

# **Factly Weekly**

**Compilation**

**2026**

**For UPSC CSE Prelims  
Exam**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Week**

**August 2026**

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## Dhabaleswar Temple

**News:** President Droupadi Murmu offered prayers at Dhabaleswar Temple during the final engagement of her three-day visit to Odisha.

### About Dhabaleswar Temple



Source – India Temple

- **Location:** It is located on a **hillock-like island in the River Mahanadi** near **Cuttack, Odisha**.
- **Dedicated to:** The temple is a **Hindu temple** dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.
- **Naming:** The name is linked to the **legend of Shiva turning a black calf white**.
  - “Dhabala” means **white** and “Ishwar” means **God**, giving the name **Dhabaleswara**, or “White Lord.”
- **Constructed by:** The temple structure was constructed during the rule of **the Somavamshi dynasty** by **King Yayati Keshari**.
- **Key Features**
  - **Antiquity:** Its historic **stone carvings** associated with the **early 10th and 11th centuries**.
  - **Architecture:** The temple follows the **Kalinga style of architecture** and has a **sandstone structure** with a **square plan and pyramidal roof**.
  - **Temple Chambers:** It has **three main chambers**, with the **central chamber** housing the **idol of Lord Shiva**.
  - **Jagamohan:** The temple has a **beautiful entrance known as Jagamohan**, decorated with **intricate carvings of animals, birds and mythological figures**.
  - **Distinctive Roof:** Its **two-tiered roof made of terracotta tiles** is a distinctive feature of the temple.
  - **Religious Importance:** **Bada Osha**, observed just before **Kartika Purnima**, is an **important religious occasion** that attracts devotees in lakhs.

### Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*)

**News:** On the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) highlights Indigenous food biodiversity and climate resilience.

#### About Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*)



Figure 1. Source – Plant Good Seed

- **Roselle** is scientifically known as **Hibiscus sabdariffa** and belongs to the **Malvaceae** family.
- **Local Name:** It is locally known as **Bhenda Dal** in Odisha's Malkangiri district.
  - It is also called **Mesta** in the Indian subcontinent.
- **Distribution:** It is **indigenous to India and Malaysia**.
  - It is cultivated in **tropical and subtropical regions**, including **China, Thailand, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria and Mexico**.
- **Key Features**
  - **Climate Resilience:** It grows on uplands and hill slopes with **minimal external inputs** and can **grow on marginal land** with **relatively little water**.
  - **Food Uses:** Its tender **leaves** are **cooked as saag** or **combined with pulses and vegetables**.
  - Its **red flower cups** are used for **pickles, chutneys and refreshing drinks**.
- **Nutritional Value:** It contains **vitamin C, anthocyanins, flavonoids, polyphenols, iron, calcium and dietary fibre**.
- **Multiple Uses:** Its dried calyces are used to **prepare tea, syrup, jams and jellies**, while different plant parts are used for **food, fibre, cosmetics and medicines**.

### Ural Mountains

**News:** Ukrainian long-range drones struck a warehouse in the Ural Mountains, over 2,000 km from the Russia-Ukraine border.

#### About Ural Mountains





Source – Britannica

- The **Ural Mountains** are a major **physiographic boundary** between **Europe and Asia**.
- **Location:** They extend across **western Russia** and **slightly into northwestern Kazakhstan**, continuing northward **towards the Arctic Ocean**.
- **Boundaries:** The range **extends about 2,500 km** from the bend of the **Ural River** in the south to the **Pay-Khoy Ridge** in the north.
- **Geological Age:** The mountains **formed around 250–300 million years ago** during the **Uralian orogeny** and are **among the world's oldest** preserved mountain ranges.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Physiography:** The Ural Mountains are **divided into five sections**– **Polar, Nether-Polar, Northern, Central and Southern Urals**, with distinct relief and climate.
  - **Peak:** The **Nether-Polar Urals** contain the **highest peaks**, including **Mount Narodnaya** and **Mount Karpinsk**.
    - The **Central Urals** are the **lowest section**, while the **Southern Urals** consist of **several parallel ridges**.
  - **Major River:** The **Ural River** flows **along the Southern Urals**.
    - while rivers such as the **Kama** draining **towards the Caspian Sea**, while the **Pechora** drains **towards the Arctic Ocean**.
  - **Climate:** The **climate is continental**, with the **western slopes** receiving **more moisture than the eastern slopes**.

- **Transport Corridor:** Historic routes and modern railways, including parts of the Trans-Siberian Railway, cross the Urals and connect Europe and Asia.
- **Vegetation:** The Ural Mountains show a **north-south transition from tundra to taiga, mixed forests and steppe**, influenced by latitude, altitude and climate.
- **Flora:** The tundra has **mosses, lichens, dwarf birch and cloudberry**; the taiga has spruce, **fir, pine, larch and Siberian cedar**; southern mixed forests contain oak, elm and linden, while southern steppes support feather grass, clover and fescue.
- **Fauna:** The region supports **Arctic fox, reindeer, brown bear, lynx, wolverine, elk**, sable and various fish species.

### Mecca Defence Pact

**News:** Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement in Mecca to strengthen collective security amid tensions.

#### About Mecca Defence Pact

**THE MECCA DEAL**  
A TRILATERAL MUTUAL DEFENCE PACT

SAUDI ARABIA      TURKEY      PAKISTAN

**An armed attack on any one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack on all.**  
Commits the parties to closer defence cooperation and collective deterrence.

| WHAT'S INCLUDED                                                                                                       | WHAT IT DOES NOT INCLUDE                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Mutual defence guarantee</b><br>An attack on one is an attack on all.                                              | <b>No explicit nuclear provision</b><br>No mention of nuclear weapons or a nuclear umbrella.                                  |
| <b>Legal basis</b><br>Grounded in Article 51 of the UN Charter – the right to individual and collective self-defence. | <b>No defined scope</b><br>No clarity on geographical scope of the guarantee.                                                 |
| <b>Military cooperation</b><br>Training, exchange of personnel, and joint exercises.                                  | <b>No automatic intervention</b><br>No specifics on when or how the three countries would be required to intervene.           |
| <b>Intelligence sharing</b><br>Framework established for deeper intelligence cooperation.                             | <b>No full treaty text released</b><br>Exact military obligations and operational details not specified in the public domain. |

**A significant political pledge that elevates trilateral ties from cooperation to a formal defence commitment.**

Source – ToI

- **Mecca Defence Pact** is a joint defence agreement between **Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey**.
- The agreement is named the “**Mecca Joint Defence Agreement**”.
- **Aim:** The pact aims to **strengthen collective deterrence** against aggression and **promote peace, security and stability in the region** and beyond.
- **Regional Context:** The pact comes amid **rising tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia**, with Iran and allied groups targeting Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.
- **Earlier Cooperation:** The pact builds on the **2025 Saudi Arabia-Pakistan defence agreement**, which provided for mutual defence in case of an attack.
- **Features:**
  - **Mutual Defence:** An armed attack against any one of the three countries would be regarded as an attack against all three.
  - **Defence Cooperation:** The pact provides for enhancing all aspects of defence cooperation among the three countries.
  - **Strategic Weight:** Turkey has NATO's second-largest military, Saudi Arabia is the Gulf's leading military power and major oil exporter, while Pakistan is the world's only nuclear-armed Muslim-majority country.
  - **No Specific Obligations:** The agreement does not specify the commitments or obligations of each country, making its practical application uncertain.

### Sowa-Rigpa and Bhoti-Language Manuscripts

**News:** Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav urged global recognition of Sowa-Rigpa as an evidence-based system and preservation of ancient Bhoti manuscripts documenting its knowledge.

#### About Sowa-Rigpa

- **About:** Sowa-Rigpa is a **system of medicine** which is **one of the oldest medical traditions** across the world.
  - It is also known as the **Amchi System of medicine and Tibetan medicine**.
- **Terminology:** The term Sowa-Rigpa means **Knowledge of Healing**. It derives its meaning from the **Bhoti Language**.
- **Origin:** The Buddha is said to be the originator of this Tibetan system of medicine.
- **Practised in:** This system was reinforced in the **Trans-Himalayan region** and is popular in **Himalayan societies** such as **Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh (Spiti and Lahoul), Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal (Darjeeling), Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim**.
  - It is practised in **some parts of China, the Himalayan regions of India, Mongolia, Nepal, Russia, and Bhutan**.
- More than 75 percent of the Sowa-Rigpa tests **have been derived from the Ashtanga Hridaya**. It is a famous exposition of Ayurveda.
- **Medicine used:** Many **medicines of Indian origin**, such as **Ashwagandha, Guggulu, Triphala, Ashok, Haridra, etc.**, are **used in the Sowa-Rigpa system for treatment purposes**.
- **Literature:** **Gyud-Zi or the Four Tantras** was the **fundamental textbook** of this form of medicine.
- **Recognition:** Recognised under **India's Ayush framework**, it has evolved over centuries across the Trans-Himalayan region and remains an important repository of traditional medical knowledge.
  - **National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa** is the country's **apex institution for education, research and healthcare in the Sowa-Rigpa system**.

