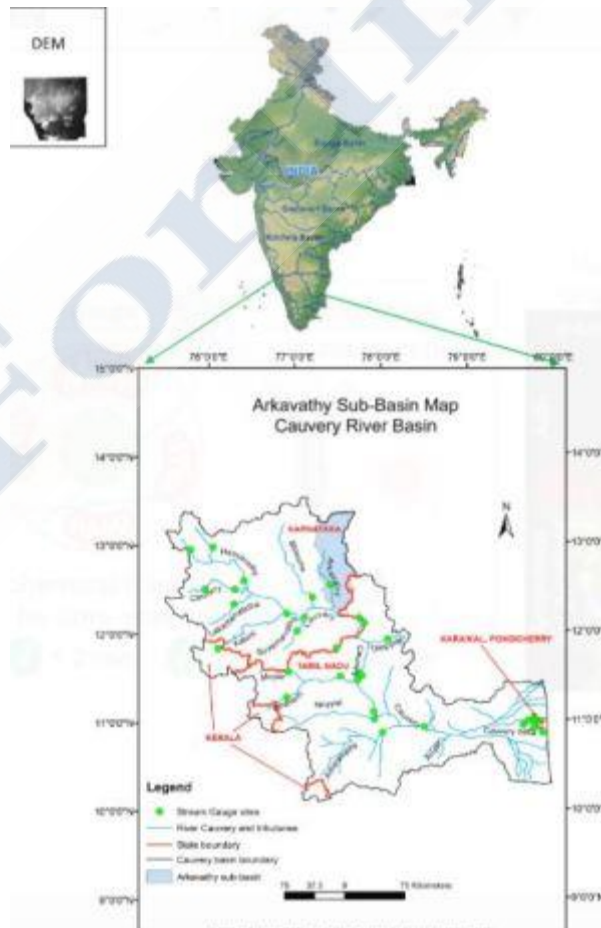
About Mekedatu Project



Source – The Print

- **The Mekedatu Project** is a multi-purpose balancing reservoir and drinking water project initiated by the Government of Karnataka.
- **Location:** The project is located near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district, Karnataka, about 90 km from Bengaluru and near the Tamil Nadu border.
- **River Confluence:** The project site is located at the confluence of the Cauvery River and its tributary Arkavathi River.
- **Naming:** Mekedatu means “goat’s leap” and refers to a deep gorge situated at the river confluence.
- **Project Specifications:**
 - The project includes a 99-m-high and 735-m-long concrete gravity dam, an underground powerhouse, and a water conductor system.
 - The reservoir will store about 66 tmcft of water and generate 400 MW hydroelectric power.
- **Objective:** The project aims to supply about 4.75 TMC drinking water to Bengaluru and nearby areas while also generating power.
- **Major Issues:** Tamil Nadu opposes the project because it fears reduction in downstream Cauvery water flow, which may affect agriculture and drinking water supply.
- **Significance:** The project is important for Bengaluru’s drinking water needs and hydroelectric power generation.

About Arkavathi River



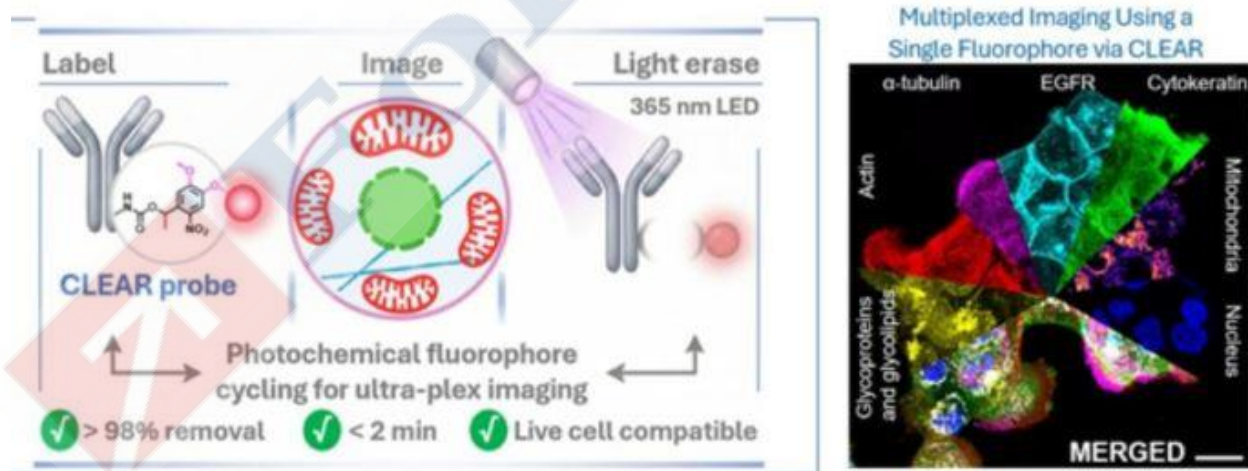
Source – ResearchGate

- The Arkavathi River is an important mountain river in Karnataka and a major tributary of the Kaveri River.
- Origin: The river originates from Nandi Hills in Chikkaballapura district.
- Course: The river flows southward through Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, and Mandya districts before joining the Kaveri River near Sangama around 34 km south of Kanakapura.
- Length: The total length of the river is about 190 km.
- Confluence (Mouth): The river merges with the Kaveri River at Sangama near Makedatu.
- Major Tributaries: The tributaries include Kumudavathi, Suvarnamukhi, Vrishabhavathi, Antharamukhi, and Devamukhi.
- Key Features:
 - River Basin: Nearly one-third of Bengaluru city lies within its 4,150 sq. km. river basin.
 - Chunchi Falls: The river forms Chunchi Falls near Haroshivanahalli during its course.
- Major Reservoirs: The river feeds the Hesaraghatta Reservoir and Thippagondanahalli Reservoir, which supply drinking water to Bangalore.

Cleavable Light-Erased Antibody Reporter (CLEAR) Platform

News: Researchers at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research developed the CLEAR platform for high-resolution protein mapping.

About Cleavable Light-Erased Antibody Reporter (CLEAR) Platform



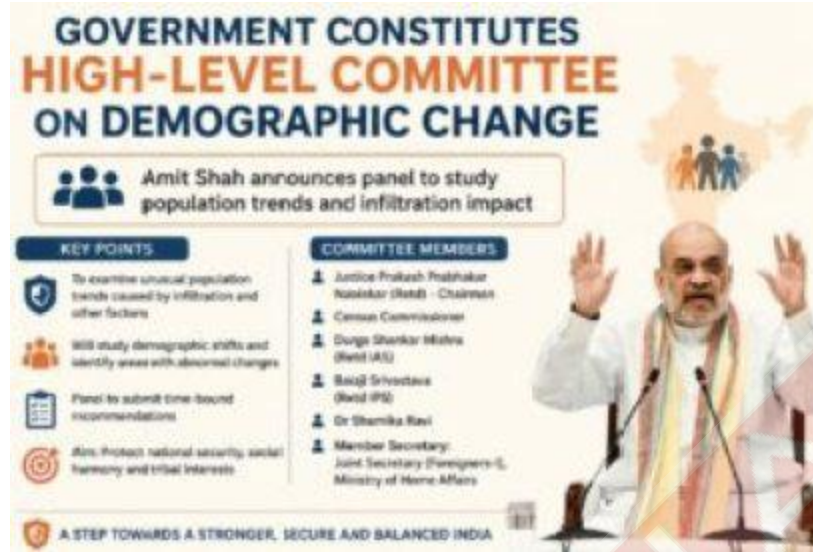
Source – DST

- **Cleavable Light-Erased Antibody Reporter (CLEAR):** It is a novel spatial protein imaging platform that enables visualization and mapping of a large number of proteins within the same sample.
- **Developed by:** The platform was developed by researchers at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- **Working Mechanism:**
 - **Targeted Labelling:** Scientists use CLEAR probes containing antibodies linked with fluorescent tags through a light-sensitive chemical bond to label proteins.
 - **Image Capture:** The labelled proteins are imaged under a microscope within the same spectral window.
 - **Photolytic Erasing:** A gentle pulse of 365 nm LED light removes the fluorescent signal by cleaving the chemical bond without damaging the sample.
 - **Cyclic Rewriting:** A new set of proteins is labelled and imaged repeatedly in the same optical window to generate detailed protein maps.
 - **Detailed Mapping:** Repeated imaging cycles create information-rich maps across cells and tissue sections.
- **Key Features of CLEAR:**
 - **High-Plex Multiplexing:** It enables visualization of a very large number of proteins within a single biological sample.
 - **Live-Cell Compatibility:** The gentle light-erasing process preserves delicate biological samples, including live cells.
 - **High Spatial Resolution:** It captures the precise spatial arrangement of proteins within tissues.
 - **Speed and Simplified Imaging:** The platform repeatedly uses a single fluorescent channel and reduces dependence on complex multi-laser imaging systems.
 - **Chalkboard-Like Imaging:** The platform repeatedly erases and rewrites fluorescent signals like a chalkboard using a single fluorophore.
- **Significance:** CLEAR can improve disease diagnosis, biomedical research, and precision medicine through comprehensive high-resolution protein mapping.

