

Factly Weekly

Compilation

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

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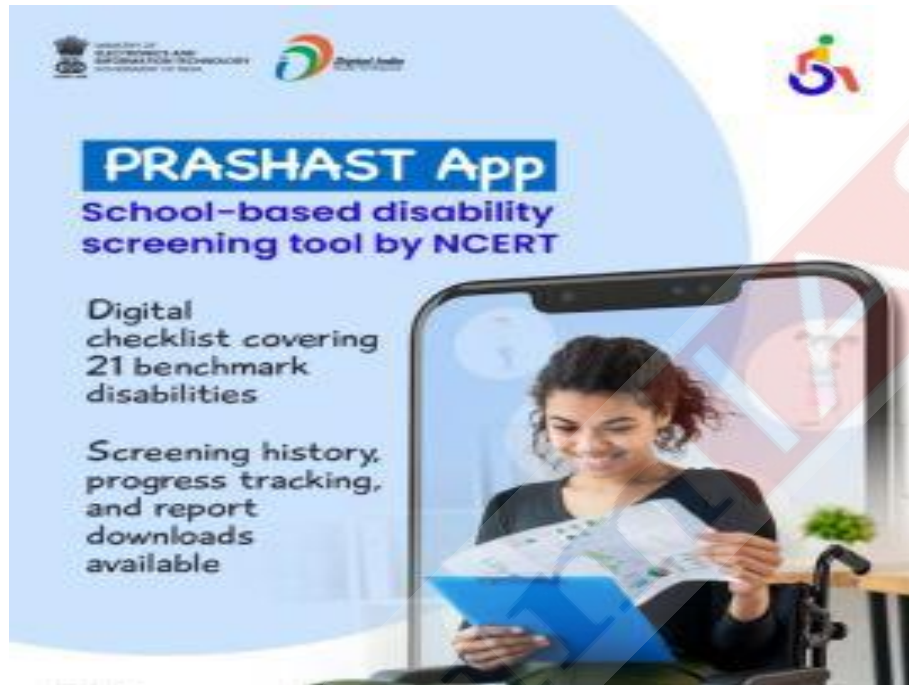
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PRASHAST Platform

News: Over 60,000 schools participated in a nationwide screening of an orientation module on inclusive education through the PRASHAST portal.

About PRASHAST Platform



Source – PIB

- **PRASHAST** stands for **Pre-Assessment Holistic Screening Tool**.
- It is a **government initiative** that **helps identify, support, and track children with special educational needs**, from early screening to inclusive education.
- **Origin:** It was launched in **September 2022** and upgraded to **PRASHAST 2.0** in late 2025.
- **Developed by:** It was developed by the **Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), NCERT**.
- **Enabling Acts and Policies:** It aligns with the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016**, and the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
- **Aim:** It **aims to identify children with probable disabilities** at an early stage, support timely referrals for **formal assessment**, and **promote inclusive education**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Two-Part Screening:** Part I enables **regular teachers to screen students using observable indicators**.
 - **Part II** allows **special educators, counsellors, or school heads** to conduct **further screening and validate initial findings**.
 - **Coverage of Disabilities:** It provides **checklists for all 21 disability conditions** recognised under the RPwD Act, 2016.
 - **Digital Integration:** It integrates with **national data sources such as UDISE+, APAAR ID, and the Swavlamban Card Portal** to track enrolment, screening, and interventions.

- **Reporting and Referrals:** It generates **standardized school-level reports** to **document screening** and **support the formal disability certification process**.

Slaty Egret (*Egretta vinaceigula*)

News: Changes in the breeding sites of the Slaty Egret in Botswana's Okavango Delta have highlighted its role in monitoring ecosystem changes.

About Slaty Egret



Source – DTE

- The **Slaty Egret (*Egretta vinaceigula*)** is a **small, shy waterbird**.
- **Family:** It belongs to the **heron family**.
- **Habitat:** It inhabits **river floodplains, marshes and temporary shallow wetlands** with short, emergent vegetation.
 - It prefers **shallow water with a depth of less than 10 cm for feeding**.
- **Distribution:** It mainly occurs in northern **Botswana**, especially around the **Okavango Delta and the Linyanti-Chobe river system**.
 - It is also found in **Zambia, Namibia and Zimbabwe**.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Appearance:** It is a **small, dark-coloured egret** with a distinctive **slaty-grey appearance**.
 - **Breeding Behaviour:** It usually breeds between **March and June**, often during high flood levels.
 - **Nesting Sites:** It nests in **small colonies on islands or in reedbeds surrounded by water**, which help reduce disturbances.
 - **Diet:** It feeds mainly on **young fish, amphibians and aquatic invertebrates**.
 - **Movement:** It is **mostly sedentary** but may **move between wetlands in response to rainfall and changing habitat conditions**.

- **Ecological Indicator:** Changes in its distribution and breeding sites can help scientists identify changes in water availability, vegetation and habitat conditions.
- **Threats:**
 - Habitat loss
 - Water regulation and abstraction
 - Agricultural expansion
 - Dam construction, fires
 - Human disturbance
 - Invasive species
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Status: Vulnerable.**
 - **International Agreement:** The species is covered by the **Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA).**

Nameri Tiger Reserve and Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) Framework

News: Nameri Tiger Reserve in Assam has received CA|TS Approved status after meeting the required standards for tiger conservation and protected area management.

About Nameri Tiger Reserve



Source – ResearchGate

- **Location:** The Nameri Tiger Reserve is located in the northern part of Sonitpur district, Assam.
- **Borders:** It shares its northern boundary with Pakke Tiger Reserve and Doimara Reserve Forest in Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Established:** It was declared a national park in 1998 and notified as a tiger reserve in 2000.
- **Compositions:** It is comprised of-
 - Two protected areas – Nameri National Park and Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary, and
 - Two reserve forests – Naduar Reserve Forest and Balipara Reserve Forest.
- **Area :** It covers 464 sq. km, including a core area of 320 sq. km and a buffer area of 144 sq. km.

- **Major Rivers:** The **Jia-Bhoro**li is the main river flowing through the reserve.
 - Its tributaries include the **Diji, Dinai, Doigurung, Nameri, Dikorai and Khari.**
 - The river is known for the **Golden Mahseer**, a fish popularly called the “**Tiger of Indian rivers.**”
- **Vegetation:** The reserve has **tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests**, along with **cane brakes and grasslands.**
- **Flora:** Important plant species include **Hollong, Nahor, Simul, orchids and medicinal plants.**
- **Fauna:** The reserve is home to the **Royal Bengal tiger, leopard, clouded leopard, wild dog and Asian elephant.**
 - It is also known for the **White-winged Wood Duck.**

About Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) Framework

- **Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) Framework** is a globally recognized **certification system that assesses the effectiveness of tiger conservation areas and promotes good management practices.**
- **Launching:** The framework was launched at the **first Asian Parks Congress in Japan in 2013.**
- **Implemented by:** The **Global Tiger Forum (GTF)** has supported its adoption and implementation across tiger landscapes.
- **Aim:** Its aim is to **secure safe habitats** where wild tigers can **live, breed and recover without threats.**
- **Structure:** The CA|TS framework consists of **seven pillars and 17 core elements, divided into two groups:**
 - **5 Conservation Assured (CA) Pillars:** These five pillars **cover general aspects** of conservation area management – **importance and status, management, community, tourism (optional) and protection.**
 - **2 Tiger Standards (TS) Pillars:** These two pillars **focus specifically on tiger conservation – habitat management and tiger populations.**
- **CA|TS Process:**
 - **Assessment:** It involves **self-assessment, national audits and international review** to evaluate management practices.
 - **Recognition:** Conservation areas can **receive Registered or Approved status based on the assessment.**
 - The **framework is voluntary** and helps identify gaps in management.
- **Framework Alignment:** CA|TS **aligns with the [IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas \(WCPA\)](#) Management Effectiveness Framework.**