#### About Bhoti-Language Manuscripts





Figure 2. Source: The News Himachal

- Bhoti-language manuscripts are **historical and religious texts** written in the **traditional Bhoti script** (derived from the Tibetan script).
- It was **closely tied to Buddhism**, and it was used extensively in the **monasteries for religious texts, teachings, and scriptures**.
- Notably, Bhoti-language manuscripts also contain **centuries-old Sowa-Rigpa knowledge**.

### Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Exercise 2026

**News:** The Indian and US navies will conduct the Indian Navy–US Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Exercise 2026 from 10 to 14 August 2026.

#### About Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Exercise 2026



Figure 3. Source – AIR

- **Participant:** It is a **bilateral** training exercise **between the Indian Navy and US Navy**.
- **Held at:** It will be conducted at the **Southern Naval Command in Kochi, Kerala**.
- **Aim:** The exercise aims to enhance **interoperability, strengthen professional cooperation, promote collaborative learning and operational synergy**, and improve the ability of both navies to **respond to complex and evolving Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) challenges**.
- **Edition:** The **2026** engagement is the **eighth edition**.
  - The **two navies** have conducted joint Salvage and EOD exercises since **2005**.
- **Duration:** The **five-day** exercise will be held from 10 to 14 August 2026.
- **Key Aspects:**
  - **Expert Exchange:** **Subject Matter Expert Exchanges** will support **sharing contemporary EOD methods**, emerging technologies, and best practices.
  - **Practical Training:** **Cross-training, equipment demonstrations, and scenario-based practical exercises** will provide practical learning.
  - **Operational Understanding:** Personnel will gain insights into each other's capabilities, operational concepts, and employment approaches.

### Key Facts about Bolivia

**News:** India has dispatched an 8 MT consignment of life-saving and essential medicines to Bolivia in support of its public healthcare capacity.

#### Key Facts about Bolivia





Source: World Atlas

- **Location:** Bolivia is a **landlocked country** in **west-central South America**.
- It is the **5th largest country** in South America.
- **Physiography:**
  - **Mountains:** The **western half** of Bolivia is covered by the **Andes Mountains**.
    - The **Cordillera Occidental** in the west is a long line of mostly bleak, dormant volcanoes. The **Cordillera Central** lies in the middle.
    - The **Cordillera Oriental** in the east is a **massive range of beautiful, snow-capped granite mountains**.
  - **Plateau:** **Altiplano** is a **high plateau** that lies between these three mountain ranges
  - **Plains:** The **southeast of Bolivia** consists of **semi-arid plains** that become swampy during heavy rains.
  - **Salt Flats:** The **Altiplano** has several **salt flats**, which are the dried remains of ancient lakes.
    - The **Uyuni Saltpan (Salar de Uyuni)** is the **largest**, covering almost **3,500 sq. miles**.
  - **Highest Point:** The highest point in Bolivia is **Nevado Sajama**.
  - **Lake:** **Lake Titicaca** is Bolivia's most important lake.
    - It is located in the **western part** of the country along the border with **Peru**.
    - **Lake Poopo** is a **salty lake and the largest inland lake in Bolivia**.
  - **Important Rivers:** Important rivers include the **Beni, Desaguadero, Guapore, Madre de Dios, and Mamore**.

### Bank in a Box

**News:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched 'Bank in a Box' as part of initiatives to modernize the technology and cybersecurity of Urban Cooperative Banks.

**About 'Bank in a Box'**

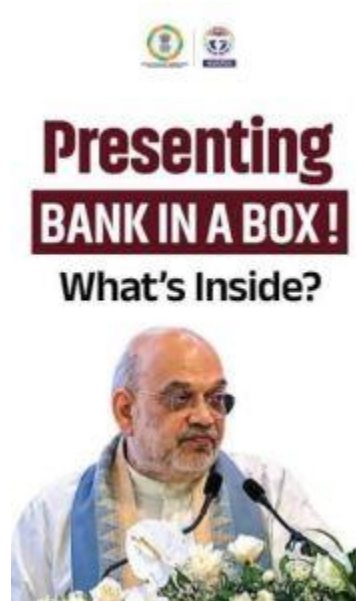


Figure 4. Source – Ministry of Cooperation

- **Bank in a Box** is an **integrated service bundle** that enables even small Urban Cooperative Banks to **provide modern banking services** without heavy technology investment.
  - It enables financial institutions to **rapidly deploy and operate fully functional banking services** through cloud-based platforms.
- **Launched by: Ministry of Cooperation**
  - It is **developed under the National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation (NUCFDC)** umbrella framework for Urban Cooperative Banks.
- **Aim:** It aims to **help small Urban Cooperative Banks access modern banking technology**, digital payments, cloud services and regulatory compliance solutions at affordable costs.
- **Features:**
  - **Integrated services:** It includes **core banking, digital payments, cloud infrastructure** and regulatory compliance solutions.
  - **Modern technology:** It supports services such as **Sahkar CBS, loan origination, Sahkar Cloud and AI-based fraud prevention**.
  - **Cybersecurity:** The related **Security Operations Centre** will provide **round-the-clock cyber monitoring and security support**.
- **Cost efficiency:** Shared services can **reduce the cost of expensive systems** that individual banks would otherwise maintain separately.

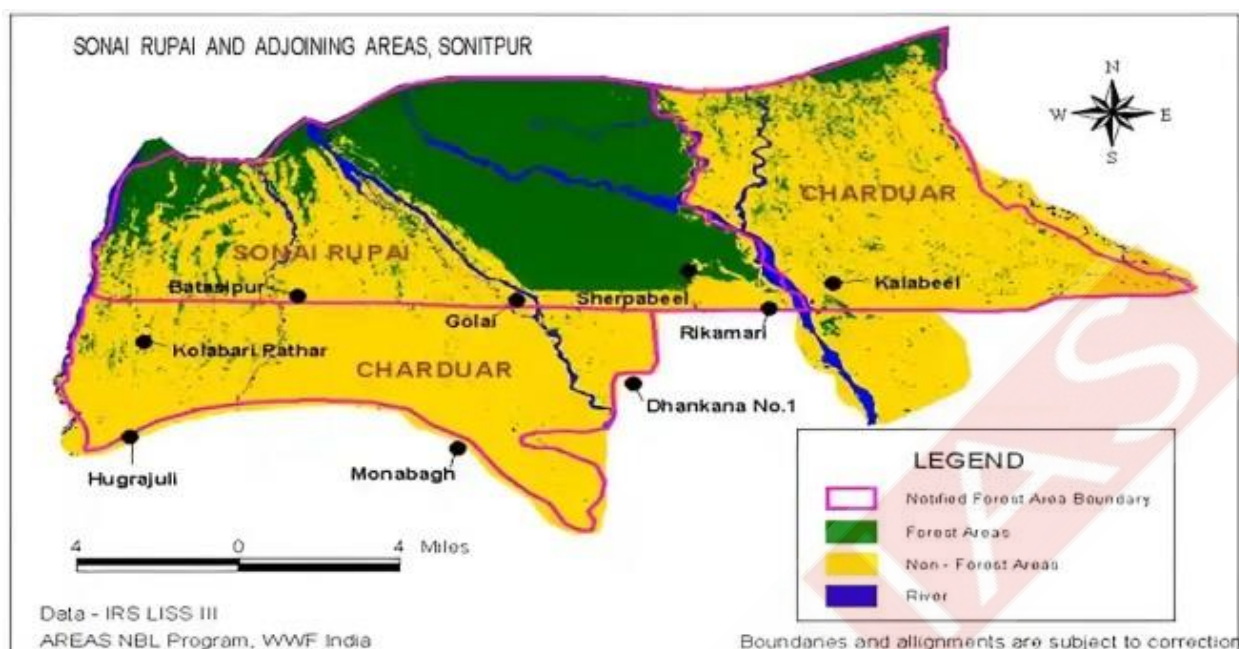
#### National Urban Co-operative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NUCFDC)

- NUCFDC serves as the **apex umbrella organisation and self-regulatory body** for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) in India.
- **RBI Recognition:** NUCFDC is officially recognized by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.
- **Aim:** Its framework **aims to transform and stabilize the cooperative banking sector** through critical capital, modern technology and enhanced governance.
- **Shared Banking Support:** NUCFDC **provides UCBs with technology, training, compliance support and modern software**, while shared services and collective contracts help provide banking infrastructure at affordable rates.

### Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary

**News:** Assam Finance Minister inaugurated the newly constructed Kalamati Wildlife Range Office at Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary in Sonitpur.