High-Level Committee on Demographic Change

News: The Government of India constituted a High-Level Committee to study demographic changes caused by illegal immigration and other abnormal reasons.

About High-Level Committee on Demographic Change



Source – Bharat Express

- The High-Level Committee on Demographic Change is a government committee formed to scientifically study demographic changes in India.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)
- Aim: The Committee aims to study the causes and consequences of demographic changes arising from illegal immigration and other abnormal reasons and recommend suitable measures.
- Composition of the Committee:
 - Chairman: Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar (Retired Supreme Court Judge)
 - Members:
 - The Census Commissioner of India
 - Shri Durga Shanker Mishra (Retired IAS officer)
 - Shri Balaji Srivastava (Retired IPS officer)
 - Dr. Shamika Ravi (Eminent Economist)
 - Member Secretary: The Joint Secretary (Foreigners-I), Ministry of Home Affairs, will be the Member Secretary.
- Timeline: The Committee will submit its report within one year.
 - The Ministry of Home Affairs may extend its tenure by up to six months if required.
- Key Mandates & Terms of Reference (ToR):
 - Assessment of Challenges: The Committee will comprehensively deliberate upon challenges arising from demographic changes, including illegal immigration.
 - Study of Causes and Factors: The Committee will study causes and identify underlying factors behind demographic changes, including cross-border activities, economic opportunities, illegal immigration, abnormal settlement patterns, and orchestrated migration.
 - Population Analysis: The Committee will analyse structural population changes among religious and social communities where trends differ significantly.

- **Mechanism for Illegal Immigrants:** The Committee will recommend a legal, fair, and time-bound mechanism for identification, detention, and deportation of illegal immigrants.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** The Committee will suggest mechanisms to strengthen border management, population stabilization, and identification systems.
- **Centre-State Coordination:** The Committee will propose a policy framework for better coordination between the Central and State Governments.
- **Additional Measures:** The Committee may recommend any other suitable measures to address demographic changes and illegal immigration.

Medical Innovations Patent Mitra: I2I Connect

News: ICMR, under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, successfully organized “Medical Innovations Patent Mitra: Innovators-to-Industry (I2I) Connect.”

About Medical Innovations Patent Mitra: I2I Connect



Source: NDTV

- It is India's largest biomedical and technology transfer facilitation event held at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.
- **Organized by:** It has been organized by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It has establishment of one of the country's first structured platforms dedicated to biomedical innovation showcasing and technology transfer under the ICMR Medical Innovation Patent Mitra initiative.
- **Aim:** It aims to bridge the gap between laboratory research and commercial healthcare products.
 - It also aims to support India's goal of becoming more self-reliant in healthcare technologies.
- **Focus:** It focuses on turning Indian medical research into practical healthcare solutions that can reach hospitals, laboratories, and patients faster.
- **Highlights of the Event:**

- The Indian Biomedical Patent Landscape Report and the Technology Compendium were launched during the event.
- A key highlight was the transfer of 41 public health technologies from Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) institutes and innovators to industry partners for further development, manufacturing, and commercialization.
 - These technologies covered advanced diagnostics, vaccines, medical devices, and biomedical solutions aimed at addressing major public health challenges.
 - Transferred technologies: The transferred technologies included glycoconjugate and recombinant vaccines for Typhoid and Paratyphoid, along with diagnostic technologies for diseases such as Japanese Encephalitis, Tuberculosis, and Mpox.
- First, well-characterized biomaterials, including inactivated KFD and Chandipura viruses, were also handed over to industry partners, further strengthening India's biomedical research and manufacturing ecosystem.
- The event also featured over 100 technologies in diagnostics, therapeutics, and medical devices developed by ICMR institutes, researchers, and startups, while enabling direct interaction between innovators and industry stakeholders.

About Medical Innovation Patent Mitra Initiative

- Medical Innovations Patent Mitra initiative is a centralized, expert-driven platform that supports Patent filing, prosecution, maintenance and transfer of technologies for societal impact.
- Initiated by: It has been launched by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
 - The initiative was guided by NITI Aayog in partnership with the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) and supported by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- Aim: The initiative aims to translate indigenous biomedical research into accessible, real-world healthcare solutions through strong industry partnerships.
- This initiative provides handholding support to innovators for quality patent filing, strategic patent management, and technology transfer.
- It ensures that innovations developed through ICMR intramural and extramural research, medical institutions, DPIIT-registered startups, and institute-led biomedical innovators are effectively utilized and commercialized.

Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme

News: Joint Secretary of Ministry of Food Processing Industries, addressed a media interaction regarding the implementation and achievements of the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme.

About Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme



Source: PIB

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme launched by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries(MOFPI).
- Nodal Ministry: It was launched in 2020 as part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- Budget outlay: It has a budget outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore.
- Duration: It has been approved for implementation from 2020-21 to 2024-25 and has been extended till September 2026.
- Aim: It aims to
 - Modernize and enhance the competitiveness of the existing individual micro enterprises and ensure their transition to formal sector.
 - Provide support to Farmer Producer Organizations, Self Help Groups, and Producers Cooperatives along their entire value chain.
- Funding Pattern: The expenditure under the PM-FME scheme would be shared in 60:40 ratio between Central and State Governments, in 90:10 ratio with North Eastern and Himalayan States, 60:40 ratio with UTs with legislature and 100% by Centre for other UTs.
- Key Components of PMFME Scheme
 - Credit-Linked Subsidy for Individual Micro Food Processing Enterprises: A 35% subsidy (up to ₹10 lakh) is provided to individuals for setting up or upgrading micro food processing units.
 - Credit-Linked Subsidy for Common Infrastructure: Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), and similar entities are eligible for a 35% credit-linked subsidy (up to ₹3 crore) to establish or upgrade common infrastructure facilities.
 - Seed Capital Assistance: Financial support of ₹40,000 per SHG member engaged in food processing is available for working capital requirements and the purchase of small tools and equipment.

- **Capacity Building:** Structured training programs are offered, including Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) training for both individual and group applicants and specialised training for SHG members receiving seed capital assistance.
- **Incubation Centres:** Support is provided for establishing and strengthening Common Incubation Centres that serve as local hubs for food processing, training, testing, and entrepreneurship development.
- **Branding & Marketing Support:** A 50% financial grant is available for branding and marketing initiatives for groups such as FPOs, SHGs, cooperatives, regional/state-level SPVs, and state agencies.
 - Assistance also includes trademark registration, product standardisation, packaging development, e-commerce integration, and trade promotion for ODOP brands.
- **Handholding Support:** Dedicated resource persons at the state and district levels assist applicants throughout the formalisation process.
- **One District One Product (ODOP):** The scheme follows the One District One Product (ODOP) approach to scale up procurement, services, and marketing.
 - States identify products, with priority on perishables such as fruits, vegetables, spices, fisheries, and traditional foods like honey and turmeric.
 - Support is focused on processing, storage, branding, and reducing wastage.
 - Capital investment is prioritised for ODOP units, and new enterprises are eligible only for ODOP products.
- **Coverage:** Under the scheme, 2,00,000 micro food processing units will be directly assisted with credit-linked subsidies.
 - Adequate supportive common infrastructure and institutional architecture will be supported to accelerate the growth of the sector.
- **Benefits:** The program has four broad components addressing the needs of the sector:
 - Support to individuals and groups of micro-enterprises.
 - Branding and Marketing support.
 - Support for strengthening institutions.
 - Setting up a robust project management framework.