Living Planet Report 2026

News: The Living Planet Index 2026 was been published recently by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

About Living Planet Report 2026



Source: WWF

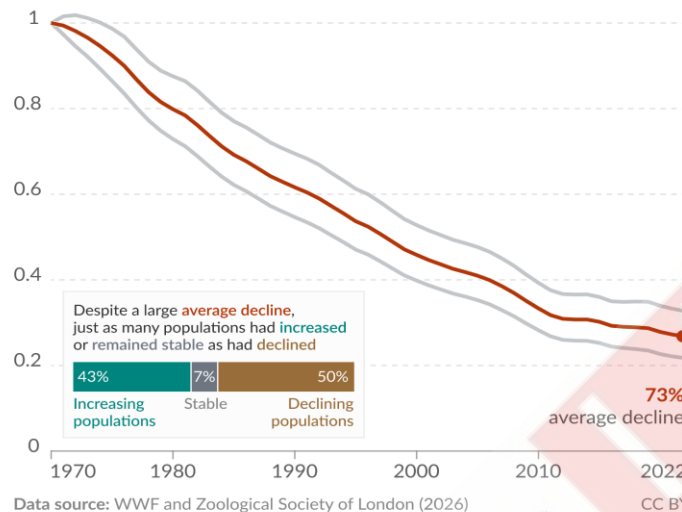
- **Living Planet Report** is a measure of the state of the world's biological diversity based on population trends of vertebrate species from terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats.
- **Released by:** It is released by [World Wide Fund for Nature \(WWF\)](#).
- **Purpose:** It measures the average rate of change in population size across the species monitored.
- **Developed by:** It was first developed in 1998 by WWF to monitor the changing state of nature.
 - **Zoological Society of London (ZSL)** has been managing the LPI in a collaborative partnership with WWF since 2006.
- It was adopted by the **Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD)** as an indicator of progress towards its 2011-2020 targets and it is now an indicator in the post-2020 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Key Findings of the Living Planet Report 2026

Living Planet Index

The Living Planet Index measures the average decline in studied wildlife populations. It captures the change in abundance in 35,803 populations across 5,790 native species relative to the year 1970.

Our World
in Data



Source: WWF and Zoological Society of London (2026)

- **Global Wildlife Decline:** The average size of monitored **vertebrate populations declined 73%** over 52 years between 1970 and 2022.
 - This is **based on scientific monitoring data from 35,803 populations and 5,790 species of amphibians, birds, fishes, mammals and reptiles.**
- **Decline in ecosystems:** The **strongest declines were seen in freshwater ecosystems** with average population sizes plunging 85%, followed by **terrestrial ecosystems, at 69%** and **marine ecosystems at 59%.**
- **Regional Variation:** At a regional level, the **steepest declines since 1970 have been recorded in Latin America and the Caribbean (-95%), Africa (-80%), and Asia and the Pacific (-49%).**
- **Evidence of Wildlife Recovery:** The report highlights **recoveries in populations of green turtles, bluefin tuna, tigers and southern African elephants.**
 - It demonstrates **that targeted conservation interventions** can deliver proven results.
 - The report noted **rise in global wild tiger numbers between 2010 and 2025, from 3,200 to around 5,700 individuals.**
- **Causes of wildlife decline:** **Habitat loss and degradation, overexploitation of resources, climate change, impact of invasive species, pollution and disease** are some of the dominant drivers of changes across ecosystems and wildlife populations.
- **Suggestions:**
 - Countries should implement the goals of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and **Paris Agreement** to drive systemic change.
 - Upcoming **UN biodiversity and climate conferences** provide an opportunity to move from **ambition to implementation.**

SAREX-2026

News: Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth inaugurated the Multinational Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX-2026).

About SAREX-2026



Source: Bharat Shakti

- **Multinational Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX-2026)** is a multi-agency exercise to test operational preparedness, joint response mechanisms and international interoperability.
 - It promotes **exchange of best practices**, with **preservation of life at sea** as the paramount objective.
- **Location:** It is to be conducted **off Paradip, Odisha on October 08, 2026**.
- **Hosted by:** It is being conducted by the **Indian Coast Guard**.
- **Participants:** The exercise will have participation and observation of **32 delegates from 30 foreign friendly nations**.
 - **Assets Deployed:** The assets deployed included **15 Coast Guard ships, three Dornier aircraft, three Advanced Light Helicopters, one Chetak helicopter, IAF C-130J and Mi-17 aircraft, two Indian Navy ships**, along with civil and state resources and shore-based support units.
- **Theme:** SAREX-2026 theme is **“Leveraging Technology to Strengthen SAR Preparedness and Maritime Safety.”**
- **2026 Edition:** This is the **12th edition of National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise**.
 - The **first edition** was conducted in **2003**.
- **Features:**

- The exercise **brought together maritime and aeronautical agencies to demonstrate operational readiness, interoperability and coordinated response** to mass rescue operations at sea.
- **Activities conducted:** It simulated a **Mass Rescue Operation** involving simultaneous **aeronautical and maritime emergencies**.
 - The scenario involved a passenger aircraft carrying **228 persons ditching at sea and colliding with the container vessel MV Zumba**.
 - The exercise involved activation of the **Incident Command Post, firefighting operations, helicopter evacuations, deployment of life rafts and air-droppable life rafts, Jason Cradle and Gemini recovery, rescue basket operations, and scramble net procedures**.
 - The exercise also included a demonstration of **Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) capability**.

ASW-SWC Mangrol

News: The third Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft, Mangrol, is scheduled to be commissioned into the Indian Navy on 12 October 2026.

About ASW-SWC Mangrol



Source – Indian Navy

- **Mangrol** is the 3rd Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) of Indian Navy.
- **Built by:** It was built by **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi**.
- **Naming:** It is named after **Mangrol, a coastal town and prominent fishing harbour in Gujarat's Junagadh district**.
 - The name also continues the legacy of the erstwhile **INS Mangrol (M85), a minesweeper that served the Navy until 7 April 2004**.
- **Aim:** It is designed to **detect and counter underwater threats in coastal and shallow waters**.
- **Key Features:**

- It is built with over **80% indigenous content** under the **Government of India's Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat** initiatives.
- **Armaments and Sensors:** It carries the **Abhay Hull-Mounted Sonar**, **lightweight torpedoes**, an indigenous **anti-submarine rocket launcher** and the **Maareech Advanced Torpedo Decoy System**.
- **Propulsion:** It uses **three diesel engines** with **waterjet propulsion**, which provide high manoeuvrability in shallow waters.
- **Significance**
 - It can conduct **underwater surveillance, Low-Intensity Maritime Operations** and **mine warfare-related tasks**.
 - It can operate alongside **maritime patrol aircraft, helicopters** and other **warships to counter submarine threats**.
 - It will strengthen the **Navy's anti-submarine warfare capabilities** and help **protect ports, harbours and coastal approaches**.

'Utkalmani' Gopabandhu Das

News: Odisha paid tributes to Gopabandhu Das on his 149th birth anniversary, recognising his contributions to the freedom struggle, social reform, journalism and Odia literature.