**About Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary**



Source – National Parks

| Aspects                             | Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Location</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a protected area located in the <b>Indian state of Assam</b>.</li> <li>It is situated in the <b>foothills of the Eastern Himalayas</b>.</li> <li>It is known as the <b>“Jewel of Assam”</b>.</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>Neighbouring protected areas</b> | It is bordered by the <b>Pachnoi River</b> to the west, <b>Jia Gabharu</b> to the east, the <b>Doimara Reserve Forest</b> in Arunachal Pradesh to the north, and the revenue village and <b>Charduar Reserve Forest</b> of Sonitpur to the south.                                       |
| <b>Status</b>                       | It was declared a <b>wildlife sanctuary in 1998</b> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>River flowing through</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are <b>four perennial rivers</b> that flow through the sanctuary – <b>Dolsiri, Gabharu, Gelgeli, and Belsiri</b>.</li> <li>During the <b>rainy season</b>, several <b>wetlands</b> known as <b>“bheels”</b> can also be seen.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Flora</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>forests type</b> in the sanctuary comprises <b>tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests</b>.</li> <li>Hollang, Mekai, Dhuno, Udiyam, Nahar, Samkothal, Bheer, Hollock, Nahor are found in the sanctuary.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Fauna</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sanctuary is primarily known for its <b>Elephant and Indian bison populations</b>.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● It hosts a variety of other animals including deer, the <b>one-horned rhinoceros</b>, leopards, tigers, and some rare species of cats.</li><li>● The <b>avian life</b> in the sanctuary features endangered species such as the <b>White Winged Wood Duck</b>, along with commonly seen birds like woodpeckers, hill mynas, Indian rollers, nightjars, horned owls, and more.</li></ul> |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Quit India Movement

**News:** Prime Minister, Home Minister and Defence Minister of India paid tribute to the freedom fighters who participated in the Quit India Movement and the [Kakori Train Action](#).

#### About Quit India Movement

- The **Quit India Movement** is also known as the **August Movement** was a movement launched at the **Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee**.
- **Launched by:** It was launched by **Mahatma Gandhi on 8 August 1942**, demanding an end to British rule in India.
  - It demanded an immediate end to British rule in India, as highlighted by the **“Do or Die” slogan**.
- **Figures involved:** Beside Gandhi, other leaders including **Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Vallabhai Patel, Govinda Ballabh Pant, Syed Mahmud, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Sankar Rao Deo, Hare Krishna Mahatab, Prafulla Chandra Ghose, Pattabhi Sitaramaya, Asaf Ali and Acharya Narendra Dev** were also involved.
- **Causes of the Quit India Movement:** The immediate cause for the Quit India Movement was the **failure of the Cripps Mission and the hardships caused during World War II**.
- **Phases of the Quit India Movement:** The Quit India Movement can be broadly divided into **three phases**:
  - **First Phase:** The movement initially remained **largely non-violent and involved civil disobedience, strikes and boycotts**.
    - The British government responded with widespread repression and arrested almost all major Congress leaders, including **Mahatma Gandhi, who remained imprisoned until 1945**.
    - **There was widespread urban uprising, boycott of goods, and shop picketing**.
  - **Second Phase:** The movement gradually became **more aggressive and violent**, with attacks on government buildings, offices and other symbols of British authority, communication was hampered.
    - Railway tracks and stations were destroyed, causing significant infrastructural damage.
  - **Britishers also retaliated vehemently, issuing fines, lathi charges, and jail**.
  - **Third Phase:** The final phase witnessed the emergence of **parallel or independent governments** in several parts of the country, including **Ballia, Satara and Tamluk**.
- **Successes of the Quit India Movement**
  - **Women’s Participation:** Women played a significant role in the movement. **Aruna Asaf Ali** hoisted the national flag at Gowalia Tank Maidan, while **Usha Mehta** operated an underground radio station to spread the message of the movement.



- **Emergence of Future Leaders:** The movement brought several future national leaders to prominence, including **Biju Patnaik, Aruna Asaf Ali, Ram Manohar Lohia, Sucheta Kriplani and Jayaprakash Narayan**, many of whom supported the movement through underground activities.
- **Limitations of the Quit India Movement**
  - The movement **lacked the support of several important organisations and sections of society.**
  - The British received support from the **Princely States, British Indian Army, Indian Civil Services, Viceroy's Council, Indian Imperial Police and the All-India Muslim League.**
  - The **Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League** also opposed the movement.

### Indian Peacock

**News:** India recently donated five Indian peafowls—four blue males and one white male—to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

#### About Indian Peacock



Source – ETV Bharat

- The **Indian Peacock** is India's national bird and a large, colourful member of the **pheasant family**.
- **Scientific Name:** Its scientific name is **Pavo cristatus**.
- **Habitat:** It occurs in **deciduous forests, shrublands, grasslands, forest edges and agricultural areas**, including areas near **human settlements with water sources**.
- **Distribution:** It is **native to India and Sri Lanka**.
- **Characteristics:**
  - The male is called a **peacock**. The female is called a **peahen**, while young ones are called **peachicks**.
  - **Appearance:** The male has **bright blue feathers and a long, iridescent tail train with eye-shaped spots**,
    - Female has **brown plumage, a shorter tail and slight green accents on the neck**.
  - **Sexual Dimorphism:** Males and females differ clearly in their **physical appearance**.
  - **Behaviour:** It is **generally ground-dwelling but roosts on trees at night**.

- **Males defends its territory** and forms harems during the breeding season.
- **Diet:** It is **omnivores** and feeds on seeds, fruits, flowers, **insects, small reptiles and small mammals**.
  - It may **also eat crops near agricultural areas**.
- **Breeding:** It is **polygamous**, and its breeding season usually **coincides with the monsoon**.
  - **Males displays its feathers to attract females**.
- **Vocalization:** It is **known for its loud 'may-yow' call**.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN Red List: Least Concern**
  - **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**

### National Scholarship Portal

**News:** Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development released scholarship and fellowship funds for agriculture students across the country through the National Scholarship Portal.

#### About National Scholarship Portal (NSP)



Figure 5. Source: National Informatics Centre

- The **National Scholarship Portal (NSP)** is a **one-stop platform** that provides a **range of scholarship-related services**, including student applications, application processing, approval, sanction and disbursement of scholarships.
- It has been **implemented as a Mission Mode Project (MMP)** under **Digital India**.
- **Nodal ministry:** The nodal ministry is the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- **Aim:** It aims to **provide a single platform for all scholarship-related services**, from student application to the processing, sanction and direct disbursement of scholarships.
- **Objective:** It seeks to **create a Simplified, Mission-oriented, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent (SMART) system** for the faster and more effective processing of scholarship applications and the direct transfer of funds to beneficiaries' accounts without leakages.
- **Benefits**
  - **Simplified process for students:** It provides information on all available scholarships under a single platform and enables a single integrated application for different scholarships.
  - **Improved transparency:** The system identifies and suggests scholarship schemes for which a student is eligible. It also helps reduce duplicate applications and processing to the maximum extent possible.

- **Standardisation:** It maintains master data on institutions and courses at the national level and also supports standardised scholarship processing.
- **Decision Support System (DSS):** It serves as a decision support system for ministries and departments by providing updated information whenever required.
- **Monitoring and Management Information System (MIS):** It provides a comprehensive MIS to monitor every stage of scholarship distribution, from student registration to the final delivery of funds.

### Dirac Medal 2026

**News:** Four physicists, including Indian physicist Deepak Dhar, have been awarded the Dirac Medal 2026 for contributions to statistical mechanics and theoretical physics.

#### About Dirac Medal 2026



Source – ICTP

- **Origin:** The Dirac Medal was **first awarded in 1985** by the **International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)**.
- **Naming:** It is **named after P.A.M. Dirac**, one of the greatest physicists of the 20th century.
- **Frequency:** The Medal is **awarded annually on August 8**.
- **Eligibility:** It is awarded to scientists who have **made significant contributions to theoretical physics**.
  - The Medal is **not awarded to Nobel Laureates, Fields Medallists, or Wolf Foundation Prize winners**.

#### Recipients of Dirac Medal 2026

- The **2026 Dirac Medal** was awarded to four physicists –
- **Deepak Dhar:**
  - **Country:** He is from **Uttar Pradesh, India**.



- **Affiliation:** He is an **Indian National Science Academy (INSA)** distinguished professor at the **International Centre for Theoretical Sciences**, in Bengaluru.
- **Contribution:** He made **pioneering contributions to statistical physics**, especially through his exact solution of the **Abelian sandpile model**.
  - His work showed **how simple interactions can produce complex behaviour** and **how small events can sometimes trigger large changes in a system**.
  - His research has also been **used to understand phenomena such as earthquakes, traffic jams and fluctuations in financial markets**.
- **Other Achievements:** In **2022**, he became the **first Indian to receive the Boltzmann Medal**.
  - He also received the **Padma Bhushan in 2023** and the **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize in 1991**.
- **Bernard Derrida:** He made important contributions to **statistical mechanics, spin glasses and non-equilibrium physics**.
  - His **Random Energy Model** showed how systems with **many possible configurations can sometimes be dominated by a small number of favourable configurations**.
  - His work has **also contributed to neural networks, optimisation and the study of driven systems**.
- **Marc Mézard:** He made major contributions to the **study of disordered systems and spin glasses**.
  - He helped **develop the cavity method** with Giorgio Parisi and Miguel Virasoro.
  - He later **applied these ideas to computer science, optimisation, information processing and neural networks**.
  - His recent work **also focuses on machine learning, deep networks and generative models**.
- **Haim Sompolinsky:** He pioneered the use of statistical physics to **study neural circuits, memory and brain function**.
  - He helped **establish theoretical and computational neuroscience by applying statistical mechanics to neural networks**, including the **Hopfield model**.
  - His later work **examined biological and artificial networks, neural representations and deep networks**.

