

Factly Monthly

Compilation

2026

For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam

September 2026

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Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

News: A rare sharp-tailed sandpiper was spotted in Chandu village near Najafgarh, nearly seven years after the previous Delhi-NCR record.

About Sharp-tailed Sandpiper



Figure 1. Source – eBird

- The **sharp-tailed sandpiper** is a **small wader bird** that is an exceptionally uncommon visitor to India.
- **Scientific Name:** Its scientific name is **Calidris acuminata**.
 - It belongs to the **Scolopacidae** family.
- **Habitat:** It is found in **freshwater marshes, coastal mudflats and sometimes inland areas**.
- **Breeding Ground:** It breeds in **northern Siberia**, from the **Lena River delta to the Kolyma region**.
- **Migration Route:** It migrates south over **East Asia to Australia and New Zealand** and may **occasionally use India as a passage route**.
 - **Smaller numbers** fly to **Melanesia**, a cluster of islands in the southwestern Pacific Ocean between New Guinea in the west to Fiji in the east.



Source – ResearchGate

- **Key Features:**
 - **Physical Appearance:** It is a medium-sized sandpiper with a **distinct cap**.

- **Breeding adults** have a **rich chestnut cap**, **white eye-line**, and **chevrons** and **spots on the underparts**.
- **Nonbreeding adults** are **duller greyish-brown** with a **drab brown cap**.
- while **juveniles** are **brighter** with a **buffy breast**, **bright cap** and **contrasting white eye-line**.
- **Identification:** It has **dull greenish legs** and a **variable pale colour at the base of the bill**.
- **Sound:** It gives excited **“peep!” calls**, **often doubled**, along with other soft twitters.
- **Diet:** It feeds on **seeds, worms, molluscs, crustaceans and insects**, especially after rainfall.
- **Threats:**
 - Habitat loss and degradation
 - Pollution
 - Altered sediment flows
 - Rising sea levels
- **Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable**

AstroRad Vest

News: A recent study found that the AstroRad vest can significantly reduce astronauts' radiation exposure during major solar storms.

About AstroRad Vest



Figure 2. Source – Lockheed Martin

- **AstroRad Vest** is a **wearable radiation-protection vest** developed for astronauts travelling **beyond Earth's protective magnetic field**.
- **Developed by:** It was developed by **StemRad**, an Israeli company, in collaboration with **Lockheed Martin**, a US-based aerospace and defence company.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Hydrogen-Rich Material:** The vest uses **high-density polyethylene (HDPE)** because of its **high proportion of hydrogen**, which is **effective against charged particle space radiation**.
 - The **hydrogen-rich material** helps **slow energetic particles** and **reduce radiation exposure**.
 - **Flexible Design:** The vest contains **thousands of hexagonal HDPE rods** placed **between two layers of elastic fabric**.
 - The **shielding components** can **slide past one another and stretch**, **allowing astronauts to move freely** while wearing the **compact vest** inside the confined space of a spacecraft.
- **Selective Target Shielding:** The vest places **more shielding** around **radiation-sensitive organs and tissues**, including **bone marrow, lungs, stomach, breasts and ovaries**.
- **Tested in Space:** Astronauts tested AstroRad on the **International Space Station** in **2019 and 2020**.
 - The **improved version** was **later tested** using the **Helga and Zohar human-shaped dummies** during **Artemis I** in **2022**.

Distinguished Jurist

News: Supreme Court judge Justice Ujjal Bhuyan called the unused provision for appointing a “distinguished jurist” to the Supreme Court an “unused mandate” needing attention.

About Distinguished Jurist

- A “distinguished jurist” is **not specifically defined** in the Constitution.
- It is **generally understood** as a **person engaged in serious work in legal practice, teaching, or research, even without courtroom experience.**
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 124(3):** A **citizen of India** can be **appointed** as a **Supreme Court judge** if they **have been a High Court judge for five years, an advocate for ten years, or are a “distinguished jurist” in the President’s opinion.**
 - **Distinguished jurist route has never been used.**
 - **Article 217:** The **42nd Constitutional Amendment** inserted a provision allowing a “distinguished jurist” to be considered for **appointment as a High Court judge.**
 - This provision **was later omitted by the 44th Constitutional Amendment.**
- **Constituent Assembly Background:**
 - **H. V. Kamath proposed the provision** so that candidates would not be limited to judges and advocates.
 - **M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar supported** bringing legal scholars into the judiciary because **practising lawyers may have limited exposure to constitutional problems.**
 - **B. R. Ambedkar did not oppose the idea** but raised a **concern about the word “distinguished”.**
- **Pros:**
 - **Specialised knowledge:** Distinguished jurists **can bring research-based critical thinking and specialised legal knowledge to the judiciary.**
 - **Diverse perspectives:** Their participation **can diversify the Bench and strengthen judicial discourse and decision-making.**
 - **Public law expertise:** They may be **better placed to address public law issues** without being limited by narrow technicalities.
 - **International Experience:** Countries such as the **US, Poland and Spain** have benefited from appointing **jurists as judges.**
- **Cons:**
 - **Lack of Courtroom Experience:** Distinguished jurists **may lack courtroom experience and procedural knowledge.**
 - **Bar Council Restrictions:** Bar Council rules generally prevent **full-time law teachers from practising law.**
 - **Perceived Lack of Academic Depth:** Justice Ujjal Bhuyan observed that the **Central Government and later the collegium may have felt that there was not enough depth in Indian academia for such appointments.**

Larak Island

News: The US struck Larak Island on August 30 after observing Iranian forces preparing to launch rockets with sea mines into the Strait of Hormuz.

About Larak Island



Source – The National News

- **Larak Island** is a small island near the [Strait of Hormuz](#) with major strategic importance due to its location.
- **Location:** It is approximately **45 km southeast of Bandar Abbas**, south of **Hormuz Island** and about **18 km southeast of the eastern end of Qeshm Island**.
- **Area:** The island covers roughly **49 sq. km**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Strategic location:** Larak, Qeshm and Hormuz form a group of three islands near the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz.
 - **Military Foothold:** Iran has a military outpost on Larak Island, which provides a base to monitor ships passing through the waterway.
 - **Control over Shipping:** Iran has directed vessels to use a route passing north of Larak, close to its coastline.
 - **Sea Mine Concern:** The US struck the island after observing Iranian forces preparing to launch rockets carrying sea mines into the Strait of Hormuz.

National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)

News: The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) formed a five-member Bench to decide on Subhash Chandra's repayment plan in a personal insolvency case involving claims of more than ₹22,000 crore after a Division Bench failed to reach a majority verdict.

About National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)



Source – LawStreet Journal

- It is a **quasi-judicial body** established to **handle civil corporate disputes**.
- It was established on **1st June 2016** under the **Companies Act, 2013**.
- **Objective:** The main goal of NCLT is to **offer a specialized forum for resolving disputes** related to **company law and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC)**.
- **Genesis:** It was established based on the **Balakrishna Eradi Committee's** recommendations on insolvency and company winding-up laws.
- **Composition:**
 - It shall consist of a **President** and **such number of Judicial and Technical Members as may be required**.
 - The **Central Government** **appoints these members** based on their expertise in fields like law, finance, accountancy, management, and administration.
- **Structure:** The NCLT has a **principal bench in New Delhi** and other benches in cities such as Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Kolkata.
- **Powers:**
 - It is not bound by the **Code of Civil Procedure (CPC)** and **follows principles of natural justice**, and the rules set by the Act and the Central Government.
 - It can enforce orders with the same authority as a court.
 - It can **review its own decisions**.
 - It can **regulate its own procedures**.
 - It handles insolvency resolution for companies and LLPs under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
- **Appeal:** Decisions of the NCLT may be **appealed to the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)**, the decisions of which may **further be appealed to the Supreme Court of India**.

Exercise 'Super Garuda Shield'

News: The United States and Indonesia launched Super Garuda Shield 2026, the first exercise since announcing a new defence partnership this year.

About Exercise 'Super Garuda Shield'



Source – Antara News

- **Super Garuda Shield** is an **annual multilateral joint military exercise** between **Indonesia, the United States and partner countries**.
- **Origin:** It began in 2006 as the **bilateral Garuda Shield** between the United States and Indonesia.
 - In 2022, “**Super**” was added to the exercise title, and the **exercise expanded to include additional partner nations**.
- **Host:** The **Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI)** host the exercise.
 - The exercise is **co-led by the United States Indo-Pacific Command**.
- **Participants:** The **United States, Indonesia and 13 additional partner nations**, including **Japan, South Korea, Australia and Canada**, participate in the exercise.
- **Observer:** **Eight nations** are participating as observers.
 - **India participating as an observer for the first time**.
- **Key Features of Super Garuda Shield 2026**
 - **Location:** The exercise is conducted in **Bandung, Baturaja, Lampung and North Kalimantan in Indonesia**.
 - The exercise includes **airborne operations, missile firing, amphibious exercises, cyber exercises** and naval **manoeuvres** across different military domains.
 - Partner forces will conduct **infiltration drills and jungle training** in Indonesia’s varied terrain.
 - **Maritime Training:** The **United States Navy and Coast Guard** will conduct **coordinated maritime training** with the Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) to strengthen interoperability at sea.
 - **Humanitarian Assistance:** The exercise also includes **humanitarian disaster relief efforts** to strengthen response capabilities during natural disasters and wildfires.

13th World Strengthlifting and Incline Bench Press (IBP) Championships 2026

News: Four strengthlifters from Sikkim have been selected to represent India at the 13th World Strengthlifting and Incline Bench Press (IBP) Championships 2026.

About 13th World Strengthlifting and Incline Bench Press (IBP) Championships 2026

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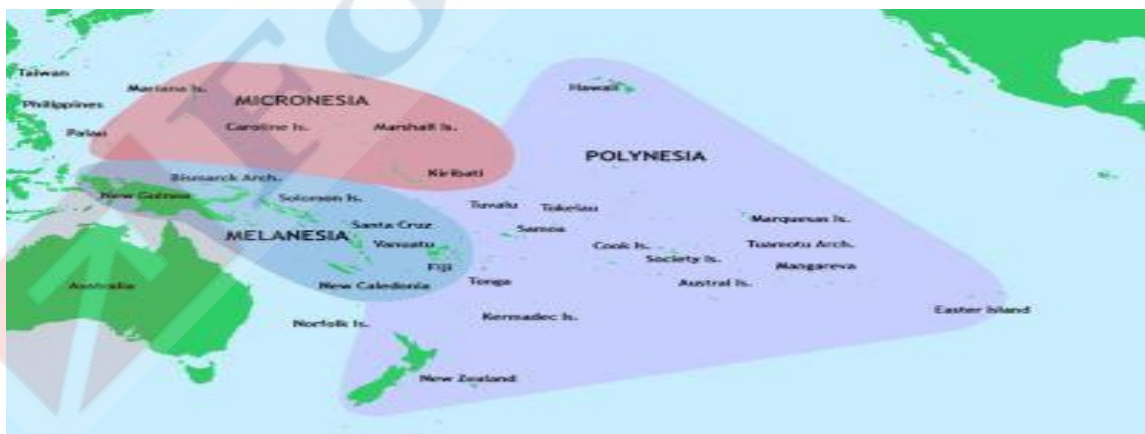
Source – Northeast News

- The **13th World Strengthlifting and Incline Bench Press (IBP) Championships 2026** is to be held in Kyrgyzstan from 8th to 12th September, 2026.
- **Four strength-lifters from Sikkim** have been selected to represent India.
- They are **Pema Dorjee Bhutia, Milan Pradhan, Binu Subba and Sangita Tamang**.

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

News: India reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening its partnership with Pacific Island countries, addressing the Dialogue Partner Session of the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting in Koror, Palau.

About Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)



Source – The Diplomat

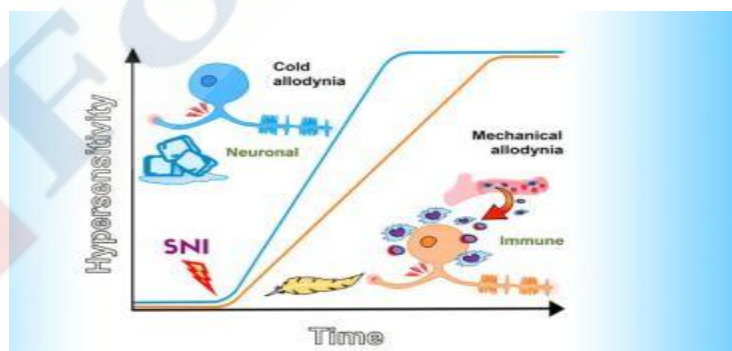
Aspects	Description
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About	- The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is an intergovernmental organization which was established in 1971. Member countries: It comprises 18 member states located in the Pacific region, including – Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Naoero, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Headquarters: Suva, Fiji
Aim	The PIF aims to promote economic growth, enhance political governance and security, and strengthen regional cooperation.
Vision	The vision of PIF is to create a resilient Pacific region characterized by peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, ensuring all Pacific peoples can lead-free, healthy, and productive lives.
Annual meeting	- The PIF holds an annual meeting where member states discuss priority issues and reach decisions by consensus. - Decisions made during the meetings are implemented by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. - The latest 2026 PIF meet (55th edition) is held in Koror, Palau.

Cold Allodynia

News: Researchers from IISc Bengaluru and TCG-CREST identified a brain circuit linked to chemotherapy-induced cold allodynia in mice.

About Cold Allodynia



Source – The Jackson Lab

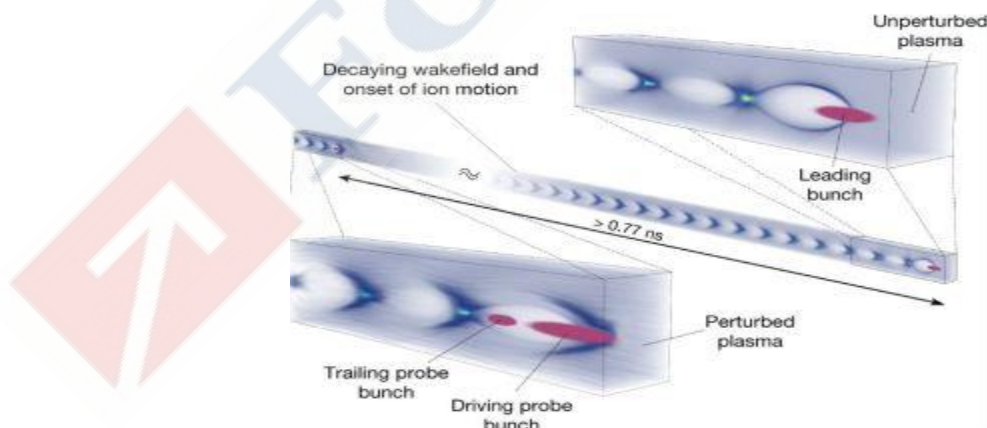
- Cold allodynia** is a **nerve-related condition** in which **even normal or mild cold temperatures can cause pain or distress**.
- Symptoms:** It may cause **sharp, burning or shooting pain, tingling, and pins-and-needles sensations**.

- It can also cause increased **sensitivity to mild cold**, including air conditioning, drafts, cold water, or cold objects.
- **Common Cause:**
 - **Chemotherapy:** Oxaliplatin, a commonly used **platinum-based chemotherapy drug**, is a **major cause** of cold allodynia.
 - **Diabetes:** Diabetes can **damage peripheral nerves** and may lead to cold allodynia.
 - **Viral infections:** Viral infections **can irritate nerves** and cause persistent neuropathic pain.
 - **Injuries:** Physical injuries **can damage or irritate sensory nerves** and may trigger nerve pain.
 - **Nutritional deficiencies:** **Lack of B vitamins**, particularly **Vitamin B12**, can **impair nerve health** and may contribute to cold allodynia.
- **Diagnosis:** Healthcare providers **assess the symptoms** and may **test responses to temperature, light touch, and vibration**, along with laboratory tests or nerve studies when required.
- **Treatment:**
 - **Medicines:** Pregabalin, gabapentin, and duloxetine target nerve pain pathways.
 - **Lidocaine and capsaicin creams** may help **desensitize skin receptors**, while **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** may help when inflammation is also present.
 - **Lifestyle measures:** Keeping the feet warm, **avoiding cold triggers**, **gentle exercise**, **adequate B vitamins**, and **stress management** may provide relief.
 - **Alternative therapies:** **Acupuncture** may help some people by modulating pain signals, while **Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)** uses **mild electrical currents to block pain pathways**.

Wakefield Accelerator

News: Wakefield accelerators can achieve very high accelerating fields while potentially reducing large accelerators to metre-scale or tabletop sizes.

About Wakefield Accelerator



Source – Nature

- **Wakefield accelerator** is a **plasma-based accelerator** that uses plasma waves to **accelerate charged particles over a short distance**.

- In contrast, **conventional accelerators**, such as the 27-km Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Europe, **use powerful magnets and electric currents to accelerate particles.**
- **Plasma:** It is an **ionized gas** in which **electrons and positively charged ions can move independently.**
- **Working Mechanism:**
 - **Driver:** A strong **driver is sent through the plasma to create the wakefield.**
 - The **driver can be either a laser pulse or an ultra-relativistic electron beam,** making the acceleration **laser-driven or particle beam-driven.**
 - **Electron Displacement:** As the driver passes through the plasma, it **pushes the lighter plasma electrons away from its path,** while the **heavier ions remain nearly stationary.**
 - **Restoring Force:** After the driver passes, the **ions pull the displaced electrons back towards the axis.**
 - **Wakefield Formation:** The **electrons overshoot and move back and forth, creating an oscillating density wave behind the driver.**
 - The **electric fields of this wave are called wakefields.**
 - **Particle Injection:** Other **electrons are injected into the wakefield at the right point** so that they can interact effectively with the moving electric fields.
 - **Acceleration:** The **injected electrons surf the moving electric fields,** drawing energy from the plasma wave and **gaining high energy over a short distance.**
- **Key Advantage:**
 - **High Acceleration Gradient:** It can **produce an electric field gradient of up to 100 GV/m** (Gigavolts per metre), **allowing particles to gain much more energy over each metre.**
 - This is **about 1,000 times stronger than conventional radio-frequency accelerators,** which achieve around 50–100 MV/m.
 - **Miniaturisation:** Higher energy gain per metre **can reduce accelerator size from kilometres to a few metres or tabletop scale.**
 - **Cost-Efficiency:** Shorter acceleration paths **can reduce infrastructure, manufacturing, and operational costs.**

Myristica Swamps

News: Myristica swamps in the Western Ghats are highlighted for their ecological role and the threats caused by plantations and human activities.

About Myristica Swamps



Source – TH

- **Myristica swamps** are **freshwater swamps** dominated by **evergreen trees** of the **Myristicaceae** family.
 - They are **also known as living fossils** due to the **primitive nature** of **Myristica** plants.
- **Distribution:** In India, they occur **mainly in the Western Ghats**, with **smaller distributions** in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** and **Meghalaya**.
- **Habitat Conditions:** These tropical freshwater swamps **grow on fertile alluvial, waterlogged soils in the plains**, which **remain inundated throughout the year**.
- **Key Ecological Characteristics:**
 - **Waterlogged ecosystem:** The swamps have trees with **large protruding roots** that emerge from permanently waterlogged soil.
 - **Flood regulation:** They help in **regulating floods and recharging groundwater**.
 - **Freshwater supply:** They provide a **perennial flow of freshwater**.
 - **Carbon storage:** These forests have a **higher ability to sequester carbon** than **non-swampy forests**.
- **Flora:** The key **plant species** include **Myristica fatua**, which is **Endangered**, **Gymnacranthera canarica**, which is **Vulnerable**, and **Semecarpus kathalekanensis**, which is **Critically Endangered**.
- **Fauna:** The swamps support species such as the **lion-tailed macaque**, **Malabar pit viper** and **hornbills**, highlighting their ecological importance as forest wetlands.
- **Threats:** The swamps are **declining due to the rise of plantations and human-dominated land**.

Sinai Peninsula

News: At least 22 people were killed and 28 injured in a passenger bus crash in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula on September 2, 2026.

About Sinai Peninsula



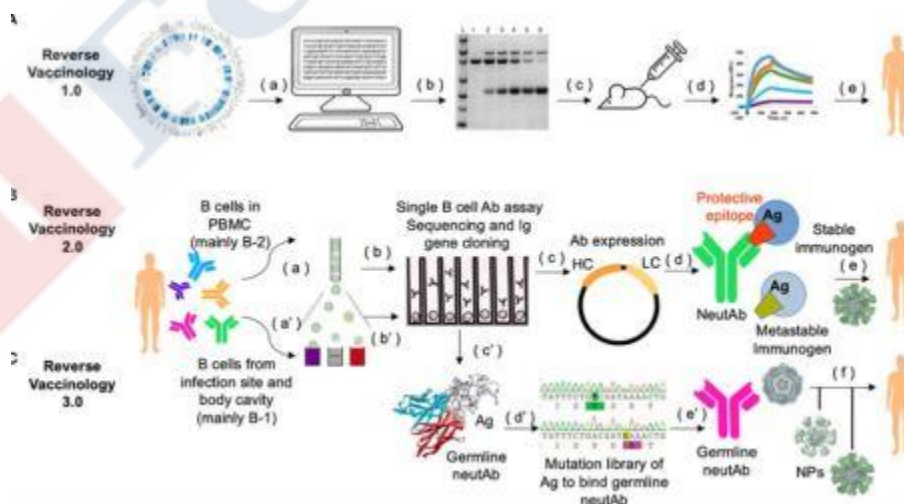
Source – Britannica

- **Location:** Sinai Peninsula is a triangle-shaped peninsula in northeastern Egypt that connects Asia and Africa.
- **Boundaries:** It is bounded by the Mediterranean Sea in the north,
 - Israel and the Gaza Strip in the east,
 - the Suez Canal and Gulf of Suez in the west, and
 - the Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba in the south and southeast.
- **Climate:** Sinai has an arid desert climate.
- **Vegetation:** Most vegetation is ephemeral, while perennial scrub survives on southern slopes and northern plateaus.
- **Landscape:** The peninsula has mountains, deserts, plateaus and coastal regions.
 - The south has high mountains, while the north has a broad plateau sloping towards the Mediterranean.
- **Highest Peak:** Mount Catherine is the highest peak, with an elevation of 2,642 metres.
- **Hydrology:** The Sinai has no major rivers.
 - Wadis (seasonal watercourses) and springs drain the mountains and form small oases.
 - Wadi el Arish is one of the largest wadis.
- **Flora:** Succulents, halophytes, medicinal plants and fodder plants are found in different parts of the peninsula.
- **Fauna:** Animals include ibex, gazelles, sand foxes, leopards, jackals, hares, hedgehogs and moles.
 - Falcons and eagles are indigenous, while quail, partridge and grouse are seasonal migrants.
- **Historical Significance:** It was occupied by Israeli forces in 1967 and returned to Egypt in 1982 under the terms of the 1979 peace treaty.

Reverse Vaccinology

News: British scientists have taken an important first step towards developing a universal pneumococcal vaccine using reverse vaccinology.

About Reverse Vaccinology



Source – ScienceDirect

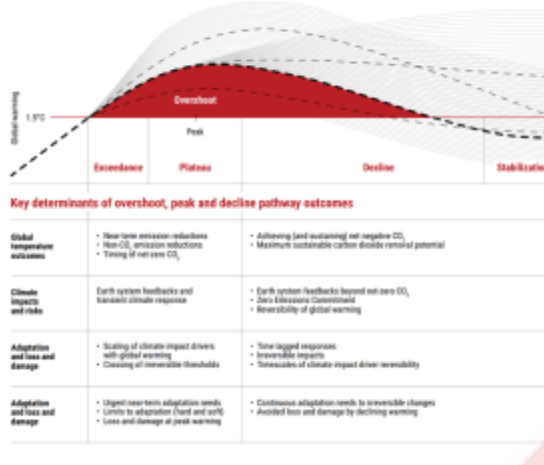
- **Reverse vaccinology** is a process of vaccine discovery that starts **in silico (on a computer)** using the **genetic information of a pathogen**, rather than starting in the laboratory with the pathogen itself.
- **Coined by:** The term reverse vaccinology was **coined by Rino Rappuoli in 2000**.
- **Working Mechanism:** It combines **bioinformatics, genomics, proteomics, and immunology** to identify and validate potential vaccine targets.
 - Scientists **first sequence the pathogen's genome** to **obtain information about its genes and proteins**.
 - Scientists use **bioinformatic tools** to study the genes in the genome and **identify those that can produce proteins located on the pathogen's surface**.
 - **Protein Identification:** Scientists **select proteins that are easily accessible to the immune system** and **have little or no similarity to human proteins**.
 - They further **assess their predicted shape, stability, and ability to produce a strong and lasting immune response**.
 - The **identified proteins are tested in animals or through laboratory assays** to determine whether they can stimulate an immune response and provide protection.
- **Key Features of Reverse Vaccinology:**
 - It **reduces the time** needed to **identify and isolate suitable antigens** compared with conventional vaccine design.
 - It can support vaccine development against pathogens that cannot be grown in culture.
 - It helps **identify potential vaccine targets** when it is difficult to determine which antigens can produce a protective immune response.
 - It can **help identify proteins shared across different serotypes**, which may **support the development of vaccines with wider coverage**.
- **Limitations:** It **cannot identify carbohydrates and other cellular structures** that are not directly encoded by the genome.
- **Applications:**
 - **First use:** It was first used **against Neisseria meningitidis** for vaccine development.
 - **COVID-19:** Genome sequencing helped identify the spike-protein gene for COVID-19 vaccine development.
 - **Pneumococcal vaccine:** Scientists are **using the approach to identify proteins for a universal pneumococcal vaccine**.

Key Highlights of 'Limiting Overshoot' Report

News: The 'Limiting Overshoot' Report has been released by UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Key Highlights of 'Limiting Overshoot' Report

Figure 1.3: Key determinants of overshoot peak and decline pathway outcomes down to the impact chain



Source: Financial News

- **Released by:** The 'Limiting Overshoot' Report is released by **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- It has for the **first time** set out a detailed "**overshoot, peak, and decline**" pathway for global warming.
- **Key Highlights of 'Limiting Overshoot' Report:**
 - **The 1.5°C Limit Will Be Crossed:** The report finds that the world is likely to cross the **1.5°C warming threshold within the next few years**. It is no longer considered realistic to prevent this from happening.
 - **Limiting Peak Warming Is Now the Priority:** Since crossing 1.5°C is becoming unavoidable, the priority should be to **limit how high temperatures rise** and reduce the amount of time the world remains above 1.5°C.
 - Every delay in reducing emissions increases the peak temperature.
 - **Warming Could Reach 1.8°C or Higher:** Under the most ambitious climate action scenario, global warming could peak at around **1.8°C** in the middle of the century.
 - Under current government policies, warming could reach around **2.6°C by 2100**.
 - **The World Needs an "Overshoot" Pathway:** The report proposes a pathway in which temperatures first **cross 1.5°C, reach a peak, and then gradually decline**.
 - The aim is eventually to return global warming to below 1.5°C.
 - **Rapid Reduction in Fossil Fuel Use Is Essential:** Returning temperatures below 1.5°C would require **ending the use of fossil fuels** and significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
 - The report also highlights the need to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
 - **Carbon Removal Has an Important but Limited Role:** The report identifies **carbon dioxide removal (CDR)** as an important part of the long-term cooling pathway.
 - However, carbon removal cannot substitute for rapid emissions reductions and faces challenges related to cost and reliability.
 - **Climate Impacts Will Continue During the Overshoot Period:** The period of warming above 1.5°C could last for **many decades**.
 - During this time, climate-related disasters are expected to increase, including extreme weather, food and water shortages, health impacts, economic losses and species extinction.