About 'Utkalmani' Gopabandhu Das



Source – NOA

- **Gopabandhu Das** was a **freedom fighter, social reformer, educationist, journalist and poet** from Odisha.
- **Early Life:**
 - **Birth:** He was born on **9 October 1877** in Suando village near Sakshigopal in **Puri district, Odisha**.
 - **Early Activism:** While studying at **Ravenshaw College**, he established the **Kartavya Bodhini Samiti** to promote **social service, duty and national awareness** among students.

- **Career:** He gave up his legal practice to devote himself to the freedom struggle and social reform.
- **Title:** He received the title 'Utkalmani', meaning 'Gem of Odisha', from Prafulla Chandra Roy for his selfless service to the people of Odisha.
- **Influenced By:**
 - **Vande Mataram Group:** During his stay in Calcutta, he came into contact with the Vande Mataram group, which inspired him with the spirit of Swadeshi.
 - **Lala Lajpat Rai:** At his request, Gopabandhu Das joined the Servants of the People Society and worked to implement its programmes.
- **Major Contributions:**
 - **Freedom Movement:** He actively participated in the freedom struggle and promoted the Non-Cooperation Movement in Odisha.
 - He encouraged people to join the national movement and helped spread the message of the charkha and other constructive programmes of the Congress.
 - **Politics:** He became the first President of the Congress party in Odisha in 1920 and continued in the position until 1928.
 - He also worked for the creation of a separate Odisha province.
 - **Education:** He founded Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya in 1909 in Puri district to promote education and develop moral values among students.
 - **Journalism:** He founded the Odia newspaper The Samaja in 1919.
 - **Social Service:** He established the Puri Seva Samiti to help cholera victims.
 - He also campaigned against untouchability and supported widow rehabilitation.
 - **Literary Work:** He wrote several works in Odia, including Abakasha Chinta, Dharmapada, Kara Kabita and Bandira Atmakatha.
- **Death:** He died on 17 June 1928, following illness, at the age of 50.

Laver Cup

News: The ninth edition of the Laver Cup was held at the O2 Arena in London, where Team Europe defeated Team World 13–5 to reclaim the trophy.

About Laver Cup



Source – TH

- The Laver Cup is an annual men's team tennis tournament.

- It features **two teams**, with **six players** representing **Europe** and **six players** representing the **rest of the world**.
- **Origin:** The idea was **developed by Roger Federer** and his **business partner Tony Godsick** in **2014**.
 - Their management company, **Team 8**, **organised the first edition in Prague in 2017**.
 - **2026 Edition:** The **ninth edition of the Laver Cup** was held from 25 to 27 September 2026 at the **O2 Arena in London**.
- **Inspired By:** It was inspired by the **Ryder Cup in golf**.
- **Naming:** It was **named after Rod Laver**, an **Australian tennis player**.
 - He was the **only player to complete the calendar-year Grand Slam twice**, in **1962 and 1969**.
- **Host:** The host **location alternates between Europe and other parts of the world**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Team Structure:** The tournament features **two teams**, **Team Europe and Team World**, each consisting of **six players**.
 - The **top three players from each region** are selected based on **Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) rankings**, while the **captains choose the remaining three players**.
 - The teams are **led by captains**.
 - **Match Format:** The competition **runs for three days**, with **three singles matches** and **one doubles match** scheduled each day.
 - Matches are **played in the best-of-three-sets format**.
 - **Scoring System:** Matches on **Day 1** are worth **1 point**, **Day 2** are worth **2 points**, and **Day 3** are worth **3 points**.
 - **Winning Criteria:** The **first team to reach 13 points** wins the tournament.

Sarus Crane and All-India Sarus Crane Survey

News: The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has announced a nationwide survey to estimate the Sarus Crane population on October 9 and 10, 2026.

About Sarus Crane



Source – DTE

- The **Sarus Crane (*Antigone antigone*)** is the **world's tallest flying bird**.
 - It is **India's only resident breeding crane species**.
- **Habitat:** It inhabits **wetlands, marshes, shallow water bodies, grasslands and agricultural landscapes**, including flooded paddy fields.
- **Distribution:** It is found across parts of **Southeast Asia, northern India and northern Australia**.
 - In India, it is largely restricted to **Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana**, with isolated populations in **Maharashtra**.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Appearance:** It has **grey plumage, a bare red head and upper neck, and reddish legs**.
 - It stands about **1.5 m tall**.
 - **Social Behaviour:** It is usually **found in pairs or small groups of three or four birds**.
 - **Breeding:** It is **monogamous** and is **known to mate for life**.
 - It builds **nests in natural wetlands and flooded paddy fields**.
 - **Ecological Importance:** Its presence **indicates the health of wetland and agricultural ecosystems**.
- **Threats:**
 - Wetland degradation
 - Changes in agricultural land use
 - Pesticides
 - Power-line collisions, electrocution
 - Human disturbance, poaching
 - Predation by wild and free-ranging dogs.
- **Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable**
 - **CITES: Appendix II**
 - **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I**

About All-India Sarus Crane Survey



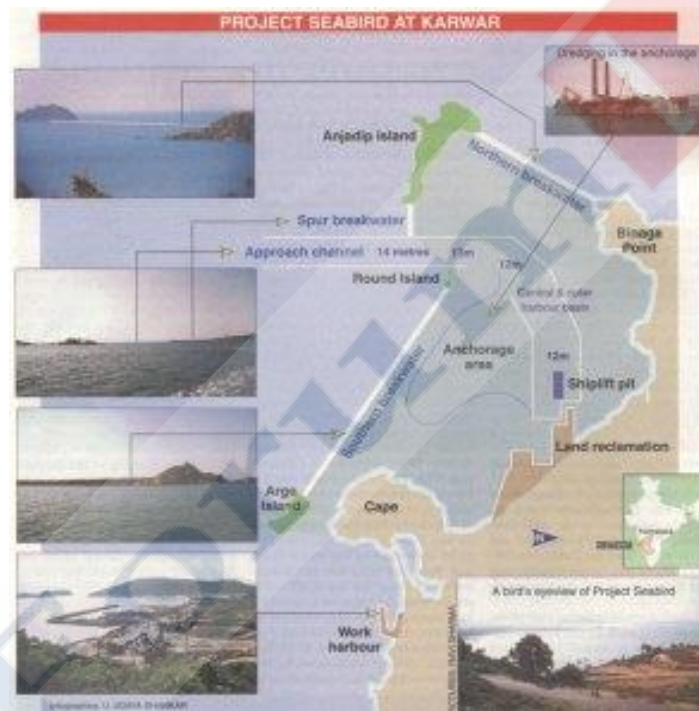
Source – PIB

- The **All-India Sarus Crane Survey** is a nationwide initiative to **establish a scientific baseline for the Sarus Crane population in India.**
- **Organised by:** It is organized by the **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).**
- **Objective:** It aims to **estimate population numbers, identify important habitats, map breeding and feeding sites, and guide targeted conservation measures.**
- **Participants:** **State forest departments, research institutions, conservation organisations, local communities, farmers, educational institutions and citizen scientists** have been invited.

PROJECT SEABIRD

News: Residential accommodation for Senior Sailors and Defence Civilians of Indian Navy along with critical trunk utility and amenity infrastructure was inaugurated as part of Project Seabird Phase IIA.