#### About International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)

- ICTP is an **international research institute** working in the **fields of physical and mathematical sciences**.
- **Established:** It was **established in 1964**.
- **Framework:** It functions **under a tripartite agreement involving the Italian Government, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**.
- **Status:** ICTP is a **UNESCO Category 1 Institute**.
- **Location:** It is **located in Trieste, Italy**.

### QS World University Rankings 2027

**News:** The number of Indian higher education institutions featured in the QS World University Rankings 2027 has increased.

#### About QS World University Rankings 2027



- **QS World University Rankings 2027** indicates that **the increase marks a significant expansion in India's global university presence** since the establishment of the [National Institutional Ranking Framework \(NIRF\)](#).
- Of the **52 Indian institutions ranked globally**, 26 improved their positions, nine remained unchanged, and 15 declined.
  - **Two institutions entered the rankings for the first time.**
- **Highest-Ever Rankings:** 18 Indian institutions achieved their **best-ever rankings**, including 13 non-IIT institutions.
- **IIT Performances:**
  - **IIT Delhi:** Rose **5 places to 118th**, matching the highest-ever position achieved by an Indian institution.
  - **IIT Bombay:** Fell **5 places to 134th**.
  - **IIT Madras:** Rose to **170th**.
  - **IIT Kharagpur:** Rose to **205th**.
- **IISc Bengaluru:** Ranked **221st**.
- **VIT and BITS Pilani:** VIT climbed **94 places to 597th**, while BITS Pilani rose **93 places to 575th**.
- **Other Major Gains:** IIT Hyderabad gained **76 places**, Jamia Millia Islamia rose **more than 75 places to 686th**, and Shoolini University climbed **51 places to 452nd**.

#### About QS World University Rankings

- It is an **annual global ranking of universities** published by **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)**, a leading higher education analytics organization.
- **Aim:** It aims to **help students, academics, and employers compare** the performance of universities worldwide.
- **Methodology**
  - The QS World University Rankings use a **structured approach to assess institutions** across the globe.
  - Each ranking is built on a **set of measurements** that help evaluate different aspects of university performance. These measurements are grouped as follows:
    - **Lens:** A collection of indicators linked by a common theme, such as research or employability.
    - **Indicator:** A specific area of performance, such as Citations per Faculty or Employer Reputation. Institutions are scored and ranked on each indicator, which contributes to their overall rank.
    - **Metric:** A detailed calculation within an indicator, used to generate precise scores.

#### S.H.I.N.E. Initiative

**News:** The Department of Health Research-Indian Council of Medical Research will organise the second edition of S.H.I.N.E. on 11–12 August 2026 across 83 locations.

#### About S.H.I.N.E. Initiative



Figure 6. Source – DD News

- **S.H.I.N.E.** stands for **Science, Health and Innovation for NextGen Explorer**.
  - It is a **nationwide student outreach programme**.
  - **Launched by:** The initiative was launched by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in **August 2025** as an **annual initiative**.
  - **Goal:** It aims to **ignite scientific curiosity, foster innovation, and inspire students to pursue careers in biomedical research, science and public health**.
  - **Beneficiaries:** It invites **students of Grades 9 to 12** from **government, government-aided and private schools across India**.
  - **Alignment with:** The initiative is **aligned with India's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision** and the **Prime Minister's call for students to spend "One Day as a Scientist."**
- **Key Features:**
    - **Scientific Exposure:** Students can explore **research through guided laboratory tours, research exhibitions, poster walks, video presentations and live demonstrations**.
    - **Interaction with Scientists:** Students can **interact directly with ICMR scientists** and learn about their research, expertise and work in public health.
    - **Nationwide Reach:** The 2026 edition will be **held across 83 locations**.

### Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme (CMAS)

**News:** The Government has proposed a ₹10,000 crore Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme in the Union Budget 2026–27 to strengthen domestic container production.

#### About Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme (CMAS)



Source – PIB

- **Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme (CMAS)** is a targeted initiative to build a competitive domestic container manufacturing industry through financial and institutional support.
- **Ministry involved:** The scheme is associated with the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.
- **Aim:** The scheme aims to **reduce import dependence, strengthen supply-chain resilience** and develop a **globally competitive container manufacturing ecosystem in India**.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Financial outlay:** The scheme has an outlay of **₹10,000 crore** over five years.
  - **Production capacity:** The initiative targets an **annual domestic manufacturing capacity** of around 10 times the existing container production capacity up-to 7.5 lakh Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs).
    - It is expected to **generate a market opportunity of nearly ₹80000 lakh crore** while positioning India as a reliable producer of internationally competitive shipping containers.
  - **Greenfield support:** The scheme provides **capital assistance for setting up new Greenfield manufacturing facilities** to expand domestic production.
  - **Brownfield support:** It supports the **expansion of existing Brownfield manufacturing units** and provides operational assistance to improve their competitiveness.
  - **Infrastructure and skills:** It supports **testing infrastructure, skilling and capacity building** to strengthen the container manufacturing value chain.
- **Employment and Manufacturing Opportunities:** It has the potential to generate around **3,000 direct jobs** and more than **50,000 indirect jobs** across container manufacturing and allied industries.

### Zaskar Range

**News:** A new study found that glaciers in the Zaskar region of Ladakh are moving more slowly than they did 30 years ago.

#### About Zaskar Range



Figure 7. Source – ResearchGate

- The Zaskar Range is an important Trans-Himalayan mountain range in Ladakh.
- **Location:** The range is located mainly in the Kargil and Leh regions of Ladakh, with extension towards Himachal Pradesh.
- **Boundary:** It lies south of the Ladakh Range and north of the Great Himalayan Range.
- **Extension:** It extends from the Suru Valley in the northwest to the Tso Kar basin in the southeast.
- **Separation:** It forms a natural divide between the Indus Valley in the north and the Zaskar Valley in the south.
- **Formation:**
  - **Geological division:** It belongs to the Tethys Himalaya and mainly contains folded and thrust

sedimentary and metamorphic rocks.

- **Plate convergence:** It formed due to the **convergence of the Indian Plate with the Eurasian Plate**, which uplifted the Himalayan mountain system.



- **Ancient sea:** Marine fossils show that the region was once part of the ancient Tethys Sea.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Climate:** It has a cold desert climate, with long, extremely cold winters, short summers and very low rainfall.
  - **Physiography:** The range has barren slopes, deep valleys, steep gorges, glaciers and high-altitude peaks,
    - It's elevations generally ranging from 3,500 m to over 7,000 m.
  - **Key Peak: Kamet (7,756 m) in Uttarakhand** is the highest peak of the broader Zaskar Range.
  - **Major Passes:**
    - **Pensi La Pass:** It connects the Suru Valley of Kargil with the Zaskar Valley and is known as the gateway to Zaskar.
    - **Shingo La Pass:** It connects the Zaskar Valley with the Lahaul region of Himachal Pradesh.
    - **Other important passes** include Fotu La, Wakha La, Kanji La, Charchar La, Ruberang La and Taglang La.
  - **Major Rivers:** The [Zaskar River](#) is formed by the Doda and Lungnak rivers near Padum and joins the Indus near Nimmu.
    - **Other significant rivers** draining the range include the Khurana River and Suru River.
  - **Glaciers:** The Drang-Drung Glacier, located near Pensi La, is one of the largest glaciers in Ladakh and provides meltwater to the Zaskar river system.
  - **Vegetation:** Vegetation is sparse and includes alpine grasses, shrubs, mosses and steppe vegetation adapted to high altitude and aridity.

### NGOPV Shruti

**News:** Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV), 'Shruti' was launched marking a significant milestone in Indian Navy's pursuit towards indigenous shipbuilding

#### About NGOPV Shruti



Source: BW Businessworld



- **Yard 3037 (*Shruti*)** is the **second Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV)** of the four NGOPVs to be constructed as part of the Indian Navy's 11-ship
  - **Yard 3039 (*Sanghmitra*)** was the first NGOPV. It was launched in 2026.
    - The ship has been named '**Sanghmitra**' after the daughter of **Emperor Ashoka**.
- **Named after:** *Shruti* is named after **India's ancient civilisational heritage**, specifically referring to the four Vedas.
- **Build by:** Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (**GRSE**), Kolkata
- **Features:**
  - **Design:** The crest design of the ship depicts the constellation of Ursa Major and a red and white coloured light house.
  - **Size:** They will be much larger and have greater endurance and firepower.
    - These will be about 113 meters long and 14.6 meters wide, with a displacement of 3,000 tons.
  - **Speed:** They will achieve speeds of up to 23 knots and have an endurance of 8,500 nautical miles at a cruising speed of 14 knots.
- **Application:** These indigenously designed and built ships will augment the existing vessels for multi-domain operations, such as maritime surveillance, search and rescue, protection of offshore assets, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) and anti-piracy missions.

### Moon Base Program of NASA

**News:** NASA has invited ISRO to join its Moon Base program during the 9th India-US Civil Space Joint Working Group meeting in Bengaluru.