- **Adaptation and Resilience Are Necessary:** Governments must strengthen **climate adaptation and resilience**, because some impacts of higher temperatures cannot be avoided.
 - Poor and vulnerable communities are expected to be affected the most.
- **Risk of Irreversible Climate Tipping Points:** Higher warming increases the risk of **irreversible tipping points**, including the loss of parts of the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets, damage to the Amazon rainforest and disruption of Atlantic Ocean circulation.
 - Some areas could eventually become difficult to insure or even uninhabitable.
- **Immediate Action Can Still Reduce Damage:** Although crossing 1.5°C is increasingly unavoidable, the report stresses that **climate action is still valuable**.
 - Acting now can **reduce peak warming and make the future safer** than allowing temperatures to remain above 1.5°C for the long term.

Raja Mircha

News: Nagaland Tourism and Higher Education Minister Temjen Imna Along shared a video of chillies and had a hilarious warning for anyone brave enough to try Raja Mircha.

About Raja Mircha



Figure 3. Source – Wikipedia

- **Raja Mircha** is a **chilli from Nagaland**.
- It is also referred to as **king chilli or Bhoot Jolokia and Ghost pepper**.
- **Genus:** This chilli belongs to the **genus Capsicum** of the **family Solanaceae**.
- **GI Tag:** It got the Geographical Indication(GI) certification in **2008**.
 - It became the **first chilli variety from Nagaland** and the **first type of goods from Nagaland** to earn the **GI tag**.
- **Significance:** It has been considered as the **world's hottest chilli** and is constantly on the **top five in the list of the world's hottest chilies** based on the **Scoville Heat Units (SHUs)**.
 - It is a **staple culinary item**, intrinsically **linked to the local community**, and historically **used not just for food**, but also as a **pest repellent and even in ancient warfare**.

About Scoville Heat Units (SHU)

- **Scoville Heat Units (SHU)** measure how much sugar-water needs to be diluted into a **chili pepper mash** to get to the **point** where **you no longer feel the heat at all**.
- The **higher the Scoville rating**, the **hotter the pepper**.

Acting Chief Justice of a High Court

News: Rajasthan High Court Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma rejected allegations against him and asked all concerned to await the CJI's decision.

About Acting Chief Justice of a High Court

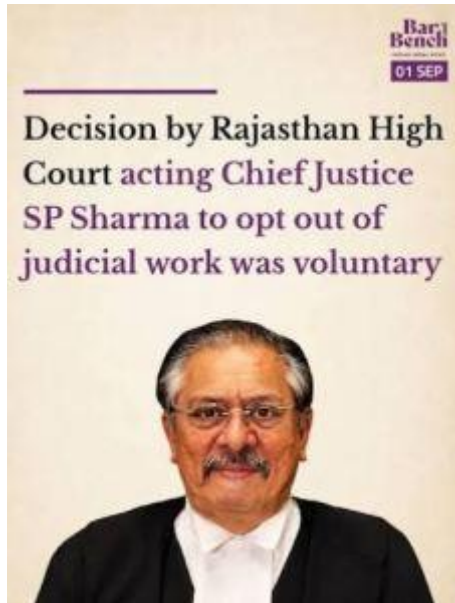


Figure 4. Source – Bar and Bench

- An **Acting Chief Justice** temporarily performs the **duties of the Chief Justice** when the **regular Chief Justice is unavailable**.
- **Constitutional Provision:** Article 223 provides for an Acting Chief Justice of a High Court.
- **Appointment:** The **President appoints** the Acting Chief Justice.
- **Eligibility:** The appointee **must be a judge of the same High Court** and **need not be its senior-most judge**.
- **Power:** The Acting Chief Justice **performs the duties and functions of the Chief Justice** during the temporary arrangement.
- **Functions:** The Acting Chief Justice ensures the **continued judicial and administrative functioning of the High Court**.
- **Convention:** Acting Chief Justices **conventionally do not recommend judicial appointments** because their tenures are generally short.
 - However, **in exceptional cases** where they have recommended names, the **Collegium** has followed different approaches.
- **Relevancy:** It prevents an administrative and constitutional vacuum and ensures institutional continuity in the judiciary.

Negative GVA Deflator for Manufacturing Sector

News: MoSPI clarified the -1.5% manufacturing GVA deflator in Q1 2026-27 and explained how double deflation produced it.

About Negative GVA Deflator for Manufacturing Sector

- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** It measures the **value added by an industry to the economy**.
 - It is broadly **calculated by subtracting the value of goods and services used as inputs from the value of production**.
- **Nominal GVA:** It measures the **value added at current prices**, meaning it **includes the effect of changes in prices**.
- **Real GVA:** It shows the **change in the value added by a sector after removing the effect of price changes**.
 - It is **calculated as real output minus real intermediate consumption**.
- **Deflation:** It means **removing the effect of price changes** from a **current-price value** to find its **real value at constant prices**.
- **Double deflation:** It is an accounting technique **used to calculate real GVA by deflating gross output and intermediate consumption separately using individual price indices**.
- **Negative GVA deflator:** It means that **nominal GVA grows slower than real GVA**.
 - It **does not mean that the prices of goods have fallen**.

- It can occur when input prices rise faster than output prices.

Recent Finding in India

- In Q1 2026-27, manufacturing nominal GVA grew by 7.7%, while real GVA grew by 9.2%, as input prices rose faster than output prices.
- This resulted in a -1.5% implicit GVA deflator for the manufacturing sector.
- Thus, the -1.5% figure reflects the relative movement of output and input prices, rather than a fall in manufacturing output prices.

Agentic AI Skilling Program

News: Agentic AI Skilling Program has been launched by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with Intel India during National Leadership Dialogue.

About Agentic AI Skilling Program

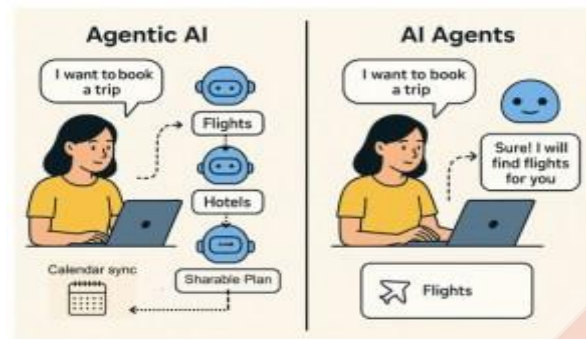


Source: PIB

- **Launched by:** It has been launched by National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with Intel India.
- **Aim:** It aimed at expanding access to industry-aligned Agentic AI learning opportunities and contributing to the development of a future-ready AI talent ecosystem in the country.
- **Components:** The initiative includes two programs – Agentic AI for Everyone and Engineering Agentic AI Systems.
 - **Agentic AI for Everyone:** This course focuses on AI agents, workflow automation, and multi-agent systems.
 - It also helps learners understand how to improve productivity, business efficiency, and decision-making using AI and more.
 - The program will offer “hands-on exposure to designing and governing AI-powered workflows and agentic systems using no-code platforms.”
 - **Engineering Agentic AI Systems:** This program provides in-depth knowledge for people who want to design, build, and deploy.
 - Learners will get hands-on training in no-code/low-code tools and code-based frameworks, which will help them develop more advanced and customised AI agents using programming.

- It also covers the **full lifecycle of an AI agent**, including agent architecture, tool integration, orchestration, memory, and deployment.

About Agentic AI



Source: MDPI

- Agentic AI is an **advanced form of artificial intelligence** focused on **autonomous decision-making and action**.
- Unlike traditional AI, which primarily responds to **commands or analyzes data**, **agentic AI can set goals, plan, and execute tasks** with minimal human intervention.
- Agentic AI systems are **designed to operate with a higher degree of autonomy**.
- It works by **using AI agents**, which are essentially autonomous entities designed to perform specific tasks.
- **At its core, this technology is built on several key components:**
 - **Perception:** Agentic AI starts by **gathering information from its surroundings and different sources**, such as sensors, databases, and user interfaces.
 - This could **involve analyzing text, images, or other forms of data** to understand the situation.
 - **Reasoning:** Using a **large language model (LLM)**, **agentic AI analyzes the gathered data to understand** the context, identify relevant information, and formulate potential solutions.
 - **For example**, if the goal is to schedule a appointment, the LLM can parse the text of emails to identify attendees, available times, and the appointment's purpose.
 - **Planning:** The AI then **uses the information it gathered to develop a plan**.
 - This involves **setting goals, breaking them down into smaller steps**, and figuring out the best way to achieve them.
 - **Action:** Based on its plan, the AI takes action. This could **involve performing tasks, making decisions, or interacting with other systems**.
 - **Reflection:** After taking action, the **AI learns from the results**. It evaluates whether **its actions were successful and uses this feedback** to adjust its plans and actions in the future.
 - This **continuous cycle of perception, planning, action, and reflection allows agentic AI to learn and improve over time**.
- Read more about [AI Agent](#).

Svalbard and Barentsburg

News: Norwegian authorities seized the Russian cruise ship Professor Molchanov in Barentsburg to enforce Naftogaz's \$4.22 billion compensation award.

About Svalbard



Source – Geographical Magazine

- **Svalbard** is a Norwegian archipelago in the Arctic Ocean, between the North Pole and northern Norway.
- **Boundaries:** It is bounded by Arctic Ocean, Greenland Sea and Norwegian Sea.
- **Discovery:** The Dutch explorer Willem Barentsz discovered the archipelago in 1596.
- **Svalbard Treaty 1920:** The treaty established Norwegian sovereignty over Svalbard.
- **Geographical features**
 - **Climate:** It has an Arctic climate, with higher temperatures than other areas at the same latitude.
 - It experiences midnight sun and polar night.
 - **Terrain:** About 60% is covered with glaciers, with many mountains and fjords (deep, narrow sea inlets between steep mountains).
 - **Island composition:** It includes Spitsbergen, Nordaustlandet, Edgeøya, Barentsøya, Kvitøya, Bjørnøya and Hopen.
 - **Largest island:** Spitsbergen is the largest and most populous island.
 - **Vegetation:** Vegetation mainly consists of lichens and mosses.
- **Svalbard Global Seed Vault:** It is located on Spitsbergen.
 - It serves as the world's largest backup facility for crop diversity.

About Barentsburg

- **Location:** Barentsburg is a Russian mining town on the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard.
- **Settlement:** It is the second-largest settlement on Svalbard.
- **Economy:** It is a coal-mining town, now almost entirely made up of Russian nationals.
- **Legal status:** Russia maintains mining operations under the Svalbard Treaty, while Svalbard remains under Norwegian sovereignty.

Police Modernisation Mission

News: The Union government told the Supreme Court that it had begun implementing the Police Modernisation Mission.

About Police Modernisation Mission



Source: Law Live

- The **Police Modernisation Mission** is an **umbrella scheme** to **modernize police forces** over the next five years.
- **Nodal ministry:** It is being overseen by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
- **Aim and intended agencies covered:** It aimed at **funding, modernizing, integrating and future-proofing** the internal security capabilities of **police forces, Central Armed Police Forces and Central Government security and intelligence agencies** through **targeted investments, reforms and technology-led transformation**.
- **Focus:** The focus of the scheme is to **strengthen police infrastructure at cutting edge level by equipping with latest technology, weaponry, communication equipment etc.** along with construction of police infrastructure such as police stations.
- **Fund:** It has an **outlay of ₹24,000 crore**.
- **Note:** “Police” is a **State subject** as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.

OpenAI's New Astra Model

News: OpenAI has released GPT-6 Astra, claiming major gains in computer use, coding, long-running tasks and cybersecurity.

About OpenAI's New Astra Model



Source – NDTV

- **OpenAI's new Astra model** is also known as **GPT-6 (Generative Pre-trained Transformer 6) Astra**.
 - It is a **new frontier artificial intelligence (AI)** model released by OpenAI.
- **Key Features:**
 - **End-to-end work:** Astra is built to **perform complete tasks, rather than only answering prompts.**
 - **Autonomous computer use:** It can operate computers and browsers, fill online forms, update customer records and organise calendars.
 - **Research and content creation:** It can **conduct web research**, draft material in documents and emails, analyse scientific data and generate plots.
 - **Software tasks:** It can build **websites, install and test software, and troubleshoot problems** visible on a screen.
 - **Large context window:** It has a **1.05-million-token context window** and supports a maximum output of **128,000 tokens.**
 - **Task continuity:** Astra can better **retain the original objective of a task** even when the user changes instructions midway.
 - **Cybersecurity:** It is the **first OpenAI model classified at the critical level for cybersecurity** under its Preparedness Framework.

Bundelkhand Region

News: Recurring drought and fodder shortages are forcing livestock farmers to travel farther, increasing risks to both people and cattle.

About Bundelkhand Region



Source – ResearchGate

- **Bundelkhand** is a **semi-arid plateau region** spread across **southern Uttar Pradesh** and **northern Madhya Pradesh**.
 - The region is **historically** associated with the **Bundela Rajput dynasty**.
- **Location:** The region lies between the **Yamuna and Narmada river systems** and forms part of the **Central Highlands**.
- **Districts Covered:** It comprises **13 districts** – **seven in Uttar Pradesh** and **six in Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Key Features of Bundelkhand Region**
 - **Geology:** The region lies on the **Bundelkhand Granite Massif**, with **ancient granite, gneiss and quartzite formations**.
 - Its **hard-rock geology** prevents **rainwater infiltration**, causing very low groundwater storage.
 - **Climate:** Bundelkhand has a **semi-arid climate**, with **hot summers, moderate to low rainfall, high rainfall variability and frequent droughts**.
 - **Terrain:** It has a **rugged, rocky and undulating plateau**, with an **average elevation of 300–400 m**, highly **eroded uplands and inselbergs**.
 - **Major Rivers:** Important rivers include **Betwa, Ken, Dhasan and Sonar**, along with other **seasonal streams**.
 - **Vegetation:** The region has **thorn and dry deciduous vegetation**, along with **scattered forests and scrub**.
 - **Flora:** Important plant species include **babool, Anjan and Dhaman grass**, while **berseem and chari** are **important fodder crops**.
 - **Fauna:** Wildlife includes **Nilgai, Wild Boar and Indian Wolf**.

Mercator Map and Equal Earth Projection

News: The United Nations General Assembly voted to phase out the traditional Mercator map in favour of the Equal Earth projection to accurately reflect the true proportions of global landmasses.

About Mercator Map

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Source: Guardian

- **Mercator map** is a **cylindrical map projection** which is **derived mathematically**.
- **Features:**
 - It has a **grid pattern with longitudes (or meridians) and latitudes (or parallels) at 90-degree angles**.
 - The **lines of longitude are evenly spaced**.
 - The **lines of latitude become farther apart away from the Equator**.
 - **Equator** is located at the **centre of the map**.
- **Creator:** This map was designed in **1569** by the **Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator** to help European explorers navigate across the world.
- **Problem with Mercator Map:** The Mercator map **makes countries and regions near the equator look smaller**, while **areas near the poles appear much larger**.
 - **For example**, on the Mercator map, **Africa appears similar in size to Greenland**, even though Africa is about 14 times larger.

About Equal Earth Projection

- **Definition:** The Equal Earth map projection is an **equal-area pseudocylindrical projection** for world maps.
- **Feature:** In this map, the **meridians of Equal Earth are equally spaced and do not excessively curve outwards**.
 - There are loosely **approximate elliptical arcs** that **mimic the overall appearance of a globe**.
- **Developed by:** The **Equal Earth projection was developed in 2018 by an international team of cartographers**.
 - It was promoted by Togo's **#CorrectTheMap** campaign.
- **Advantage:** It gives a more **accurate representation of the actual size of continents**.
- **Adoption of new map:** The **United Nations General Assembly voted to phase out the traditional Mercator map in favour of the Equal Earth projection to accurately reflect the true proportions of global landmasses**.

- **Not legally binding:** The UN resolution does not force countries to stop using the Mercator map, but it could influence **school textbooks, technology and other mapping systems.**

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

News: UNCLOS has been in the news because of maritime disputes, including those involving the Strait of Hormuz.

About United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)



Source – UNCLOS

- **UNCLOS** is an **international treaty** that **provides a comprehensive legal framework** for the **world's oceans and seas.**
- **Adoption:** It was adopted in **1982 at Montego Bay, Jamaica.**
 - It entered into **force in 1994.**
- **Predecessor:** It **replaced the four 1958 Geneva Conventions** dealing with **maritime zones, continental shelf, high seas, and marine resources.**
- **Members:** It has **168 parties**, including the **European Union.**
 - While the **United States has neither signed nor ratified it.**
 - **India's Position:** India **signed and ratified UNCLOS in 1995.**
- **Secretariat:** The **Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS)** of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations serves as the secretariat of the Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- **Key Maritime Zones:** UNCLOS **divides ocean spaces into five main zones** measured **from a coastal baseline:**
 - **Internal Waters:** These waters **lie landward of the baseline**, where the **coastal state has full sovereignty.**
 - **Territorial Sea:** It **extends up to 12 nautical miles**, with **foreign ships** enjoying the **right of innocent passage.**
 - **Contiguous Zone:** It **extends up to 24 nautical miles** and **allows action against violations of customs, fiscal, immigration, and sanitation laws.**
 - **Exclusive Economic Zone:** It **extends up to 200 nautical miles**, giving **coastal states rights over living and non-living resources.**
 - **High Seas:** These **areas are outside national jurisdiction** and are **open to all nations under international rules.**
- **Specialized Bodies:** The Convention has created **three new institutions on the international scene** :
 - **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea:** It **settles disputes related to the interpretation and application of UNCLOS.**

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- **International Seabed Authority:** It regulates **mineral-related activities** in the international seabed area.
- **Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf:** It examines **submissions by coastal states on the outer limits of their continental shelf**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Peaceful Use:** It promotes the **peaceful use of the oceans**.
 - **Resource Management:** It regulates the **use and management of marine resources**.
 - **Marine Conservation:** It promotes **conservation of living resources and preservation of the marine environment**.
 - **Legal Framework:** It **establishes** rules governing States' **rights and jurisdiction in maritime spaces**.

Key Facts about Belgium

News: India and Belgium recently reaffirmed their commitment to deepening trade, investment and economic cooperation.

Key Facts about Belgium



Figure 5. Source: Britannica

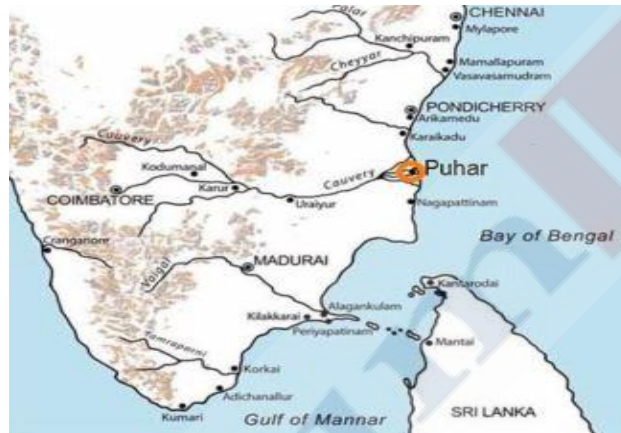
- **Location:** Belgium is a country located in **northwestern Europe**.
- **Boundaries:** It is bounded by the **Netherlands to the north, Germany to the east, Luxembourg to the southeast, and France to the south**.
 - It is bounded by the **North Sea** in the **northwest**.
- **Climate:** It has a **temperate, maritime climate**.
- **Geography:** The main **physical regions** of Belgium are the **Ardennes, Ardennes foothills, Côtes Lorraines, Central Plateaus, Plain of Flanders, and Kempenland**.
 - **Ardennes:** The **Ardennes** is a **high plateau** in **southeastern Belgium** and forms part of the ancient **Hercynian mountain system**.
 - The **Famenne and Fagne depressions** separate the **Ardennes** from its **foothills to the north**.
- **Côtes Lorraines:** The **Côtes Lorraines** is a region of hills located **south of the Ardennes and is separated from the rest of the country**.
 - About half of the **Côtes Lorraines region** is **covered by forests**, while its **southern part contains iron ore deposits**.
- The **Plain of Flanders** is a **low-lying region that stretches along the North Sea** from **France to the Schelde River**.
- **Sambre-Meuse valley:** The **Sambre-Meuse valley** is an important geographical feature that **crosses Belgium from the southwest toward the northeast**.

- **Rivers:** The **Schelde, Meuse, and Yser** are the three major rivers of the country.
- **Lakes:** It has several lakes like **Lake Genval, Lake Gileppe, Lake Eupen, Lake Robertville**, etc.
- **Highest point:** The highest point in Belgium is **Botrange**.
- **Natural Resource:** It has plenty of natural resources such as **fertile land, coal, carbonates, limestone, black marble, fir trees, diamonds, zinc, lead, iron, and silica**.

Ancient Port of Poompuhar

News: The third phase of underwater archaeological exploration has commenced off Poompuhar to trace the maritime trade links of ancient Tamils.

About Ancient Port of Poompuhar



Source – Live History India

- **Poompuhar** was a flourishing ancient port city known as **Kaveripoompattinam**.
- **Location:** It is located in **Mayiladuthurai district, Tamil Nadu**, near where the **Cauveri River** flows into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Naming:** 'Puhar' in Tamil means the estuary of a river in the sea.
- **Historical Significance:**
 - **Chola capital:** Poompuhar served as the **capital of the Early Chola kings in Tamilakam** for a period.
 - **Maritime trade:** The city had **maritime trade links with Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia and the West, including Egypt**.
 - **Literary references:** **Sangam works** such as **Pattinappaalai, Silappadikaram** and **Manimekalai** describe the city, its settlements and maritime trade.
- **Key Findings**
 - **Ancient pottery:** Pottery **dating to the 4th century BCE** has been discovered offshore east of Poompuhar.
 - **Submerged structures:** Surveys found an **elliptical structure** near a previously identified **U-shaped structure**, along with **other structures buried in the seabed**.
 - **Possible ancient harbour:** Earlier research identified features that could have been a **harbour, dockyards, human settlements and a lighthouse**.
 - **Lighthouse:** Remains of an **ancient lighthouse** were found at a depth of 50 metres, including a **spiral staircase and causeway pillars**.

APNIC 62

News: More than 600 Internet experts, policymakers and technology leaders have gathered in Mumbai for APNIC 62, being held from 4 to 10 September 2026.

About APNIC 62



Source – DD India

- **APNIC 62** is a **conference** bringing together **Internet and networking experts, government representatives and industry leaders** to share **ideas, experience and develop policies** related to **Internet operations**.
- **Organised by:** It is organised by the **Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC)**.
 - APNIC is the **region's not-for-profit Internet number registry**.
- **Hosted by:** It is hosted by the **[National Internet Exchange of India \(NIXI\)](#)** and the **Internet Service Providers Association of India (ISPAI)**.
- **Supported by:** It is supported by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MeitY**) and the **Maharashtra government**.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - **Technical discussions:** The conference covers **AI-powered services, network automation, cybersecurity, routing security and Internet governance**.
 - **Regional cooperation:** It provides a **platform for technical experts, network operators and policymakers** to exchange knowledge and strengthen cooperation.
 - **IPv6 adoption:** APNIC highlighted **India's progress in IPv6 (Internet Protocol Version 6) adoption** as an example of **technical capability, investment and collaboration**.
 - **MoU on Internet infrastructure:** NIXI and APNIC will sign an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) to **enhance IPv6 and routing security**.
 - **Internet resilience:** The conference **focuses on developing a secure, resilient and scalable Internet infrastructure**.

About Internet Service Providers Association of India (ISPAI)

- It was **established in 1998**.
- **Mission:** It's mission was to **"Promote Internet for the benefit of all."**
- **Collective voice:** It represents the **Internet Service Provider (ISP) fraternity** and, by extension, the **wider Internet community**.
- **Role:** It **supports the interests of ISPs** and contributes to the **development of the Internet ecosystem in India**.

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Mount Anak Krakatau

News: Eight Indonesian airports, including two serving Jakarta, remained closed because of volcanic ash from eruptions at Mount Anak Krakatau.

About Mount Anak Krakatau



Source: Britannica

- **Location:** Mount Anak Krakatau is situated in the **Sunda Strait** between the islands of Java and Sumatra in Indonesia.
 - **Anak Krakatau** is literally translated as the “**Son of Krakatoa**”.
- It lies along the **convergence of the Indian-Australian and Eurasian tectonic plates**.
- **Formation:** It was formed after the **destructive eruption of Mount Krakatoa in 1883**.
 - Over millions of years, the volcano gradually **developed into a cone-shaped mountain** made up of layers of volcanic rock, cinder, and ash.
 - The destruction of the volcano resulted in **the formation of a caldera**.
 - Parts of the caldera remained above the water, forming **four small islands: Sertung (Verlaten), Lang, Polish Hat, and Rakata**.
 - Over the years, **three new volcanic cones developed** and **eventually merged to form a single island**.
 - A new eruption began in **1928** and by **1930**, it had developed into a small island known as **Anak Krakatau**.
- **Features:**
 - It was originally formed mainly from **basaltic andesite**.
 - It has diverse landforms, including **steep slopes, volcanic cones, lava flows, and pyroclastic deposits**.
 - It **remained dormant until December 1927**.
 - Since then, **the volcano has erupted intermittently, and the cone has continued to grow**.
- It is part of the **Ujung Kulon National Park, listed in UNESCO's World Heritage site**.

About Sunda Strait



Source: Britannica

- Sunda strait is between **Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra**.
- It links the **Java Sea of the western Pacific Ocean with the eastern Indian Ocean**.
- The strait contains **several volcanic islands**, the most well-known of which is **Krakatoa caldera**.

National Commission for Safai Karmcharis (NCSK)

News: The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, has made the appointment of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Members of the National Commission for Safai Karmcharis (NCSK).

About National Commission for Safai Karmcharis (NCSK)



Figure 6. Source: Business Standards

- The National Commission for Safai Karmcharis (NCSK) is a **non- statutory body** established under the **National Commission for Safai Karmcharis Act 1993**.
- It acts as the **primary national monitoring body** that **tracks data and reviews compensation regarding sewer and septic tank deaths** in India.
- **Formation:** The Commission functioned as a **statutory body until 2004**, when the law lapsed.
 - **Nodal ministry:** Since 2004, it has been operated as a **non-statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice**, with its tenure extended periodically.
- **Present Tenure:** The tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karmcharis (NCSK) was **extended for three years beyond 31.03.2025 (i.e. upto 31.03.2028)**.