About PROJECT SEABIRD



Source: Bharat Rakshak

- **Project Seabird** is a **strategic naval infrastructure project** of the **Indian Navy.**
- It is the **largest naval infrastructure project** for India.
- **Location:** It is located at **Karwar, Karnataka, on the western coast of India.**
- **Aim:** To **establish a state-of-the-art naval base** to support India's maritime security and operational readiness.
- **Phases of Development:** It has been developed in two phases:
 - **Phase I** focused on **creation of berthing, docking, and basic logistic facilities for naval ships.**
 - **Phase IIA (Ongoing)** aims to **support ships and submarines** through a Naval Air Station, a full-fledged Naval Dockyard and logistics facilities.
- **Strategic Importance:**

- It strengthens **India's maritime security posture** in the **Arabian Sea**.
- It provides **strategic depth to the Western Naval Command**.
- It **reduces congestion at Mumbai naval dockyard** and enhances fleet dispersal and survivability.

Robotics for Good Youth Challenge India 2026-2027

News: The Robotics for Good Youth Challenge India 2026-2027 concluded in New Delhi, with two winning teams selected to represent India at the global finale.

About Robotics for Good Youth Challenge India 2026-2027



Source – DD India

- The **Robotics for Good Youth Challenge** is a **UN-based global robotics championship** organised by the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**.
- **Organised by:** The Indian national event was organised by **ITU and IIT Delhi's I-Hub Foundation for Cobotics (IHFC)**, with support from the Department of Telecommunications (**DoT**), Ministry of Communications.
- **Origin:** The Indian edition began in **2024** during the **World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly** hosted by India.
 - The subsequent editions were held at **India Mobile Congress** in **2025** and **2026**.
- **Focus:** The competition focuses on addressing health emergencies through robotics.
- **Eligibility:** Students aged **10-18 years** participated in junior and senior categories.
- **Objective:** The challenge aims to **develop problem-solving, teamwork and STEM skills** among young innovators through practical robotics activities.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Participation:** The competition brought together **57 teams** and around **300 students and mentors** from **14 states**.
 - **Robotic Tasks:** Participants **designed, built and programmed autonomous robots** for sample delivery, quarantine-zone construction, medical-kit distribution and medical triage.
 - **Open Technology:** The competition promotes **free and open-source software and hardware**, enabling participants to assemble and programme robots.

- **National Winners:** Team Singularity from Karnataka won the junior title, while Team Ferrum Incubators from Noida won the senior title.
- **Global Opportunity:** Both winning teams will represent India at the global finale during the AI for Good Global Summit in Geneva in June 2027.

Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Shreyas'

News: Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. (GRSE) launched 'Shreyas', the third of four Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels built for the Indian Navy.

About Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Shreyas'



Source – IDRW

- **Classification:** It is the **third of four** Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPVs).
 - The NGOPVs form part of the **Indian Navy's 11-ship NGOPV programme**.
 - The **first vessel, Sanghmitra**, was launched in May 2026, and the **second, Shruti**, in August 2026.
- **Built by:** Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. (GRSE)
- **Naming:** The name '**Shreyas**' comes from Sanskrit and means '**Best**' or '**Most Excellent**'.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Dimensions:** The vessel is **113 m long, 14.6 m wide** and has a displacement of **3,000 tonnes**.
 - **Speed:** It can achieve a **maximum speed of 23 knots**.
 - **Endurance:** It can **cover 8,500 nautical miles** at a **cruising speed of 14 knots**.
 - **Maritime Security:** It is designed for **coastal and offshore asset protection, maritime interdiction, surveillance, and mine warfare**.
 - **Special Operations:** It can undertake **special operations, anti-piracy missions, counter-infiltration, and visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) operations**.
 - **Additional Roles:** The vessel can support **humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), search and rescue missions, and Out of Area Contingency Operations**.

Katchatheevu Island

News: Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said India had acknowledged Katchatheevu as part of Sri Lanka before the Supreme Court.

About Katchatheevu Island



Source – IE

- **Location:** Katchatheevu is a small, uninhabited island located in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka.
 - It lies 33 km northeast of Rameswaram and 62 km southwest of Jaffna.
- **Geographical Features:**
 - **Formation:** It was formed through volcanic activity during the 14th century.
 - **Water Availability:** The island has no source of drinking water, making it unsuitable for permanent settlement.
- **Historical Background:**
 - **Historical Control:** The Jaffna kingdom governed it during the early medieval period.
 - By the 17th century, control shifted to the Raja of Ramnad, and it later became part of the Madras Presidency.
 - **Colonial Dispute:** In 1921, British India and Sri Lanka both claimed the island while determining fishing boundaries.
- **Maritime Dispute:**
 - **International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL):** The maritime boundary between India and Sri Lanka was delineated through the 1974 agreement.
 - It determines the limits of their maritime zones, including territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).

- **1974 Agreement:** Prime Ministers **Indira Gandhi** and **Sirima R. D. Bandaranaike** signed an agreement recognising **Katchatheevu** as part of Sri Lankan territory.
- **Access Rights:** Indian **fishermen** could visit the island to rest, dry their nets and visit **St. Anthony's Church**.
 - However, the **agreement did not settle fishing rights**.
- **1976 Agreement:** A subsequent treaty **restricted fishermen from both countries from fishing in each other's EEZs**, leaving fishing rights a continuing source of uncertainty.
- **Current Position:** Sri Lankan President **Anura Kumara Disسانayake** said India had **acknowledged before the Supreme Court that Katchatheevu belongs to Sri Lanka**.
 - He also reiterated that **Sri Lanka would not allow its airspace, land or sea to be used in a manner that threatens India**.

Raja Ravi Varma

News: Radhikaraje Gaekwad, Maharani of Baroda and custodian of one of the world's largest private collections of Raja Ravi Varma's original paintings, announced that the paintings will be exhibited across India and abroad in the future.

About Raja Ravi Varma



Source – Past India

- **Raja Ravi Varma** was an **Indian painter** celebrated for **blending Hindu themes with European realism and naturalism**.
- **Birth:** He was born to an **aristocratic family in Travancore (Kerala) in 1848**.
- **Early life:** He began training in **painting, particularly water colours, in the Travancore palace at 14** under court artist Rama Swami Naidu.
 - He later picked up **oil painting techniques by observing British painter Theodore Jenson at the Travancore court**.

- **Patronized by:** He was patronized by **Ayilyam Thirunal**, the then ruler of **Travancore**.
- **Artistic Style:** He blended **Indian mythology and themes with European techniques**, particularly **oil painting, realism and three-dimensional effects**.
 - He painted **portraits and scenes from the Mahabharata and Ramayana**, depicting dramatic episodes from Indian mythology.
 - His works, such as **Harischandra in Distress, Jatayu Vadha and Shri Rama Vanquishing the Sea**, realistically portrayed **Hindu deities** and epic characters.
- **Famous works:** **Damayanti Talking to a Swan, Shakuntala Looking for Dushyanta, Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair, Shantanu and Matsyagandha and Yashoda and Krishna** are his famous works.
- **Contributions:**
 - He was among the **first Indian artists to use oil paints and master lithographic reproduction**.
 - In **1873**, the **painting of Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair** won the Governor's Gold Medal when it was presented in the Madras Presidency.
 - His **idealised paintings of women wearing saris and jewellery** earned him **gold medals at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893**.
 - In **1894**, he established the **Raja Ravi Varma Fine Art Lithographic Press in Bombay** to produce affordable prints of paintings depicting Indian gods and goddesses.
 - His prints of **mythological figures, political leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and historical figures such as Chhatrapati Shivaji** helped create **shared visual symbols of Indian identity**.
 - In **1904**, the British colonial government awarded **Varma with the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal**.
 - According to art historians, **Raja Ravi Varma's dramatic history paintings influenced the pioneers of Indian cinema like Dadasaheb Phadke and Baburao Painter**.
 - In **2013**, a **crater on the planet Mercury** was named in his honour.
- **Legacy:** He died in **1906**.
 - He is **remembered for giving Indians their western, classical representations of Hindu gods and goddesses**.