#### About Moon Base Program of NASA



Source – AIR

- **Moon Base Programme** is part of NASA's broader [Artemis Programme](#), which seeks to build a permanent lunar outpost near the Moon's South Pole.
- **Aim:** The program aims to learn how humans can live and work on the Moon and prepare for future exploration from the Moon to Mars.
- **Key Features:**

- The Moon Base program will be **built step by step** through robotic and human missions **using a phased approach**.
- **Phase One (Now–2029)**: In this phase, **robotic missions will explore the lunar South Pole**, demonstrate new technologies, and **gather knowledge needed for future development**.
  - This phase will also help **identify suitable locations, improve mission capabilities, and reduce risks** before astronauts arrive.
- **Phase Two (2029–2032)**: It will **deploy early power systems, cargo transportation, logistics, and communications** to support long-term operations.
- **Phase Three (2032 and Beyond)**: It will establish a **permanent lunar outpost with habitats, power, communications, transportation, and other critical capabilities for extended human operations**.
- **Commercial and Global Participation**: The program will combine government efforts, private innovation, and global collaboration.

#### About NASA's Artemis Programme

- **Artemis**: It is a **NASA-led Moon exploration programme**.
  - It **established in 2017**, to re-establish human presence on the Moon and support future Mars missions.
- **Artemis I to Artemis IV**:
- **Artemis I**: It was an **uncrewed test mission in 2022** that **successfully tested the Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion in lunar orbit**.
- **Artemis II**: It will conduct the **first crewed test flight of SLS and Orion around the Moon**.
- **Artemis III**: It will **send humans to explore the region near the lunar South Pole**.
  - It is scheduled to make the **first human landing on the Moon since the Apollo programme, probably by 2028**.
- **Artemis IV**: It will introduce the **first lunar space station and a more powerful SLS rocket**.

#### Hallaniyat Islands

**News:** A recent crude oil spill from the tanker Caroline Bezeni poses a serious threat to the pristine nature reserve surrounding Oman's Hallaniyat Islands.

#### About Hallaniyat Islands



Source: Research Gate

- **Location:** The islands of al Hallaniyyat are **located in the north east of Dhofar (South of Oman).**
- **Administrative control:** It is administratively under **Wilayat Shalim and al Hallaniyyat Islands of Sultanate of Oman.**
- It is an **archipelago** made up of **four main islands and small rocky islets.**
  - The four islands are named as **Al-Hasikiyah, Al-Sawda, Al-Hallaniyah, Qarzawit, and Al-Qibliyah.**
  - **Al Hallaniyyat** is the **biggest island** among the four islands and is occupied by 250 persons.
- **Physiography:**
  - The four main islands are **generally hilly but with some flat areas**, especially on the most easterly and most westerly islands.
  - There are also **some small, rocky islets.**
  - The **terrain is very rugged in some islands**, and there is a massive limestone cliff at the northeastern side of the **Hallaniyyat Islands.**
  - The islands are characterized by rocky **sub littoral mixed coral and phaeophyte, and coastal cliffs** with predominantly sandy sub littoral.
- The area overlaps with the **Halaaniyaat Islands Key Biodiversity Area and the Oman Arabian Sea Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area.**
- **Flora and Fauna:** Shallow waters contain highly diverse and **largely undisturbed corals, sponges, seaweeds, algae, fish, and other marine life.**
  - The islands are an important nesting area for **Loggerhead turtles. Green turtles** are also present.

- The surrounding waters support several **marine mammals, including dolphins and whales.**

### Babirusa/Pig-Deer

**News:** Chester Zoo in the United Kingdom recorded the birth of a babirusa as its wild populations face a rapid decline due to African swine fever.

#### About Babirusa/Pig-Deer



Source – DTE 1

- They are **unusual wild pigs** commonly known as “pig-deer”.
- **Species:** Since 2001, scientists have recognized **three extant species: Buru babirusa, North Sulawesi babirusa and Togian babirusa.**
- **Habitat:** They inhabit **tropical rainforests, lowland and hill forests, swamps and wetlands,** especially areas near riverbanks and ponds with aquatic plants.
- **Distribution:** Babirusas are found **exclusively on Indonesian islands, including Sulawesi, Togian, Sula and Buru.**
  - The **Buru babirusa** is found on **Buru, Mangole and Taliabu** in the **Maluku region.**
- **Characteristics:**
  - **Distinctive Tusks:** Males have **upper canine teeth** that grow through the snout and curve backward towards the forehead.
  - **Sparse Hair:** Babirusas are **much less hairy than other pigs**, while the **Buru babirusa** has a **distinctive golden-brown coat.**
  - **Unusual Snout:** They **cannot root in the ground like other pigs** because they **lack a rostral bone in the snout.**
  - **Diet:** They are **omnivorous** and feed on leaves, roots, fruits and animal matter.
  - **Reproduction:** Females usually give **birth to only one or two piglets**, making **population recovery difficult after major declines.**
- **Ecological Role:** They help in **seed dispersal, nutrient cycling and soil aeration.**
- **Conservation Status**
  - **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN):** **Vulnerable** but it is **expected to be uplisted to Critically Endangered.**



## De-reservation

**News:** The National Commission for Scheduled Castes will review Central government de-reservation proposals received over the last three years.

### About De-Reservation



Source – TNIE

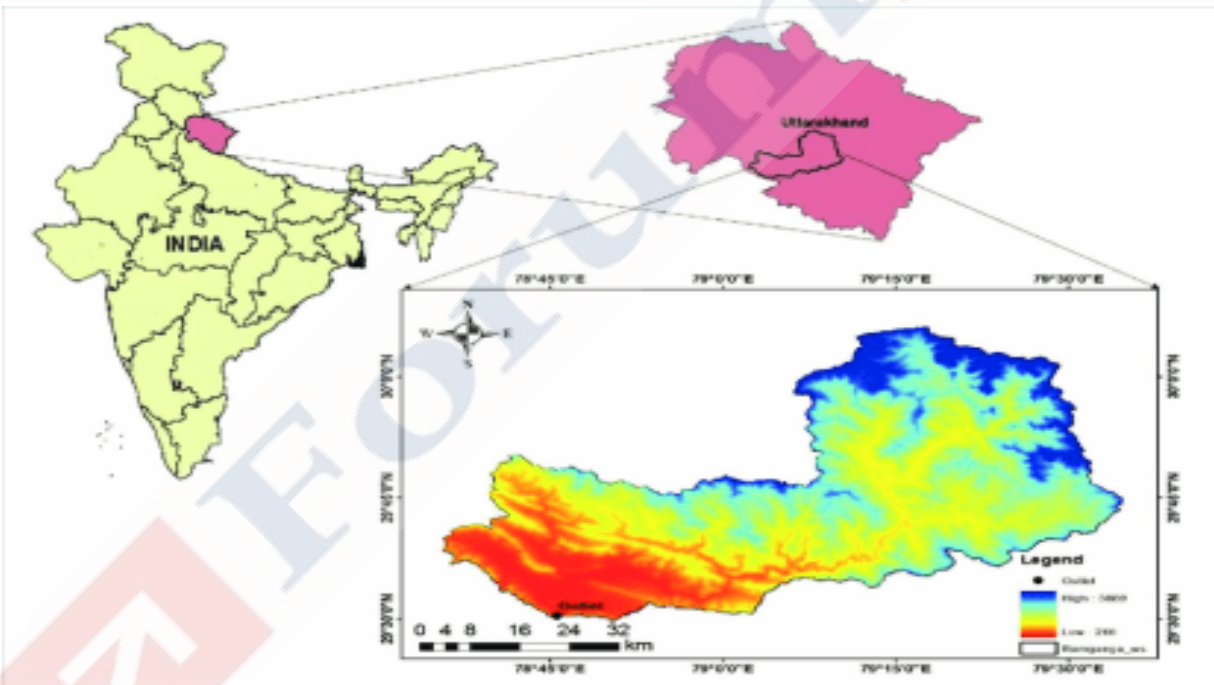
- **De-reservation:** It is the process of filling a reserved vacancy as an unreserved vacancy, under specific conditions..
- **Regulated by:** De-reservation in Central government recruitment is regulated through Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) rules and procedures.
- **Constitutional Framework:** Articles 15(4), 16(4), 16(4A) and 16(4B) provide the constitutional framework for reservation in services, promotions and unfilled reserved vacancies.
- **The General Ban:** There is a general ban on de-reserving posts.
  - In direct recruitment, it is prohibited for Group B, C and D posts and permitted only for Group A services when leaving a vacancy would harm public interest.
- **Backlog Rules:** Article 16(4B) allows unfilled Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe vacancies to be filled in the succeeding year.
  - These backlog vacancies are exempt from the 50% yearly cap on reservations.
- **Procedure for De-reservation:**
  - **Proposal Submission:** The concerned recruiting Department or Ministry submits a de-reservation proposal to the relevant National Commission, and the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).
  - **Commission Examination:** The proposal is first examined by the relevant National Commission for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or Other Backward Classes.
  - **Committee Review:** It is then examined by a Committee of Secretaries, the DoPT and the Social Justice Ministry.
  - **Final Decision:** For direct recruitment vacancies, the final decision rests with the Minister of Personnel and Training.