- **Composition:** It consists of **1 Chairperson, 1 Vice-Chairperson, and 5 members**, including a **lady member**, with prescribed ranks/statuses equivalent to senior Central Government officials. It also has a **Secretary (Joint Secretary rank)** and supporting staff to assist in its functioning.
- **Functions of the Commission**
 - It monitors the implementation of the [Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013](#).
 - It also **monitors their working conditions**, including health, safety, and wages.
 - It **recommends programmes to the Central Government** to eliminate inequalities faced by Safai Karmacharis.
 - It **reviews the implementation of schemes** for their social and economic rehabilitation.
 - It **investigates grievances and take suo-motu action** on non-implementation of welfare schemes, guidelines, and upliftment measures.
 - It **submits reports and recommendations to the Central and State Governments** on issues affecting Safai Karmacharis

Key Facts about Luxembourg

News: Luxembourg's Deputy PM Xavier Bettel will visit India from September 7–9 to meet S. Jaishankar and attend events in Chennai.

Key Facts About Luxembourg



Figure 7. Source – Britannica

- **Luxembourg is a landlocked country** located in **northwestern Europe**.
 - It is **one of the smallest countries** in the world.
- **Bordering nation:** It is bordered by **Belgium on the west and north, France on the south, and Germany on the northeast and east**.
- **Capital:** **Luxembourg** is the capital city.
- **Geography:** The country is divided into **two regions, Oesling and Gotland**.
 - **Oesling:** The northern region, (Oesling) is a **ridged plateau**.
 - It comprises of the **Ardennes Mountains**, which **borders with southern Belgium**.
 - It has a plateau which is **composed of schists and sandstones**.
 - **Gutland:** It is a **southern region of the country**. It has **fertile soil and rich rivers**.
 - This part is also known as **Bon Pays**.
 - It includes **Luxembourg, the capital city**, and other industrial towns such as Esch-sur-Alzette.
 - The **Alzette River** flows north through the centre of the Bon Pays and is an important part of the country's economic activity.
- **Rivers:** Important rivers of the country include the **Alzette, Eisch, Moselle, Our and Sure**.
- **Lake:** **Haute Sure** is the **largest lake** of the country.

- **Climate:** It has a **mild climate** with considerable precipitation.
- **Highest point:** Burgplatz is the **highest point** of the country.
- **Lowest point:** The lowest point is located at the **confluence of Sauer and Moselle Rivers, in Wasserbillig.**

Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)

News: The U.K. has recognised India's CCTS for carbon pricing relief under its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

About Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)



Figure 8. Source – PIB

- **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)** is a mechanism designed to reduce GHG emissions through carbon pricing.
 - It laid the **foundation for the Indian Carbon Market (ICM)** by establishing its institutional framework.
- **Legal Basis:** It was notified by the Ministry of Power in 2023 under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- **Predecessor:** CCTS supersedes the Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme, which focused on energy efficiency through Energy Saving Certificates (ESCs).
- **Objective:** It aims to **decarbonize industrial sectors** by shifting the focus from energy efficiency to GHG emissions intensity reduction.
- **Institutional Structure**
 - **Administrator:** The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) sets targets and issues Carbon Credit Certificates (CCCs).
 - **Regulator:** The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) regulates CCC trading.
- **Operational Mechanism:**
 - **Coverage:** The CCTS compliance mechanism initially **covers nine energy-intensive sectors** – aluminium, cement, chlor-alkali, pulp and paper, iron and steel, fertilizer, petroleum refining, petrochemicals, and textiles.
 - **Setting Targets:** Obligated entities in **these sectors are given sector-specific GHG emission intensity targets.**
 - **Measuring Performance:** Their **performance is assessed** against the prescribed emission intensity targets.
 - **Earning Credits:** An **entity that performs better than its target earns Carbon Credit Certificates (CCCs)**, with 1 CCC representing 1 tonne of CO₂ equivalent reduced.
 - **Buying Credits:** An **entity that fails to meet its target must purchase CCCs** to meet its compliance requirement.
 - **Trading Credits:** **Earned CCCs can be traded on power exchanges**, allowing entities that need credits to purchase them.
 - **Voluntary Participation:** **Entities outside the compliance mechanism can voluntarily reduce their emissions and earn carbon credits through the offset mechanism.**
- **CCTS Emission Accounting:**

- **Intensity-Based Targets:** CCTS sets targets in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per unit of product output.
- **Scope of Emissions:** It covers direct emissions from fuel combustion and industrial processes (Scope 1) and indirect emissions from electricity and heat consumption (Scope 2).
- **Additional Emissions:** Some Scope 3 emissions, including emissions from the import and export of intermediary products, are also considered.

India joins Call to Action for 6G Leadership and Security and Bharat 6G Mission

News: India has joined a US-led initiative with 25 other countries to shape the development and security of next-generation 6G networks.

About India joins Call to Action for 6G Leadership and Security



Source – Money Control

- **'Call to Action for 6G Leadership and Security'** is an international initiative for 6G telecommunications networks.
- **Launched by:** The initiative was launched by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) under the US Commerce Department.
- **Partner nations:** The initiative has 26 partner countries, including India and the United States.
- **Objective:** It seeks to ensure that 6G networks reflect shared security interests, strengthen competitiveness and drive innovation.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Network security:** It aims to ensure that next-generation networks reflect shared security interests.
 - **Interoperability:** It promotes interoperability so that 6G networks can function effectively across different countries and systems.
 - **Resilience:** It aims to make 6G infrastructure resilient, so that next-generation networks can remain reliable and robust.
 - **Trusted AI:** It promotes the use of trusted artificial intelligence in developing and operating 6G infrastructure.
 - **Competitiveness and innovation:** It seeks to strengthen competitiveness and drive innovation in 6G development.

About Bharat 6G Mission

- **Bharat 6G Mission** is India's initiative to develop next-generation wireless communication capabilities.
- **Objective:** It aims to make India a leading global supplier of affordable 6G intellectual property, products and solutions.
- **Phases:** The mission will be **implemented in two phases**, covering 2023–2025 and 2025–2030.
 - **Phase 1:** It supports **new ideas, use cases, intellectual property (IP) and testbeds** through research and government support.
 - **Phase 2:** It focuses on **developing globally viable concepts and use cases and commercializing IPs, prototypes and testbeds**.
- **Apex Council:** The Government has **appointed an Apex Council to oversee the Bharat 6G Mission**.
 - **Standardization:** It focuses on 6G standardization and identification of spectrum for 6G use.
 - **Ecosystem:** It works to **create an ecosystem for 6G devices and systems**.
 - **Finance:** It addresses the **financing of research and development**.
 - **Technology:** It focuses on technologies such as **Terahertz communication, radio interfaces, tactile internet, AI for connected intelligence**, new encoding methods, waveforms and chipsets.

Nicotine Pouches and Their Regulation

News: A new ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research study found that nicotine pouches are reaching Indian cities through online platforms, hookah shops and gig delivery services.

About Nicotine Pouches and Their Regulation



Source: Reuters

- **About Nicotine Pouch:** It is a **small, tobacco-free, tea-bag-like sack** containing **nicotine, flavourings and plant-based fibres**.
 - **Note:** Nicotine is a **highly addictive chemical compound** found **naturally in the tobacco plant and used in products** like cigarettes, vapes, and nicotine pouches.

- Users place the **pouch between the lip and gum for up to an hour, allowing nicotine to be absorbed** directly into the bloodstream without smoke, vapour or spitting.
- **Regulation of Nicotine Pouches:**
 - **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (COTPA):** It governs the **marketing, advertising and sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products**.
 - Since **nicotine pouches are not among the products listed in the Act**, they fall **outside** it.
 - **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940:** Nicotine is **not specifically listed** as a **drug** under the Act. However, **nicotine patches and gums are approved as drugs for treating nicotine addiction**.
 - **Schedule K of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 exempts certain nicotine gums and lozenges** containing **less than 2 mg of nicotine** from licensing and prescription requirements.
 - **The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and the Food Safety and Standards Act:** It defines food as **any processed, partially processed or unprocessed substance intended for human consumption**.
 - Court rulings on supari and chewing tobacco establish **that the definition has a very wide amplitude**, encompassing items that are **chewed rather than swallowed**.
 - It is arguable, then, that nicotine pouches could fall within the broad definition of food.
- **Import Regulations:** The import of nicotine pouches into India is governed by the **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992** and the **Customs Act, 1962**.
 - The **Foreign Trade Act** empowers the Central Government to prohibit, restrict or regulate imports.
 - Under **Section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962** the government can prohibit or restrict goods through notification on grounds including the protection of human, animal or plant life.
 - Following the **World Customs Organization's update of the Harmonized System**, specific categories were introduced for oral nicotine products that do not involve combustion:
 - **2404 91 30** covers **tobacco-free, single-use nicotine pouches such as Zyn or Lyft**.
 - **2404 91 90** covers other **oral nicotine products not intended for therapeutic use**.
 - **Medicament codes apply only to products** specifically intended as **nicotine-cessation aids**.
 - Under the **DGFT schedule and CBIC rules**, products under **2404 91 30** are classified as **"restricted"**.
 - This means nicotine pouches are **not completely banned**, unlike e-cigarettes, but they **cannot be imported freely by merely paying customs duty**. They require a **specific licence or permission**.
 - In deciding whether to permit such imports, the **DGFT may consult the Health Ministry and other concerned ministries**.
- **Regulation for Duty-free shops:**
 - Nicotine pouches are **currently available at some duty-free shops** at Indian airports, which operate under **Section 58 of the Customs Act**.
 - In ***Flemingo Duty Free Shop Pvt. Ltd. v. Shri Kaushik Bhattacharya (2024)***, the Calcutta High Court held that **duty-free shops are treated as being outside India for certain purposes** under the Customs Act and therefore do not **"import"** goods into India.
 - However, **Indian laws and regulations still apply** to duty-free shops.

- As nicotine pouches are classified as **restricted goods**, their sale requires the necessary **import licence or permission**.

Kashmir Flycatcher (*Ficedula subrubra*)

News: An ongoing research project is studying the Kashmir flycatcher in the North-Western Himalayas, including its migration and ecology.

About Kashmir Flycatcher



Source – Mongabay

- **Kashmir Flycatcher** is a **small migratory bird** of the **flycatcher family Muscicapidae**.
- **Scientific Name:** *Ficedula subrubra*
- **Habitat:** It prefers mature **temperate broad-leaved forests** with **dense canopy and understorey**.
 - It is found at **1,800–2,700 m** above sea level.
- **Distribution:** It **returns to Kashmir to breed** and spends the non-breeding season in the **Western Ghats and Sri Lanka**.
 - It is **endemic to the Indian subcontinent**.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Size:** It is about **13 cm** long and barely larger than a sparrow.
 - **Sexual Dimorphism:** **Males** have an **orange-red throat and breast**,
 - while **females and young birds** are **browner with lighter underparts**.
 - **Diet:** It feeds **mainly on flying and foliage-dwelling insects** during breeding.
 - **Behaviour:** **Males defend territories** by singing and displaying.
 - **Both parents feed nestlings**.
- **Threats:**
 - Forest loss and degradation,
 - Timber extraction,
 - Fuelwood collection
 - Infrastructure development
 - Tourism

- Human disturbance
- **Conservation Status**
 - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable

Yakov Novichenko bridge and Tumen River

News: North Korea and Russia opened the Yakov Novichenko Bridge, their first proper road link, over the Tumen River.

About Yakov Novichenko Bridge



Figure 9. Source – CSIS

- **Location:** The Yakov Novichenko Bridge is built over the Tumen River between Russia and North Korea.
- It was built near the existing Friendship Bridge, a rail bridge commissioned in 1959.
- **Naming:** The bridge is named after Yakov Novichenko, a Red Army soldier whom Pyongyang credits with protecting Kim Il Sung in 1946.
- **Size and Design:** It is a 1-km-long, two-lane road bridge designed to allow up to 300 vehicles to cross every day.
- **Connectivity:** It provides the first proper road link between Russia and North Korea.
 - It will also connect with Russia's federal road network and the transport corridor between Vladivostok and St Petersburg.

About Tumen River



Source – ScienceDirect

- The **Tumen River** originates from **Mount Paektu**, along the **China–North Korea border**.
- It forms part of the **boundary between China and North Korea in the upper reaches** and between **North Korea and Russia in the lower reaches**.
- **Other names:** It is also known as the **Tuman River** or **Duman River**.
 - Its **Russian name, Tumannaya**, means “foggy”.
- **Tributaries:** The **Gaya River** and **Hunchun River** are tributaries of the Tumen River.
- **Merges into:** It enters the **Sea of Japan (East Sea)**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Size:** It is **521 km long** and is the **third-longest river in Korea**.
 - **Navigability:** The river is **navigable for only 85 km**, limiting its navigational use.
 - **River Economic Development Area:** In **1995**, **China, Mongolia, Russia, North Korea and South Korea** signed **three agreements** to create the **Tumen River Economic Development Area**.

Bornean Orangutan

News: Wildfires in Kalimantan affected 60.2% of Bornean orangutan habitat, putting its food sources, nesting trees and habitat connectivity at risk.

About Bornean Orangutan



Source – WWF

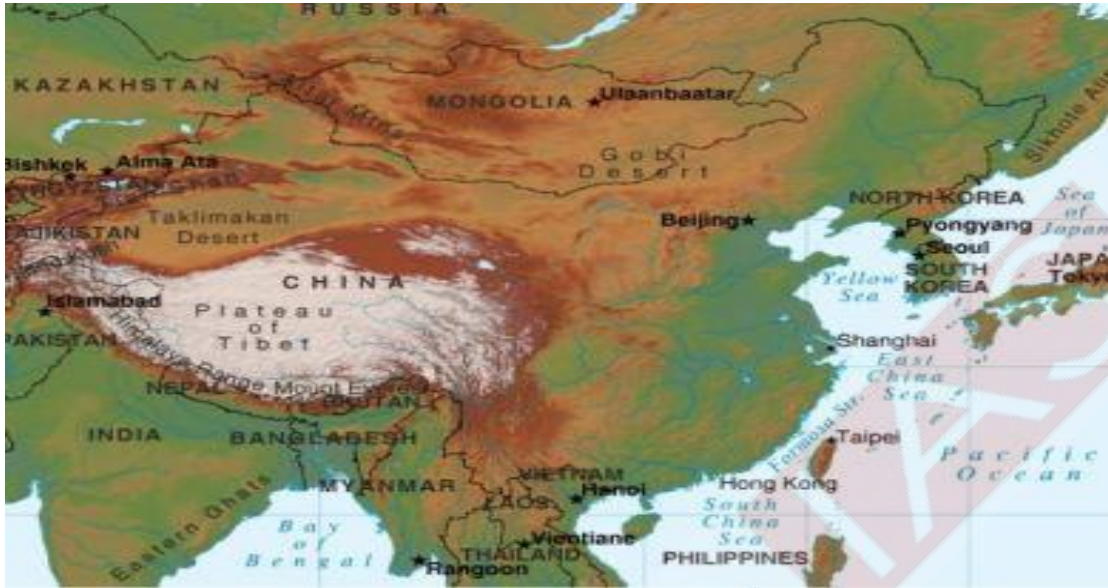
- The **Bornean orangutan** is a **great ape** that **naturally occurs in Borneo**.
- **Species Types:** There are **three recognized orangutan species** – Bornean, Sumatran and [Tapanuli orangutans](#).
- **Habitat and Distribution:** The Bornean orangutan lives exclusively in the **tropical lowland and montane rainforests** on the **island of Borneo in Southeast Asia**.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Physical Features:** It has **darker skin and hair, very long arms, shorter legs and long, hook-like hands and feet**.
 - **Cheek Pads:** **Mature males** develop **large, fleshy cheek pads**, which become more noticeable with age.
 - **Arboreal Life:** It is **adapted to life in trees** and **uses semibrachiation to move through them**.
 - Each night, it builds nests from branches and leaves, 40–60 feet above the ground.
 - **Diet:** It mainly **eats fruit**, and a large part of its day is spent foraging and eating.
 - **Social Behaviour:** It **generally does not live in large social groups** because its fruit-based diet requires it to search widely for food.
 - **Territorial Behaviour:** **Adult males may avoid or show aggression towards other males** entering their territory.
 - **Intelligence:** It shows remarkable **cognitive skills, including memorisation, object recognition, problem-solving and occasional tool use**.
- **Threats:**
 - Wildfires
 - Habitat destruction
 - Poaching and illegal trafficking
- **Conservation Status**
 - **IUCN Status: Critically Endangered**

Tibetan Plateau

News: Rising temperatures caused glacier retreat on the Tibetan Plateau, linked to the August 26 glacial collapse on the Nepal-China border.

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About Tibetan Plateau



Source – World Atlas

- **Tibetan Plateau** is a vast, high-elevation plateau in Asia.
- **Other Names:** It is called the “Roof of the World” and Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.
- **Location and extension:** It lies in southwestern China.
 - It lies between the **Kunlun Mountains in the north** and the **Himalayas in the south**,
 - It extends from the **Pamir Plateau** in the west to the eastern highlands near the **Loess Plateau**.
- **Formation:**
 - **Plate Collision:** Around 45 million years ago, the northward-moving **Indian Plate collided with the Eurasian Plate**, causing intense **compression of the Earth’s crust**.
 - **Crustal Deformation and Uplift:** The collision led to folding, faulting and thickening of the crust, which caused the **land to rise to great heights**.
 - **Formation and Continued Uplift:** This process resulted in the **formation of the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau**.
 - The **plateau is still slowly rising**, although its rate of expansion has reduced over time.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Climate:** High altitude causes **cold and dry conditions**, with very **cold winters and short cool summers**.
 - **Relief:** It has **high plains, rugged mountains, deep valleys** and grasslands.
 - **Terrain:** Northern areas have **cold deserts**; the **Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon** is one of the **deepest canyons**.
 - **Rivers:** It is the **source of the Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra, Yangtze, Yellow River and Mekong**.
 - **Lakes:** It has both **saltwater and freshwater lakes**.
 - **Saltwater lakes:** Qinghai Lake and Namtso
 - **Freshwater lakes:** Manasarovar, Yamdrok and Pangong Tso

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- **Glaciers:** It has more than 46,000 glaciers.
- **Role in Influencing Climate:**
 - In summer, **strong heating creates a low-pressure area that draws moist ocean winds.**
 - This **supports the southwest monsoon and influences rainfall in India.**
- **Vegetation:** The plateau mainly has **alpine shrublands, sedge meadows and alpine steppe, with vegetation becoming drier from southeast to northwest.**
- **Flora:** Common vegetation **includes Kobresia and Carex sedges, alpine forbs, juniper, dwarf rhododendron, Caragana and dwarf willow.**
- **Fauna:** It supports **Tibetan wild ass, Tibetan gazelle, blue sheep and white-lipped deer,** along with **predators such as the snow leopard, gray wolf and brown bear.**

Gangdise Mountains

- **Location:** The **Gangdise Mountains** are located in the southwestern part of **Tibet, parallel to the Himalayas.**
- **Extensions:** The range **runs in a northwest-southeast direction and extends eastward into the Nyenchen Tanglha Mountains.**
- **Other Name:** The mountains are also **known as Gangdise Shan and the Kailas Range.**
 - It is also called **“Transhimalaya”** because it **lies behind the Himalayas, separated by the Tsangpo valley.**
- **Key Features:**
 - **Peaks:** Its **highest peak is Mt. Loinbo Kangri (7,095 m), while Mt. Kailash (6,656 m) is its main peak.**
 - **Watershed:** It forms a **watershed between the inland water system and the Indian Ocean water system.**
 - **Relief:** The **southern side has steep slopes, while the northern side gradually becomes more level.**
 - **Geological Age:** The range has **experienced volcanic activity for about 100 million years, making the Gangdise Shan geologically older than the Himalayan Range.**
 - **Volcanic Features:** Although there are **no active volcanoes today, the range still has several hot springs and geysers.**

Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojana (TBSY) and Nanha Sa Dil

News: The Ministry of Coal, along with Coal India Limited (CIL) celebrated key milestones under its flagship Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives namely Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojana (TBSY) and Nanha Sa Dil.

About Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojana (TBSY)

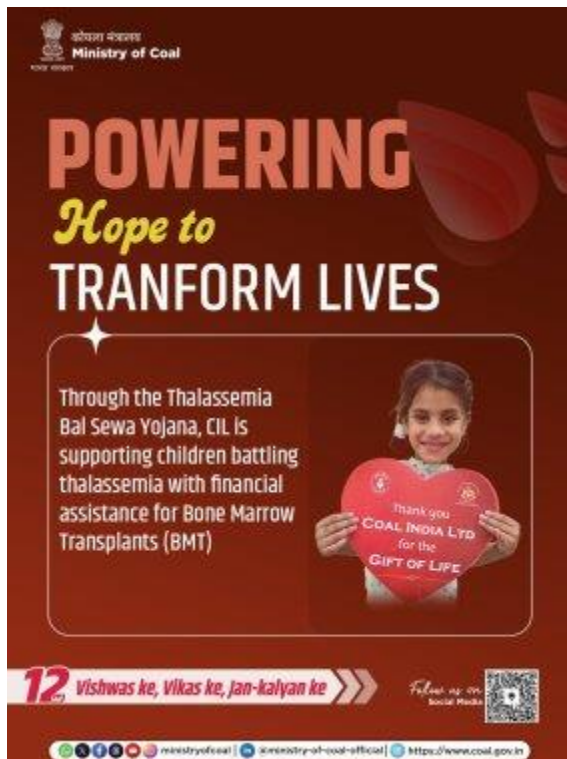
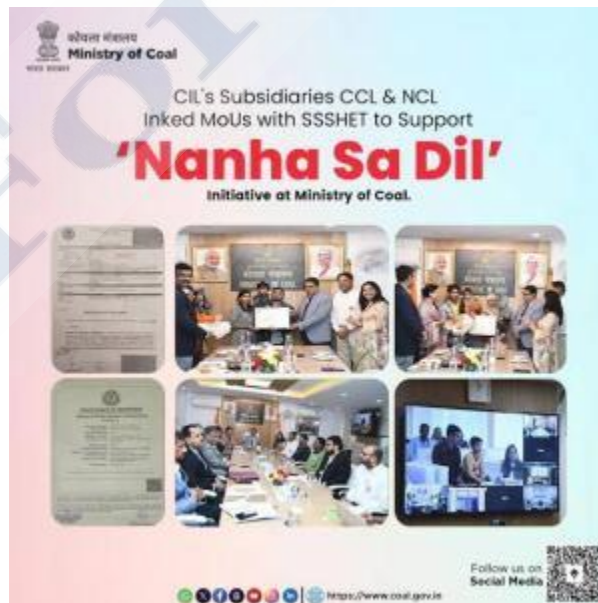


Figure 10. Source: Ministry of Coal

total outlay of **Rs. 130 crore** across four phases.

- **Eligibility:** It supports families with an annual income below 8 lakh rupees.

About Nanha Sa Dil



Source: Ministry of Coal

- **Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojana (TBSY)** is a flagship corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative Coal India Limited (CIL) to address the treatment needs of children suffering from **Thalassemia and Aplastic Anaemia** — rare genetic blood disorders.
 - CIL is the first PSU to take up such a CSR project in 2017, for curative treatment of **Thalassemia**.
- **Launch Year:** It was launched in **2017**.
- **Funded by:** The scheme is a Coal India CSR funded **Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation(HSCT)** program.
- **Nodal ministry:** It is implemented in coordination with **Thalassemics India**, with monitoring guidance from the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- **Aim:** It aims to provide a **one-time cure opportunity to underprivileged Thalassemia patients** who have a matched sibling donor but do not have the financial resources to cover the cost of the procedure.
- **Financial assistance:** Under the scheme, up to **Rs. 10 lakh per patient** is extended directly to empanelled hospitals for **Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT)**, against a

- **Nanha Sa Dil** is a **CSR initiative** to provides completely **free corrective heart surgeries** for **children with congenital heart defects**.
- **Launched by:** It was **launched by CIL** in partnership **with the Sri Sathya Sai Health and Education Trust**.
 - It has scaled up through **CIL subsidiaries** like **NCL, SECL, CCL, and WCL**.
- The program was **designed to support children through the entire journey of care**, from awareness and screening to diagnosis, surgery and follow-up.
- **Coverage:** Over **2 lakh children** have been screened using **modern diagnostic tools**, and more than **1,500 corrective surgeries** have been completed, **entirely free of cost to patient families**, including travel and hospitalisation expenses.

About Thalassemia

- **Thalassemia** is a **chronic and genetic blood disorder** due to which a patient's body cannot make enough hemoglobin leading to anemia.
 - This **disease is passed from parents to children** through genes and people suffering from it require blood transfusions to survive.

About Hematopoietic stem-cell transplantation (HSCT)

- **Hematopoietic stem-cell transplantation(HSCT):** It is the **transplantation of multipotent hematopoietic stem cells** usually derived from **bone marrow, peripheral blood, or umbilical cord blood**.
 - It may be **autologous (the patient's own stem cells are used)**, **allogeneic** (the stem cells come from a donor) or **syngeneic** (from an identical twin).
 - It is most often **performed for patients with certain cancers of the blood, thalassemia or bone marrow** such as multiple myeloma or leukemia.

Orangutans

News: Recently, five baby orangutans have been found in a forest in Odisha.

About Orangutans

- The orangutan is **Asia's only great ape**.
- The name **orangutan** means "**man of the forest**" in the Malay language.
- **Habitat:** They live exclusively in the **tropical rainforests of Southeast Asian islands**.
- **Distribution:** They are only **found exclusively on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra**.
- **Species:** There are **three** orangutan species:
 - Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*)
 - Sumatran orangutan(*Pongo abelii*)
 - [Tapanuli orangutan](#) (*Pongo tapanuliensis*)

Different Species of Orangutan

- **Bornean orangutan:** They are found **across Borneo**. They are the most numerous of the three species but are on decline.
- **Sumatran orangutan:** They are restricted to **northern Sumatra**. They are among the rarest great apes on the planet.
- **Tapanuli orangutan:** They are found on the **island of Sumatra in Indonesia**. They are **identified only in 2017**. Fewer than 800 individuals remain in forest patch.