Aldabra Giant Tortoise

News: Recent study published showed that, Jonathan, the world's oldest known living Aldabra Giant Tortoise at 194 years, has 287 unique gene variants that may slow ageing.

About Aldabra Giant Tortoise



Source: popsci

Aspects	Details
About	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It is the world's second-largest land tortoise species, after the Galapagos giant tortoise.2. These tortoise have descended from ancestors of Aldabrachelys abrupta, one of two giant tortoises that lived in Madagascar for 15 million years.
Scientific Name	Its scientific name is Aldabrachelys gigantea .
Habitat	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. These tortoises live on land and inhabit diverse environments such as scrub forests, mangrove swamps, and coastal dunes and beaches.2. Grasslands named "platins" harbour the largest populations of tortoises.
Distribution	These are endemic to the Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles, an archipelago in the western Indian Ocean .
Physical Characteristics	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. They are dark gray to black with a strongly domed, thick shell.2. Aldabra tortoises show sexual dimorphism.3. Males are much bigger than females and have longer, thicker tails.

Lifespan	It has a lifespan of about 100 years .
Diet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are primarily herbivores. 2. They eat grasses, leaves, woody plant stems, and fruits.
Behaviour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are found both individually and in herds. 2. They are most active in the morning. 3. They dig wallows, hide under shade trees or in small caves, as well as submerge themselves in pools to keep cool during the heat of the day.
Conservation Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IUCN- Vulnerable ● CITES- Appendix II
Significance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are vital in keeping the ecological balance in a habitat mosaic (a place where different habitats exist side by side). 2. They consume fruits and then spread the seeds through their dung, aiding in megafauna-dependent germination. This facilitates the growth of forests, woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands.

Yenisei River

News: The Yenisei River was mentioned in reports about rising bear attacks in Podtesovo, a settlement on its right bank.

About Yenisei River



Source – FreeWorldMap

- The **Yenisei** river is one of the major **Siberian rivers**.
- **Origin:** It is formed by the **confluence** of the **Great Yenisei** and **Little Yenisei** rivers at **Kyzyl** in **Russia**.
 - The **Great Yenisei** rises in the **Eastern Sayan Mountains**, while the **Little Yenisei** rises in **Mongolia**.
- **Course:** It flows mainly northwards through **Russia** and empties into the **Kara Sea**, part of the **Arctic Ocean**.
- **Basin:** Its basin is the **fifth largest** in the **world**, and it is the **largest** among the major **Siberian rivers**.
- **Major Tributaries:** The **Angara**, **Stony Tunguska** and **Lower Tunguska** are important tributaries that contribute substantially to the river's flow.
- **Ecological Significance:** Its waters support **fishes** such as **Siberian sturgeon**, **sterlet** and **Arctic char**.
 - Its lower reaches and delta also provide **habitats** for **ducks**, **geese**, **swans** and **muskrats**.
 - The **upper basin** is connected to [Lake Baikal](#), the world's deepest and oldest lake.
- **Environmental Pollution:** **Industrial activities** and **river regulation** contribute to **pollution**, making the lower reaches among the **most polluted Arctic river sections**.

Bharat Rice

News: The Indian Army launched 'Bharat Rice' on October 12, 2026, to improve ration quality and strengthen military logistics.

About Bharat Rice



Source – TH

- The **Indian Army** launched the **Bharat Rice initiative** in New Delhi.
- **Agencies involved:** The **Directorate General of Supplies and Transport** is **leading** the initiative with support from the Food Corporation of India (**FCI**), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (**NAFED**) and the **Department of Food and Public Distribution**.
- **Objective:** It aims to **improve ration quality** based on sustained feedback from Army personnel.
- The rice will be **milled to prescribed defence specifications** and **supplied through** the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (**NAFED**) during the financial year 2026-27.
- It will contain **minimal broken, damaged and discoloured rice grains**, with **no foreign matter or admixtures**.
- Rice will **reach Army Supply Depots directly**, including those in **Ladakh and the North East**, reducing the need to collect supplies from local FCI facilities.

Mount Mukut

News: An Indian Coast Guard mountaineering team successfully scaled Mount Mukut on October 7, 2026, as part of its preparation for the 2027 Mount Everest expedition.

About Mount Mukut



Source – ICG

- **Mount Mukut** is a prominent **Himalayas mountain peak**.
- It is also known as **Mukut Parbat**.
- **Location:** It is located in **Uttarakhand, India**.

- It lies in the **Garhwal Himalaya**, northeast of **Badrinath**, near the **Indo-China border**.
- **Mountain Range:** It lies in the **Zaskar Range**, near **Mount Kamet**.
- **Ranking:** It is the **96th highest** peak in the **world** and the **20th highest mountain** located entirely within India.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Two Summits:** The **main summit** reaches **7,242 m**, while **Mukut Parbat East** reaches **7,130 m**.
 - **Neighbouring Peaks:** The mountain is surrounded by **three principal neighbouring peaks** –
 - **Abi Gamin** (7,355 m), **Kamet** (7,756 m) and **Chamrao Parbat** (6,910 m).
 - **Glaciers:** The **West Kamet Glacier** has branches originating on the western slopes of **Kamet**, **Abi Gamin** and **Mukut Parbat**.

Global Innovation Index 2026

News: The Global Innovation Index (GII) 2026 has been released by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

About Global Innovation Index 2026

Global leaders in innovation, 2026

Top innovation economies by region

North America	Latin America and the Caribbean	Europe	Sub-Saharan Africa	North Africa and Western Asia	Central and Southern Asia	South East Asia, East Asia and Oceania
1 United States	1 Chile	1 Switzerland	1 Mauritius	1 Israel	1 India	1 Republic of Korea
2 Canada	2 Brazil	2 Sweden	2 South Africa	2 United Arab Emirates	2 Kazakhstan	2 Singapore
	3 Mexico	3 United Kingdom	3 Botswana	3 Cyprus	3 Bhutan	3 China
			4 Senegal	4 Saudi Arabia		

Source: WIPO

- **Global Innovation Index 2026** has been released by **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**.
- **2026 Edition:** This is the **19th edition of the GI**.
- **Coverage:** It ranked the **innovation performance of 139 economies**, maps the **world's top 100 innovation clusters**, and tracks the **main global innovation trends**.
- **Findings of the Index:**
 - **Switzerland** is the most innovative economy in 2026 followed by **Sweden** and the **United States**.