- **Promotion Vacancies:** The concerned recruiting Department or Ministry has the final say in de-reserving promotion vacancies.
  - **However**, after submitting the proposal to the National Commission and DoPT, it must wait for at least one month for their comments.
  - **If no comments are received within one month**, it may take a decision on de-reservation.
- **Alternate Efforts:** The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) has suggested **exploring deputation or short-term contracts to fill reserved vacancies before de-reservation.**
- **Current Issue:**
  - **Comprehensive Review:** The NCSC has decided to **comprehensively review all de-reservation proposals received from the Centre over the last three years** because it found **consistent shortcomings** in such proposals.

### Ramganga River

**News:** The district administration has intensified relief and rescue efforts as rising Ganga and Ramganga waters flood villages in Uttar Pradesh.

#### About Ramganga River



Source: Research Gate

- The **Ramganga River** is an important river of **northern India**.
- **Origin:** It originates from **Doodhatoli ranges in the district of Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand**.
  - **Main source:** Its main source is the glaciers near the **Namik Glacier and the Pindari Glacier**.
  - It rises at an altitude of about **3,100 m in the lower Himalayas** near the Lohba village in the **Garhwal district of Uttaranchal**.
- **States through which it flows:** It flows from Almora and Pauri district in **Uttarakhand** and Kalagarh, Bijnore, Moradabad, Rampur, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur in **Uttar Pradesh**.

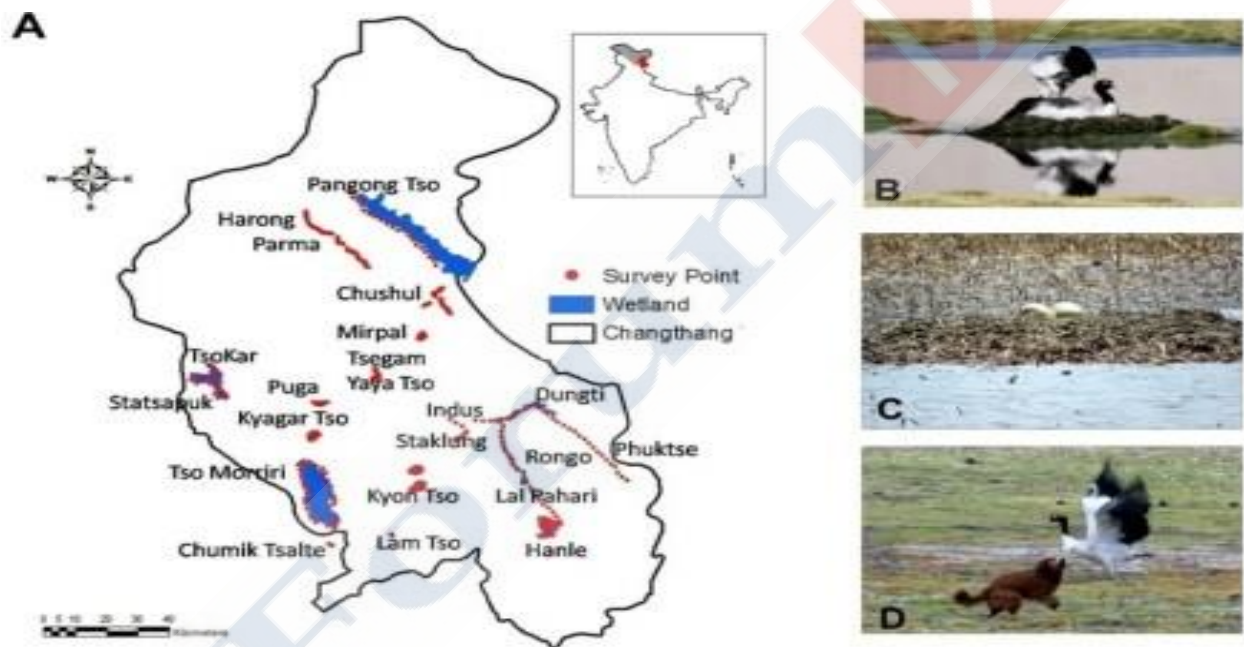
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- It is bounded by **Ganga Basin in West and South-West**, while **Gomti Basin in North-East to South-East** and slightly touching **Ghaghra Basin in upper North-East**.
- It flows by **Corbett National Park**.
- **City situated on the bank:** **Bareilly** city is situated on the **bank of the River in Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Total Length:** Its **total length of River** is **596 Km** and has a **catchment** of **32,493 sq. km**.
- **Tributaries:** **Khoh, Gagan, Aril, Kosi and Deoha (Garra)** are major tributaries of Ramganga.
- **Tributary of:** It is a major tributary joining **Ganga near Kannauj**.
- **Dam associated:** **Kalagarh dam** (embankment dam) is situated in its basin.

### About Hanle Wetland and Tso Kar

**News:** Bombay Natural History Society sterilizes over 2,950 Dogs to Protect Black-Necked Cranes and Wildlife in areas of Hanle Wetland and Tso Kar, Ladakh.

#### About Hanle Wetland



Source: Research Gate

- It is a thriving **high-altitude wetland oasis** in the **cold desert of Ladakh**.
- **Location:** It is located in **Hanle village in Ladakh**, near the **border with China**.
  - **Hanle Valley** falls within the **Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- **River associated with:** It is a complex of fast flowing streams, stagnant pools, saline marshes, seasonally flooded marshes, and bogs along the **Hanle river**.
- These wetlands are **frozen from November to April** and are fed by **snowmelt in summer**.
- **Vegetation:** The **marshes, grasslands and steppes** support vegetation such as **forbs and hardy grasses**, including **Krascheninnikovia ceratoides**, locally known as '**gyab-shen**'.
- **Flora:** The freshwater pools shelter species such as **Hydrilla, Myriophyllum, Potamogeton**, and an **edible aquatic lichen**.
- **Fauna:** It provides a vital refuge for wildlife, including the **endangered Black-necked Crane**, elusive **Pallas's cat**, and the rare **Tibetan gazelle**.

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- It also offers **moist soil and habitats suitable** for small burrowing mammals like **marmots and pikas**.

#### About Tso Kar

- **Location:** It is a **high altitude wetland** situated in the **Changthang region of Ladakh**.
- It consists of **two connected lakes**:
  - **Startsapuk Tso** (a **freshwater** lake of about 438 hectares to the south) and
  - **Tso Kar** (a **hypersaline** lake of 1800 hectares to the north).
- **Named after:** It is called **Tso Kar, meaning white lake**, because of the white **salt efflorescence** found on the margins due to the **evaporation** of highly saline water.
- **Fauna:** Numerous threatened species inhabit this wetland, including the **endangered saker falcon** and **Asiatic wild dog or dhole**, and the **vulnerable snow leopard**.
- **Recognition:** It was designated a **Ramsar site in 2020**.
  - The **Tso Kar Basin is an A1 Category Important Bird Area (IBA)** as per Bird Life International and a key staging site in the **Central Asian Flyway**.
- **Important Breeding Ground:** The site is one of the most important breeding areas of the **Black-necked Crane** in India.
  - It is also the **major breeding area** for **Great Crested Grebe Bar-headed Geese, Ruddy Shelduck, Brown-headed Gull, Lesser Sand-Plover, and many other species**.

### Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) and Dialysis

**News:** The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare has informed Lok Sabha about Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP).

#### About Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) and Dialysis



Source – MoHFW

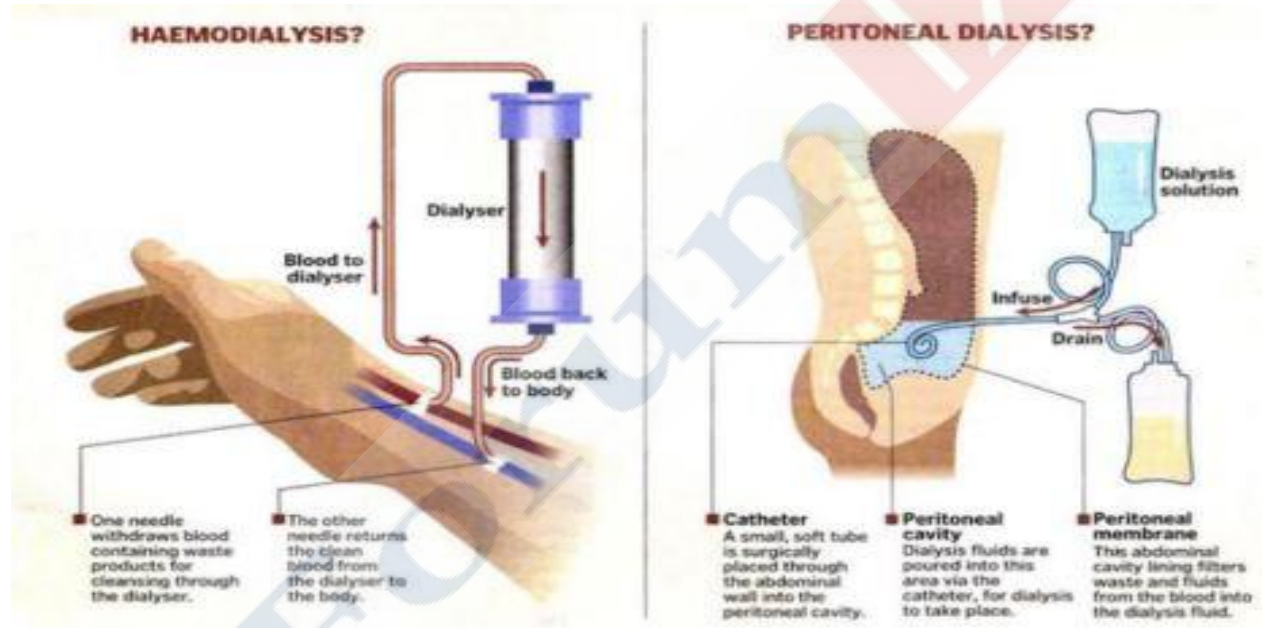
- The **Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP)** was rolled out on **07th April 2016** as part of the **National Health Mission (NHM)**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- **Aim:** It aims to improve access to **haemodialysis services** by establishing **dialysis centres in District Hospitals** and other **health facilities** across the country and providing **free dialysis services to eligible patients**.
- **Beneficiaries:** The scheme targets people living **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** at the district hospitals in the country.