Bornean orangutan	Sumatran orangutan	Tapanuli orangutan
Found across Borneo; the most numerous of the three species, still in steep decline	Restricted to northern Sumatra; among the rarest great apes on the planet	Identified only in 2017; fewer than 800 individuals remain in one forest patch

Source – IE

Characteristics:

- They are **larger than chimpanzees but are not as powerfully built as gorillas**.
 - Adult male orangutans are **typically twice the size of females**.
- **Distinguish feature:** Their skin is usually **dark tan or brownish** and is covered with coarse, sparse reddish-brown hair.
 - Older males develop **wide cheek pads**, which are a distinctive feature among primates.
 - Male orangutans can have very long hair that may look like a **cape when they move their arms**.
- **Behaviour:**
 - They are **arboreal** and are **largest tree-dwelling mammal** species on Earth.
 - They are **highly intelligent species** and are **known for tool use, problem-solving, and complex social learning**.
 - They **make nests in trees or vegetation** to sleep at night and rest during the day.
 - They live an **average of up to 40 years** in the wild while they can reach up to over 50 to 55 years in captivity.
- **Diet:** They feast on **wild fruits like lychees, mangosteens, and figs, and slurp water** from holes in trees.

Threat: **Habitat loss, poaching, and illegal trafficking** have been threat to the species.

Conservation status: All three species classified as **Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List**.



Source – IE

e-FAST India and ZET Marketplace

News: e-FAST India launched the Platform for Aggregating Clean Transport (PACT) to accelerate zero-emission freight in India at the 5th e-FAST India Summit 2026 in New Delhi.

About e-FAST India



Figure 11. Source: e-fast india

- **Focus Areas:**
 - **Technology and Innovation:** It track the latest developments in freight electric technologies and private sector innovation.
 - **Market Acceleration:** Develop strategies to address barriers to adoption, incentivize manufacturing and avenues for experimentation and deployment.
 - **Public Policy Support:** It support decision makers by identifying suitable incentive structures, public investment and resources to stimulate demand and industry innovation.

About ZET Marketplace

- **e-FAST India** stands for **Electric Freight Accelerator for Sustainable Transport – India**.
- **Initiative by:** It is an initiative of **NITI Aayog**.
- It is an initiative **focused on advancing the electrification of medium- and heavy-duty freight** through collaboration among stakeholders.
 - It includes **OEMs, logistics service providers, financiers, shippers and charge point operators**.
- It is the **country's first platform to facilitate collaboration** between government stakeholders and private sector partners .

- ZET Marketplace is an interactive business-engagement platform connecting e-truck manufacturers, LSPs, CPOs, financiers, and technology companies.
- It acts as a unified ecosystem to support the purchasing, leasing, and commercial deployment of electric heavy-duty trucks.
- **Aim:** It aims to tackle high upfront capital costs and fragmented logistics infrastructure.
- The Marketplace enabled participants to showcase products, explore commercial opportunities and develop partnerships needed to move zero-emission freight projects from intent to implementation.

About Platform for Aggregating Clean Transport (PACT)

- **Platform for Aggregating Clean Transport (PACT)** is a flagship initiative under the **e-FAST India (Electric Freight Accelerator for Sustainable Transport – India)** platform.
- **Aim:** It aims to improve demand visibility, support charging infrastructure planning and strengthen the commercial case for electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (e-MHDVs).
- It brings together shippers, LSPs, vehicle manufacturers, financiers, charge point operators (CPOs) and other ecosystem partners at one platform.
- It is designed to aggregate freight demand from shippers, Logistics Service Providers (LSPs) and other ecosystem stakeholders and translate it into deployment opportunities across identified freight corridors.

Exercise Veer Guardian-2026

News: The Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Japan Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) will conduct the bilateral air exercise Veer Guardian-2026.

About Exercise Veer Guardian-2026



Figure 12. Source: PIB

- **Exercise Veer Guardian-2026** is a bilateral exercise conducted between India and Japan.
- **2026 Host:** It would be conducted from 9 September 2026 to 22 September 2026 at Air Force Station, Jodhpur.
- **Edition:** This is the second edition of this exercise.
 - **First edition:** The first edition of Exercise Veer Guardian was held in Japan in 2023.
- **Aim:** It aimed at strengthening operational coordination and sharing professional expertise.
- **Forces Involved:** Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Japan Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) will be participating in the exercise.
- **India's Participation:** The IAF will deploy a diverse fleet comprising the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Su-30 MKI and Rafale fighter aircraft.
- **Japan Participation:** The JASDF will participate with its F-2A fighter aircraft.
- **Focus:** It focuses heavily on strengthening interoperability, sharpening tactical combat skills, and fostering operational synergy between the two air forces.
 - Participating air warriors will engage in complex operational scenarios, including advanced air-combat manoeuvring.

- The comprehensive programme also features mission-planning conferences, engineering exchanges, and focused discussions on aerospace safety.
- **Significance:** These efforts will help promote a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific region.

Ocean Research Vessel (ORV) Sagar Manthan

News: India's advanced Ocean Research Vessel (ORV) Sagar Manthan was launched at Kolkata, marking progress in indigenous oceanographic research capabilities.

About Ocean Research Vessel (ORV) Sagar Manthan



Source – Indian Express

- **Ocean Research Vessel (ORV) Sagar Manthan** is an all-weather, multidisciplinary ocean research vessel.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It has been developed under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- **User Agency:** The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) will use the vessel.
- **Builder:** The vessel is designed, engineered and constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata.
- **Mission Link:** It has been constructed under Vertical-4 (Deep Ocean Survey and Exploration) of the Deep Ocean Mission (DOM).
- **Replacement:** It will gradually replace the 43-year-old ORV Sagar Kanya, procured from Germany in 1983.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Advanced Equipment:** It has dynamic positioning, multibeam bathymetry, seismic systems, sub-bottom profiling.
 - It also has deployment facilities for Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) and Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs).
 - **Research Capabilities:** It will support mineral exploration, environmental baseline studies, atmospheric observations and Conductivity, Temperature and Depth (CTD) profiling.
- **Extreme Operations:** It is designed to operate in extreme oceanic environments, including the Southern Ocean.
- **Service Life:** The vessel has a projected service life of 30 years.

- **Project Cost:** The vessel has been constructed at an approximate **cost of ₹840 crore** and is **scheduled for commissioning in 2028**.

Global Dryland Congress 2026

News: The Global Dryland Congress 2026 will be held in New Delhi from September 10 to 12, bringing together over 800 participants.

About Global Dryland Congress 2026



Figure 13. Source – PIB

- **Global Dryland Congress 2026** is a **three-day global event** promoting **sustainable and climate-resilient dryland agriculture**.
- **Theme:** “Transforming Dryland Agriculture with South-South Cooperation”
- **Held at:** It will be held at the **National Agricultural Science Complex in New Delhi**.
- **Organisers:** It is **jointly organised** by the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** and the **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)**.
- **Participants:** More than **800 scientists, policymakers, farmer representatives** and development partners from **Asia, Africa and the Americas** will participate.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Six Key Themes:** It will focus on **breeding, climate resilience, nutrition and markets, farming systems, seed systems, and gender and youth inclusion**.
 - **Knowledge Exchange:** It will provide a **platform to exchange knowledge and explore solutions** through **panel discussions, keynote presentations, parallel sessions and poster exhibitions**.
 - **South-South Cooperation:** It will commemorate the **United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation** and hold sessions on **South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)** in agricultural research.
 - **Expected Outcomes:** Its proceedings are expected to culminate in the **Delhi Declaration on Dryland (3D)**, along with new partnerships, MOUs and awards.
 - **50-Year Partnership:** It will mark **50 years of the ICAR-ICRISAT partnership**.

Red-naped Ibises

News: A new study in Udaipur found diverse bacteria, including multidrug-resistant strains, in red-naped ibis faeces.

About Red-naped Ibises



Figure 14. Source – eBird

- **Red-naped Ibis' scientific name** is *Pseudibis papillosa*.
- It is **commonly** known as the **Indian Black Ibis**.
- **Habitat:** It **prefers drier habitats**, including dry agricultural fields, fallow lands and scrub forests, **rather than depending strictly on wetlands**.
- **Distribution:** It is widely distributed **across the plains of the Indian subcontinent**.
 - It is **common** in **Rajasthan** along the **Aravalli mountains**.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Appearance:** It has a **dark body** with a **bluish-green sheen** and a **white patch near the shoulder**.
- **Red nape:** It has **bright red warts on the crown and nape**, which give it its name.
- **Bill:** It has a **long, downcurved bill**.
- **Diet:** It is an **opportunistic omnivore** that feeds on **carrion, insects, frogs, small vertebrates and grain**.
- **Behaviour:** It is **usually found singly or in loose groups**.
- **Activity:** It is **largely diurnal** and **roosts communally on trees or islands at night**.
- **Threats:** It may **feed at garbage disposal sites**, which can expose it to **antibiotic-resistant bacteria**.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** **Least Concern**
 - **Wild Life Protection Act:** **Schedule-II**

7th Global Fintech Fest 2026

News: The 7th edition of GFF is being held in Mumbai from 8 to 11 September 2026.

About 7th Global Fintech Fest 2026



Figure 15. Source: PIB

- The **7th Global Fintech Fest 2026** is the **world's largest fintech festival**, **uniting the brightest minds** to **shape an AI-powered future**.
- It serves as a **global platform** for **advancing policy dialogue**, **showcasing innovation**, enabling **cross-border partnerships and driving collaboration** at the intersection of **finance, technology and public policy**.
- **Place of event:** It is being held in **Mumbai from 8 to 11 September 2026**.
 - **1st Global Fintech Fest** took place **virtually in 2020**.
- **Organised by:** It is organised by the **Payments Council of India (PCI)**, the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, and the **Fintech Convergence Council (FCC)**.

- It is supported by **MeitY; Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance; NEST Division, MEA; NITI Aayog; RBI; SEBI; IFSCA; and PFRDA.**
- **Theme:** “Potential to Impact: Agentic AI | Tokenisation | Quantum: Trusted, Connected, Global Systems for Inclusive Finance.”
- **Foundational Technologies:** It is built upon **three foundational technologies** that are shifting the landscape of global finance toward **autonomous, programmable, and secure ecosystems.**
 - **Agentic AI:** It enables financial systems to **sense, decide, and act in real time within strong governance frameworks.**
 - **Tokenisation:** It **transforms assets into programmable digital units**, enabling fractional ownership, instant settlement, and interoperable money.
 - **Quantum:** Quantum technologies **introduce a foundational shift** in computation and security.

Boma-Badingilo Migratory Landscape

News: Boma-Badingilo Migratory Landscape spans nearly 30 Million acres and protects a migration of around six million Antelopes.

About Boma-Badingilo Migratory Landscape



Figure 16. Source: Africa Geographic

- The **Boma-Badingilo Migratory Landscape** is located in **South Sudan.**
 - It is located at the **interface between the Sudd wetland system and the East Sudanian Savanna.**
- It is known for **supporting one of the world's largest terrestrial mammal migrations.**
- It comprises **Boma National Park, Badingilo National Park, and the surrounding floodplain and savanna landscapes** in South Sudan.
- **Vegetation:** It encompasses an **extensive mosaic of seasonally flooded grasslands, wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, and savannas** shaped by seasonal rainfall and flood dynamics.
- **Fauna:** These connected ecosystems **support one of the world's largest remaining land-mammal migrations.**
 - Around six million **White-eared Kob, Tiang, and Mongalla Gazelle** are found in this region.
 - It supports many important wildlife species, **including Nile Lechwe, African Savanna Elephant, African Wild Dog, Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, and Beisa Oryx.**
 - It is also an important habitat for **many bird species**, including **shoebills, storks, African Openbills, Abdim's Storks, and Woodland Kingfishers.**
- It is also home to diverse communities, **including the Murle, Dinka, Nuer, Anyuak, and Toposa.**
- It was inscribed on the **UNESCO World Heritage List** as South Sudan's first World Heritage Site in **July 2026.**

Article 371(K)

News: The Centre has proposed Article 371(K) to provide Ladakh with constitutional safeguards and a directly elected governing body.

About Article 371(K)



Source – Bharat Update News

- **Article 371(K)** is a **proposed constitutional provision** for Ladakh.
- It is **intended** to provide a **directly elected Union Territory-level legislative body** along with **special safeguards**.
- **Proposed by:** The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** proposed this framework during talks with Ladakh representatives, including the **Leh Apex Body** and **Kargil Democratic Alliance**.
- **Origin:**
 - **2019 Reorganisation:** Ladakh became a separate Union Territory without a legislative assembly after the **reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019**.
 - **Demand for Safeguards:** Concerns over land, employment, demography, cultural identity and limited Hill Council powers led to **demands for stronger constitutional protection**.
- **Key Features of the Proposal:**
 - **Directly Elected Body:** Ladakh would have a **directly elected governing body at the Union Territory level**.
 - **Legislative Powers:** The body would have **powers over land, culture and language, forests, environment and natural resources**.
 - **Separate Arrangement:** Article 371(K) would create a **separate constitutional arrangement for Ladakh, rather than simply extending the Sixth Schedule**.
 - **Unresolved Powers:** The **Executive, financial, planning, police and law-and-order powers** have **not yet been decided**.
 - There is **no detailed draft** specifying the powers of the proposed body, and **further talks are expected in October**.
- **Difference Between Article 371(K) and Sixth Schedule:** The Sixth Schedule creates **Autonomous District Councils within States (Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura)**.
 - In contrast, **Article 371(K) proposes a directly elected governing body for Ladakh, a Union Territory**, creating a distinct constitutional arrangement.

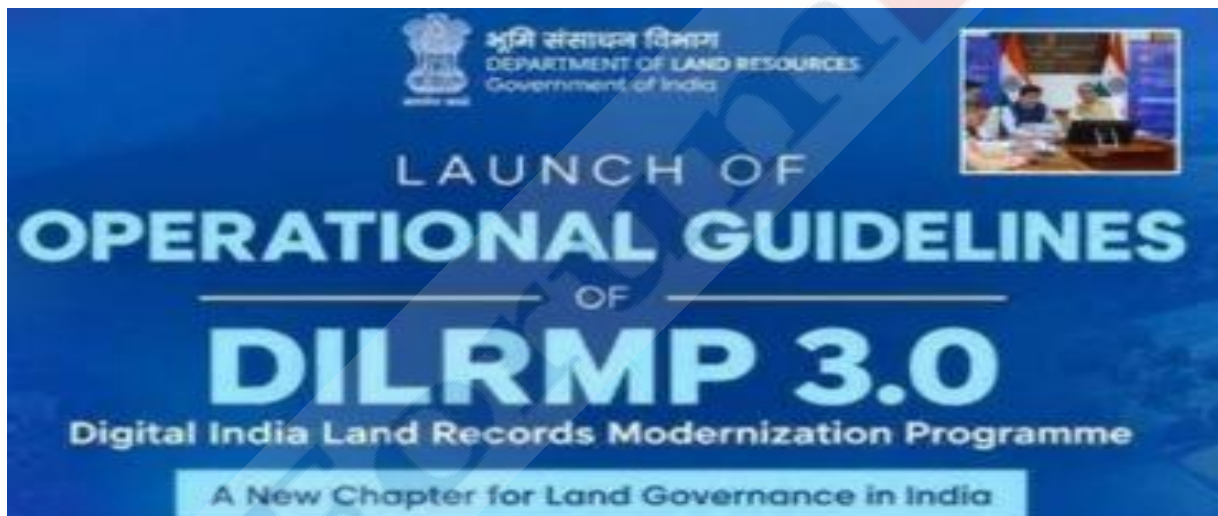
About Article 371

- **Special Provisions:** Articles 371 to 371-J provide special constitutional arrangements for 12 States.
- **Original provision:** Article 371 was part of the original Constitution and provided special arrangements for certain regions.
- **Later additions:** Articles 371-A to 371-J were added later through constitutional amendments under.
- **States Covered:** The 12 States are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Sikkim, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Karnataka.
- **Different Safeguards:** These provisions vary from state to state and provide safeguards relating to local political, cultural, social or economic interests.

Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) 3.0

News: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the Operational Guidelines for DILRMP 3.0 (2026–2031) in New Delhi.

About Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) 3.0



Source – NTV

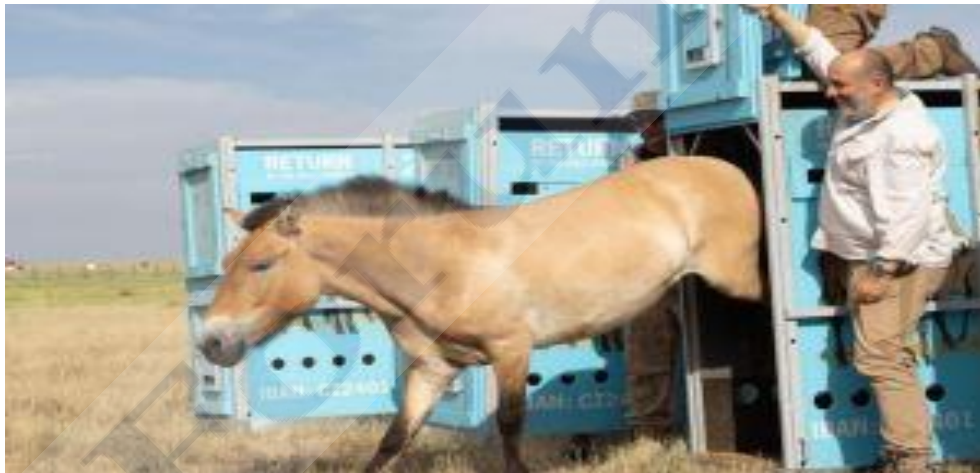
- **DILRMP 3.0** is a **five-year programme** to build an integrated, GIS-enabled “Land Stack” for land administration.
- **Evolution:** In 2008, Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA&ULR) were merged into the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NILRMP).
 - In 2016, NILRMP was revamped as DILRMP, which has now been expanded as DILRMP 3.0 (2026–2031).
- **Type of Scheme:** It is a Central Sector Scheme.
- **Funding:** It has 100% central funding with an anticipated financial outlay of ₹565.50 crore.
- **Implemented by:** The Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development, will implement the programme across all States and Union Territories.

- **Monitored by:** Real-time progress will be monitored through the upgraded DILRMP-MIS dashboard.
- **Aim:** It aims to make land governance transparent, accessible and citizen-friendly by integrating land records, maps, property registration and court cases.
- **Key Features**
 - **Universal Bhu-Aadhaar (ULPIN):** It will assign a 14-digit unique identification number to every land parcel, ensuring a secure and unmistakable identity for each property.
 - **Digitisation and Georeferencing of Maps:** It will completely digitise cadastral maps and embed them with exact geographical coordinates.
 - **Paperless Property Registration:** It will introduce end-to-end online and paperless property registration along with a new Registration Repository.
 - **Integrated Revenue Courts:** It will introduce a paperless Revenue Court Case Management System (RCCMS) integrated with land records to track disputes and reduce the time and cost of legal battles.

Przewalski's Horse

News: Two Przewalski's horse foals were born in central Kazakhstan, the first in the country in over 200 years.

About Przewalski's Horse



Source – BBC

- **Przewalski's horse is subspecies of wild horse.**
 - It is the **only living wild relative of the domestic horse.**
- **Scientific name:** Its scientific name is **E. ferus przewalskii**.
 - It is locally known as **kertagy**.
- **Distribution:** It once lived across the grasslands of **Kazakhstan, Russia, Mongolia, and northern China.**
 - It was once considered **extinct in the wild** but **survived** through **captive-breeding** programs.
 - It was **reintroduced** into **Kazakhstan in 2024** after a 200-year absence through the **"Return of the Wild Horses" programme.**
- **Characteristics:**

- **Appearance:** They have **tan to reddish brown fur** with **white** on the belly, **dark brown** on the **lower legs** and a **white muzzle**.
- There are markings in **its body** which are of **yellowish-white belly**, **dark lower legs**, and zebra-like stripes behind the knees.
 - It has a **stiff, dark brown mane**.
 - It has a **stocky build with short legs**.
 - Their **large eyes are on the sides of their head**, giving them a wide view to spot predators while grazing or drinking.
 - They grow a **thick coat in winter** to stay warm and **shed it in summer** to keep cool.
 - It can **withstand harsh winters with temperatures dropping below minus 30 degrees Celsius**.
 - Their **tan color helps them blend into the grasslands and deserts** where they live.
 - **Weight:** They weigh **247-383 kg**.
 - **Height:** It stand **48-58 inches (120-146 cm)** tall at the shoulder.
- **Diet:** In the wild, it feed mainly on **grass and leaves from shrubs and trees**.
- **Behaviour:** It is a **very social animal forming herds** consisting of **one stallion and four to 10 mares with their offspring**.
 - The stallion is **responsible for the herd's protection and coordinates daily movements of the group**.
 - Herds don't mix **but share territory**.
 - They **digest food through hindgut fermentation**, allowing them to survive on large amounts of low-quality vegetation and water.
- **Ecological Importance:** They **graze on dry vegetation to reduce wildfire risk**, their **hooves disturb the soil letting new plants take root**, and **they disperse seeds across the landscape as they roam**.
- **Conservation status:** It was listed as **extinct-in-the-wild** until one adult was found in **1996**, after which it was **re-listed as critically endangered**.
 - Since 2011, it has been **classified as endangered by the IUCN**.

Historic City of Barakuru

News: A rare Sidithale Veeragallu hero stone, depicting self-sacrifice, was recently discovered near the Panchalingeshwara Temple in Barkur.

About Historic City of Barakuru



Source – Academia edu

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- **Location:** Barakuru is located in **Udupi district, Karnataka**.
 - It lies on the banks of the **Sita River**, about **5 km east of the Arabian Sea coast**.
- **Ancient names:** The town was **known as Varakula, Barakanur, and Barahkanyapura**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Ancient Port:** Barakuru was a **busy commercial centre** from around the **2nd century B.C.**
 - It traded with foreign nations across the **Arabian Sea**.
 - **Alupa Capital:** The **Alupa rulers made it their capital during the 10th–11th centuries A.D.**, turning it into a **political centre**.
 - **Later Rule:** It later **became the provincial headquarters of the Hoysalas and Vijayanagara Empire**.
 - **Temple Heritage:** It once had **365 temples**, while the **Panchalingeshwara Temple** remains its **most famous temple**.
 - **Cultural Heritage:** It was a **Jain settlement in ancient times**.
 - It became an **important centre of Tuluva culture under the Alupa rulers**.
 - **Organized Settlement:** It was **divided into ten extensions called Keris**, which were named after the **professional residents** living in them.
 - Each Keri had its **own water tank and several temples**, reflecting the **organized settlement pattern of the city**.

Recent Findings

- **Hero Stone:** A **Sidithale Veeragallu**, dating to the **late 13th or early 14th century**, was found **near Panchalingeshwara Temple**.
- **Depiction:** The stone has **three panels** showing the **warrior's self-sacrifice, his journey towards heaven, and a Shivalinga with Shiva being worshipped**.
- **Similar Stones:** Similar carvings and inscriptions referring to **Sidithale Veeragallu** have been found in other parts of **Karnataka**, but **this appears to be the first such stone discovered in coastal Karnataka**.
- **Preservation:** The stone has been **brought into the Panchalingeshwara Temple premises**, where it is preserved.

Bail Pola Festival

News: Bail Pola is observed by farmers to honour bulls and oxen for their vital contribution to agriculture and rural livelihoods.

About Bail Pola Festival



Source – Incredible India

- **Bail Pola Festival** is a traditional festival that **celebrates the bond between farmers and their bulls** and **expresses gratitude for their agricultural service**.
 - It is also known as **Pola Amavasya, Kushopatini Amavasya and Pithori Amavasya**.
- **Region:** It is **predominantly celebrated in Maharashtra**.
 - It is also observed in **Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Telangana**.
- **Timing:** It is celebrated **on the Amavasya of the Shravan month, generally during the August–September period**.
- **Key Features of Bail Pola Festival**
 - **Agricultural Significance:** The festival **recognizes the vital role of bulls and oxen** in ploughing fields, preparing land and supporting farmers' livelihoods.
 - **Rituals and Worship:** Farmers wash the cattle, give them oil massages, decorate them with flowers, ribbons and **bells**, and perform their **puja and aarti**.
 - **Hindu faith:** The festival is linked with the belief that **young Lord Krishna killed the demon Polasur on this day**.
 - Another tradition **connects it with Lord Shiva and his bull Nandi**.

South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN)

News: South Asian countries adopted the Kathmandu Declaration to strengthen coordinated action against illegal wildlife trade and related organised crime.

About South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN)



Figure 17. Source – SAWEN

cooperation.

- **Key Functions**
 - **Policy Harmonisation:** It promotes **harmonisation and standardisation** of laws and policies **concerning fauna and flora conservation**.
 - **Information Sharing:** It promotes **research, intelligence and information sharing, training, technical support and exchange of experiences**.
 - **National Action Plans:** It **encourages** member countries to **prepare and implement National Action Plans to curb wildlife crime**.

Kathmandu Declaration under SAWEN

- **SAWEN** is a **regional inter-governmental wildlife law enforcement support body of South Asian countries**.
- **Origin:** It was formally **launched in January 2011 at Paro, Bhutan**.
- **Members:** It comprises **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka**.
- **Secretariat:** Its Secretariat was **formally established in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 2011**.
- **Aim:** It promotes **regional cooperation to combat wildlife crime through communication, coordination, collaboration, capacity building and**

- **Adoption:** It was adopted in September 2026 at the first General Assembly of SAWEN held in Kathmandu.
- **Coordinated Action:** Member countries agreed to strengthen coordinated action against illegal wildlife trade and related transnational organised crime.
- **Financial Measures:** They agreed on financial investigations, anti-money laundering measures, asset recovery and effective prosecution.
- **Transnational Crime:** They supported efforts to recognise serious wildlife crime as a form of transnational organised crime.

Bab el-Mandeb Strait

News: The Houthis have captured Mokha port and Perim Island in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, raising concerns over this vital shipping route.