- The leading economies remain **largely the same as in 2025, with no new economy entering the top 15.**
- **Europe once again has the largest share of innovation leaders**, accounting for 14 of the 25 leading economies.
- Asia also maintains a **strong presence among the top 25 innovation economies**, with five economies, **Republic of Korea, Singapore, China, Japan and Hong Kong, China in the list.**
- **Switzerland, China, India and Rwanda** lead their respective income groups.
- **Thailand strengthens its position among upper-middle-income economies.**
- **Kazakhstan, Bhutan and Saudi Arabia** lead their respective regions.
- **Top Innovation Clusters:** The **Shenzhen–Hong Kong–Guangzhou** cluster emerged as the world’s most innovative cluster overall.
 - **Tokyo–Yokohama** ranked **second**, followed by **San Jose–San Francisco** at **No. 3**, which topped the index for innovation intensity.
 - **Bengaluru** and **Delhi** were ranked at **No. 25** and **No. 27** in the list, respectively.
- **India’s Performance in the Index**
 - **India** ranks **38th** among the 139 economies featured in the GII 2026.
 - India ranks **1st among the 36 Lower middle-income group economies** and among the **11 economies in Central and Southern Asia.**
 - India ranks **49th in innovation inputs** and **25th in innovation outputs.**

About Global Innovation Index

- **Global Innovation Index** tracks and ranks **science and technology hubs across the globe.**
- It is considered as the **world’s leading reference for measuring innovation.**
 - The **UN and other member states** use the index as a **key reference for shaping science and technology policies** across the globe.
- **Released by:** It is released by **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).**
- **First edition:** It was published in **2007.**
- **Aim:** It aims to **provide an innovation ranking and rich analysis** referencing around **140 economies.**
- It has two sub-indices: **the Innovation Input Sub-Index** and the **Innovation Output Sub-Index.** It has seven pillars:
 - **Innovation Input Sub-Index:** It has **five pillars** which cover the economic conditions that enable innovation. They are **Institutions, Human Capital and Research, Infrastructure, Market Sophistication and Business Sophistication.**
 - **Innovation Output Sub-Index:** It has **two pillars** capture the results of innovative activity in the economy. They are **Knowledge and Technology Outputs and Creative Outputs.**
 - These both have equally weighted.
 - **Overall GII score:** It is the **simple average of the Input and Output Sub-Indices**, from which the GII economy rankings are derived.

India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime (IBSAMAR) Exercise 2026

News: Indian Naval Ship Tarkash is on an overseas deployment to South Africa to participate in the India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime (IBSAMAR) Exercise 2026.

About India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime (IBSAMAR) Exercise 2026



Source: PIB

- **India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime (IBSAMAR) Exercise 2026** is a trilateral maritime exercise between **India, Brazil and South Africa**.
- **Aim:** It aims to **enhance interoperability, strengthen maritime cooperation and promote mutual understanding** amongst the participating forces.
- **Frequency:** It has been conducted **biennially**.
- **First edition:** The first edition of the exercise was **conducted in 2008**.
- **2026 Edition:**
 - This is **ninth edition** of the exercise.
 - **Hosted by:** It has been hosted by **South Africa**.
 - **Location:** It is being conducted at **Simon's Town, Western Cape, South Africa** from **October 8 to October 19, 2026**.
 - **Theme:** The theme is **Stronger Together Towards a Shared Future in the Maritime Domain**.
 - **Aim:** It aims to **promote collective maritime security and preparedness** to address maritime challenges.
 - **Participants:**
 - The **South African Navy** will participate with **SAS Amatola, SAS King Sekhukhune I and SAS Adam Kok III**, along with **SAS Manthatisi submarine**.
 - **Brazil** will participate with **BNS Barroso**, embarked with one integral **Lynx helicopter**.
 - The **Indian Navy** is represented by **INS Tarkash** embarked with one integral **Chetak helicopter**.
 - **Features:**
 - The exercise **encompasses a broad spectrum of maritime operations**, including surface warfare, anti-air warfare, anti-submarine warfare, naval air operations, maritime interdiction, and Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS).
 - It also **includes anti-piracy operations, Search and Rescue (SAR), damage control and firefighting**, along with professional interactions.

About INS Tarkash



Source: PIB

- INS Tarkash is a **guided missile stealth frigate** of the **Indian Navy**.
 - It is the **second of three Talwar-class guided missile frigates**.
- **Built by:** It was built by **Yantar Shipyard at Kaliningrad, Russia**.
- It was commissioned into **Indian Navy in 2012**.
- The ship is **part of the Indian Navy's Western Fleet** based at Mumbai under the Western Naval Command.
- **Features:**
 - It is **equipped with a versatile range of weapons and sensors capable** of addressing threats from air, sea and underwater.
 - **Displacement:** It displaces **3,850 tonnes**.
 - **Speed and Range:** It can travel at **speeds exceeding 30 knots** and has a range of **4,500 nautical miles** or can operate for 30 days.
 - **Weapons:** It carries **surface-to-air missiles, 100 mm guns, close-range guns, torpedoes and rocket launchers**.
 - The ship **incorporates the latest stealth features** such as reduced radar, infra-red, acoustic, and magnetic signatures, thus making it difficult to detect at sea.

Soybean Cultivation in India

News: On the occasion of Soybean Harvest Day, the yield potential of the improved soybean Varieties NRC 268 and NRC 270 was assessed.

About Soybean Cultivation in India



Source: Britannica

- **Soybean (*Glycine max*)** is a significant **legume in the pea family (Fabaceae)**.
- It is known for its **nitrogenfixing ability through symbiosis with soil bacteria**
- Soybean is a **nutritionally rich and industrially valuable crop, used in food, feed, and biobased industries**
- **Geographical condition for its growth:**
 - **Temperature:** It is **highly sensitive to temperature** throughout its life cycle. Optimum growth happens **between 20°C and 35°C (with ideal ranges around 26.5°C to 30°C)**.
 - **Climate:** It grows **well in warm and moist climate**.
 - **Rainfall:** It is **highly sensitive to water stress**, particularly during critical growth phases such as flowering, pod development, and seed filling.
 - **Soil:** A well drained, sandy loam to clayey soils with medium water holding capacity, rich in organic carbon is ideal.
 - It requires **pH between 6.0 and 7.5**.

Soybean Production in India

- It is primarily grown as a **Kharif crop in India**.
- **Soybean Producing states:** It Is cultivated in **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka**.
- At present, the average **soybean productivity** in India is approximately **10–11 quintals per hectare**.
- **Scope of Improved Varieties:** **Improved soybean Varieties NRC 268 and NRC 270** are being devised by the ICAR for better yield.
 - Research and trials conducted across the country indicate that **yields of 15–20 quintals per hectare can be achieved by adopting improved varieties** and appropriate production technologies.
 - Under favourable conditions, yields **may potentially reach approximately 22–25 quintals per hectare**.

Shipbuilding Project Credit Risk Insurance Policy (SbPCP) and Business Credit Shield Policy– Shipbuilders (BCSPS)

News: During the 21st Meeting of Maritime State Development Council, Shipbuilding Project Credit Risk Insurance Policy (SbPCP), and Business Credit Shield Policy–Shipbuilders (BCSPS), credit risk insurance products have been launched to support India's shipbuilding industry.

About Shipbuilding Project Credit Risk Insurance Policy (SbPCP) and Business Credit Shield Policy– Shipbuilders (BCSPS)



Source: BW Businessworld

- Shipbuilding Project Credit Risk Insurance Policy (SbPCP) and Business Credit Shield Policy– Shipbuilders (BCSPS) are the first-of-their-kind insurance policies.
- Aim: They aim to reduce financial stress in large-scale ship manufacturing.
 - It aligns with the National Shipbuilding Mission.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways
- The central government will subsidize insurance premiums and provide direct support to insurers in case shipyards file claims.

About Shipbuilding Project Credit Risk Insurance Policy (SbPCP)

- Developed by: It has been developed by ECGC Ltd.
- It has been developed under the [Shipbuilding Development Scheme \(SbDS\)](#).
- Coverage: It will cover export-oriented projects from financial stress.

About Business Credit Shield Policy–Shipbuilders (BCSPS)

- It is a specialized credit risk insurance product.
- Developed by: It has been developed by New India Assurance Co. Ltd. (NIACL).