Gynacantha khasiaca

News: *Gynacantha khasiaca*, a rare dragonfly, has resurfaced in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district, about 600 km east of where it was first recorded 110 years ago.

About *Gynacantha khasiaca*



Source – TH

- It is commonly known as the long-tailed duskhawker.
- Family: Aeshnidae
- Order: Odonata (dragonflies & damselflies)
- Ecological role: It is crucial component of freshwater ecosystems, as predators and prey in the aquatic food web.
- Habitat: It is mostly found around the vicinity of freshwater habitats like rivers, streams, marshes, lakes and even small pools and rice fields.
- Distribution: Globally, it is found in north-east India, Nepal and Bangladesh.
 - In India, beyond Arunachal Pradesh, the long-tailed duskhawker has been documented in Assam, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal.
 - Rediscovery: It is discovered in Arunachal Pradesh, after a gap of 110 years from the Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve.
 - It was last described from the erstwhile Abor Hills in 1914.
- Characteristics
 - This insect has two compound eyes, each with thousands of tiny lenses and photoreceptor clusters.
 - Due to this, it enjoys a near-360° while staying still in the air.
 - It has a black “T”-shaped mark on its forehead.
 - Its thorax is bright green with dark stripes, its wings are transparent with an amber tint, and it possesses a characteristically long, black-tipped abdomen.
- Conservation status
 - IUCN Red List: Data Deficient

India's First Indigenous Hydrogen Train and Hydrogen Fuel Cell (HFC)

News: In a major step towards green and sustainable transportation, Indian Railways has approved the introduction of a 10-car Hydrogen Fuel Cell-based trainset on the dedicated Jind-Sonipat section of Northern Railway.

About India's First Indigenous Hydrogen Train

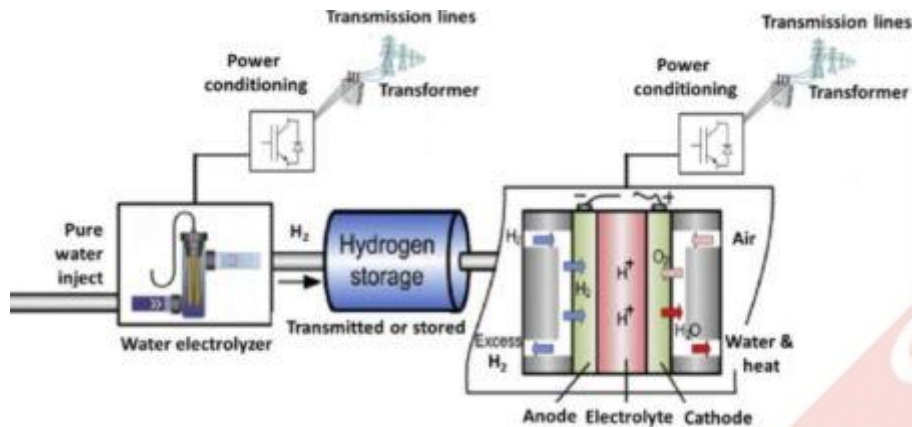
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Source – DD India

- Indian Railways has approved the introduction of a 10-car Hydrogen Fuel Cell-based trainset.
- Dedicated route: The train will travel on the dedicated Jind-Sonapat section (Haryana) of Northern Railway.
- Agencies involved
 - Developed by: It is developed by Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF).
 - The train is designed as per specifications framed by the Research, Design & Standards Organization (RDSO).
 - The Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) has granted the required license for storage and dispensing of compressed hydrogen gas.
- Indian Railways under “Hydrogen for Heritage” envisages deploying 35 hydrogen-powered trains on heritage and hill routes across the country.
- Prominent features of Hydrogen Train-set are as below:
 - Designed and Developed in India demonstrating Indian Railways’ commitment to Atmanirbhar Bharat.
 - Presently, it is the world’s longest (10 coaches) and most powerful (2400 kW) Hydrogen Train-set on Broad Gauge platform.
 - The train-set comprises of two Driving Power Cars (DPCs) of 1200 kW each, totaling 2400 kW along with eight passenger cars.
 - Zero CO₂ emissions; only emission is water vapour.
 - The trainset will operate at a maximum speed of 75 kmph.
- With this initiative, India joins a select group of countries such as Germany, Japan, China and the United States that are exploring the use of hydrogen for cleaner rail transportation.

About Hydrogen Fuel Cell (HFC)



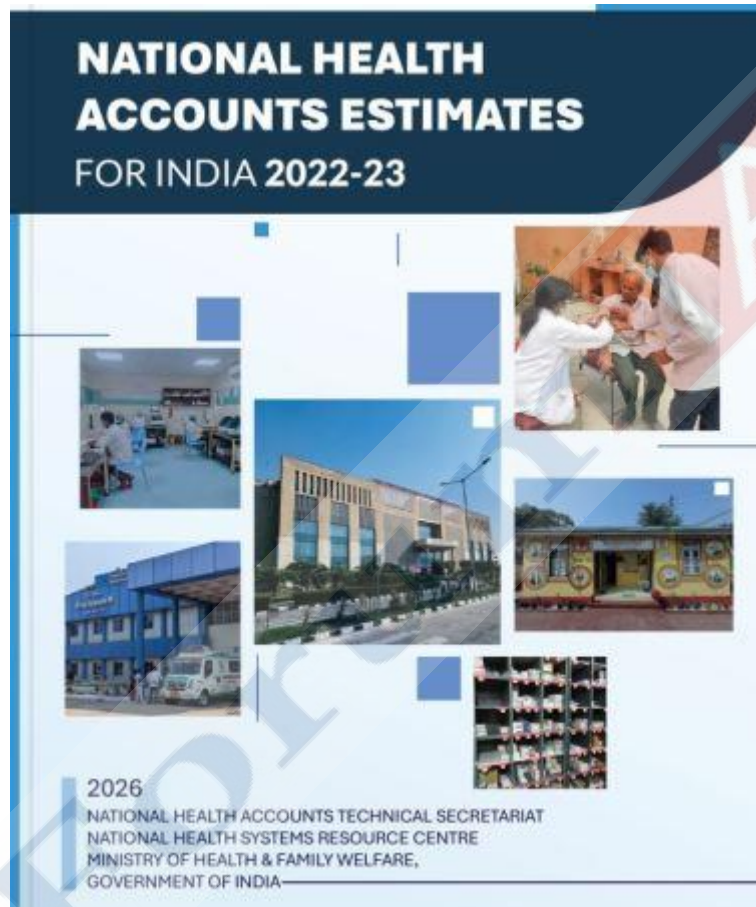
Source – ScienceDirect

- Hydrogen fuel cell technology generates electricity through a chemical reaction using hydrogen, with water vapour as the only emission, making it a clean alternative to conventional fossil fuel-based traction systems.
- Components: The primary components of an HFC are –
 - Membrane Electrode Assembly (MEA)
 - Bipolar plates
- Membrane Electrode Assembly (MEA): The MEA is where the electrochemical reaction takes place.
 - It consists of a Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) placed between two catalyst layers – anode (where hydrogen gas enters the fuel cell) and cathode (where oxygen from the air enters).
 - They are surrounded by the Gas Diffusion Layers that help distribute reactant gases (hydrogen and oxygen) and remove byproducts (water and heat).
 - The PEM is a specially treated material that looks something like ordinary kitchen plastic wrap.
 - It conducts only positively charged ions and blocks the electrons.
 - The PEM is the key to the fuel cell technology; it must permit only the necessary ions to pass between the anode and cathode.
- Working mechanism
 - First, hydrogen fuel (H_2) is passed through the anode and is split into protons (H^+) and electrons (e^-) via oxidation using a catalyst.
 - Then the PEM allows only protons to pass through to the cathode and blocks the electrons.
 - Electrons flow through an external circuit, generating electricity.
 - At the cathode, oxygen (O_2) from the air interacts with the catalyst and undergoes reduction.
 - Subsequently, Oxygen reacts with the protons that have passed through the membrane and the electrons from the external circuit to produce water (H_2O).