- **Key Features**

- The **guidelines** for Programme envisage the provision of **dialysis services** in **PPP (Public Private Partnership) mode**.
- **Dialysis centres** under PMNDP are **established** based on **proposals received** from the **States/UTs in their annual Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs)**.
- **Financing: For Below Poverty Line (BPL) economic group: 100% expenses are directly covered under NHM by the government.**
  - **For non-BPL patients:** They can **get treated** at the **district hospitals** by **paying the same rates as paid by the government for the BPL patient**.
- **PMNDP portal:** The PMNDP portal (IT platform) was launched on **05 May 22** to **integrate all the dialysis centres** operational in the **state under NHM** and **facilitate building of renal registry** and ensuring **portability** within the state (**one state one dialysis**) and later **throughout the country (One Nation-One Dialysis)**.

**About Dialysis**



Source – Cauvery Hospital

- **Dialysis** is a procedure that **removes waste and fluids** from the **body** that the **kidneys are not able to remove**.
- It also **aims to keep the body in balance** by **correcting the levels of various toxic substances in the blood**.
- **Without dialysis**, all patients with complete **kidney failure** would die from the **build-up of toxins** in the bloodstream.
- **Types of Dialysis:** There are **two main types** of dialysis –
  - **Hemodialysis (HD/Blood Dialysis):** In HD, the **blood is filtered** through a **machine** that **acts like an artificial kidney** and is **returned back into the body**.  
HD **needs to be performed** in a **designated dialysis center**.  
It is usually **needed about 3 times per week**, with **each episode** taking about **3-4 hours**.

- **Peritoneal dialysis (PD/Water Dialysis):** In PD, the **blood** is cleaned without being removed from the body.

- The **abdomen sac (lining)** acts as a **natural filter**.
- A **solution** (mainly made up of **salts and sugars**) is **injected** into the **abdomen** that encourages **filtration** such that the **waste is transferred from the blood to the solution**.

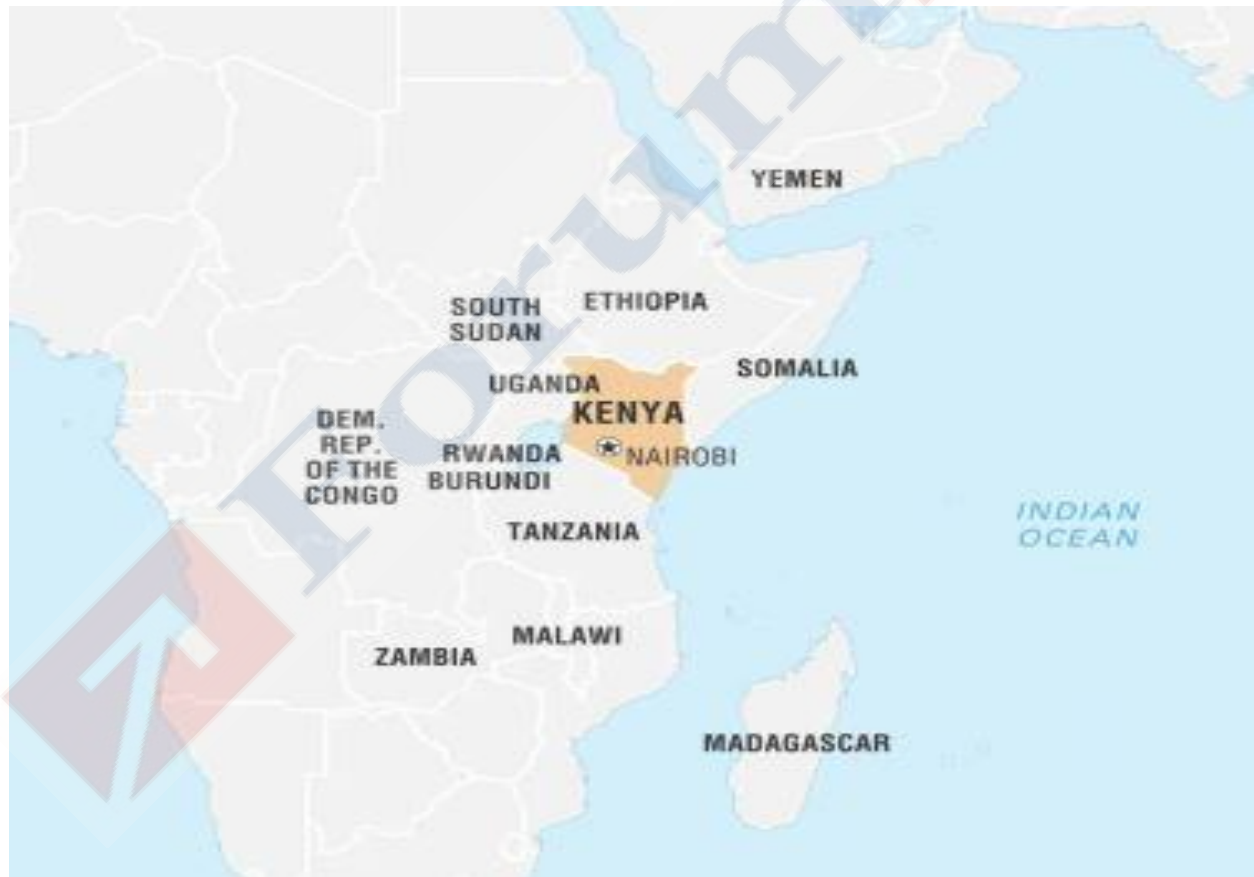
**There are 2 types of PD – Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) and Automated Peritoneal Dialysis (APD).**

- **CAPD** needs to be **done 3 to 5 times every day**, but **does not require a machine**.
- **APD** uses an **automated cyclor machine** to perform **3 to 5 exchanges** during the **night** while the patient is **asleep**.

### Key Facts About Kenya

**News:** India and Kenya discussed parliamentary cooperation and bilateral ties, with Kenya supporting India's permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council.

### Key Facts About Kenya



Source – Britannica

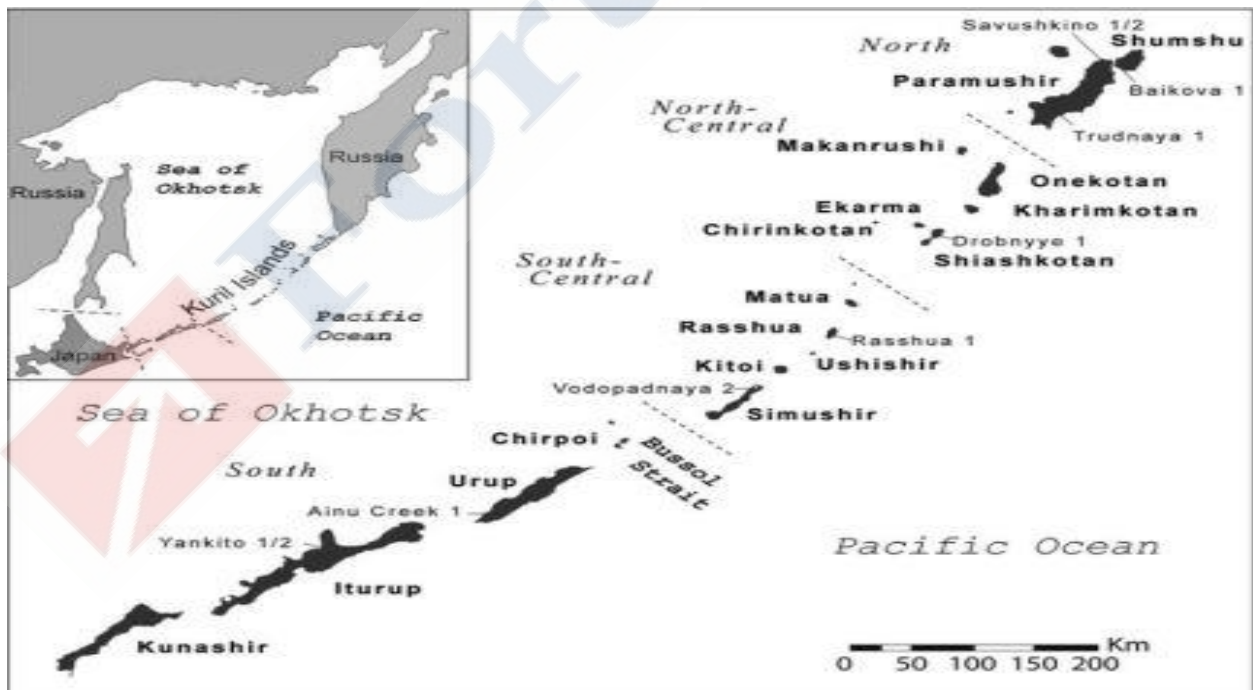
- **Location:** Kenya is in East Africa and is **bisected** by the **Equator**.