About Bab el-Mandeb Strait



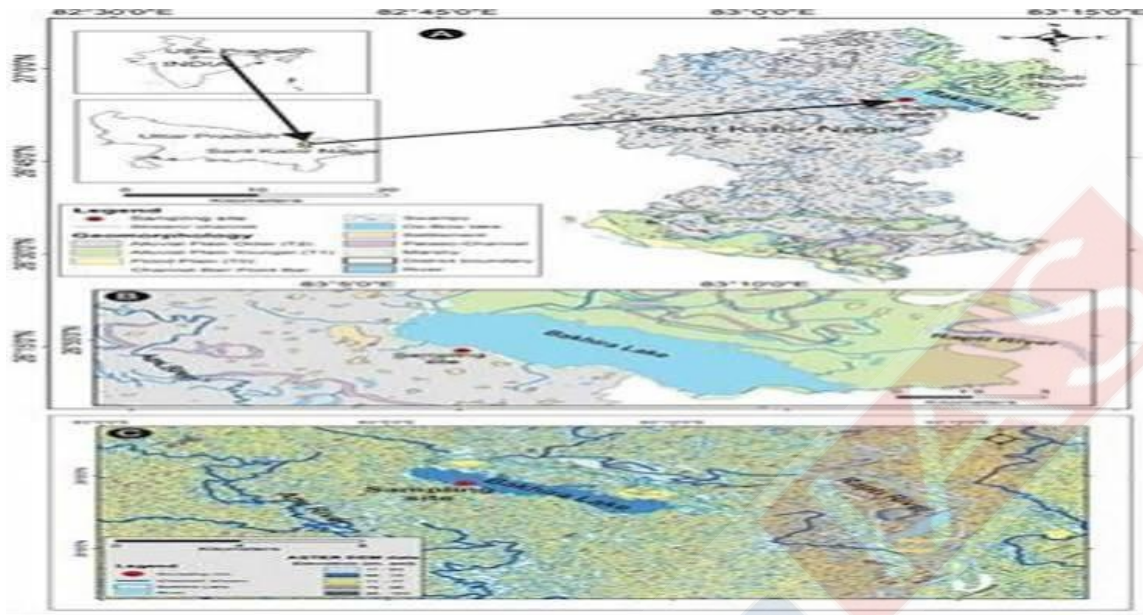
Figure 18. Source – BBC

- **Location:**
 - Bab el-Mandeb Strait lies at the southern tip of the Red Sea, between Yemen and the Horn of Africa.
 - It lies between the Arabian Peninsula and the African continent.
- **Connectivity:** It connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean through the Red Sea and Suez Canal.
- **Channels Structure**
 - The strait is about 30 km wide.
 - It is divided into two channels by Perim Island.
 - The eastern channel is called Alexander's Strait, while the western channel is the Dact-el-Mayun Channel.
- **Key Features of Bab el-Mandeb Strait:**
 - **Known as:** It is also known as the "Gate of Tears", referring to the large number of shipwrecks that have occurred in this region.
 - **Global trade route:** It is a crucial link in the trade route connecting the Mediterranean to Asia.
 - **Alternative to Hormuz:** It provides an alternative route for Gulf oil exports when the Strait of Hormuz is disrupted.
 - **Indian trade:** Indian exports and imports, including petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, textiles, machinery and engineering products, depend heavily on the Suez route.
- **Current Crisis:** The Iran-backed Houthis have captured Mokha port and Perim Island, strengthening their position around the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Bakhira Lake

News: A new study of magnetic minerals in Bakhira Lake sediments over 25,000 years reveals how past climate changes affected rainfall, weathering, sediment transport, and lake processes in northern India.

About Bakhira Lake



Source: DD News

- **Location:** Bakhira Lake is located at **Sant Kabir Nagar** district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.
 - It forms part of the **Ghaghara-Rapti alluvial system**.
- It is **one of the largest wetlands in Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Formation:** It is a **perennial oxbow/floodplain wetland** formed through **the migration and subsequent cut-off of the Rapti River**.
- Its **floodplain-lacustrine setting** favours the **accumulation and preservation of sediments derived from both the lake and surrounding catchment**.
- **Area:** It is spread over **29 km²**.
- **Bird sanctuary:** It was declared as a **bird sanctuary in 1990**.
- **Ramsar site:** It was **designated as a Ramsar Site in 2022**.
- **Fauna:** In winter (November–January), **birds from Tibet, China, Europe, and Siberia travel up to 5,000 km to the lake**.
 - It also **supports over 30 fish species, mainly Labeo rohita and Chana sp.**
- **Significance:** It supports **migratory and resident birds, fishing, farming, and local livelihoods**.

Program Electronic Review Management (PERM)

News: The U.S.A Department of Labor has suspended IT services giant Cognizant's filings under Program Electronic Review Management (PERM) as authorities investigate alleged fraud and misuse of employment-based immigration programmes.

About Program Electronic Review Management (PERM)



Source: TOI

- **Program Electronic Review Management (PERM)** is the system through which **employers generally obtain labour certification before sponsoring** a foreign employee for an employment-based Green Card.
 - PERM filing is **done by the employer on behalf of the worker.**
- **Administered by:** It is administered by the **U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)** for processing permanent labor-certification applications.
- **Intent of the process:** The process is intended **to establish that hiring a foreign worker permanently** will not adversely affect the job opportunities, wages or working conditions of U.S.A workers.
- **How does it work:**
 - Before filing, **an employer must obtain a prevailing wage determination** for the position and carry out prescribed recruitment.
 - Once the Labour Department certifies the application, the **employer can proceed to the next stage of the Green Card process.**
 - **The date on which the Labour Department accepts the labour certification** application also generally **becomes the worker's "priority date"**, which is effectively their place in the queue for an employment-based immigrant visa.
 - This is **particularly important for workers from countries such as India**, where **demand for Green Cards far exceeds the number available.**

Difference Between H-1B and PERM

- An H-1B visa is a **temporary, non-immigrant work visa** that allows U.S.A employers to employ foreign professionals in specialised occupations.
 - **PERM is part of the process** used by **employers to sponsor foreign workers** for permanent residency or a Green Card.
- The **H-1B and PERM processes can operate at the same time.**
- **Example:** An Indian engineer may work for Cognizant in the U.S.A on an H-1B visa while Cognizant separately files a PERM application to sponsor that employee for a Green Card.
- **Note:** The **suspension of PERM filings does not automatically cancel** an employee's existing H-1B status or an already-issued Green Card.

Cultivation of Moth Bean in India

News: ICAR-CAZRI's four new moth bean varieties showed strong resilience during the prolonged moisture stress in Kharif 2026.

About Cultivation of Moth Bean in India

Moth Bean Farming



Figure 19. Source – Agri Farming

- **Moth bean (*Vigna aconitifolia*)** is a drought-resistant, short-duration kharif pulse.
- **Known as:** It is commonly known as **mat bean**, **Turkish gram** and **dew bean**.
- **Distribution:** It is cultivated most **extensively in the Thar Desert region of western Rajasthan**, as well as parts of **Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab**.
- **Agro-Climatic Requirements**
 - **Climate:** It grows well in **arid and semi-arid regions** and can **withstand high temperatures** without adversely affecting flowering or fruit development.
 - **Temperature:** Its optimum growth and development occur at 25–37°C.
- **Rainfall:** It requires **around 250–500 mm of rainfall**.
- **Soil:** It prefers **well-drained sandy-loam soils** but can **also grow on poor, light-textured soils with low organic matter, including sand dunes**.
- **Sowing period:** Timely sowing is carried out with the onset of the **monsoon in July**.
- **Key Features**
 - **Drought and Heat Tolerance:** It can withstand **prolonged moisture stress** and **maintain growth under rainfed conditions**.
 - **Developmental Plasticity:** It is the ability of a plant to **adjust its growth and maturity according to environmental conditions**.
 - In moth bean, it **flowers at around 30 days after sowing and adjusts its growth and maturity according to available soil moisture**, helping it adapt to changing rainfall conditions.
 - **Soil Conservation:** Its prostrate, spreading canopy helps bind sandy soil and **retain moisture in the rhizosphere**.

Recent Development

- **New Varieties:** ICAR-CAZRI (Indian Council of Agricultural Research–Central Arid Zone Research Institute) has released four varieties –
 - **CAZRI Moth-4, CAZRI Moth-5, CAZRI Moth-6 and CAZRI Moth-7** – in the last three years.
- **Moisture-Stress Resilience:** During Kharif 2026, these varieties maintained good growth, green appearance and profuse pod development despite a prolonged moisture-stress period of around 35 days.
- **Seed Multiplication:** The seed is **being multiplied by the Rajasthan State Seeds Corporation, National Seeds Corporation and selected private players**.

OPU-IVF Calf Born in Badri Cattle

News: A healthy Badri female calf was born through OPU-IVF after a Badri embryo was transferred into a Sahiwal recipient cow.

About OPU-IVF Calf Born in Badri Cattle



Source – IE

- A healthy **Badri female calf** was born through **Ovum Pick-Up and In Vitro Fertilisation (OPU-IVF) technology**.
- **Scientific Collaboration:** ICAR-NDRI, Karnal, and GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, collaborated to establish advanced reproductive technologies for the conservation and multiplication of Badri germplasm.
- **Process of OPU-IVF Technology:**
 - **Oocyte Collection:** Oocytes are female reproductive cells (egg cells) of cattle. These egg cells were collected from selected genetically valuable Badri donor cows through ultrasound-guided ovum pick-up.
 - **Fertilisation:** They were matured and fertilised in vitro using semen from a genetically superior Badri bull.
 - **Embryo culture:** Embryos were cultured under controlled laboratory conditions and transferred into synchronized recipient cows.
 - **Embryo transfer:** One Badri embryo was transferred into a Sahiwal cow, which gave birth to the calf.

About Badri Cattle

- **Naming :** The breed derived its name from Badrinath.
 - It was earlier known as the 'pahadi' cow.
- **Habitat:** It is adapted to the Himalayan environment and feeds on herbs and shrubs available in the mountains.
- **Distribution:** It is found only in the hill districts of Uttarakhand.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Physical Features:** It is small in size, has long legs and has black, brown, red, white or grey body colours.
 - **Milk Quality:** Its milk has rich medicinal content and high organic value due to its feeding on herbs and shrubs.
 - **Disease Resistance:** It is comparatively more resistant to diseases, mostly due to its eating habits.
 - **Local Adaptation:** It is adapted to hill terrain and local environmental conditions and is suitable for low-input farming systems.
- **Threats:** Indigenous cattle breeds face pressure from cross-breeding and shrinking herd sizes across India.

- **Status:** Badri is the **first certified cattle breed of Uttarakhand**.
 - It was **included as the Badri breed by the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources**.

Steel Slag Road Technology

News: India has set the Guinness World Record with World's Longest Steel Slag Road at Raigarh in Chhattisgarh.

About Steel Slag Road Technology



Figure 20. Source – CSIR

- **Steel slag is a waste by-product of the steel manufacturing process.**
- It is produced during the **separation of the molten steel from impurities in steel-making furnaces**.
- The slag occurs as a **molten liquid melt** and is a **complex solution of silicates and oxides** that **solidifies upon cooling**.
- **Use in road materials:** It **cannot automatically be used as road material in its untreated form**.
 - **Processing** converts suitable slag into **aggregates of specified sizes and engineering properties**.
 - These **aggregates** can then **replace natural stone** in appropriate road layers when supported by suitable pavement design, testing and quality control.
- **Advantages:**
 - **Steel Slag Road Technology** can **reduce road construction costs** by around **40 per cent** while delivering **four times the strength** of conventional roads.
 - **Environment friendly:** India is the world's second largest steel producer. For per ton of steel production around 200 kg Steel slag is generated as solid waste.
 - Steel slag generation in the country is about 19 Million tons per annum and expected to reach 60 million tons by 2030.
 - This huge quantity of steel slag is piled up in and around the steel plants as big mounds and becoming the source of air, water, and land pollution.
 - Hence, the use of steel slag in road construction is an environmentally friendly cost-effective method.
 - **Cheaper:** Steel slag road costs are **about 30% cheaper** than conventional making of roads.
 - **Less Maintenance cost:** Steel slag roads have been found to **last ten years as compared to three to four years** for bitumen roads, thus bringing down sharply the maintenance costs.
 - **More durable:** Steel slag roads are **more durable and resistant** to weather unpredictability.

Notable Uses of Steel Slag Road

- In 2022, Surat in Gujarat became the **first city in the country** to get a **processed steel slag (industrial waste) road**.
- The **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** has also **used steel slag** to construct a **long-lasting heavy-duty road** at Arunachal Pradesh along the **India-China border area**.
- A **1.85-km road** at Jindal Steel's Raigarh facility in Chhattisgarh has been recognised as the **world's longest road built** with processed steel-slag aggregates in 2026.
- **CSIR- Central Road Research Institute (CRRI), New Delhi** has **pioneered** the development of use of Steel slag in road construction.

Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)

News: Colombo Security Conclave Table Top Exercise concludes at Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam.

About Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)

- The **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)** is a key regional **platform** aimed at **enhancing security cooperation among Indian Ocean Region (IOR) countries**.
- **Objectives:** To **promote regional security by addressing transnational threats** that affect all member nations.
- **Permanent secretariat:** Colombo
- **Origin:** The CSC traces its roots to a **2011 trilateral maritime security grouping** comprising **India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives**.
 - It was revitalized and upgraded in **2020**, evolving into a broader security cooperation platform that reflects contemporary regional challenges.
 - **Mauritius** formally joined as a full member in **2022**, **Bangladesh** joined in 2024 and **Seychelles** currently participate as **observer countries**.
 - **Current members** include India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka.
- **Five Pillars of Cooperation:** The CSC's agenda is built around **five major pillars**, representing key security priorities in the Indian Ocean Region:
 - **Maritime Safety and Security**
 - **Countering Terrorism and Radicalisation**
 - **Combating Trafficking and Transnational Organised Crime**
 - **Cyber Security and Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Technology**
 - **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**
 - These pillars enable structured collaboration, joint exercises, knowledge sharing, and capacity-building among member states.

Brač Island and Adriatic Sea

News: A massive wildfire on Croatia's Brač Island located in Adriatic Sea, forced nearly 700 evacuations, while strong winds hampered firefighting efforts.

About Brač Island



Source: Britannica

- **Location:** It is a rugged, mountainous island in the Adriatic Sea that is part of [Croatia](#).
 - It is **positioned just across Split (distance 12 km)**, the second biggest city in Croatia, separated by mainland by the Brac channel.
- **Area:** It covers an area of about 395 sq. km, making it one of the larger islands in the Adriatic.
- **Highest Point:** Its highest point is Vidova Mountain, rising to about 780 metres, making it the highest point among the Adriatic islands.
- **Climate:** Its climate is characterized as **Medireannean climate**.
- **Economy:** **Mechanised marble quarrying** is an **important economic activity** and provides an export commodity.
- It is famous for its **white-pebble Zlatni Rat beach**, **limestone quarries**, and **excellent windsurfing conditions**.

About Adriatic Sea



Figure 21. Source: World Atlas

- The **Adriatic Sea** is defined as a **temperate semi-enclosed basin** situated in the **central Mediterranean Sea**.
 - It acts as a **geographic divider** separating the **Italian Peninsula** from the **Balkan Peninsula**.
- **Borders:** It is bordered by **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, and Slovenia**.
 - Its **southern boundary** is situated between **Albania and Italy's Salento Peninsula**.
 - The **Strait of Otranto** links it with the **Ionian Sea** to the southeast.
- It is surrounded by the **Apennines, Alps, Dinarids, and Helenids mountain ranges**.

- It is **geographically divided into three basins**, namely, the Northern Adriatic, the Middle Adriatic, and the Southern Adriatic.
- **Major rivers: Reno, Po, Adige, Brenta, Piave, Soča/Isonzo, Zrmanja, Krka, Cetina, Neretva and Drini** river flows into the sea.
- **Major seaports: Ancona, Bari, Brindisi, Dubrovnik, Rijeka, Split and Venice** located along the Adriatic Sea.

Schizopygopsis waddellii

News: Scientists recorded *Schizopygopsis waddellii* for the first time from a natural lake in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh.

About *Schizopygopsis waddellii*



Figure 22. Source – NOA

- ***Schizopygopsis waddellii*** is a rare species of high-altitude Himalayan fish.
- **Family:** It belongs to the Cyprinidae family.
- It is commonly known as the Tibetan fish or Waddell's snow trout.
- **Habitat:** It is adapted to harsh, high-altitude freshwater ecosystems across the Tibetan Plateau and the Eastern Himalayas.
- **Distribution:** It was previously known only from the Tibetan and China Plateau region, including Yamdrok Lake in Tibet.
 - It was recorded in India for the first time from Pangkang Teng Tso Lake in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Key features:**
 - **Body:** It has an elongated, cylindrical body with a dark greyish to olive upper side and lighter underside.
 - **Lateral and Caudal Features:** It has a complete lateral line and a deeply forked caudal fin.
 - **Snout structure:** It has a distinctive hard plate-like structure around the lower lip and snout.
 - **Sexual Dimorphism:** Males have small visible nuptial tubercles or spines and brighter coloration, while females lack spines and have duller coloration.
 - **High-Altitude Adaptation:** It is adapted to freezing water temperatures, low oxygen saturation, and oligotrophic high-altitude lake environments.
 - **Identification:** Its identity was confirmed through morphological examination and mitochondrial DNA analysis.
- **Threats:** The species may be vulnerable to disturbances in fragile, high-altitude freshwater ecosystems, making the conservation of these habitats important.
- **Conservation Status:**

- IUCN Red List: Least Concern (LC)

Ramanathaswamy Temple

News: At the 2026 BRICS Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping were seen before an image of the Ramanathaswamy Temple's 1,212-pillar corridor.

About Ramanathaswamy Temple



Figure 23. Source – Trade India

- **Location:** Ramanathaswamy Temple is located in Rameswaram on Pamban Island, Tamil Nadu.
- **Religious Association:** It is a historic temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
 - According to the Ramayana, Lord Rama is believed to have worshipped Lord Shiva at the site after returning from Lanka.
- **Architectural Style:** The temple is built in the Dravidian style of architecture.
- **Historical Evolution:**
 - **12th century:** The Chola kings built the first stone temple, which later developed through successive additions.
 - **Later period:** The Pandya and Vijayanagar rulers expanded the temple, while Krishna Deva Raya made significant gifts in 1513.
- **Nayaka period:** The Sethupathi kings of Ramnad became guardians of the temple and played a key role in shaping its present form.
- **17th century:** According to an 1885 report by Henry Hardy Cole, the temple in its present form was rebuilt after repeated earlier sackings.
- **Key Architectural Features:**
 - **Grand corridors:** The outer corridor has 1,212 intricately carved pillars, each about 6.9 metres high, with the corridors extending roughly 1.17 km.
 - **Visual depth:** The parallel rows of pillars create a striking effect as they appear to converge towards a distant point.
 - **Lofty gopurams:** The eastern Rajagopuram rises 126 feet across nine levels.
 - **Sacred water bodies:** The complex has 36 water bodies, including 22 sacred wells (theerthams).
 - **Intricate sculptures:** The pillars feature floral motifs and mythical creatures.
 - **Sacred sanctum:** The sanctum houses Lord Ramanathaswamy, one of the 12 sacred Jyotirlingas dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)

News: The Department of Telecommunications has helped prevent suspected cyber fraud losses of more than five thousand crore rupees through its Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI) within fifteen months of its launch.

About Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)



Source – News On Air

- It is a **multi- dimensional analytical tool** to empower financial institutions with advance actionable **intelligence for cyber fraud prevention**.
- This initiative **aims** to bolster **cyber protection by identifying mobile numbers** linked to potential financial fraud before a transaction takes place.
- **Developed by:** Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under its **Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP)**
- **Working:** The FRI is a **risk-based metric** that classifies mobile numbers into **three categories** Medium, High, and Very High based on their likelihood of involvement in financial fraud.
 - The classification draws from a comprehensive analysis using inputs from various platforms, including the **Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre's National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP)**, DoT's **Chakshu platform**, and **intelligence** shared by banks and financial institutions.
- It empowers **stakeholders**-especially **banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies, and UPI service providers** to prioritize enforcement and take **additional customer protection** measures in case a mobile number with high risk.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

News: NCPCR summoned Meta officials on September 9, 2026, over an inquiry into child sexual exploitation and abuse material on Instagram.

About National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)



Source – NCPCR

- The **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is a **statutory body** constituted to **protect, promote and defend child rights in the country**.
- **Established:** It was **constituted under Section 3** of the **Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005**.
- **Constituted By:** It is **constituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development**.
- **Target Group:** It protects the **rights of children below 18 years of age**.
 - It also focuses on children in distress, marginalized and disadvantaged children, children in conflict with law, and children without family.
- **Composition**
 - **Members:** The Commission consists of a **Chairperson and six Members**, of whom **at least two must be women**.
 - **Appointment:** The **Central Government** appoints the Chairperson.
 - The appointment is made **on the recommendation of a three-member selection committee chaired by the Minister in charge of the Ministry or Department dealing with children**.
 - **Expertise:** Members are selected for **expertise** in education, child health and development, juvenile justice, care of marginalised children or children with disabilities, elimination of child labour, child psychology or sociology, and laws relating to children.
 - **Tenure and Age Limits:** The Chairperson and Members may serve **for a maximum of two terms**.
 - The **maximum age is 65 years for the Chairperson and 60 years for Members**.
- **Core Mandate**
 - **Legal Safeguards:** It reviews **legal safeguards for children** and **recommends measures for their effective implementation**.
 - **Child Rights Violations:** It **inquires into complaints** and **takes suo motu notice** of deprivation or violation of child rights and non-implementation of protective laws.
 - **Protection and Inspection:** It **investigates violations**, **inspects institutions** where children are detained or housed, and **recommends remedial action**.
 - **Policies and Awareness:** It **studies treaties and policies**, **promotes research** and **child-rights literacy**, and **encourages consideration of children's views**.

- **Law Monitoring:** It monitors specified safeguards under the **RTE Act, 2009, POCSO Act, 2012, and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act.**
- **Child Care Institutions:** It monitors **Child Care Institutions (CCIs)** and carries out their **social audit** as directed by the Supreme Court.
- **Powers**
 - **Civil Court Powers:** **Summon persons, examine them on oath, require documents, receive evidence on affidavits and requisition public records.**
 - **Legal Action:** **Recommend prosecution or other action** against persons responsible for serious violations.
 - **Judicial and Relief Measures:** **Approach the Supreme Court or High Court and recommend interim relief** to victims or their families.

Initiatives Taken by NCPCR

- **POCSO e-Box:** An online mechanism for **reporting cases of child sexual abuse under the POCSO Act.**
- **e-BaalNidaan:** An online complaint management system for **registering and tracking complaints relating to violations of child rights.**
- **Baal Swaraj – CiSS Application:** A platform to **identify children in street situations** and facilitate their **rescue and rehabilitation.**
- **POCSO Tracking Portal:** A system for **real-time tracking of child sexual abuse cases, including rehabilitation and victim-support services.**
- **MASI App:** A **monitoring application** for seamless and real-time **inspection of Child Care Institutions.**
- **GHAR – GO:** A portal for **digitally monitoring and tracking the restoration and repatriation of children.**
- **Samvardhan:** An exercise for **vulnerability mapping to combat child trafficking.**
- **Quick Response Cell (QRC):** A mechanism for **quick intervention and rescue in situations involving children in distress.**

Guneri Inland Mangrove

News: Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister felicitated the Guneri Inland Mangrove Village Biodiversity Management Committee for its sustained efforts to conserve the Guneri inland mangroves.

About Guneri Inland Mangrove

- **Guneri Inland Mangrove** is a **natural inland mangrove** site located in **Kutch district of Gujarat.**
- It is located at a distance of **45 km from the Arabian Sea** and **4 km from the Kori Creek**, where **seawater never approaches.**
- **Uniqueness:** It is **one of only eight known inland mangrove locations in the world** and the **last of its kind in India.**
- **Recognition:** It was **declared Gujarat's first Biodiversity Heritage Site** in **January 2025.**
- **Area:** It spreads over **33 hectares** including the buffer zone.
- **Formation:** It may have **originated** either after the **Miocene-period marine transgression** or along the banks of the **lost Saraswati River** in the Great Rann of Kachchh, which is believed to have existed around **3000–4000 BC.**
 - The mangroves survive on **limestone deposits connected to the seabed**, which allow a continuous flow of groundwater.
- **Features**

- It has **inland mangrove of considerable height**.
- It is **devoid of any sludge**, and is spread over a flat piece of land like a forest.
- It is **unique as it grows inland**, away from regular seawater and muddy coastal conditions.
- Unlike typical coastal mangroves, it supports **Avicennia marina** through **underground saline water and tidal influence** from nearby Kori Creek.
 - It is also a unique example of **nature's adaptation and resilience in an arid region**.
- **Fauna:** The Guneri inland mangrove area **houses chinkara, ratel, around 20 migratory and 25 resident migratory avifaunal species**.

Kishau Multipurpose Project

News: Six states signed a Memorandum of Understanding, to pave the way for the long-pending 422 MW Kishau Multipurpose Project.

About Kishau Multipurpose Project

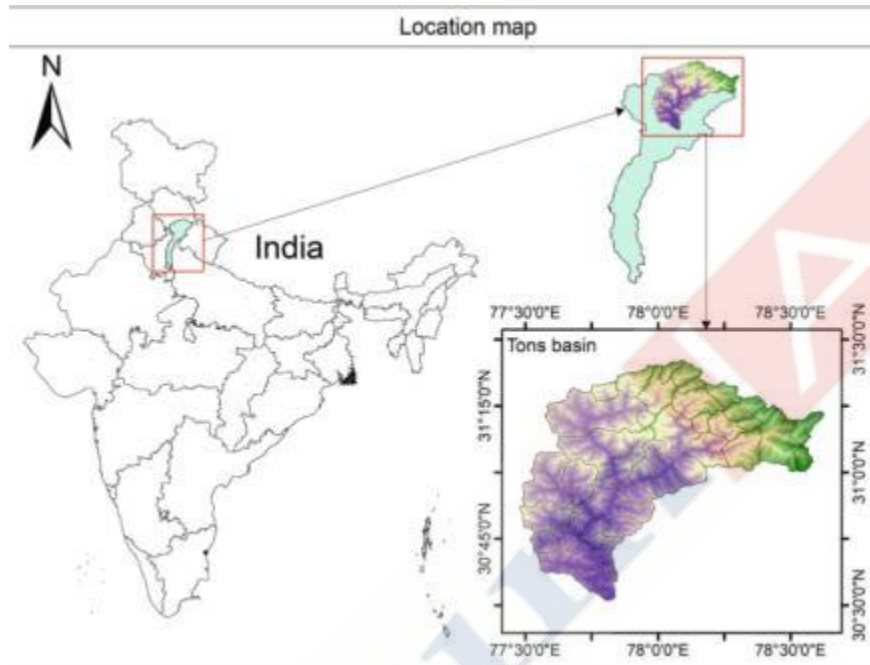


Source – Kishau Corp

- The **Kishau Multipurpose Project** is an **inter-state hydropower and water-storage project** on the **Tons River**.
- **Location:** The project site lies on the **border of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand**.
- **Aim:** The project aims to **generate hydropower, create irrigation potential, and provide drinking and industrial water** to the beneficiary states.
- **Participating States:** **Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh** are the participating states.
- **Funding Pattern:** The **Central Government will bear 90% of the water component cost**, while the **remaining 10% will be shared by the six states**.
- **Key Features**
 - **Dam:** The project envisages a **232.6-metre-high concrete gravity dam**.
 - **Power Generation:** It will have an **installed capacity of 422 MW** and is expected to **generate 1,476 million units of clean hydropower**.

- **Water Storage:** The project will have a **storage capacity of 1,786 MCM, with 1,324 MCM expected to be actually stored.**
- **Irrigation and Water Supply:** It is expected to create irrigation potential of about 97,076 hectares and provide drinking and industrial water to beneficiary states.