National Health Accounts Estimates for India 2022-23

News: Government expenditure on healthcare has nearly tripled over the last decade to Rs. 3.85 lakh crore in 2022-23, while out-of-pocket spending by households on treatment has declined significantly, according to the National Health Accounts (NHA) estimates released by the Union Health Ministry .

About National Health Accounts Estimates for India 2022-23



Source – MoHFW

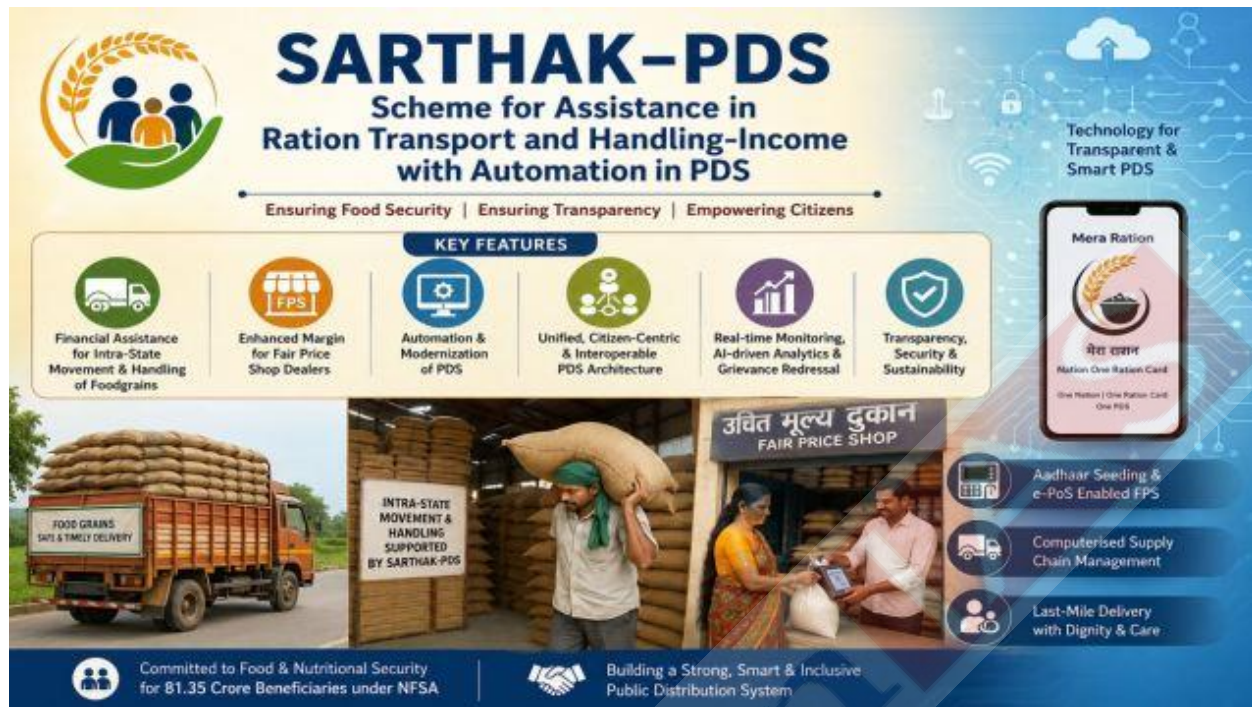
- Released by: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)
- Prepared by: The NHA 2022-23 is the 10th report on health expenditure estimates prepared by the National Health Accounts Technical Secretariat (NHATS), National Health Systems Resource Centre, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, using the System of Health Accounts (2011) framework.
- Key Highlights
 - Health expenditure's share in general government expenditure has increased from 78% to 4.89% between 2013-14 and 2022-23.
 - Government Health Expenditure (GHE)

- Increases by threefold from ₹30 Lakh Crores to ₹3.85 Lakh Crores between 2013-14 and 2022-23
- An increase in the share of GHE in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- GHE as a share of the country's GDP increased from 15% to 1.43% between 2013-14 and 2022-23.
- Government Health Expenditure as a share of Total Health Expenditure (THE) increases from 28.6% to 43.7% between 2013-14 and 2022-23.
- In per capita terms, GHE has increased nearly 7 times, from Rs. 1,042 to Rs. 2,786 between 2013-14 and 2022-23.
- **Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE):** The out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) share in total health expenditure (THE) has declined by 21%, from 2013-14 till date.
 - The OOPE as a share of the THE has been calculated as 4% in 2022-23, as against 64.2% in 2013-14.
- **Social Security Expenditure (SSE):** Inter-temporal comparisons also reveal a positive trend in the growth of social security expenditure.
 - Spending here increased substantially from 6% in 2013-14 to 9.9% in 2022-23.
 - The share of private health insurance has also increased, from 4% to 9.2%, clearly indicating improved health-seeking behaviour due to awareness.
- **Expenditure On Primary Health Care by Government** has more than doubled from ₹0.5 Lakh Crores to ₹1.4 Lakh Crores between 2013-14 and 2022-23.
- **During COVID Crisis:** To address the emergency COVID pandemic situation, the government increased the health expenditure significantly to 1.84% of GDP in 2021-22 towards managing the pandemic situation given these additional spending by the government as a one-time measure, OOPE as a percentage of total health expenditure during this period also declined to 39.4%.

SARTHAK PDS Scheme

News: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the continuation of the "Scheme for Assistance in Ration Transport and Handling-Income with Automation in PDS" (SARTHAK PDS) as an umbrella scheme, in the 16th Finance Commission cycle award period, with an outlay of Rs. 25,530 crore as Central share.

About SARTHAK PDS Scheme



Source – DD News

- Full name: SARTHAK PDS stands for – “Scheme for Assistance in Ration Transport and Handling-Income with Automation in PDS”.
- The SARTHAK-PDS Scheme is an umbrella scheme approved by the Union Cabinet to modernize and digitize India’s Public Distribution System (PDS).
- Aim: The Scheme aims to provide –
 - Assured financial support for intra-State movement, handling and FPS dealer’s margin, and
 - A unified, citizen-centric, intelligent and interoperable PDS architecture that ensures last-mile service delivery, minimizes leakages and strengthens the nation’s commitment to food security under NFSA.
- Objectives: SARTHAK-PDS Scheme seeks to modernize, integrate and intelligently optimize PDS operations through advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Blockchain, by creating standardized architectures and unified databases for real-time monitoring, AI-driven grievance and analytics systems.
- Funding and timeline: The Centre will spend ₹25,530 crore over the next five years as its share for the implementation of the scheme during the 16th Finance Commission cycle, with the programme set to continue until March 31, 2031.
- Integration: The SARTHAK-PDS scheme integrates two existing initiatives with the objective of strengthening implementation of the National Food Security Act –
 - “Assistance to State Agencies for intra-State movement of foodgrains and FPS dealers’ margin under NFSA” and the “Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System (SMART PDS)” –

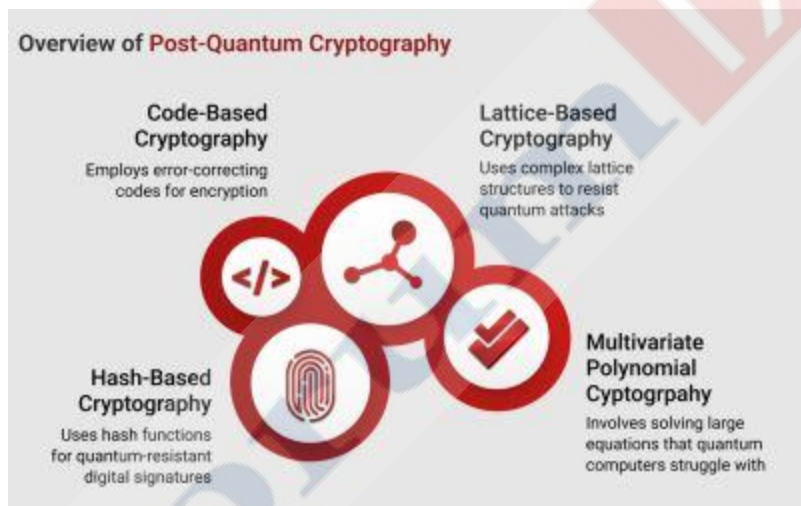
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- Revised norms: The Scheme will have revised norms of Central assistance for meeting expenditure incurred by States/UTs intra-state movement & handling of foodgrains and FPS dealers' margin and continuation of the existing funding pattern of Central Assistance.
- Earlier initiatives in PDS governance: Government has implemented multiple digitization initiatives such as End-to-End Computerization of TPDS, [Integrated Management of PDS \(IM-PDS\)](#) and [SMART PDS](#), along with citizen-facing applications like [Mera Ration](#), Anna Mitra, Rightful Targeting Dashboard and [Anna Sahayata](#).

Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC)

News: A Department of Science & Technology (DST) task force has recommended a phased shift to Post-Quantum Cryptography for protecting sensitive data in critical sectors.

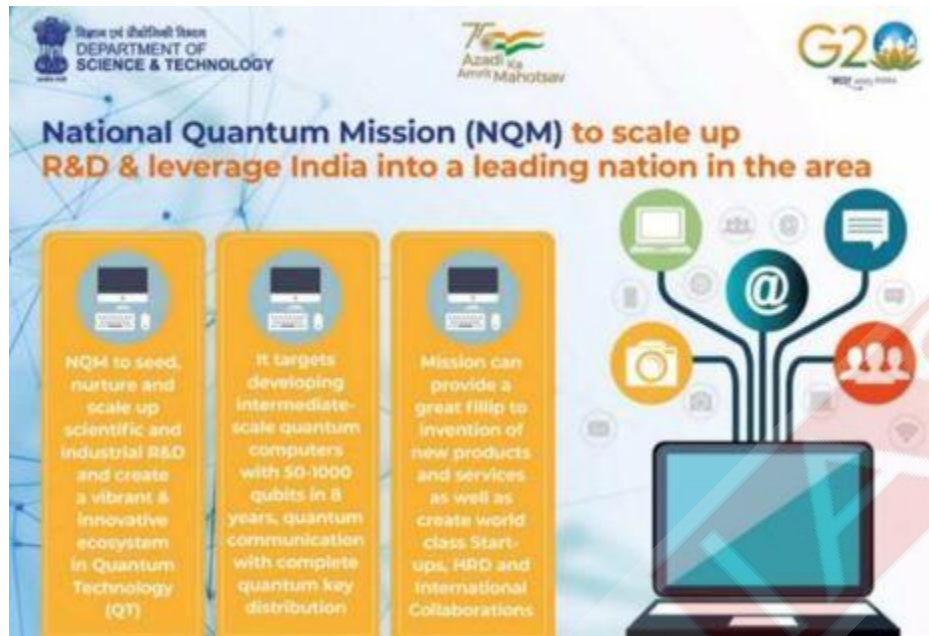
About Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC)



Source – FutureX

- Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC) refers to a new generation of mathematical algorithms designed to protect digital data from being broken by future quantum computers.
- Aim: PQC aims to ensure that confidential data remains secure even when quantum computers make current encryption methods obsolete.
- Defense Mechanisms: PQC uses quantum-resistant mathematical approaches such as hash-based signatures, multivariate equations, and lattice-based cryptography.
- Significance: PQC helps protect sensitive information from future quantum threats, including "harvest now, decrypt later" (HNDL) attacks, and supports a quantum-safe future.

About National Quantum Mission (NQM)



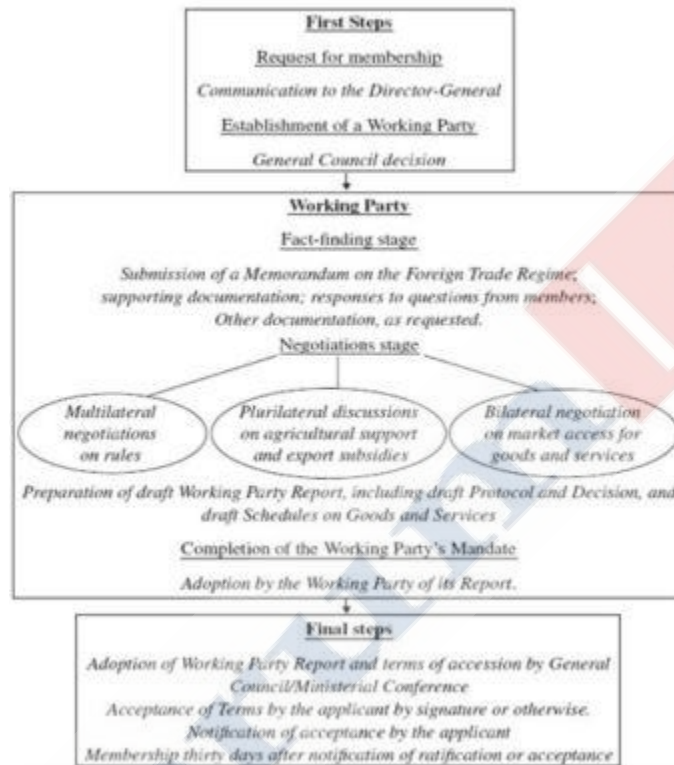
Source – DST

- The National Quantum Mission (NQM) is one of the nine initiatives under the Prime Minister's Science Technology Innovation Advisory Council (PMSTIAC) and is a flagship quantum technology initiative of the Government of India.
- Launched in: The mission was approved by the Union Cabinet in April 2023.
- Implemented by: The mission is implemented by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- Timeline: The mission will run from 2023–24 to 2030–31.
- Objective: The mission aims to seed, nurture, and scale up research and development in quantum technologies, build indigenous capabilities, accelerate technology-led economic growth, and establish India as a leading global force in quantum technologies.
- Key Features:
 - Implementation Structure: The mission is implemented through a hub-and-spoke model with four Thematic Hubs hosted at premier institutions across India.
 - Quantum Computing: The mission seeks to develop intermediate-scale quantum computers with 50 to 1,000 physical qubits within eight years.
 - Quantum Communication: The mission aims to establish satellite-based secure communication over 2,000 km within India and support long-distance Quantum Key Distribution.
 - Quantum Sensing and Metrology: The mission focuses on developing high-sensitivity magnetometers and precision atomic clocks for navigation and communication applications.
 - Quantum Materials and Devices: The mission promotes fabrication capabilities for quantum materials to support indigenous hardware development.

Process of WTO Membership

News: India and Ethiopia signed the bilateral accession protocol on 22 May 2026 in Geneva in the context of Ethiopia's WTO accession.

About Process of WTO Membership



Source – WTO

- **Eligibility to Apply:** Any state or customs territory having full autonomy in conducting its trade policies can apply for World Trade Organization (WTO) membership under Article XII of the WTO Agreement.
- **Request for Membership:** The accession process begins when the candidate country sends a formal request to the WTO seeking membership.
- **Formation of Working Party:** The General Council establishes a Working Party of WTO members to conduct negotiations with the candidate country.
 - Any WTO member can join this group at any stage.
- **Examination of Trade Regime:** The Working Party examines whether the candidate country's trade regime is compatible with WTO rules.
 - If required, the country must amend existing laws or adopt new laws and inscribe WTO rules into its national legal system.
- **Bilateral Market Access Negotiations:** At the same time, the applicant negotiates bilaterally with Working Party members to further open its market for goods and services.

- The agreed outcomes are compiled into goods and services schedules.
- **Final Commitments at Accession:** At accession, tariffs and commitments on goods and services are offered equally to all WTO members under the principle of Most Favoured Nation (MFN).

Mission Queen Pineapple and Queen Pineapple

News: The Government recently launched the “Mission Queen Pineapple” for pineapple cultivation and value chain development in the State of Tripura.