- **Coverage:** It will **protect domestic projects from financial stress.**

About Maritime State Development Council (NSDC)

- **Maritime State Development Council (MSDC)** is a **statutory consultative body.**
- **Notified under:** It has been notified as **statutory consultative body** under the **Indian Ports Act, 2025 in 2026.**
- **Establishment year:** It was **originally constituted in 1997.**
- **Mandate:** Its mandate is to **promote integrated maritime growth**, coordinated policy formulation, and planned development of maritime infrastructure.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The nodal ministry for the MSDC is the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.**
- **Chaired by:** It is chaired by the **Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways.**

Samarthak Vessel

News: The Indian Navy will commission Samarthak Vessel, the first of four Multi-Purpose Vessels being inducted into its fleet, at Naval Base Karwar at Naval Base Karwar.

About Samarthak Vessel



Source: PIB

- The **Samarthak vessel** is the **first of four Multi-Purpose Vessels** being inducted into **Indian Navy.**
- **Developed by:** It has been built by **Larsen & Toubro** under the **Make in India** initiative.
- **Commission year:** It has been commissioned in **2026.**
- **Motto:** Its motto, **“विजयार्थम् एकनिष्ठता”**, means **“Victory is Our Sole Aim”.**
 - Its **crest** depicts an **Indian elephant emerging from the waves**, symbolizing **strength, intelligence and agility.**
- **Purpose:** It has been designed primarily for **maritime surveillance and patrol.**
 - It can also **undertake low-intensity maritime operations** and serve as a **platform for target deployment and trials.**
- **Features:**

- **Size:** It is **107 meters in length** with a width of 18.6 meters.
- **Displacement:** It has a **displacement of over 3,750 tonnes**.
- **Operability:** It is equipped to **serve multiple roles**. It can **operate as a mothership for unmanned and autonomous systems**, support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and be **converted into a limited hospital ship**.
 - It also has **capabilities for salvage-related operations**.
- It combines **cutting-edge capabilities with exceptional operational versatility**.
- For precision control during **complex marine manoeuvres**, it is equipped with **state-of-the-art Dynamic Positioning System**.
- **Weapons:** Its integrated combat suite **combines indigenous sensors, weapons and electronic systems optimised for challenging maritime conditions**.

EXERCISE INDRA-2026

News: Indian Naval Ship Sahyadri arrived at Vladivostok, Russia to participate in Exercise INDRA 2026.

About EXERCISE INDRA-2026



Source: PIB

- **Exercise INDRA-2026 is a bilateral exercise** between the **Indian Navy and the Russian Federation Navy (RuFN)**.
- **Aim:** It **aimed** at enhancing **mutual understanding, operational coordination and interoperability** between the two navies.
- **First edition:** The **first edition** of this exercise was conducted in **2003**.
- **Frequency:** It is **biennial** exercise.
- **About 2026 edition:**
 - **Edition:** This is the **15th edition of this exercise**.

- **Duration:** It is scheduled from 13 to 18 Oct 2026.
- **Hosted by:** It is being hosted by Russia.
- **Participation from India:** Indian Naval Ship Sahyadri will be participating in the exercise.
- **Features:**
 - **Phases:** It involves exercise at Vladivostok that is Harbour Phase and the adjacent waters of the Sea of Japan which involves Sea Phase.
 - It will comprise engagements during the harbour phase followed by coordinated operational activities at sea.
 - It will include a range of professional interactions and maritime evolutions.
 - It also includes social and cultural interactions, that will provide opportunities for personnel of both navies to interact and foster camaraderie and people-to-people connections.

About Indian Naval Ship Sahyadri



Source: Deccan Herald.

- INS Sahyadri is a **Shivalik-class Guided Missile Stealth Frigate** of the Indian Navy.
 - It is the **third ship** of the class, designed for **multi-role operations** including surface, air, and sub-surface warfare.
- **It is indigenously designed and built** in India, representing the nation's growing **defence self-reliance**.
- It was commissioned in **2012**.
- It features **stealth technology** to reduce radar and infrared signatures.
- It is equipped with **advanced weapon systems, sensors, and integrated combat suites** for multi-dimensional warfare.

Bekal Fort

News: HAL, NCF and ASI signed an MoA for undertaking heritage conservation and development works at three prominent heritage sites- Hampi in Karnataka, the Taj Mahal in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, and Bekal Fort in Kerala.

About Bekal Fort



Source – Outlook Traveller

- **Location:** The **Bekal Fort** is located in **Kasargod district, Kerala**.
- It is the **largest fort in Kerala**.
- It was **built** in the **17th century** by **Shivappa Nayaka** of the **Keladi dynasty**.
- The fort has seen **rise and fall** of several dynasties and later **came under the control of the Kingdom of Mysore**.
- **Structural features:**
 - The fort **appears to emerge from the sea**.
 - Almost **three-quarters** of its **exterior** is in **contact with water**.
 - An **important feature** of the fort is the **water-tank** and the **flight of steps** leading to an **observation tower built by Tipu Sultan**.
 - The fort's **zigzag entrance** and surrounding **trenches** reveal its **defensive strategy**.
 - **Holes** on the **outer walls** are designed to **defend the fort** effectively from **naval attacks**.
 - The **upper holes** are meant for **aiming** at the **farthest targets**; **lower holes** below for **striking as enemy nearer** and the **lowest holes** to **attacking enemy closest** to the fort.
 - The fort's **solid construction** resembles the **Thalassery Fort** and the **St. Angelo Fort** at **Kannur** built by the **Dutch**.

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

News: Central Government has approved India's accession to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA).

About Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

- The **Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)** is a **regional framework for managing fisheries resources** in its area of jurisdiction in the high seas.
- It is **one of two major Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)** in the Indian Ocean. The other is the **Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)**.

- **Aim:** It aims to conserve and sustainably use fishery resources through cooperation among Contracting Parties and promote fisheries development, especially in least developed and small-island developing States bordering the Area.
- **Coverage:** It covers fish, molluscs, crustaceans and other sedentary species, while excluding highly migratory species listed in Annex I of the [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#) and sedentary species falling under the fishing jurisdiction of coastal states.
- **Signing year:** It was signed in Rome the 7th July 2006 and entered into force in June 2012.
- **Parties to the agreement:**
 - **Contracting Parties:** To date, SIOFA has ten contracting parties including Australia, China, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Spain and France and **India (2026)**.
 - **Participating fishing entity:** Chinese Taipei
 - **Cooperating non-Contracting Parties:** Comoros
 - **Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique and New Zealand** are also signatories to this Agreement but have not ratified it.
- **Benefits of accession to SIOFA for India:**
 - It would allow India to participate fully in key bodies such as the **Scientific Committee and the Compliance Committee and gain access to scientific data, research programmes and stock assessments under the agreement.**
 - It would also give Indian-flagged fishing vessels and enterprises the opportunity to undertake authorised fishing within SIOFA's jurisdiction.
 - It could create opportunities for Indian fishers and entrepreneurs to access marine resources beyond their existing operating areas.
 - India will be able to contribute more effectively to preventing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
 - Participation in SIOFA's High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) Scheme will help advance India's regional strategic interests and strengthen coastal security.

About Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

Specifications	Details
Type	Intergovernmental Organization
Established in	1993 (came into force in 1996)
Secretariat	Victoria, Seychelles
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is responsible for the management of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean. ● It seeks to do this by promoting cooperation among its Contracting Parties (Members) and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties in order to ensure the conservation and appropriate utilisation of fish stocks and encouraging the sustainable development of fisheries.

Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are 30 contracting parties to it. ● Liberia is a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party. ● India has been a contracting party since 1996.
Binding decisions	The decisions taken by commission are binding on all Members and non-Contracting Parties.