About Tons River



Source – ResearchGate

- **Origin:** The Tons river originates from the **Bandarpunch Mountain (6,315 m)** in Uttarakhand.
- **Natural Boundary:** The Tons forms a natural **boundary between Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh in the Jaunsar region.**
- **Course:** It flows through the **Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, touches Himachal Pradesh.**
 - It has a **length of about 200 km.**
- It is the **perennial rivers emerging from the Himalayas.**
- **Terrain:** It flows through **deep gorges, tranquil valleys and dense forests.**
- **Tributaries:** The **Pabbar and Asan rivers** are its main tributaries.
- **Confluence:** The river **joins the Yamuna near Kalsi in Dehradun district, Uttarakhand.**

Rungia mastersii

News: Rungia mastersii was rediscovered in Assam's Jatinga Hills after nearly 180 years, having not been seen anywhere during this period.

About Rungia mastersii



Source – Mongabay

- **Rungia mastersii** is a rare shrubby herb endemic to Assam.
- **Family:** It belongs to the **Acanthaceae** family.
- **Genus:** It belongs to the **Rungia** genus, which has 88 accepted species worldwide.
- **Habitat:** It grows in **moist, shaded rock crevices** beside streams in **moist forests** at **900–1,250 m** elevation.
- **Distribution:** The species is **known from Jatinga Hills** in **Dima Hasao district, Assam**.
 - It was **first collected in 1845** from an **unidentified location** along the **Sundar River**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Plant size:** It is a **shrubby herb** that grows **60–110 cm** tall.
 - **Flowers:** It has **pale green to whitish flowers** with **delicate purple streaks**.
 - **Concentration:** The known plants **occur in one highly concentrated location**.
- **Threats:** Its highly concentrated population is **vulnerable to landslides and forest fires**, requiring **active monitoring, habitat protection and intensive surveys**.
- **Conservation Status:** The species is currently **“not evaluated”** under **IUCN Red List** criteria.

World Circular Economy Forum 2026

News: India is hosting the World Circular Economy Forum 2026 in Gandhinagar from September 15 to 18, for the first time in South Asia.

About World Circular Economy Forum 2026



Source – NOA

- **World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF)** is an **annual global forum** for **sharing solutions** and **advancing the transition** towards a **circular economy**.
- **Origin:** It was **launched in 2017** by the **Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra**.
- **Official Partner:** The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is an **official partner** of WCEF.

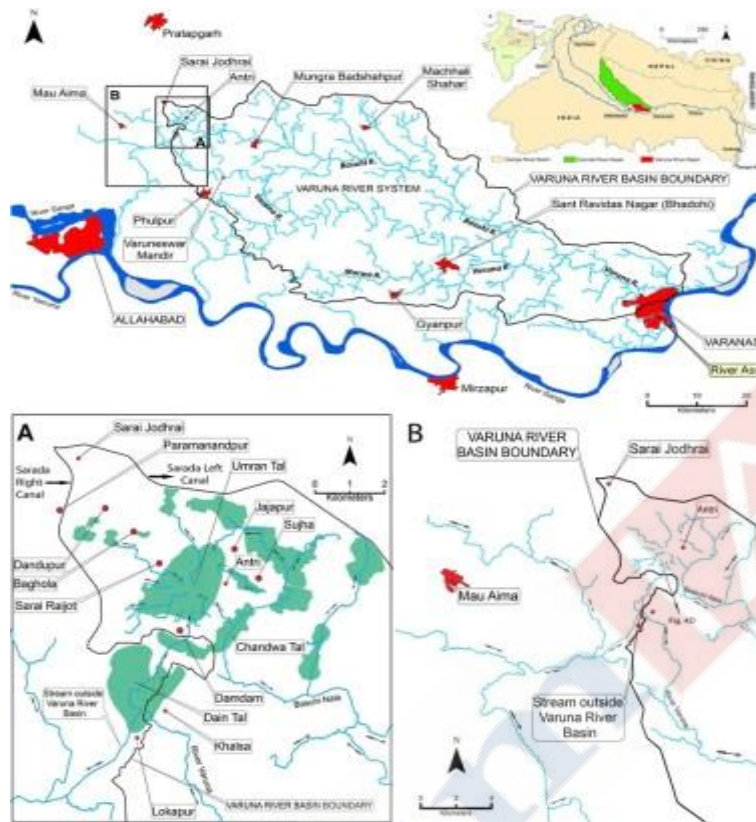
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- **2026 Edition:** It is the **10th edition** of the World Circular Economy Forum.
- **Host:** India is hosting the 10th edition of the World Circular Economy Forum in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- **Theme:** The theme is “Circular Economy: Transition for People and Prosperity.”
- **Organized by:** The forum is jointly organized by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, Government of Finland, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Gujarat and Gujarat Pollution Control Board.
- **Aim:** The forum aims to promote **global cooperation, circular finance, private-sector investment, policy dialogue, cross-sectoral partnerships, and innovation** for sustainable production and consumption.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Global participation:** More than **2,000 stakeholders** from over **65 countries** will participate.
 - **Circular solutions expo:** An international expo with **more than 125 exhibitors** will showcase practical circular economy solutions.
 - **Thematic discussions:** The main programme will feature **4 plenary sessions and 16 parallel thematic sessions**.
 - These sessions **will cover artificial intelligence, employment potential, energy production, finance, governance, sustainable products, industrial solutions, start-up ecosystems and youth leadership**.
 - **International cooperation:** WCEF 2026 will feature the **10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10 YFP) Board meeting**.
 - **India will co-chair the meeting**, while global collaborators will organise 80 accelerator sessions.

Varuna River

News: Varuna Elevated Corridor along the Varuna River in Varanas is set to become a key axis of modern urban mobility.

About Varuna River



Source: Research Gate

- **Varuna River** flows through the **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.
The name of the **Varanasi** is believed to be derived from the **two-river** bordering the city i.e. **Varuna & Assi**.
- **Origin:** It originates from **Jhigna Tal (Phulpur Tal)** near Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Course of river:** After flowing **towards south east for about 70 km**, it meets two more tributaries of Ganga namely **Morawa river and Basuhi river**.
 - Both tributaries originates near Phulpur (about 100 km North West of Varanasi).
Finally **flowing through Varanasi**, the river **meets river Ganga** at Saray Mohana.
- **Sarnath** is situated at the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Varuna river.
- **Tributary of:** It is a tributary of the **Ganga**.
- **National Waterway:** **National Waterway 108 (52.83 km)** spans the Varuna River in Uttar Pradesh, running from the road bridge near Kuru to the Ganga river **confluence at Saray Mohana in Varanasi**.

About Varuna Elevated Corridor

A NEW CHAPTER IN VARANASI'S URBAN MOBILITY

Union Cabinet

Approves the Development of Elevated Corridor over River Varuna

4/6-Lane Elevated Corridor | **43.2 km** | **₹10,998 Cr**

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Travel time** to reduce from about 60 minutes to 20 minutes between Varanasi Airport and the city centre.
- Decongests** Varanasi city roads by providing seamless connectivity between NH-31 and the Varanasi Ring Road.
- Improves access** to Varanasi Airport, Varanasi Cantonment, Kashi Railway Station, Namohat and other major destinations.
- Strengthens** multimodal connectivity by linking highways, railway stations, logistics hubs and key economic centres.
- Promotes** sustainable urban mobility through reduced congestion, lower fuel consumption and improved traffic flow.
- Boosts tourism**, pilgrimage and regional economic growth while supporting the long-term development of Varanasi.

A NEW CHAPTER IN VARANASI'S URBAN MOBILITY

Union Cabinet

Approves the Development of Elevated Corridor over River Varuna

6/4-Lane Elevated Corridor | **43.2 km** | **₹10,998 Cr**

Project Map-

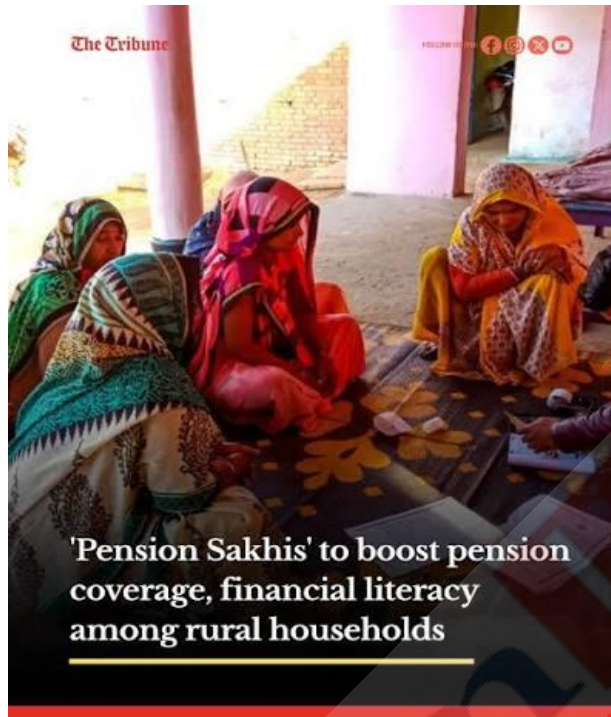
Source: NHAI

- **Varuna Elevated Corridor** is a major infrastructure project along the **Varuna River in Varanasi**.
- **Purpose:** The main purpose of the project is to provide an **alternative high-capacity route** and reduce congestion on the existing urban roads of Varanasi.
- **Length:** It has a total length of **43.218 km**.
- **Features:** The corridor will provide connectivity between **NH-31 and the Varanasi Ring Road**, thereby improving movement **across the city and surrounding areas**.

Pension Sakhis

News: Department of Rural Development (DoRD) and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) signed a MoU to create and support a community-based outreach mechanism of 'Pension Sakhis' across rural India.

About Pension Sakhis



Source: The Tribune

- **Pension Sakhis** are a new **community-based network** which will work as **trusted community-level facilitators** to take **pension awareness and retirement planning** closer to **rural households**, particularly reaching SHG members, rural women, Lakhpati Didis and other rural participants.
- **Nodal Department:** This is an initiative of **Department of Rural Development (DoRD)** and the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**.
- **Focus:** The focus is on **enrolment, financial awareness** and **informed** decision-making.
- **Features:**
 - **Network Integration:** The initiative seeks to **leverage the extensive community institutional network** created under the [Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission \(DAY-NRLM\)](#), including its Banking Correspondent (BC) Sakhis and other trained community resource persons.
 - It will use **women-led SHGs** to help reach households that have **limited access to financial advice and pension-planning services**.
 - It will **support households with information on pension and retirement planning at doorsteps, facilitate enrolment**, and provide assistance in **understanding pension-related services**.
 - It will **improve awareness and adoption** of pension products, including the **National Pension System (NPS)**.
 - **Monitoring and tracking:** **Digital dashboards, mobile and web-based solutions, and unique identifier-based tracking** through **Central Recordkeeping Agencies** will support the monitoring of outreach, enrolment and the performance of Pension Sakhis.

Parang La

News: The NCC's 'Aparajita – Parang La 2026' expedition was flagged-in at Karzok, Ladakh on September 16, 2026.

About Parang La

- **Parang La** is a **high-altitude mountain pass** in the **Trans-Himalayas**.
- **Connects:** It connects the **Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh** with the **Changthang region of Ladakh**.
- **Historical Significance:** It was a **traditional trade route between Spiti and Ladakh**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Terrain:** The trail passes through **glaciers, snowfields, river valleys, deep gorges and arid landscapes**.
 - **Altitude:** It has an **elevation of around 5,600 m**.
 - **Rivers Association:** It serves as the source area of the **Pare Chu River (Parang River)**, which **originates in Himachal Pradesh**.
 - It **flows into Tibet and then re-enters India in Ladakh/Spiti**.

Madurai Meenakshi Temple

News: The Maha Kumbabishekam ceremony of Madurai Meenakshi Temple was held after seventeen years, with thousands of devotees witnessing the event.

About Madurai Meenakshi Temple

- **Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple** is a **historic Hindu temple**.
- **Location:** It is located in **Madurai, Tamil Nadu**, on the **southern bank of the Vaigai River**.
- **Deities:** The main deities are **Meenakshi (Parvati) and Sundareswarar (Shiva)**.
 - **Alagar, a form of Vishnu**, is also associated with the temple.
- **Architecture Style:** The temple follows the **Dravidian style** and **Nayaka school of architecture**.
- **Builders:** The **Pandya kings built the original temple**.
 - **Vishwanatha Nayaka and Tirumala Nayaka** contributed to its present form during the **16th–17th centuries CE**.
- **Key Features**
 - **Temple Complex:** The temple covers **45 acres** and measures **254 × 237 metres**.
 - **Gopurams:** It has **14 gopurams**, including **four tall outer gopurams**.
 - **Tallest Gopuram:** The **Southern tower rises to over 170 feet** and was **built in 1559**.
 - **Thousand Pillar Hall:** The **Ayirakkal Mandapam** was built around **1569 CE** and contains **985 carved pillars**.
 - **Musical Pillars:** The **Musical Pillars** are **located outside the Thousand Pillar Hall towards the west**, and **each pillar produces a different musical note when struck**.
- **Festival:** **Meenakshi Tirukalyanam** is the **annual festival** celebrated during the **Chithirai festival in April–May**.
 - The **Maha Kumbabishekam ceremony** was held after **seventeen years**.
- **Recognition:** The temple was recognised as “**Best Swachh Iconic Place**” in **2017** and has been **nominated for World Heritage**.

Enhancement of EPFO Wage Ceiling

News: The Union Cabinet has raised the EPFO mandatory coverage wage ceiling from Rs.15,000 to Rs.25,000 per month.

Key Highlights of Enhancement of EPFO Wage Ceiling

- **Implementation:** The **Ministry of Labour & Employment and Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO)** will undertake the necessary statutory and administrative steps for implementation.
- **Changes made**
 - **Higher Coverage:** The revised ceiling will **bring more than 51 lakh additional employees** under mandatory EPFO coverage.
 - **Wage Band:** Employees earning between **₹15,000 and ₹25,000 per month will come within the statutory social security framework.**
 - **Social Security:** The decision will **expand access to provident fund savings, pension protection under EPS and insurance protection under EDLI.**
 - **Ceiling Revision:** The wage ceiling **remained unchanged from 2004 to 2014** before being increased to ₹15,000 in September 2014.
- **Reason for Revision:** The increase **reflects sustained wage growth, rising incomes and continued expansion of formal employment.**
- **Government Outgo:** The annual Government outgo is **estimated at about ₹11,339 crore**, while expenditure over **five years is approximately ₹56,696 crore.**
- **Expected Impact:** The measure is expected to give further **impetus to employment formalisation, worker retention and long-term retirement security.**

Budhabalanga River

News: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) recently examined a case of alleged illegal sand mining in the Budhabalanga River in Mayurbhanj district, Odisha.

About Budhabalanga River

- **Budhabalanga River flows through Odisha.**
- **Origin:** It originates from the **Simlipal Hill**, Mayurbhanj district, **Odisha.**
- **Course of river:** It plunges through **Barehipani falls, the second-highest waterfall in India**, located in [Simlipal National Park](#).
 - It flows through **Baripada and Balasore districts** before it finally empties into the **Bay of Bengal.**
- **Length:** It has with a **length of around 175 km.**
- It has a total **catchment area of 4,840 sq. km.**
- **Tributaries:** Its major tributaries are **Palapala, Sunei, Kalo, Sanjo, Deo, Gangahari and Katra.**

Gegeneophis Chandgadi

News: Scientists have discovered Gegeneophis Chandgadi, a new species of subterranean, legless amphibian from Maharashtra.

About Gegeneophis Chandgadi

- **Gegeneophis chandgadi** is a **newly discovered species of legless amphibian**, known as a **caecilian.**

- **Family and Genus:** The species belongs to the family Grandisoniidae and the genus Gegeneophis, commonly known as **blind caecilians**.
- It is a **group of elusive, limbless amphibians** that spend much of their lives underground.
- It was discovered from **Maharashtra, in the Western Ghats**.
- **Habitat:** It spends most of their lives **underground**.
- **Features:**
 - **Size:** Adult *G. chandgadi* measure approximately 105–185 mm in length.
 - **Appearance:**
 - It has a slender, cylindrical, legless and tailless body.
 - Its upper body is dark brown to dark flesh-coloured, with a pinkish head and belly.
 - It has 132–135 primary annuli, or ring-like grooves, around its body.
- **Conservation status:** Researchers have recommended a **Data Deficient status** until its wider distribution and population are better understood.

Melanoma

News: In August 2026, intismeran, a personalised mRNA vaccine, showed reduced melanoma recurrence when combined with pembrolizumab.

About Melanoma



Source – Cleveland Clinic

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- **Melanoma** is a **type of skin cancer**.
- It **develops from melanocytes**, the **cells that produce melanin**.
- It usually **develops on sun-exposed skin**, including the arms, back, face and legs.
- In India, it **commonly occurs on the soles of the feet or beneath the nails and is called acral lentiginous melanoma**.
- Mucosal melanoma **starts in the mucous membranes** and is highly aggressive, with few early warning signs.
- **Causes:**
 - **UV Exposure:** Most melanomas are **caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light** from sunlight or tanning lamps and beds.
 - **Unclear Cause:** The exact cause of all melanomas is **not clear**.
- **Symptoms:**
 - **Mole Changes:** A **change in an existing mole** can be a warning sign.
 - **New Growth:** A **new pigmented or unusual-looking growth** may **develop on the skin**.
 - **Persistent Lesions:** Any **pigmented lesion that changes or persists** needs investigation.
- **Treatment:**
 - **Surgery:** In early stages, surgery has a high probability of curing melanoma.
 - **Lymphadenectomy:** If melanoma has spread, **nearby lymph nodes may need to be removed**.
 - **Metastasectomy:** It is **used to remove small melanoma growths** from organs.
 - **Immunotherapy:** Immune-checkpoint blockade using **therapies targeting CTLA-4** (Cytotoxic T-Lymphocyte-Associated Protein4) **and PD-1** (Programmed Cell Death Protein 1) can help the immune system attack tumours.
 - **Precision medicine:** Next-generation sequencing (NGS) can **identify tumour mutations**, including **BRAF pathway mutations**, to **guide targeted treatment**.
 - **TIL therapy:** **Tumour-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs)** are taken from the tumour, expanded in the laboratory and reinfused in larger numbers.
 - **Personalised mRNA vaccine:** In August 2026, **intismeran with pembrolizumab** **significantly reduced** recurrence after surgery, **although survival data remain pending**.

Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI 40)

News: GIFT City climbed nine places to 37th globally and entered the top 15 financial centres in Asia-Pacific in GFCI 40.

About Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI 40)



Source – GIFT City

- **Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI 40):** It provides **rankings and evaluations** of the future competitiveness of financial centres worldwide.
- **Published by:** It is published by **Z/Yen Partners** in collaboration with the **China Development Institute (CDI)**.
- **Started in:** The GFCI has been published since 2007.
- **2026 Edition:** It is the 40th edition, published in September 2026.
- **Frequency:** It is updated and published twice a year, in **March and September**.
- **Evaluation Methodology:** It uses **144 instrumental factors** from **third-party sources**, including the **World Bank, OECD and United Nations**.
 - The index provides rankings for **117 financial centres**.
- **Key Highlights**
 - **Global Leaders:** **New York** leads the index, followed by **London**, while **Hong Kong** ranks third and **Singapore** fourth.
 - **FinTech:** **Hong Kong** leads the **FinTech** ranking, followed by **New York, Shenzhen, Singapore, Shanghai** and **London**.
 - **Global Outlook:** The report identifies **digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, FinTech** and **deeper capital markets** as priority areas.
 - **India's Global Rank:** **GIFT City** improved from **46th** to **37th**, gaining **nine places** globally.
 - **India's Asia-Pacific Rank:** **GIFT City** entered the **top 15** financial centres in Asia-Pacific.
 - **India's FinTech Rank:** **GIFT City** ranked **26th** globally in **FinTech**, improving from **29th**.
 - **Future Position:** **GIFT City** was among the **15 centres** expected to gain greater significance over the next two to three years.

Stem Cell Therapy

News: The Union Health Ministry has asked States and Union Territories to restrict stem cell therapy for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to approved clinical trials.

About Stem Cell Therapy



Source – Revival Clinic

- **Stem Cells:** They are **undifferentiated biological cells** that can **differentiate into specialized cells** and **divide to produce more stem cells**.
 - **Role:** They are **found in almost all tissues** and **help in tissue maintenance and repair**.
 - **Types:** The main **types of stem cells** are **embryonic, adult, induced pluripotent and perinatal stem cells**.
- **Stem Cell Therapy:** It uses **stem cells** to **prevent or treat diseases** and **promote the repair of diseased, dead or injured tissues**.
- **Working Mechanism:**
 - **Extraction:** Stem cells are **taken from a suitable source**, such as **bone marrow**, and **processed in a laboratory**.
 - **Specialisation:** The cells are **manipulated to become specific types**, such as **heart muscle, blood or nerve cells**.
 - **Implantation:** The **specialised cells** are **implanted into the person** and may help repair damaged tissue.
- **Applications:**
 - **Disease Treatment:** Stem cell transplants are **used to treat leukemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma**.
 - **Tissue Repair:** Stem cells may **help replace damaged neurons, produce insulin and repair cartilage**.
 - **Regenerative Medicine:** Stem cells are **being studied for type 1 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, heart failure and osteoarthritis**.
 - **Research and Drug Testing:** Stem cells can **help researchers understand diseases and test new drugs for safety, effectiveness and toxicity**.
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in India:** In India, the use of stem cell therapy for ASD is restricted to **duly approved clinical trials**.
 - Available evidence does not support its use as a **standard treatment** for ASD.

Ramjak Mountain

News: A four-member team from Keralam recently scaled Ramjak, a 6,318-metre peak in the remote Lahaul region of Himachal Pradesh.

About Ramjak Mountain



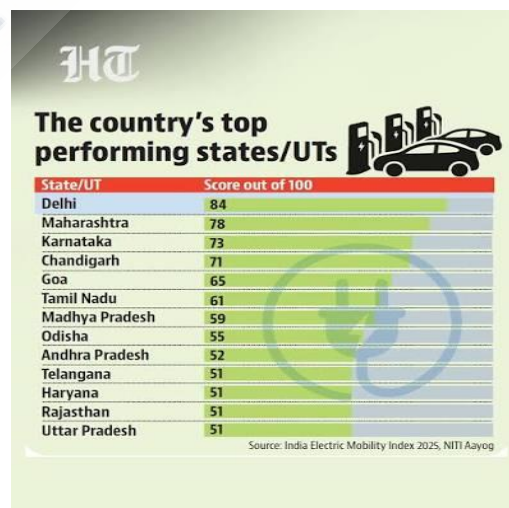
Source – ResearchGate

- The **Ramjak mountain** is a **high-altitude mountain peak** located in the **Lahaul region of Himachal Pradesh**.
 - The peak is **located near Shingo La**, which is a popular trek route from **Himachal to Zaskar**.
- **Height:** It rises to **around 6,318 m (20,728 ft)**.
- **Temperature:** The temperature on the mountain hovers between **-35 degree celsius and minus -40 degree celsius**.
- **First Ascent:** The **first successful ascent** was achieved in **2002** by an expedition of the **Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF)**, led by **Sangay Dorjee Sherpa**.
- It has **glacier terrain, steep summit slopes, and rapid altitude**.

India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025

News: Delhi has topped NITI Aayog's India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025 for the development of the e-mobility ecosystem and the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) on Indian roads.

About India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025



Source: HT

- **IEMI** is a **composite Index**, which assesses **the policy framework and implementation outcomes** for e-mobility at the state-level.
- **Developed by:** NITI Aayog developed the index in collaboration with **WRI India**.
- **Themes:** The report covers **three themes**:
 - **transport electrification progress (50%)**
 - **charging infrastructure readiness (30%)**
 - **EV research and innovation status (20%)**
- **Scores:** According to the index, the **composite scores on performance across all 36 States and Union Territories (UTs)** ranges from **10 to 84**, and a **median score of 40**.
- **Performance:** **Delhi has topped** the NITI Aayog's India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025.
 - **Maharashtra and Karnataka secured the second and third positions**, with scores of 78 and 73 respectively.
 - **Chandigarh and Goa** secured the fourth and fifth positions, with scores of 71 and 65 respectively.
 - **Goa improved significantly by climbing ten positions** and secured the fifth position.
 - **Madhya Pradesh recorded a major improvement**, rising from **23rd position in 2024 to seventh position in 2025**.
- **Performance of Large States**
 - Eight large states, namely **Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh**, were classified as **frontrunners**, with scores between 50 and 64.
 - Seven large states, namely **Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala, Jharkhand, Punjab and Gujarat**, were classified as **emerging performers**, with scores between 35 and 49.
- **Themewise performance:**
 - **Transport Electrification:** This category measures **EV adoption, market absorption, consumer acceptance and demand-side momentum**.
 - **Delhi, Chandigarh and Maharashtra** were the only States and UTs to qualify as top performers in transport electrification progress.
 - **Charging Infrastructure:** This category assesses factors such as the **charger-to-vehicle ratio, subsidies for charging infrastructure, building bye-laws for EV charging and power availability**.
 - **Karnataka recorded the highest national score of 97** in charging infrastructure readiness.
 - **Goa and Maharashtra** followed with scores of **92 and 91**, respectively.
 - **EV Research and Innovation:** This category considers the presence of **EV startups, research and development initiatives, and patents** related to electric mobility.
 - **Delhi achieved the highest score of 94** in EV research and innovation status.

Global Business Climate Survey 2026

News: India has been ranked first in business climate among 40-plus global markets in the Global Business Climate Survey 2026.

About Global Business Climate Survey 2026

- The **Global Business Climate Survey** presents **Swedish companies' views** on doing business across **41 global markets**.
- **Produced by:** It is jointly produced by **Business Sweden, Swedish Chambers of Commerce (SCI), and Sweden's embassies and consulates**.
- **Origin:** The survey was **first conducted in 2020**.
- **Aim:** It compares **economic performance, outlook, and operating conditions** and **identifies challenges and opportunities** in key Swedish export markets.
- **Methodology:** More than 2,250 C-level representatives of Swedish companies **answered 18 standard questions** about the business climate in their main markets.
 - The **responses were weighted by region**.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - **Regional outlook:** **Asia-Pacific (APAC)** remains the most optimistic region, while the Middle East and Africa show more cautious sentiment.
 - **India's business climate:** India ranks **first in business climate** among the surveyed markets.
 - **India's growth outlook:** Market-level growth projections are **highest in India, Philippines and Poland**.
 - **India's investment position:** India is among the **top investment markets in APAC**, along with the Philippines.

Himalayan Monal

News: Two studies by Hemvathi Nandan Bahuguna University researchers highlighted the effects of human-made noise and climate change on the Himalayan monal.