About Mission Queen Pineapple and Queen Pineapple



Source: Guwahati News

About Mission ‘Queen Pineapple’

- It is an initiative for pineapple cultivation and value chain development in Tripura.
- **Duration:** The Mission is designed as a three-year implementation roadmap from the second quarter of fiscal year 2026 through the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2028 for promoting Tripura’s Unique Selling Proposition (USP), the GI-tagged Queen Pineapple.
- **Funding:** Its total outlay is ₹236 crore.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Its nodal ministry is the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).
- **Aim:** It aims to bridge this gap through convergence-led investments and market-oriented interventions that will significantly enhance farmer value realisation.
- **Objective:** It focus to increase merely crop cultivation and enabling farmers to become active players across the entire value chain, from production and aggregation to processing, branding, packaging and exports.
- **Features:**

- **Convergence-led initiative:** It builds upon convergence with Schemes and interventions of the Ministries of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Food Processing Industries, Commerce, MSME, APEDA, DPIIT, ICAR, CSIR, TRIFED, NERAMAC and the Government of Tripura for establishing an integrated pineapple value-chain ecosystem in the State.
- **Infrastructure component:** It will establish a “Hub & Spoke” integrated pineapple post-harvest ecosystem comprising one central Hub near Agartala airport and eight spoke collection centers across major pineapple-growing clusters of West Tripura, Khowai and Sepahijala districts.
 - The infrastructure will include grading facilities, cold storage, reefer logistics, solar cold storage, IoT-enabled farm monitoring and digital traceability systems.
- **Revival of Pineapple Processing Unit:** It also includes the revival of the Nalkata Pineapple Processing Unit through a Viability Gap Funding (VGF) model to support commercial-scale processing and value addition for pineapple-based products.
- **Bio-economy strategy:** Nearly 60 per cent of the pineapple plant, presently discarded as waste, would be converted into value-added products through Bromelain extraction, Pineapple Leaf Fibre (PALF) processing and GI-branded confectionery units.
 - These interventions would create new opportunities for women SHGs, tribal communities and rural entrepreneurs and will also strengthen the circular economy around pineapple cultivation.

About Queen Pineapple

- **The Queen Pineapple is the state fruit of Tripura.**
- **The variety is believed to have been cultivated over 200 years.**
- **Climatic condition:**
 - It is commercially propagated by suckers in Tripura.
 - **Slope Requirement:** An area with 30–40% slope is generally selected for cultivation.
 - **Soil:** Its plants require sandy soil and good drainage to prevent water logging.
 - **Temperature:** Ideal temperature range of 180°C to 32°C is most favorable for its cultivation
- **Features:**
 - This pineapple is distinguished from pineapples grown in other parts of Northeast India due to its exceptional sweetness and unique aroma.
 - It has high nutritional value and contains appreciable amounts of potassium and calcium.
 - The favorable climatic conditions for pineapple cultivation eliminate the need for chemical inputs, resulting in produce that is free from pesticide residues.
 - When fully ripe, the fruits develop an attractive orange-yellow colour.
- **It has got Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2015.**
 - Tripura, is one of the largest pineapple growing states of India with commercial scale plantations spread across the state’s length and breadth.

'Nirbhay Raho' Initiative

News: Ministry of Panchayati Raj conducts Training of Trainers Program under 'Nirbhay Raho' Initiative to strengthen Women's Safety in Rural Areas.

About 'Nirbhay Raho' Initiative



Source – PIB

- **Initiative by:** "Nirbhay Raho" is an initiative implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj under the Nirbhaya Fund in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru.
- **It was launched on** 11th March 2026.
- **Aim:** The initiative aims to empower 14.5 lakh Elected Women Representatives through capacity building on legal rights and leadership and sensitise 17.5 lakh Male Elected Representatives to promote gender equality and accountability.
- **Objective:** It has been launched to advance women's safety and empowerment in Panchayats.
- **Features:** Nirbhay Raho framework operates through three distinct channels:
 - **Nirbhay Netri:** It is focused on capacity building and legal awareness of Elected Women Representatives
 - **Nirbhay Chetna:** It aimed at sensitising elected male representatives towards gender equality and women-related issues
 - **Nirbhay Drishti:** It envisages the installation of CCTV cameras at strategic rural locations to strengthen technology-enabled safety infrastructure in Panchayats.

About Nirbhaya Fund

- The Nirbhaya Fund Framework provides for a non-lapsable corpus fund for the safety and security of women.
- It is to be administered by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Government of India.
- Under this framework, an Empowered Committee reviews and recommends projects for funding, while concerned Ministries implement approved schemes.
- As per this framework, the MoF, through DEA, is the nodal Ministry for any accretion into and withdrawal from the corpus.
- Ministry of Women & Child Development (MWCD) is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the progress of sanctioned projects/ schemes in conjunction with the concerned Central Ministries/ Departments.

NeSDA 2025 Portal

News: The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) launched the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA), 2025 Portal.

About NeSDA 2025 Portal



Source – DARPG

- It will serve as a centralized platform to collect data online provided by the States, UTs and Central Ministries.
- Launched by: It has been launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
- Aim: It aimed at strengthening the assessment of digital governance and improving online service delivery across States, Union Territories, and Central Ministries.

- It has been designed to evaluate how effectively government services are being delivered online from a citizen-centric perspective and to promote better performance in e-governance systems.
- It will also support consultations, capacity-building sessions, and regular review meetings during the assessment cycle.
- Portal Coverage: All Government Portals assessed under NeSDA are classified into two categories:
 - State, UT, City and Central Ministry Portals
 - State, UT, City and Central Ministry Service Portals.

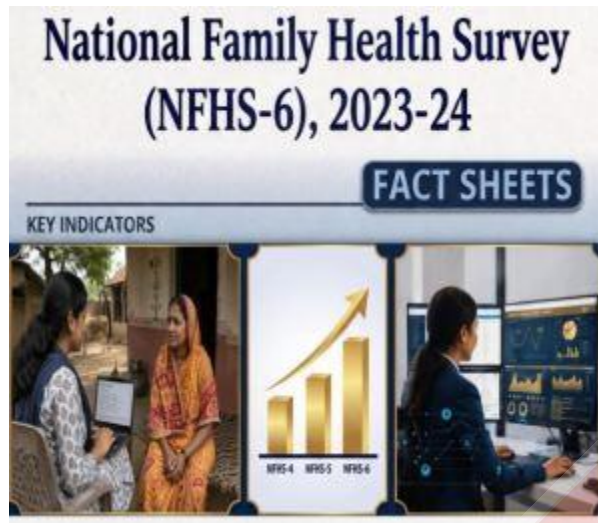
About National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA)

- It is a biennial framework used to measure the depth and effectiveness of online service delivery.
- It is based on the UN's Online Service Index and customised for India's federal structure to assess availability, accessibility, and maturity of digital services.
- Purpose: It serves as an important benchmarking exercise for improving online service delivery across the country and for promoting best practices among States, UTs and Central Ministries/Departments.
- Sectors covered: The NeSDA 2025 framework will evaluate government portals across multiple sectors, including finance, education, health, labour, agriculture, transport, tourism, and public grievance systems.
- Coverage: It will also include expanded coverage with services from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and assess a total of 59 mandatory services for States and UTs and 43 services for Central Ministries.
- Parameters: The assessment will be based on parameters such as accessibility, ease of use, content availability, information security and privacy, integrated service delivery, open government data, e-participation, and use of emerging technologies.

Key Highlights Of National Family Health Survey-6

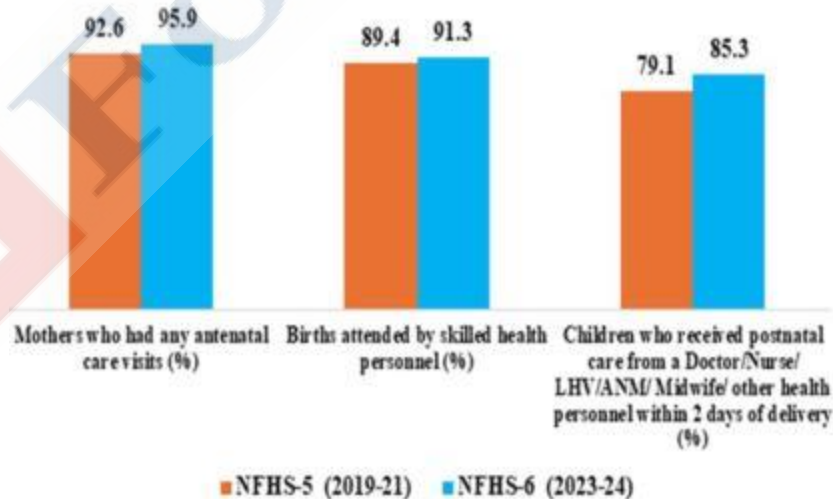
News: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the National Family Health Survey-6 conducted during 2023-24 across 715 districts.