- **Land Boundaries:** It shares land boundaries with **South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.**
- **Maritime Boundary:** Kenya lies along the **Indian Ocean to the east, with a coastal plain.**
- **Capital:** **Nairobi**
- **Climate:** Kenya has **dry, rainy, and low-precipitation periods**, with high temperatures in arid regions.
- **Physiography:** Kenya includes the **Lake Victoria basin, Rift Valley and highlands, eastern plateau, arid areas, and coast.**
- **Mountain:** Major highlands include the **Mau Escarpment and Aberdare Range.**
  - **Mount Elgon** lies near **Uganda.**
  - **Highest Peak:** **Mount Kenya** is the **highest peak** at **5,199 metres.**
- **Important Rivers:** The **Tana River**, Kenya's longest river, flows **towards the Indian Ocean,**
- **Important Lakes:** **Lake Victoria**, shared with **Uganda and Tanzania**, is **Africa's largest lake.**
  - **Lake Turkana** is Kenya's **largest Rift Valley lake.**
- **Vegetation:** The highlands have **evergreen forests and short grass.**
- **Flora:** Highland vegetation **includes cedar, podo, tree heaths, tree groundsel, and giant lobelia.**
- **Fauna:** Kenya has diverse wildlife, **including lions, elephants, cheetahs, rhinoceroses, and hippopotamuses.**

### Kuril Islands

**News:** Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Iturup, one of the disputed southern Kuril Islands claimed by Japan.

#### About Kuril Islands



Source – ResearchGate

- **Location:** The **Kuril Islands** are an island group in the Russian Far East, stretching from the southern tip of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula to northeastern Hokkaido in Japan.
- **Boundary:** They form the boundary between the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Okhotsk.
- **Geographical Extent:** The archipelago extends for about 1,300 km and covers over 15,600 sq. km.
- **Composition:** The archipelago comprises 56 islands, along with several islets and rocks.
- **Division:** The islands are divided into the Greater and Lesser Kuril Chains.
- **Geology:** The islands are part of the Pacific Ring of Fire and contain over 100 volcanoes, including 35 active volcanoes.
- **Natural Features:** The islands have many hot springs, while earthquakes and tidal waves are common.
- **Climate:** The climate has long, cold, snowy winters and cool, wet and foggy summers.
- **Vegetation:** Vegetation ranges from tundra in the north to dense forests in the south.
- **Major towns:** Kurilsk, Severo-Kurilsk and Yuzhno-Kurilsk are important towns.
- **Dispute:**
  - **Sovereignty:** Japan claims the four southern islands – Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and Habomai – as its Northern Territories, while Russia administers them as the South Kurils.
  - **Background:** The Soviet Union seized the islands at the end of World War II and expelled Japanese residents by 1949.
  - **Impact:** Russia and Japan have never formally concluded a peace treaty since the end of World War II.

### Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)

**News:** The government is exploring ways to make UPI financially sustainable by restoring MDR for selected transactions or introducing tiered incentives.

**About Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)**



## What is **MDR** & How It Works



Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) is the fee that a merchant pays to accept payments made through credit cards, debit cards, and certain digital payment systems.

It is usually charged as a percentage of the transaction value and is deducted before the merchant receives the payment.

**Suppose you buy a product worth Rs 1,000 using a credit card.**

- Customer pays: Rs 1,000
- Merchant receives: Rs 980-990 (depending on the MDR)
- Rs 10-20 is deducted as MDR



**Deducted MDR is shared among:**

|                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>Issuing bank (bank that issued your card) | <br>Acquiring bank/ payment aggregator (merchant's bank or payment processor) | <br>Card network (Visa, Mastercard, RuPay, etc.) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Source – ToI

- **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)** is the **fee charged to merchants for accepting digital payments**.
- **Purpose:** It covers costs incurred by **banks, payment processors, payment gateways, and other payment infrastructure participants**.
- **Mechanism:**
  - **Payment Process:** When a customer makes a digital payment, the merchant usually receives the transaction amount after MDR is deducted.
  - Example: On a ₹10,000 transaction with a 2% MDR, ₹200 is deducted and the merchant receives ₹9,800.
- **Major Components:** MDR consists of **different fees paid** to the entities involved in processing and completing a digital payment.
  - **Payment Processor Fee:** Payment processors **charge fees for handling transactions between merchants and banks**.
  - **Interchange Fee:** Card issuers **charge fees** for processing transactions.
  - **Assessment Fee:** Card networks **charge fees** for using their payment processing services.
  - **Markup Fee:** This fee is **divided among entities involved in the transaction**.

- **Key Features:**

- **Percentage-based:** MDR is generally calculated as a percentage of the transaction value.
- **Variable:** MDR is not a single fixed rate and can differ across payment modes, providers and applicable arrangements.
- **Additional Charges:** Payment processors may charge additional fees for fraud prevention, chargeback handling and customer support.
- **Settlement:** MDR charges are automatically deducted from the merchant's account when the transaction batch is settled.
- **Business Cost:** Merchants must consider MDR as part of their business costs while setting their prices.
- **UPI Position:** UPI and RuPay debit card transactions were exempted from MDR under the government's zero-MDR framework in January 2020.

**Report of Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance on MDR**

- **Committee's Recommendation:** The Committee has called for a self-sustaining, tiered MDR framework for higher-value merchant transactions.
- **Reason:** The ₹2,000 crore government support covers only around 10% of the industry's actual operating costs, while estimated operational expenditure is ₹20,700 crore.
- **Earlier Recommendation:** The Committee had earlier asked the Department of Financial Services to examine the long-term financial viability of defined-benefit and incentive-based schemes.
- **Legal Action:** Following its earlier recommendation, legislative provisions enabling a tiered MDR structure have now been introduced.
- **Early Implementation:** The Committee has urged faster notification and implementation because inadequate support may affect investment in cybersecurity, fraud prevention and payment infrastructure.
- **Safeguards:** The framework should protect small merchants and person-to-person transfers while moving towards a self-sustaining digital payments ecosystem.

**Southern African Customs Union (SACU)**

**News:** India has signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) for negotiations on a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with SACU.

**About Southern African Customs Union (SACU)**



Source – SACU

- **Southern African Customs Union (SACU)** is an African regional economic organisation and the world's oldest customs union.
- **Established:** It was **established in 1910** and **re-established in 1969**.
- **Members:** It comprises **South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland) and Lesotho**.
- **Headquarters:** It's headquarters is **located in Windhoek, Namibia**.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Function:** The five members **share customs revenues and coordinate trade policies and decision-making**.
  - **Common Customs Territory:** It allows the **free movement of goods among member states without internal tariffs**.
  - **Common External Tariff:** A Common External Tariff (CET) **applies to goods imported from territories outside SACU**.
  - **Regional Linkage:** All SACU members **also participate in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)**.

#### **India-SACU Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)**

- **India** has signed the **Terms of Reference (ToR)** for negotiations on a **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)** with SACU.
- **Key Areas:** The proposed PTA will cover **eight broad subject areas**, including **trade in goods, market access, customs, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, trade remedies, technical barriers to trade, rules of origin and dispute settlement**.

### **Revamped India Code Portal**

**News:** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice recently launched the revamped India Code Portal.

#### **About Revamped India Code Portal**

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor based courses.





Figure 8. Source: IndiaAI

**Revamped India Code Portal** is a revamped portal to make access to laws simpler, faster and more citizen-centric.

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Law and Justice

- **Aim:** It is aimed at making access to laws simpler, faster and more citizen-centric.

- **Features:**

- **Technology Driven features:** It introduces a range of technology-driven features, including artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted search and interaction, semantic and speech-based search, improved navigation, multilingual access and enhanced linkages between different legislative documents.

- **Efficient Search and Navigation:** The upgraded platform enables users to search and navigate legislation more efficiently, access amendments and legislative history, and find links between Acts and relevant subordinate legislation.

- **Integration with the e-Gazette Ecosystem:** It also incorporates integration with the e-Gazette ecosystem, improved document viewing, QR-enabled access and

a structured mechanism for citizen feedback.

- **AI-Assisted Multilingual Access:** It features an AI-assisted multilingual access to laws in all 22 languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution.
- **Semantic and Speech-Enabled Search:** It also supports semantic and speech-enabled searches, enabling users to find legal information through more natural and accessible forms of interaction.