SPARK 5.0 and CCRAS Ayurshodh 2026

News: The Chairperson of National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) launched CCRAS SPARK 5.0 and CCRAS Ayurshodh 2026 (2nd circular) of the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS).

About SPARK 5.0



SPARK-5.0
(2026-2027)

CCRAS OFFERS:
Studentship Program for Ayurveda Research Ken (SPARK)

Number of Studentship: 300		START DATE OF REGISTRATION 15 th OCTOBER 2026
Amount of Studentship: Total Rs. 50,000/-		LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION 15 th NOVEMBER 2026
Eligibility: UG Students of I st to IV th Year/Prof. pursuing their BAMS in NCISM/GOI recognized College/University		TO APPLY VISIT: https://spark.ccras.org.in/

- Introduce undergraduate Ayurveda students to research methodology and techniques.
- Provide hands-on experience through short-term independent research projects.
- Foster research aptitude and analytical thinking at an early stage.
- Motivate students to consider research as a potential career path.
- Serve as an incentive for nurturing the next generation of Ayurveda researchers.

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN AYURVEDIC SCIENCES (CCRAS)
Ministry of Ayush, Government of India

Jawahar Lal Nehru Bhartiya Chikitsa Arum Homeopathy Anusandhan Bhawan
No.81-85, Institutional Area, Opp. "D" Block, Janapuri, New Delhi - 110058 (India)
Telephone : 91-011-28625851/28625853, (Ext. No. 321) (09:30AM to 05:30PM)
Email: ccras.spark@gmail.com, spark.ay@ccras.nic.in

For more details
Scan the QR code below



Source: CCRAS

- The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) Studentship Program for Ayurveda Research Ken (SPARK) 5.0 for 2026-27 is the fifth edition of the programme.

- The first edition of this programme was launched in 2022.
- **Launched by:** It has been launched by **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Ayush
- **Objective:** It seeks to **introduce undergraduate Ayurveda students to research methodology and techniques through short-term independent research projects**, and to foster research aptitude, analytical thinking and early interest in research as a career among BAMS students.
- **Coverage:** A total of **300 studentships** are being offered, with a **studentship amount of ₹50,000**.
- **Eligibility:** **BAMS students** in their **third/fourth/professional years** studying in NCISM/Government of India-recognized colleges or universities are eligible.

About CCRAS Ayurshodh 2026

- The CCRAS Ayurshodh 2026 national recognition and research initiative was launched by the **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)**.
- **Aim:** It aims to **strengthen Ayurveda research and innovation**.
- **Categories:** It provides a platform to recognize and encourage research contributions in **Ayurveda** across **three categories**:
 - **CCRAS-Prabodh 3MT:** It involves **communication of research** through **three-minute thesis presentations**.
 - **CCRAS-Prakash:** It involves **recognition of scholarly achievements** through **publications based on original research**.
 - **CCRAS-Navonmesha:** It involves **recognition of innovative prototypes, novel solutions, process innovations and transformative research methodologies**.
- The **prize money** is sponsored by **Shree Dhootapapeshwar Limited**.

Note: Both the initiatives are intended to **nurture emerging research talent, promote effective research communication, encourage quality scholarly publications and foster innovative approaches to advancing Ayurveda research**.

African wild dogs (Lycaon pictus)

News: Three African wild dogs travelled over 4,000 kilometres to find mates, offering hope for the survival of this endangered species.

About African wild dogs (Lycaon pictus)



Source: DTE

- The **African wild dogs** are the **largest wild canine in Africa**, and the **only extant members of the genus *Lycaon***.
 - They are one of the **world's most endangered large carnivores**.
- **Scientific name:** Their scientific name is ***Lycaon pictus***.
- **Habitat:** They are found in **grasslands, savannahs and open woodlands**.
- **Distribution:** They are **native to sub-Saharan Africa**.
 - The majority of the species' population occurs in **Southern Africa and southern East Africa**.
- **Characteristic features:**
 - **Appearance:**
 - They have **stiff bristle hairs without underfur** and **gradually lose their fur with age**.
 - Their **coat varies geographically**, ranging from **mostly black with small white and yellow patches** in the northeast to brown, black, and white in the south.
 - Their **muzzle is usually black**, fading into brown on the cheeks and forehead.
 - A **black line extends up the forehead and becomes blackish-brown behind the ears**.
 - Some have brown, teardrop-shaped marks below the eyes.
 - The **back of the head and neck are brown or yellow**.
 - A **white patch may appear behind the forelegs**, and some have entirely white forelegs, chests, and throats.
 - Their **tail is usually white at the tip**, black in the middle, and brown at the base.
 - **Diet:** They are **carnivores that hunt** antelopes, gazelles, warthogs, wildebeest calves, ostriches, buffalo calves, and smaller animals like hares, birds, and rats.
 - **Behaviour:** They are very **social animals, living in packs** with separate dominance hierarchies for males and females.
- **Threats:**
 - Habitat fragmentation
 - Human persecution
 - Disease outbreaks
 - Competition with larger predators
- **Conservation status:**
 - **IUCN: Endangered**

Renaming of National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

News: The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Department of Rural Development for Continuation of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) with renamed as Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana.

About National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

- The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) was **launched on 15th August, 1995**.
- **Nature of Scheme:** It is a **centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The nodal ministry for the scheme is **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- It is aligned with the **Directive Principles of State Policy under the Constitution of India**, particularly **Article 41**.

- The **intention in providing 100 per cent central assistance** is to ensure that assistance to the beneficiaries everywhere in the country is uniformly available.
- **Objectives**
 - To ensure a **minimum level of social security** to vulnerable sections of society, elderly, widows, and persons with disabilities (Divyangjan).
 - To provide **financial and food assistance** to families living below the poverty line.

Renaming of NSAP

- The **National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)** has been renamed as **Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana**.
- **Budgetary outlay:** Total outlay is of **Rs. 53,428 crore**.
- **Duration:** It is for **five years** from **2026-27 to 2030-31**.
- **Beneficiary:** A total of **3.20 crore beneficiaries** across all the 36 States/UTs will benefit from this approval.
- **Revised provisions of the scheme:**
 - Renaming of the scheme & sub-schemes
 - Revision in eligibility criteria, coverage and rate of assistance for divyangjan pension and
 - Continuation of pension schemes for old aged & widows and family benefit scheme in its existing form.

I. Renaming of the sub-schemes: Renamed Components of National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) are as follow:

Previous components name	Renamed componets	Feature
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)	Pradhan Mantri Vridhavastha Pension Yojana	It provides monthly pension to elderly individuals aged 60 years and above living below the poverty line.
Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)	Pradhan Mantri Vidhawa Pension Yojana	It offers monthly pension to widows aged 40-59 years from BPL households.
Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)	Pradhan Mantri Divyangjan Pension Yojana	It etends pension support to persons with severe or multiple disabilities (40%) from BPL families, aged 18-79 years .
National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)	Pradhan Mantri Parivar Labh Yojana	It grants a one-time lump sum to BPL families on the death of the primary breadwinner aged 18-59 years .

II. Revision in eligibility criteria, coverage and rate of assistance for divyangjan pension:

- **Eligibility criteria:** The **criteria for benchmark disability** under the scheme will be **40% against 80% at present**.
 - **Minimum age criterion** for the disability pension will now be **since birth**.

- **Coverage and rate of assistance for divyangjan pension:** Amount of assistance **under** divyangjan pension scheme will now be Rs.375/- for the age group of 0-79 yrs and Rs.625/- for 80 yrs and above.

III. Pension schemes for old aged & widows and family benefit scheme will continue in its existing form.