About National Family Health Survey-6



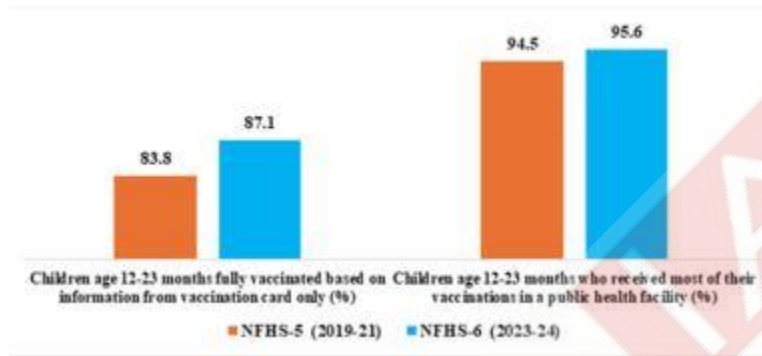
Source – PIB

- The National Family Health Survey-6 provides evidence on population, health, nutrition, and family welfare indicators and supports planning up to the district level.
- Released by: It is released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- Conducted by: The survey was conducted by the MoHFW with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai serving as the nodal agency.
- Time Period: The survey was conducted during 2023-24.
- Key Highlights of National Family Health Survey-6:
 - Maternal Healthcare: Antenatal care coverage reached 95.9%, while institutional deliveries increased from 88.6% to 90.6% and skilled birth attendance rose to 91.3%.



Source – PIB

- **Maternal Nutrition:** Mothers consuming iron folic acid supplements for 100 days or more increased from 44.1% to 54.9%.
- **Family Planning:** The Total Fertility Rate remained at 2.0, while the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate increased from 66.7% to 69.1%.
- **Child Immunization:** Full vaccination coverage among children aged 12–23 months increased from 83.8% to 87.1%, and rotavirus vaccination coverage rose from 36.4% to 85.4%.



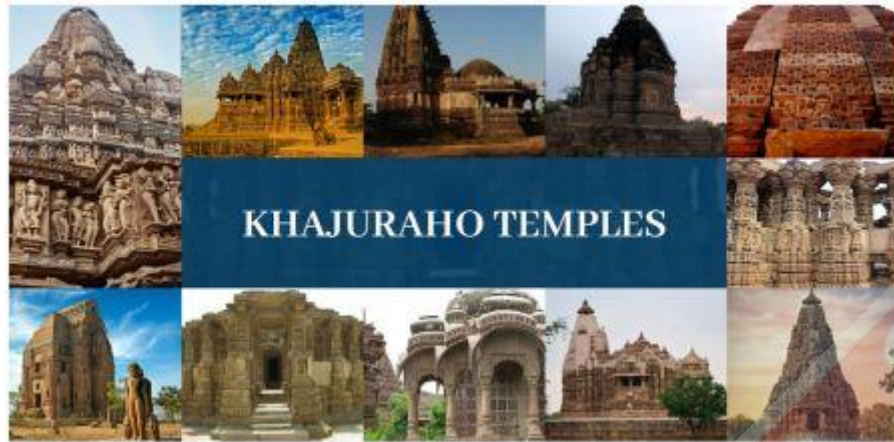
Source – PIB

- **Child Nutrition:** Stunting among children under five years declined from 35.5% to 29.3%, while severe wasting declined from 7.7% to 5.2%.
- **Health Protection:** Household coverage under health insurance or financing schemes increased from 41.0% to 60.2%.
- **Women's Empowerment:** Women who had ever used the internet increased from 33.3% to 64.3%, while women operating their own bank accounts increased from 78.6% to 89.0%.
- **Child Health:** Symptoms of acute respiratory infection among children declined from 2.8% to 1.9%, and severe diarrhoea declined to 0.5%.

Khajuraho Group of Temples

News: Yoga Mahotsav 2026 was organised at the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Western Group of Temples, Khajuraho, marking the 25-day countdown to International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026.

About Khajuraho Group of Temples



Source – Ministry of Culture

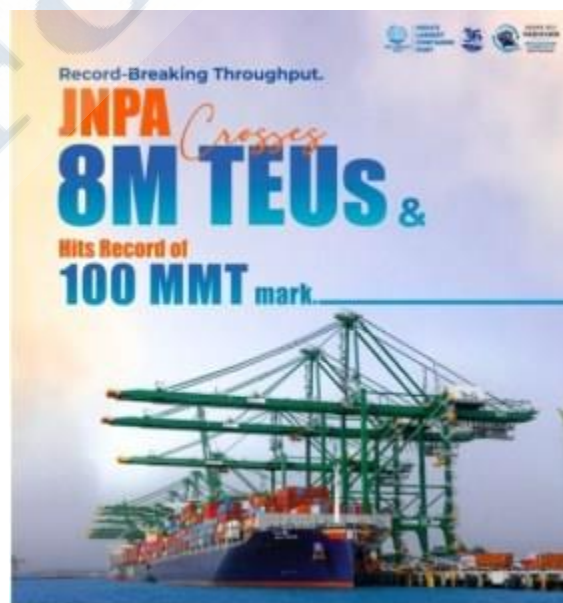
- The Khajuraho Group of Temples represents the culmination of northern Indian temple art and architecture of the Chandella dynasty.
- Location: Khajuraho temples are located in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh.
- Builder: The temples were built during the reign of the Chandella dynasty between 900 CE and 1130 CE.
- Religious Affiliation: The temples are associated with Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and Jainism, while the Parsvanatha Temple is the largest Jain temple in the complex.
- Surviving Temples: Khajuraho had about 85 temples in the 12th century, but only around 20 temples remain today.
- Categorisation: The Khajuraho temples are divided into three groups:
 - Western Group: This is the most important and well-preserved group and includes Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, Vishwanath Temple, Lakshmana Temple, Devi Jagdamba Temple, Chitragupta Temple, and Chausath Yogini Temple.
 - Eastern Group: This group contains both Hindu and Jain temples and includes Brahma Temple, Vamana Temple, Javari Temple, Ghantai Temple, and Parsvanatha Temple.
 - Southern Group: This group includes Duladeo Temple and Chaturbhuja Temple, which is unique because it does not contain erotic sculptures.
- Architecture:
 - Temple style: The Khajuraho temples are built in the Nagara style of North Indian temple architecture.
 - Temple Platform: Each temple stands on a highly ornate terraced platform called jagati.
 - Shikhara: The sanctum is crowned by a shikhara, whose vertical form is enhanced by a series of miniature spires.
 - Temple Layout: The temples follow an axial plan consisting of arddhamandapa, mandapa, antarala, and garbhagriha, arranged in a hierarchical sequence.
 - Additional Features: Many temples include transepts, projecting windows, and a circumambulatory path around the sanctum.

- Panchayatana Type: Some temples follow the Panchayatana plan, with four subsidiary shrines around the main shrine.
- Building Material: Most temples were constructed using light-coloured sandstone from the Panna region, while some smaller structures used granite.
- Orientation: Most temples face east so that the rising sun illuminates the temple entrance.
- Sculpture: The Khajuraho temples are renowned for their rich sculptural tradition, which is harmoniously integrated with the temple architecture.
 - Themes Depicted: The sculptures portray Hindu gods and goddesses, mythological stories, acts of worship, and various sacred and secular themes.
 - Social Life Representation: The carvings depict teachers and disciples, dancers, musicians, ascetics, domestic scenes, and other aspects of daily life.
 - Celestial Figures: Special emphasis was given to the representation of celestial women such as apsaras and surasundaris.
 - Erotic Sculptures: Erotic sculptures form an important part of the sculptural programme and are associated with ideas of female beauty, fertility, and human life.
- Management and Protection:
 - Ownership and Management: The monuments are owned by the Government of India and are managed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
 - Legal Protection: The site is protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958.

Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI) for FY 2024-25 and Maritime Digital Reforms

News: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) has recently launched the Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI) for FY 2024-25 and Maritime Digital Reforms.

About Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI) for FY 2024-25



Source: India Shipping News

- It is a **national benchmarking mechanism** designed to assess and improve the operational performance of Indian ports.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**.
- It has been developed under the **Sagar Aankalan framework**.
- It aligns with the **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**.
- It seeks to **strengthen India's position in global logistics and maritime trade**.
- **Parameters:** It evaluates ports across three cargo segments – Dry bulk, liquid bulk and container cargo.
 - It uses **operational indicators** such as **cargo handled, vessel turnaround time, berth idle time, pre-berthing waiting time, container dwell time and ship berth day output**.
 - It assigns **equal weightage to absolute performance and year-on-year improvement**, encouraging continuous enhancement of port operations.
- **Performance:**
 - **Paradip Port Authority topped the Dry Bulk Cargo category**.
 - **Sikka Port and Terminals led the Liquid Bulk Cargo segment**.
 - **Mundra Port emerged as the highest-ranked facility in the Container Cargo category and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) secured second position among major container ports**.
 - **Note:** India's ranking in the **World Bank's Logistics Performance Index improved from 44th to 22nd position in the International Shipments category**.
 - Also, **seven Indian ports** featured among the **world's top 100 ports in the World Bank's Container Port Performance Index 2024**.
 - **JNPA crossed eight million TEUs** and handled **more than 102 MMT** of cargo during financial year **2025-26**, reflecting the shipping sector's growth.

About Maritime Digital Reforms

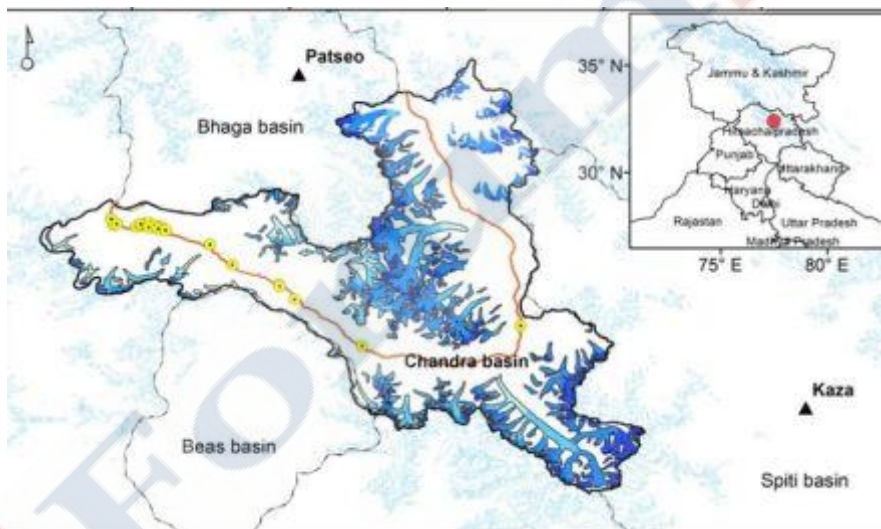
- **Launched by:** The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** has launched **four digital initiatives**.
- **Aim:** They are initiated to **improve service delivery, transparency and accountability** for seafarers and maritime stakeholders.
- **Developed by:** It has been developed by the **Directorate General of Shipping (DGS)**.
 - The **DGS is an attached office of the MoPSW**.
- **The initiatives include:**
 - **A 24×7 Grievance Redressal Module under the e-Navik platform**
 - **A Ship Registration Module on the e-Samudra platform**
 - **A Medical Practitioner Module and**
 - **A Unified Ship Recycling Credit Note Module**
- **About 24×7 Grievance Redressal Module under the e-Navik platform:**
 - It is a **major welfare measure for Indian seafarers**.
 - It would **allow grievances to be filed through multiple channels**, including the e-Navik portal, toll-free helplines, WhatsApp and dedicated email services from anywhere in the world.

- **About Ship Registration Module on the e-Samudra platform:** The digital ship registration module simplifies vessel registration procedures,
- **About the Medical Practitioner Module:** It would streamline the registration and monitoring of doctors authorised to certify seafarers, while reducing the risk of fraudulent certifications.
- **About Unified Ship Recycling Credit Note Module:** The Unified Ship Recycling Portal for Ship Recycling Credit scheme is part of the Government's ₹70,000-crore maritime development package announced in 2025.
 - Under the scheme, ship owners recycling vessels at Hong Kong Convention-compliant Indian yards can receive a credit note equivalent to 40 per cent of the vessel's scrap value, redeemable against new shipbuilding projects in India.

Chandra River

News: Sissu village on the Chandra River is facing concerns due to the expanding Ghepan Lake and the risk of a glacial lake outburst flood.

About Chandra River



Source – ResearchGate

- **Origin:** The Chandra River originates from a huge snow bed on the south-eastern side of Baralacha La (in Himachal Pradesh) and rises among the snows lying at the foot of the main Himalayan range.
- **Source:** The river is fed by numerous glaciers throughout its course.
- **The largest glaciers** are the Shigri Glacier on its left bank and the Samundari Glacier on its right bank.
- **Course:** It flows through the Lahaul region of Himachal Pradesh and passes through areas such as Khoksar, Sissu and Gondhla.
 - Chandra Tal Lake lies along its course and has an outlet into the river.

- The river travels through a cold desert region and descends steadily until Tandi.
- **The Confluence:** At Tandi, the Chandra River meets the Bhaga River and their combined waters flow together.
- **Birth of Chenab:** After the confluence at Tandi, the combined waters of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers form the Chandrabhaga or Chenab River.

Hog Deer

News: A rare albino hog deer was recently sighted in Kaziranga National Park.

About Hog Deer



Source: Thai National Parks

- The hog deer is a species belonging to the **genus Axis**.
- **Scientific name:** Its scientific name is **Axis porcinus**.
- **Habitat:** It inhabits well-covered dense forests **near rivers and marshes**, including **dense reed beds, thick riverside vegetation, and woodland areas** close to swamps.
- **Distribution**
 - It is **endemic** to the **tall, moist grasslands of South and Southeast Asia**.
 - **Its geographic range** is throughout **India and Pakistan, including the Himalayan foothill zone and Southeast Asia**, including Burma and Thailand.
 - **Its free-ranging populations have been introduced by humans in Sri Lanka, Australia and U.S.A.**
 - **Distribution in India:** In India, it is **limited to grasslands adjoining the foothills of the Himalayas, near wetlands and floodplains of the rivers Ganga and Brahmaputra**, extending from Punjab to Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Appearances:** It is a **low, stocky-built animal** with a muscular body.
 - **Height:** It measures **approximately 70 cm** at shoulder height.
 - **Weight:** It can weigh between **50 – 110 kg**.
 - It has **relatively short legs, with its body being lower in the front than the back**.

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- It has a **short and wedge-shaped face**.
- It is **brown with a yellowish or reddish tinge in appearance** and sometimes has a speckled appearance, as some hairs have white tips.
- There is a **darker band running down its spine**.
- The **females are slightly smaller than the males and lack antlers**.
- **Males bear three-tined antlers**, mounted on short pedicles on the forehead.
- Its distinctive feature is the **unusually large, round ears** that are fringed with white hairs.
- Also, its **tail is particularly bushy** due to long hairs that lie in a dorsoventral pattern.
- **Diet:** It feeds upon **grass, leaves, young shoots, herbaceous plants and riverside vegetation**.
- **Behaviour:** It is a **solitary animal and is not found in large herds**.
 - It makes a **whistling sound when alarmed and gives a warning bark**.
 - It has a **habit of rushing through grass with its head down** like a pig, rather than bounding or leaping over obstacles like other deer species.
 - It is **sedentary and does not migrate**.
 - **Males** tend to be territorial and **mark their territory with glandular secretions**.
- **Threats:** **Habitat fragmentation due to anthropogenic activities and hunting** are the main threats to its existence.
- **Conservation:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** It is currently classified as **Endangered** as per the **IUCN Red List**.
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** It is protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

About Albino Hog Deer



Source: Wikimedia Commons

- The albino hog deer is a **small cervid species which is rarely found in the wild**.
- It is **native to** the region of the **Indian subcontinent and the Indo-Gangetic Plain**.
- It is characterized by **white fur, pink eyes and pale hooves**.
- **Albino is a genetic defect wherein the animal lacks colour completely**.