About Himalayan Monal

- The **Himalayan monal** is a large, ground-dwelling pheasant.
 - **Scientific Name:** Its scientific name is **Lophophorus impejanus**.
 - **Family:** It belongs to the **pheasant family, Phasianidae**.
 - **Local Name:** It is called **Danfe** in the **Nepali language**.
- **Cultural importance:** It is the **national bird of Nepal** and the **state bird of Uttarakhand**.
- **Habitat:** It lives in **upper temperate conifer and oak forests with open grasslands** at about **2,400–4,500 m**.
- **Distribution:** It is found **from eastern Afghanistan through the Himalayas to China**, including **India, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan and Myanmar**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Appearance:** It shows high **sexual dimorphism**.
 - **Males** have **multi-coloured plumage** and a **long green metallic crest**,
 - while **females** have a **pale blue eye patch, white throat and streaky brown body**.
 - **Feeding:** It **dives into the ground and snow** for leaves, shoots, tubers, seeds and insects.
 - **Altitudinal Movement:** It **moves to higher elevations in summer for breeding** and **moves down in winter during heavy snowfall**.
 - **Courtship:** **Males** perform **dance-like courtship displays** and show their **colourful plumage** and **bright white back patch**.
 - **Communication:** It has a **range of calls** used for purposes such as **raising an alarm** and **calling potential mates**.

- **Threats:**
 - Habitat loss
 - Hunting
 - Pollution
 - Human-made noise
 - Climate change
- **Conservation Status**
 - **IUCN Status: Least Concern (LC)**
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule-I**

Perim Island

News: Iran-backed Houthi rebels have seized Yemen's Perim Island, a strategic point in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

About Perim Island

- **Perim Island** is a **small volcanic island** belonging to **Yemen**.
 - It is also known as **Mayun Island**.
- **Location:** It is located in the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait**, at the **southern entrance of the Red Sea**.
- **Channel Division:** The Perim Island **divides the Bab el-Mandeb Strait into two channels**.
 - **Eastern Channel:** It is called **Alexander's Strait**.
 - **Western Channel:** It is called the **Dact-el-Mayun Channel**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Size and Height:** The rocky island **covers about 13 sq. km and rises up to 65 m**.
 - **Strategic location:** Its importance increased after the **Suez Canal connected the Mediterranean Sea with the Arabian Sea through the Red Sea**.
 - **Political Status:** It remained **part of the British Empire from 1857 to 1967 and became part of independent Yemen in 1967**.
 - **Facilities:** It has a **deep natural harbor on the southwestern side** and a **military airfield in the north**.
- **Current Crisis:**
 - **Houthi Capture:** In September 2026, **Iran-backed Houthi rebels captured Perim Island**.
 - **Trade Concerns:** The **Bab el-Mandeb Strait handles nearly 10% of global trade and about 5% of global oil and petroleum shipments daily**.
 - A disrupted route could force vessels to **reroute via Africa, adding nearly 14 days to delivery schedules**.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) 2.0

News: The Ministry of Rural Development will commence DDU-GKY 2.0 training batches across most States and Union Territories from October 2026.

About Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) 2.0

- The **DDU-GKY 2.0** provides **placement-linked skill training to poor rural youth**.
- **Origin:** **DDU-GKY** was launched in **2014** by the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
 - DDU-GKY 2.0 is its second edition.
- **Type of Scheme:** It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.

- **Part of:** It is part of the **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)**.
- **Eligibility:** Rural youth aged **15–35 years** are eligible.
 - While Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), women, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) can be covered up to **45 years**.
- **Social Coverage:** The scheme mandates coverage of **50% SC/ST, 15% minorities and 33% women**.
- **Training Duration:** The duration of skill training ranges from **3 to 12 months**, depending on the course.
- **Key Features of DDU-GKY 2.0**
 - Targets have been allocated to **all 31 participating States and Union Territories** for the 2026–28 period.
 - **5.6 lakh rural youth targets across more than 1,200 projects** have been allocated by **24 States and Union Territories**, while other States are at advanced stages of allocation.
 - **Digital Portal:** The integrated portal supports the **end-to-end project lifecycle, digital monitoring, transparency and greater efficiency**.
 - **Online Payments:** Integration with **State Treasury Portals** will facilitate online payments through the **Grameen Kaushal Portal**.
 - **Regional Workshops:** Hybrid workshops will be organised at **Shillong, Vijayawada, Mumbai and Dharamshala** during October 2026 to familiarise Project Implementing Agencies with the digital platform.

Sankh River

News: Tragedy struck in Sundargarh district, Odisha when three minor girls drowned in the Sankh River while making preparations for the Karma Puja.

About Sankh River

- The **Sankh River** flows across **Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha**.
- It is part of **Brahmani River system**.
- **Origin:** It starts from **Gumla district in Jharkhand** and flows **67.5 km** in the state before entering **Chhattisgarh**.
- **Course of river:** It runs a distance of **about 50 km** in **Chhattisgarh** and enters **Jharkhand** again to flow for another **78 km**.
 - It finally enters **Odisha** and merges with the **Koel river**.
 - **Sankh and the Koel river join** at **Vedavyasa near Rourkela in Sundargarh district of Odisha** to form a major river called the **Brahmani**.
- **Total length:** Its total length is about **240 km**.
- **Waterfall:** The **Sadni falls (60 m)** falls on **Sankh River at the edge of Ranchi plateau**.

About Koel River

- **Koel River** flows through the **Jharkhand and Odisha**.
- **Origin:** It originates from the **Palamau Tiger Reserve, Jharkhand**, and flows in the **western part of Palamu District**.
- **Course of river:** It further divides into two, the **North Koel River and the South Koel River**.
 - **North Koel River** finally joins with the **Son River**.

- **South Koel River** flows across Orissa near Rourkela, before merging with the **Brahmani River**.
- It is part of the **larger Damodar Valley region**.
- **Dams situated on river:** The **North Koel Dam (Mandal Dam)** is situated on the North Koel River in Jharkhand to generate hydroelectric power and supply water for irrigation.

Giant African Snail

News: Kerala Agricultural University has launched a special project to eradicate African snails in Idukki following a request from the Agriculture department.

About Giant African Snail



Source – TNIE

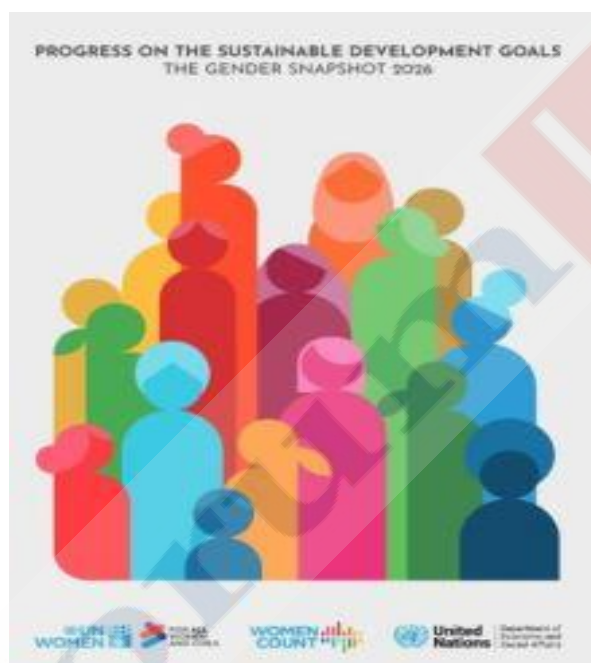
- **Giant African Snail** is the **common name for several large African land snail species**.
- It is also known as the **Lissachatina fulica**.
- **Habitat:** It thrives in **warm tropical and subtropical areas** with **mild temperatures and high humidity**.
 - It is found in **agricultural areas, coastal areas, wetlands, forests, riparian zones, scrublands, shrublands and urban zones**.
- **Distribution:** It is **native to East Africa**.
 - It has been **widely introduced to other parts of the world** through the pet trade, as a food resource and accidental introduction.
- **Characteristics:**
 - **Size:** An adult is usually **3–4 inches long**, but it can reach **8 inches in length and 5 inches in diameter**.
 - **Shell:** It has a **brownish, cone-shaped shell** with nearly vertical lighter-brown stripes.
 - **Body:** Its body can be **grayish-brown or milky-white**.
 - **Reproduction:** It is a **hermaphrodite** and can self-reproduce, allowing one snail to start a population.
 - **Diet:** It can feed on **more than 500 types of crops and ornamental plants**.
 - **Health Impact:** It can carry the **rat lungworm parasite (Angiostrongylus cantonensis)**, which can cause eosinophilic meningitis in humans.

- **Threats:** It is one of the world's worst invasive species and threatens agriculture, animals and people.
- **Conservation Status:** The IUCN Red List lists it as Not Evaluated.
 - The IUCN Global Invasive Species Database lists it as a major agricultural and ecological threat.

Gender Snapshot 2026 Report

News: The Gender Snapshot 2026 reports that progress on gender equality is stalling or reversing, with no SDG 5 target on track for 2030.

About Gender Snapshot 2026 Report



Source – UN Women

- **Gender Snapshot 2026 Report** tracks global progress on gender equality and women and girls across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Released by:** It is released by **UN Women and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)** in September 2026.
- **Origin:** The report is **linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and **anchors the Beijing+30 Action Agenda**.
- **Methodology used:** It draws on **more than 100 data sources** to assess progress for women and girls across all 17 SDGs.
- **Key Highlights**
 - **Gender equality gap:** At current rates of progress, gender equality remains 171 years away.
 - **Funding cuts:** Gender-equality funding fell to its lowest level since 2021.
 - Funding for **women's rights organisations** fell 28% between 2023 and 2024.
 - **Political representation:** Six in seven countries are led by men.

- **Women hold 27.4%** of national parliamentary seats in 2026.
- **Judicial representation:** Women lead **fewer than 20%** of the highest courts globally.
- **Food and economic insecurity:** **9.9%** of women lived in extreme poverty in 2024, compared with 9.5% of men.
 - At the current pace, **1.1 billion women and girls** could remain food insecure by **2030**.
- **Domestic and care burden:** Women spend **2.5 times more hours** than men on unpaid domestic and care work.
- **Violence against women:** Nearly **one in three women** globally has experienced partner or sexual violence in her lifetime.
- **Global AI workforce:** Women account for about **22%** of AI professionals and **fewer than 14%** of senior AI leadership positions globally.
- **Global climate exposure:** **2.9 billion women and girls** live in countries highly or very highly exposed to climate change and geophysical hazards.

Tulu Language

News: The Karnataka government announced “Tulu” as the state’s second additional administrative language alongside Kannada.

About Tulu Language



Source – Udayavani

- **Tulu is a Dravidian language.**
- It is mainly spoken in **two coastal districts, Dakshina Kannada and Udupi of Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala.**
- **Kasaragod district** is called the ‘**Sapta bhasha Samgama Bhumi (the confluence of seven languages)**’ and **Tulu is one among the seven.**
- This region is informally known as **Tulu Nadu.**
- It has **borrowed many words from the Kannada language** but they are not closely related.
- The **Tulu script** is also known as the **Tigalari script** and it has **resemblance with Malayalam script.**
- The **Tulu speakers** are known as **Tuluvas.**
- The **oldest available inscriptions in Tulu** are from the **period between 14th to 15th centuries AD.**

- Tulu has a rich oral literature tradition with folk-song forms like paddana and traditional folk theatre yakshagana.
- It also has an active tradition of cinema, with around 5 to 7 Tulu language movies produced a year.
 - Moreover, Tulu films are screened every day in Mangalore and Udupi in at least one theater.
- Recognition: Karnataka has officially recognized Tulu as an additional administrative language in the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts.
- There has been rising demand to include Tulu language in 8th Schedule.

Khejadli Sacrifice Day and Amrita Devi Bishnoi

News: On Khejadli Sacrifice Day, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla paid tribute to Amrita Devi Bishnoi and all the martyrs who laid down their lives for the protection of Khejri trees in Khejadli village of Rajasthan.

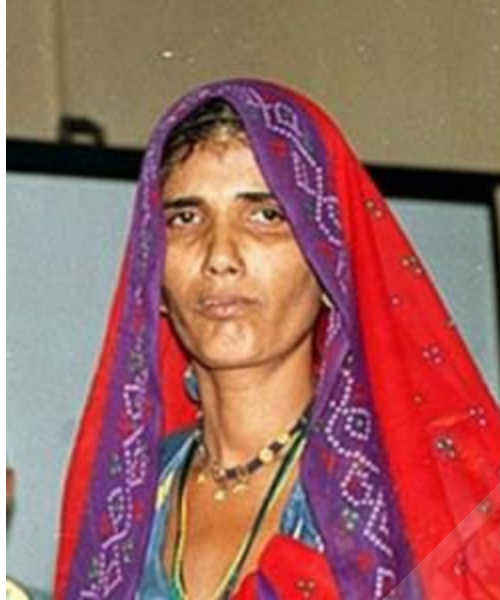
About Khejadli Sacrifice Day

- Khejarli Sacrifice Day is commemorated every year on September 11.
 - It is also observed as National Forest Martyrs Day.
- It commemorates the historic event that took place in 1730 in Rajasthan where 363 members of the Bishnoi community, led by Amrita Devi, sacrificed their lives to protect sacred Khejri trees.
- About the event:
 - Maharaja Abhai Singh of the Marwar Kingdom gave the order to cut down Khejri trees, which are revered by the Bishnoi community.
 - Amrita Devi Bishnoi and her three daughters sacrificed their lives while protecting the sacred Khejri trees.
 - Inspired by their courage, 363 Bishnois gave their lives by embracing the trees to prevent them from being felled.
 - Their sacrifice later inspired the Chipko Movement of the 1970s.

Khejri tree

Note: Khejri tree (*Prosopis cineraria*) holds great importance in Rajasthan, especially among the Bishnoi community. It is considered as sacred as Tulsi and has strong religious significance.

About Amrita Devi Bishnoi



Source: Deccan Herald

- **Amrita Devi Bishnoi** was a **legendary environmental protector** and an **early symbol of ecological conservation in India**.
 - She is popularly known as **Mata Amrita Devi Bishnoi**.
- **Birth:** She was **born in the 17th century in Rajasthan** and belonged to the **Bishnoi community**.
- **Activities undertaken:**
 - She is **remembered for her supreme sacrifice** during the historic **Khejarli incident of 1730** in present-day Jodhpur district, Rajasthan.
 - When the **ruler of Jodhpur ordered the cutting of Khejri trees**, she strongly opposed this act, as the **Bishnoi faith considers the protection of trees and nature as sacred**.
 - **She was killed by the soldiers**.
 - Following her sacrifice, **363 Bishnois men, women and children also gave their lives while protecting the trees**.
 - Shocked by this mass sacrifice, **the ruler ordered an immediate halt to tree-felling and issued a royal decree** protecting trees and wildlife in Bishnoi areas.
- **Legacy:** Her sacrifice later inspired environmental movements such as the **Chipko Movement**.
- **Awards:** Today, the **Amrita Devi Bishnoi Wildlife Protection Award** is given by the Government of India in her honour.

Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2026

News: Four Indian Army dogs are participating in Yudh Abhyas 2026 and demonstrating their role in specialized military operations.

About Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2026



Source – PIB

- **Yudh Abhyas 2026** is an **annual bilateral army exercise** between **India and the United States**.
- **Origin:** The exercise **began in 2004** and is **held alternately in India and the US**.
- **2026 Edition:** Yudh Abhyas 2026 is the **22nd edition** of the exercise.
- **Hosted by:** This edition is being **hosted by India at Auli in Uttarakhand** and **Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan**.
- **Key Features**
 - **Integrated Battle Groups:** It focuses on **infantry-dominated operations** in **mountainous and semi-mountainous terrain**.
 - **Technology and Drones:** Training includes **drones, autonomous systems, surveillance, reconnaissance and counter-drone capabilities**.
 - **MLIDS Deployment:** For the **first time**, the **US Army's Mobile Low, Slow, Small Unmanned Aircraft Integrated Defeat System (MLIDS)** is being deployed in India to counter unmanned aerial threats.
 - **Training Exercises:** The drills include a **Command Post Exercise (CPX)** and a **Field Training Exercise (FTX)**.
 - **Operation Pathways:** The exercise is **conducted under the Operation Pathways framework** to strengthen **information sharing, interoperability and joint operational preparedness**.

Other Exercises Between India and US

- **Vajra Prahar:** **Special Forces exercise**.
- **SALVEX:** **Naval exercise**.
- **Cope India:** **Air Force exercise**.
- **Malabar:** **Quad naval exercise** involving **India, the US, Japan and Australia**.

Subic Bay

News: Indian Naval Ships Sahyadri and Kulish arrived at Subic Bay, Philippines to participate in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Joint Cooperation Activity (JCA).

About Subic Bay



Source: Britannica

- Subic Bay is an **embayment of the South China Sea**.
- It is located on the **southwestern coast of Luzon Island in the Philippines**.
 - It is **situated 35 miles northwest of Manila Bay and extends into the Luzon coastline**.
- The **city of Olongapo** is located near the **head of Subic Bay**.
- **Historical background:** From **1901 to 1992, the United States operated a major naval base at Subic Bay** in the Philippines.
 - During **World War II, Japan captured the base in 1942**, and Allied forces recaptured it in 1944.
 - Its strategic location made it important for **U.S. operations during the Vietnam War and the Cold War**.
 - In **1992, the U.S. handed over the base to the Philippines**, which developed it into a **free port, industrial and tourism zone**.
- In **2012, the Philippines allowed limited access to U.S. warships** at the Subic Bay port.

About ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Joint Cooperation Activity (JCA)

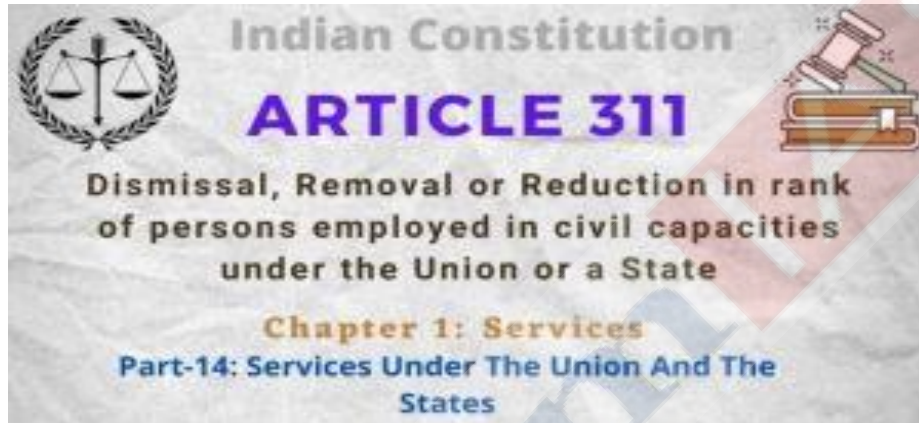
- The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Joint Cooperation Activity (JCA) brings together maritime forces **from ASEAN Member States and eight Plus countries** for professional and operational engagements.
- It aimed at **enhancing interoperability, fostering mutual understanding and strengthening cooperation** in the maritime domain.
- Participation of Indian Naval Ships in ADMM-Plus JCA aligns with India's **Act East Policy and MAHASAGAR vision**.

- The deployment will facilitate **professional and operational interactions with participating maritime forces, enhancing understanding of shared maritime challenges.**

Article 311 of the Indian Constitution

News: The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor recently invoked Article 311 of the Constitution and terminated the services of government employees.

About Article 311 of the Indian Constitution



Source – The Indian Constitution

- **Article 311** outlines the **procedures and safeguards** to be followed before a **government employee can be dismissed, removed, or reduced in rank.**
- It acts as a **shield against arbitrary actions** by the government and upholds the principles of natural justice.
- **Key Provisions**
 - **Opportunity to Defend:** No government employee can be dismissed, removed, or reduced in rank except after an inquiry in which they have been informed of the charges against them and given a reasonable opportunity to defend themselves.
 - **Authority for Action:** A civil servant can only be removed from their services by the authority who appointed them or by someone with the same authority or rank as the appointing authority.
 - **Grounds for Dismissal:**
 - An employee's performance or conduct must be found unsatisfactory or detrimental to the efficient functioning of the government.
 - An employee involved in corruption, bribery, fraud, or any other offense involving moral turpitude can be dismissed.
- **Procedure for Disciplinary Action**
 - The competent authority must clearly state the allegations and grounds for disciplinary action.
 - The employee must be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the charges and present their defense.
 - An impartial inquiry should be conducted by a competent authority, allowing the employee to present their case and cross-examine witnesses or evidence.

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- A report should be prepared after the inquiry, taking into account all evidence and submissions made during the inquiry.
- The competent authority should make a reasoned decision based on the inquiry report and communicate it to the employee. The decision must be reasonable, fair, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- **Exceptions to Article 311**
 - **Security of the State:** If the employee's activities are deemed prejudicial to the security of the State, the President or the Governor can dispense with the inquiry and take immediate action.
 - **Efficiency in Public Service:** If the President or the Governor believes it is in the interest of security or efficiency of public service, they can dispense with the inquiry and take appropriate action.
 - **Probationary Employees:** Probationary employees, who have not yet acquired the right to hold a permanent position, can be dismissed or removed without an inquiry.
 - **Judicial Review:** Article 311 provides for judicial review of decisions made under its provisions. Remedies may include reinstatement, back wages, or any other relief deemed appropriate by the court.

UPI Tap and Pay

News: RBI announced UPI Tap and Pay, MyUPI and multicurrency foreign exchange facilities at the Global Fintech Fest 2026.

About UPI Tap and Pay



Source – Zee Business

- **UPI Tap and Pay is a contactless payment facility.**
 - It allows users to **make UPI payments by tapping an NFC-enabled smartphone on a compatible Point-of-Sale (PoS) terminal.**
- **Technology used:** It uses **Near-Field Communication (NFC) technology**, which **enables nearby devices to exchange information wirelessly.**
- **Working mechanism:**
 - **Device requirement:** Users **need an NFC-enabled smartphone and a compatible PoS terminal at the merchant outlet.**
 - **Payment process:** Users unlock their smartphone and **tap it on the PoS terminal**, after which the **payment is processed through the terminal's internet connection.**

- **PIN requirement:** Payments up to ₹5,000 can be made without entering a UPI PIN, while higher-value payments require a UPI PIN.
- **Key features of UPI Tap and Pay:**
 - **QR-free payment:** Users can make payments without scanning a QR code or entering payment details manually.
 - **No mobile data requirement:** The user's phone does not necessarily need an active mobile data connection during the transaction.
 - **Multiple account support:** The facility supports regular UPI-linked accounts and RuPay credit cards linked to UPI.
 - **Contactless experience:** It provides a payment experience similar to contactless card transactions.
 - **NFC dependency:** Both the smartphone and merchant's PoS terminal must support NFC and the new payment functionality.

About MyUPI

- **MyUPI is an AI-powered platform.**
 - It provides users with a single view of their UPI transactions and AutoPay mandates.
- **Developed by:** It has been developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- **Powered by:** It is powered by the Finance Model for India (FiMI) small language model.
- **Aim:** It aims to provide greater control and security over UPI payments.
- **Key features of MyUPI:**
 - **Safety Switch:** It allows users to request rejection of UPI debit transactions if they suspect their account has been compromised.
 - **UPI Number Delink:** It allows users to stop receiving UPI payments through their mobile number.
 - **Beneficiary information:** It provides contextual information about beneficiaries before eligible payments.
 - **Transaction Replay:** It allows users to recall and repeat an earlier transaction through any UPI app.

About Bharat Connect

- **Multicurrency facility:** RBI has introduced a multicurrency facility for foreign exchange services on Bharat Connect.
 - It is being launched initially under a controlled user group (CUG).
- **Supported currencies:** The facility will support the euro, British pound, Canadian dollar, Swiss franc and UAE dirham, expanding forex services beyond the US dollar.
- **Bharat Connect operator:** NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd operates Bharat Connect.
- **Forex integration:** The forex facility is integrated with FX-Retail, which is operated by Clearcorp Dealing Systems (India) Ltd.
- **Future expansion:** After assessment of the CUG phase, the multicurrency facility is proposed to be extended to more Bharat Connect channels and participating banks.

Lord Howe Island and Tasman Sea

News: A 16-year study found a sharp rise in plastic ingestion by fledgling sable shearwaters on Lord Howe Island between 2010 and 2026.

About Lord Howe Island



Source – Naturalworldheritage

- **Lord Howe Island** is a **volcanic, crescent-shaped island** and part of the Lord Howe Island Group.
- **Location:** It lies in the **Tasman Sea**, about **650 km** off **Australia's east coast**.
- **Origin:** The island is **volcanic** in origin and developed from submarine volcanic activity.
- **Discovered by:** The island was **named after Admiral Lord Howe** by **Lieutenant Henry Lidgbird Ball**, who discovered it in 1788.
- **Geographical Features**
 - **Two Peaks:** The island has **two major peaks – Mount Gower and Mount Lidgbird**, both rising above **760 m**.
 - **Coral Reef:** It has the **world's most southerly true coral reef**.
- **Biodiversity:** The island has **rare vegetation** and **diverse endemic fauna**, including the **Lord Howe Woodhen** and **Lord Howe Island Phasmid**.
 - The islands provide important **breeding grounds for large colonies of seabirds**, including **Providence Petrels** and **Red-tailed Tropicbirds**.
- **Recognition:** The **Lord Howe Island Group** was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage site** in **1982**.
- **Major Threats:** **Plastic pollution** is a growing **threat to the island's seabirds**, with a sharp rise in **plastic ingestion by fledgling sooty shearwaters**.

About Tasman Sea



Source – Britannica

- **Tasman Sea** is a large section of the **southwestern Pacific Ocean**.
- **Location:** It lies between the **southeastern coast of Australia** and **Tasmania and New Zealand**.
- **Boundaries:** It merges with the **Coral Sea** to the **north**, while **Bass Strait** and **Cook Strait** connect it towards the **Indian and Pacific oceans**.
- **Naming:** It was named after **Dutch navigator Abel Tasman**, who navigated it in 1642.
- **Nickname:** The Tasman Sea is informally called “**The Ditch**” by Australians and New Zealanders.
- **Climate:** The **southern** part is generally **temperate**, while the **northern part** is **subtropical**.
 - It lies in the **belt of westerly winds** known as the “**roaring forties**.”
- **Key Features of Tasman Sea**
 - **Size:** It covers about **2.3 million sq. km**.
 - **Depth:** Its **maximum depth** exceeds **5,200 metres**.
 - **Ocean currents:** The sea is **influenced by the East Australian Current** and **colder southern waters**.
 - **Economic resources:** Its resources include **fisheries and petroleum deposits**.
 - **Shipping:** It contains **important shipping lanes** between **New Zealand, southeastern Australia and Tasmania**.

Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT 2026

News: The 18th edition of Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT commenced at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, on 21 September 2026.

About Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT 2026



Source – PIB

- **Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT** is a **bilateral platoon-level military exercise** between **India and Mongolia**.
- **Started in:** The exercise has **been conducted since 2006**.
- **Frequency:** It is conducted **annually and alternately** in India and Mongolia.
- **Edition:** The **2026 edition is the 18th edition**.
 - **Previous edition** was held at **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**, in May–June 2025.
- **Aim:** It aims to enhance **joint military capability and interoperability** for Counter-Insurgency Operations in **semi-urban and mountainous terrain** under the **United Nations Mandate**.
- **Key Features of Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT 2026:**
 - **Participation:** The exercise **involves 45 personnel each** from the Indian Army and Mongolian Armed Forces.
 - **Tactical Training:** It focuses on **tactical-level operations**, exchange of best practices and refinement of operational drills.
 - **Counter-Insurgency Drills:** Training includes **Cordon and Search Operations and Room Intervention Drills**.
 - **Special Operations:** The curriculum includes **Special Heliborne Operations and Cyber Security Training**.
 - **Drone Operations:** Troops train in the **employment of drones and counter-drone systems**.
 - **Realistic Training:** Both armies train together in **realistic operational scenarios to strengthen interoperability and joint operations**.

Other Exercises Between India and Mongolia

- **Exercise Khaan Quest:** Multinational **peacekeeping exercise** organised by **Mongolia**.

Dermatophytosis

News: A recent study highlighted rising concerns over fungal infections and the growing ability of some fungal pathogens to resist antifungal drugs.

About Dermatophytosis

- **Dermatophytosis** refers to **infections of the skin, hair and nails** caused by **dermatophytes**.
- **Causative Agent:** Dermatophytes are fungi that grow by using keratin present in the skin, hair and nails.
- **Mechanism:** These fungi colonise keratin-containing tissues and produce lesions on the affected body surfaces.
- **Transmission:**
 - **Direct transmission:** Some dermatophytes spread from one person to another.
 - **Animal and soil transmission:** Some species reach humans from animal hosts or soil.
 - **Indirect transmission:** Infection can also occur through contaminated objects such as upholstery, hairbrushes and hats.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Highly contagious:** Dermatophyte infections can spread easily between individuals.
 - **Affected tissues:** They can infect the skin, hair and nails, causing different types of disease.
 - **Environmental factors:** Tropical climates and overcrowding increase the prevalence of these infections.
 - **Lifestyle factors:** Occlusive footwear, community showers and sports participation are linked with higher prevalence of some infections.
 - **Antifungal Resistance:** Fungi can resist antifungal medicines through genetic mutations and additional copies of protective genes.
- **Treatment:** Antifungal drugs such as azoles, polyenes and echinocandins are used, while susceptibility testing helps determine their effectiveness.

National Formulary of India

News: The Union Minister of State for Health launched the 7th Edition of the National Formulary of India (NFI) 2026 during the 6th National Pharmacovigilance Week.

About National Formulary of India (NFI)

- The **National Formulary of India (NFI)** is a **guidance document** for **healthcare professionals** that **promotes the rational and safe use of medicines**.
- **Published by:** The **Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)** publishes the **NFI** on behalf of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
 - The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** assigned the responsibility of **publishing the NFI to the IPC in 2008**.
 - **IPC** has **published it periodically since 2009**.
- **Origin:** The **first, second and third editions** of **NFI** were **published in 1960, 1966 and 1979**, respectively, **by the Ministry of Health, Government of India**.
- **2026 Edition:** The **7th Edition** was **launched in 2026**.
- **Key Highlights of NFI 2026:**
 - **Drug coverage:** It contains **34 chapters, 20 appendices and 653 drugs**, including **42 fixed-dose combinations and 30 immunologicals**.

- **Updated monographs:** Drug monographs have been revised to align with the **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)** and **National Health Programmes**.
- **Digital access:** It is available through **NFI Online**, with links to **health programmes, immunisation schedules and Jan Aushadhi**.
- **Safe medicine use:** It provides **guidance for the prescribing, dispensing and administering of medicines**.

About Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)

- IPC is a **dedicated autonomous institution** under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- **Core mandate:** It publishes the **Indian Pharmacopoeia and National Formulary of India** regularly.
- **Standards:** It specifies **standards of identity, purity and strength of drugs**.
- **Operational status:** IPC became **fully operational as an autonomous body on 1 January 2009** and
- **Funding:** It is **fully financed by the Central Government**.

Visegrád Group

News: The Visegrad Group backed India's inclusion as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

About Visegrád Group

- The **Visegrád Group**, also called the **Visegrad Four (V4)**.
- It is an **informal intergovernmental forum** and a **cultural and political alliance**.
- **Member Countries:** The group consists of **Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia**.
- **Origin:** The group was **created in 1991** when **Polish, Czechoslovakian and Hungarian** leaders met in **Visegrád, Hungary** to **promote cooperation after the Warsaw Pact**.
 - In **1993**, **Czechoslovakia** separated into the **Czech Republic and Slovakia**.
 - The group then **became the Visegrad Four (V4)**.
- **Aim:** It aims to **promote cooperation in military, economic, cultural and energy affairs** and **strengthen stability and cooperation in Central Europe**.
- **Governance:** It takes **decisions by consensus** and has **no permanent structures**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Regular Meetings:** It conducts **meetings among Heads of State, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers and other ministers and officials**.
 - **Rotating Presidency:** The **presidency changes every year**, and the **presidency sets the agenda for meetings**.
 - **V4+ Format:** The group **can cooperate with EU and non-EU countries** through formats known as **"V4+"**.
 - **Areas of Cooperation:** Its cooperation **covers culture, education, science and information exchange**, along with **wider economic, security and energy cooperation**.

Project Rhino and World Rhino Day

News: On World Rhino Day, PM Modi highlighted rhino conservation through Project Rhino, which supports protection, habitat management and population studies.

About Project Rhino

- **Project Rhino** was launched on **World Rhino Day, September 22, 2026**.

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- **Aim:** It is a dedicated programme aimed at **providing financial and technical support to states** that host the **greater one-horned rhinoceros**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- **Focus:** It will focus on **strengthening protection, managing habitats, improving genetic diversity, and scientifically understanding** rhino population trends.
- **Components:**
 - It will **strengthen anti-poaching measures** and support **habitat management**, including grasslands and movement corridors.
 - It will also assess **rhino genetics** to monitor genetic diversity, reduce inbreeding risks and ensure long-term population health.
 - It will promote **scientific population monitoring** to track growth, reproduction, mortality and other demographic trends for better conservation planning.

About World Rhino Day

- **World Rhino Day** is celebrated globally **every year on September 22**.
 - It is being celebrated **since 2011**.
- It is celebrated **to raise awareness about protecting the five remaining** rhinoceros species.
- **Theme:** 2026's theme is **"Keep the Five Alive."**
 - It calls for stronger efforts **to protect rhino habitats, prevent poaching and curb the illegal trade** in rhino horn.

IMEI Tampering

News: The Government has reiterated that tampering with IMEI numbers is punishable under the Telecommunications Act, 2023.

About IMEI Tampering

- **International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI):**
 - **Unique Identity:** IMEI is a **15-digit number** used to **identify a mobile device on a mobile network**.
 - The **first eight digits form the Type Allocation Code (TAC)**, which **identifies the device model or type**.
 - A dual-SIM phone **generally has two IMEI numbers**, one for each SIM slot.
 - **Function :** It helps **verify a device** when users make calls or use the Internet through mobile networks.
 - **TAC Allocation:** The global allocation of TAC is managed by the **GSMA (Global System for Mobile Communications Association)**.
- **IMEI Tampering:** It involves **intentionally removing, changing or altering the unique identification number** of a mobile device or using equipment configured for such alteration.
- **Tracking Mechanism:**
 - **Central Equipment Identity Register (CIER):** The CIER categorises **devices into white, grey and black lists** based on their IMEI status.
 - **White List:** Devices permitted for **normal network use**.
 - **Grey List:** Devices that **do not conform to standards but may connect under supervision**.
 - **Black List:** Devices reported **lost or stolen and denied network access**.

- **Sanchar Saathi:** Citizens can verify IMEI details, including the brand, model and manufacturer, through the Sanchar Saathi platform.
- **Threat of IMEI Tampering:**
 - **Financial Fraud:** Cloned IMEIs can mask the identity of bad actors, enabling cyber fraud, phishing and parallel banking rackets.
 - **Disrupting Law Enforcement:** Altered IMEIs can make it difficult for police and intelligence agencies to track stolen devices and criminal networks.
 - **Enabling SIM Boxing:** Criminal syndicates can use SIM boxes with tampered or configurable IMEIs to reroute international calls as local traffic.
 - This can bypass official gateways and cause revenue loss to the government.

IMEI Regulatory Framework

- **Telecommunications Act, 2023:** Section 42(3)(c) prohibits tampering with telecommunication identifiers, including IMEI numbers.
 - **Punishment:** Violation may attract up to three years' imprisonment, a fine up to ₹50 lakh, or both.
 - Such offences are cognizable and non-bailable.
- **Telecom Cyber Security Rules, 2024:** Manufacturers must register IMEIs of devices made in India before sale, testing, research or other use.
 - **Importers:** They must register IMEIs before importing devices into India.
 - **Registration:** The process is completed through the Device Setu-ICDR portal.
- **Telecom Cyber Security Amendment Rules, 2025:** The Centre can direct manufacturers not to reassign IMEIs already active in Indian telecom networks.
 - **Network Blocking:** Telecom operators may be directed to block devices with tampered IMEIs.
 - **Second-hand Devices:** Sellers must verify IMEIs through the central database of blacklisted or tampered devices.

Satellite Smart Anti-Airfield Weapons (SAT-SAAW)

News: The Ministry of Defence signed a ₹810.79 crore contract with Bharat Dynamics Limited for 160 SAT-SAAW for the Indian Air Force.

About Satellite Smart Anti-Airfield Weapons (SAT-SAAW)

- **SAT-SAAW** is an air-to-ground precision-guided glide bomb.
- It is designed to neutralise enemy airfields from a long stand-off range.
- **Developed by:** The system was indigenously designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Key Features of SAT-SAAW:**
 - **Precision Guidance:** SAAW uses inertial navigation and signals from satellite systems such as GPS and GLONASS for guidance.

- **Range and Weight:** It is a **125-kilograms class weapon** with an effective **range of up to 110 km**.
- **Target Capability:** It **can target** critical airfield infrastructure, including **runways, bunkers, aircraft hangars and hardened aircraft shelters**.
- **Aircraft Compatibility:** It can be **launched from Su-30 MKI, Hawk and Jaguar aircraft**.
- **Indigenous Content:** The system **will have 60% indigenous content**, including the **indigenisation of the Initial Measurement Unit, Long Impact Delay Fuse and Twin Store Carrier**.

India's First eVTOL Aircraft – e200X

News: The Technology Development Board approved ₹285 crore support to Ubifly Technologies for advancing its indigenous advanced air mobility solution.

About India's first eVTOL aircraft – e200X

- **Electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing (eVTOL)** aircraft are **battery-powered aircraft** that can **take off and land vertically** before transitioning to forward flight.
- The **e200X** is a **specific eVTOL aircraft** being **developed in India for advanced air mobility**.
 - It is a **three-seater, zero-emission aircraft**.
 - It is designed for **one pilot and two passengers**.
- **Developed by:** In India, the e200X is **developed by Ubifly Technologies Private Limited (The ePlane Company), Chennai**.
- **Financial Support:** The Technology Development Board (**TDB**) approved **₹285 crore** under the **Research Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund**.
- **Funding Mode:** The support will be provided through **Optionally Convertible Debentures (OCD)**.
 - The project has a total approved cost of **₹570 crore**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Working Mechanism:** The aircraft can **take off and land vertically using electric propulsion** before switching to forward flight.
 - **Performance:** It has a targeted **range of 110 km and an ideal speed of 160 kmph**.

- **Indigenous Technology:** It uses **vertical rotors, forward propellers, flight-control algorithms, power-distribution controllers and battery-pack modules** with integrated cooling systems.
- **Landing System:** Its landing gear **supports both conventional and vertical landing**, providing operational flexibility.
- **Technology Development:** The project aims to advance the aircraft from **Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6 to TRL 9** through further testing, validation and scale-up.
- **Applications:** It is intended for **advanced air mobility**, including **emergency medical services, airport transfers and urban passenger transport**.

Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited (MSE)

News: The shares of National Stock Exchange (NSE) will also trade on the Metropolitan Stock Exchange (MSE).

About Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited (MSE)

- The **Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited (MSE)** is a **national stock exchange** that provides a **technology-driven electronic trading platform** across multiple financial segments, including equities, equity derivatives, currency derivatives, and debt securities.
- **Recognised by:** It is recognized by the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** since 2008 under the **Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956**.
- **Functions:**
 - It **ensures seamless and secure market operations** for investors, brokers, and **corporates** by integrating advanced electronic trading systems, robust risk management mechanisms, and real-time surveillance tools,
 - It also **actively contributes to the development of India's financial ecosystem** by promoting investor education, market awareness, and regulatory compliance.
 - **SX40 Index:** It is released by MSE. It is **designed to represent a diversified set of leading companies** across key sectors.
 - It serves as a transparent yardstick for performance measurement and supports investors and product issuers with a credible reference for India's equity markets.
- **Recent changes:** The [National Stock Exchange \(NSE\)](#) is going to have its shares traded on the **Metropolitan Stock Exchange (MSE)** along with the [Bombay Stock Exchange \(BSE\)](#).

- The shares of NSE will be available for trading on MSE under the “**Permitted to Trade**” category.
- NSE has selected BSE as its designated stock exchange, but other recognised exchanges are also allowed to trade NSE shares.

Key Facts about Naoero

News: The President of Naoero recently announced the change of name of country from Nauru to Naoero in the U.N. General Assembly.

Key Facts about Naoero

- **Location:** Naoero is a tiny island located in **north-east of Australia**, **42 km south of the equator**.
 - It lies within the **Micronesia sub-region of Oceania**, with its **nearest neighbour** being **Banaba (part of Kiribati)** about 300 km to the east.
- It was **formerly** known as **Pleasant Island**.
- **Climate:** Its climate is **hot and very humid year-round** because of its **proximity** to the equator and the ocean.
- **Reef system:** A **coral reef** surrounds the entire island which is **dotted with pinnacles**. Hence, there **no specific port located** at the coast of the country.
- **Geology:** It is a **phosphate-rock island** with rich deposits near the surface.
- **Highest point:** The **Command Ridge** is the highest point at **71 m** above sea level.
- **Smallest island country:** It is the **third-smallest country** in the world, after Vatican City and Monaco, with an area of **only 21 sq. km**.
 - So, it is the **smallest island nation** in the world.
- **International co-operation:** It is a member of the **United Nations**, the **Commonwealth** of Nations, and the **Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States**.
- **Governance system:** It is a **republic** with a **parliamentary system** of government.
 - The **president** is both **head of state and head of government** and is dependent on **parliamentary confidence** to remain president.
- **Water source:** The **Buada Lagoon**, located inland, is a **rare freshwater resource** but is an **endorheic basin** (not connected to the sea).

Tokay Geckos

News: DRI officers intercepted two persons in Mariani, Assam and seized 86 live endangered Tokay Geckos under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

About Tokay Geckos

- Tokay gecko is a **lizard species** with orange-spotted blue-grey skin.
 - They are **one of the largest geckos alive today** which can grow up to 14 inches in length.
- **Scientific name:** Gekko gekko
- **Habitat:** They live in **tropical rainforests, rock crevices or manmade environments** with a variety of microhabitats.
- **Distribution:** They are found across southeast and east Asia.
- **Species:** Two variants of tokay geckos exist: **a red-spotted and a black-spotted**
- **Characterstics:**
 - **Appearance:** They have **thick, cylindrical bodies**, with heads set apart from their necks.
 - Their limbs are well-defined and powerful, and their bodies are covered in spots.
 - **Camouflage:** They can **changes its skin colour** to blend with its surroundings.
 - **Skin folds:** Their **skin folds help it blend with tree surfaces** and **avoid casting shadows**.
 - **Tail:** They can **drop its tail to escape predators**, and the tail grows back in about three weeks.
 - **Grip:** Tiny structures called **setae** help them stick strongly to vertical and overhead surfaces.
 - **Bite:** They are very fast and a **strong bite**.
 - **Eyes:** They have **two large eyes** and a light-sensitive **third eye** called the parietal eye.
 - **Smell:** They **uses its nose and tongue to detect scents** through the **Jacobson's organ**.
 - **Behaviour:**
 - They are **arboreal**.
 - They are **solitary, nocturnal hunters** and are **more likely to sit and wait for prey than to actively forage**.

- They **communicate vocally** to find members of the opposite sex during the breeding season.
- **Diet:** They are **insectivorous**, and **eat pests** such as cockroaches. They may also **eat small rats, mice and snakes**.
- **Threats:** They face major threats from the **illegal wildlife trade and hunting**.
- **Conservation status:**
 - **IUCN: Least Concern**
 - Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: **Schedule I**
 - **CITES: Appendix-II**

SWIFT Payment System and its Alternatives

News: The BRICS Summit discussed increasing trade and payments in national currencies amid efforts to develop alternatives to the SWIFT system.

About SWIFT Payment System

- **'SWIFT'** stands for the **'Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication'**.
- It is a **messaging network** used by **banks and financial institutions** to **exchange information on financial transactions**.
 - It does **not hold or transfer money or securities**.
- **Global Reach:** It connects **more than 11,000 banking and securities organizations** in over **200 countries and territories**.
- **Headquarter:** Its headquarters is in **Belgium**.
- **Working Mechanism:** Each participant is **assigned a unique eight-digit SWIFT code or Bank Identification Code (BIC)**.
 - The sending **bank uses this code** to send a SWIFT message to the **beneficiary's bank**.
 - After the **message is received and approved**, the money is credited to the required **account**.
- **Governance:**
 - **Ownership and Control:** It is **owned and controlled by its shareholders**.
 - **Board:** Shareholders **elect a 25-member Board of Directors** to **govern and oversee the company**.

- **Oversight:** It is overseen by G-10 central banks and the European Central Bank (ECB), led by the National Bank of Belgium.
- **SWIFT Oversight Forum:** It was established in 2012.
 - It brings the G-10 central banks together with the central banks of India, Australia, Russia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Türkiye and China.

Alternatives of SWIFT

Project mBridge

- The Project mBridge comprises the Bank of Thailand, Central Bank of the UAE, Digital Currency Institute of China, Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and Saudi Central Bank.
- **Purpose:** It is a multi-Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) platform designed for cross-border payments through direct peer-to-peer CBDC settlement.
- **Technology:** The project developed the mBridge Ledger, a blockchain for multi-currency cross-border CBDC payments.
- **Status:** It attained minimum viability status in 2024.

Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS)

- The Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) is backed by the People's Bank of China.
- **Purpose:** China launched it in 2015 to internationalise yuan use.
- **Working:** It allows global banks to clear cross-border yuan transactions directly onshore.
- **Reach:** It has participants in more than 120 countries, including all BRICS members except India.

System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS)

- The System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS) was developed by Russia in 2014.
- **Purpose:** It was developed to bypass Western sanctions.
- **Growth:** 50 new entities joined the system in 2023, taking the total to 440.
- **Participation:** More than 100 participants were non-residents.

SEPAM (System for Electronic Payments Messaging)

- The SEPAMA is Iran's local interbank telecom system.

- **Connectivity:** It has **52 branches of Iranian banks** and **four unnamed foreign banks** connecting with **106 banks** using SPFS.

Chundan Vallam, Nettoor Petti, Bhairavan Theyyam Ritual Art Sculpture

News: The PM Mementos e-Auction 2026 includes 32 mementos from Keralam, highlighting its art, craftsmanship, performing traditions and cultural heritage.

About Chundan Vallam

- **Chundan Vallam** is a **historic war boat of Kerala**, also known as the **traditional snake boat**.
- It is famously associated with **Vallamkali**, the **traditional boat races held during the Onam festival**.
- **Cultural Significance:** Today, Chundan Vallam is a **prominent part of Kerala's traditional boat-racing culture**.

About Nettoor Petti

- **Nettoor Petti** is a **traditional jewellery box of Keralam**.
- **Naming:** It is named after **Nettur**, a **village near Kozhikode**.
- It was traditionally **used by women of aristocratic families to store jewellery and other valuable objects**.
- **Tachu Sastram:** Its design and construction follow the **principles of Tachu Sastram**, an **ancient architectural science followed in Kerala**.
- **Craftsmanship and Materials:** It is made from **rosewood and other country woods**.
 - The wooden structure has **handcrafted hinges and nails**, along with **decorative polished brass elements**.

About Bhairavan Theyyam Ritual Art Sculpture

- The **Bhairavan Theyyam Ritual Art Sculpture** represents **Bhairavan Theyyam**, a **ritual dance-art tradition of North Keralam**.
- **Mythological Roots:** It represents the **Bhairava aspect of Lord Shiva**, associated with **purification, protection and the Shaivism tradition**.
- **Distinctive Features:** The sculpture depicts **characteristic headgear, facial makeup, breastplates and traditional attire** associated with the ritual tradition.

Nidhi Companies

News: The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has issued an advisory cautioning the public about Nidhi Companies and their functioning.

About Nidhi Companies

- **Nidhi Companies** are Non-Banking Financial Companies created to **promote saving and thrift among their members**.
 - They are **exempted from the core provisions of the RBI Act**.
 - They are classified as **“Mutual Benefit Financial Company”** by RBI.
- **Regulated by:** They are regulated by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)** under the **Companies Act, 2013 and Nidhi Rules, 2014**.
- **Members:** A Nidhi Company must have a **minimum of 7 members**, of whom **at least 3 must be appointed as directors**
- **Provisions related to Nidhi Company:**
 - Every company **desirous to function as “Nidhi” is required to file application in Form “NDH-4”** for getting itself declared/ updated as “Nidhi”.
 - The requirement for Central Government declaration of Nidhi Companies was **reintroduced from 15 August 2019** through amendments to **Section 406 of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Nidhi Rules, 2014**.
 - It can **accept deposits and give loans only to their members**.
 - A Nidhi Company **cannot –**
 - Open current accounts in the names of its members.
 - Deal in **chit funds, hire-purchase, leasing, insurance or securities business**.
 - Issue **preference shares, debentures or other debt instruments**.
 - The **deposits accepted by these Companies are not insured by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)**. Therefore, **if a company fails or fraud occurs, recovery of the deposited money may be difficult or incomplete**.

DURGA scheme

News: The Delhi Cabinet recently approved the Driving Upliftment and Rozgar for Women/Transgender Green e-Auto (DURGA) scheme to provide safe and dignified self-employment.

About DURGA scheme

- **DURGA (Driving Upliftment and Rozgar for Women/Transgender Green e-Auto) Scheme** aims to provide **safe, clean and dignified employment opportunities** to women and transgender persons.
- **Launched by:** It is an initiative by the **Delhi Government**.
- **Objective:** It also seeks to **promote women's safety, greater participation of transgender persons** in the **transport sector, last-mile connectivity and clean and sustainable urban transport**.
- **Eligibility:** Women applicants must be **20 to 40 years** of age, **residents of Delhi**, and must possess a **valid Voter ID, Light Motor Vehicle driving licence and Public Service Vehicle Badge**.
 - A woman with **more than three children** will **not be eligible** for the scheme.
 - The applicant or her family must **not own** any **registered transport vehicle or three-wheeler**.
 - The applicant's **family income during FY 2025-26 must not exceed ₹5 lakh**.
 - Transgender applicants must submit a **valid transgender certificate issued by the District Magistrate's office** and **must fulfil the other prescribed eligibility conditions**.
 - Applicants will be **able to apply through a dedicated online portal** to be created for the scheme.
- **Key Features:**
 - In the first phase, **1,300 pink electric autos** will be provided, including **1,170 for women and 130 for transgender persons**.
 - Each district will be allocated up to **90 e-autos for women and 10 e-autos for transgender persons**.
 - The e-autos will have a **mandatory three-year lock-in period**, during which they cannot be sold, transferred or disposed of.
 - The e-autos will carry **DURGA branding and special identification features** so that passengers can easily identify them.
 - The scheme also provides for **integration of e-autos with the public transport network**.
- **Electric vehicle charging facilities are already available in the parking areas of 70 Delhi Metro stations**, which will support the operation of these e-autos.

OneSCD

News: India co-hosted the launch of OneSCD on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 81) in New York.

About OneSCD

- **OneSCD** is a **Global Partnership** to advance **equity and transform Sickle Cell Care**.
- It is a **multistakeholder and multisectoral global partnership** established to coordinate existing efforts and support country-led action on [Sickle Cell Disease \(SCD\)](#).
- **Hosted by:** It has been launched at high level event held during the **81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA81)**.
 - It is **hosted by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and co-hosted by India**.
 - The initiative brought together partners **including the Government of Nigeria, WHO, UNICEF, Africa CDC, the World Coalition on Sickle Cell Disease and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital**.
- **Key Features**
 - It will **bring together government leaders, UN agencies, health experts, civil society, and people with lived experience**.
 - The Partnership **aims to:**
 - **Build global consensus and standardized targets** for SCD and strengthen political commitment.
 - **Support countries in integrating SCD into national health systems**, including primary healthcare, Universal Health Coverage, NCD and maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health strategies.
 - **Mobilize sustainable financing and partnerships** to expand newborn screening, diagnosis, essential medicines, safe blood supplies, patient registries, health information systems, and comprehensive lifelong SCD care.

About Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

- **Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)** is a group of **inherited red blood cell** disorders affecting **haemoglobin**.
 - **Normal Cells are of Disc-shaped and flexible**, allowing easy movement through blood vessels.

- In Sickle Cell Disease, **Red blood cells become crescent or “sickle” shaped**, causing them to be rigid and block blood flow.
- **Blocked blood flow can lead to serious issues** such as Stroke, Eye problems, Infections, Pain crises.
- India has adopted a **comprehensive approach to Sickle Cell Disease** through the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission**.
 - It was **launched in 2023** with the goal of eliminating Sickle Cell Disease as a **public health problem by 2047**.

Gulbarga Tur Dal and Tur Dal cultivation in India (Pigeon Pea)

News: APEDA flagged off 1 MT of GI-tagged Gulbarga Tur Dal from Karnataka to the Maldives, helping expand India's agricultural exports.

About Gulbarga Tur Dal (Pigeon Pea)

- **Gulbarga Tur Dal** is associated with the **Kalaburagi region of Karnataka**.
- **Features:**
 - The **high calcium and potassium content of the soil** in Gulbarga tur dal-growing **region** has been one of the major factors for its **superior quality**.
 - It is recognized for its **distinctive taste, aroma and quality**.
 - It also takes **less time to cook**.
- **Recognition:** It has received the **Geographical Indication (GI) registration** in **2019**.
- **Production:** Karnataka is one of **India's major agricultural states with pulses** playing an important role in its dryland agriculture and rural economy.
 - **Kalaburagi is one of the major centres of tur cultivation** and production in Karnataka.

About Tur Dal (Pigeon Pea) Cultivation in India

- **Tur dal** is the **major legume crop**.
 - It is also known as **pigeon pea or Arhar dal**.
- It is the **second most important pulse** after gram.
- **Geographical condition requirements :**
 - **Climate:** It is mainly grown in **tropical regions**, particularly in the **semi-arid areas of India**.

- **Rainfall:** It requires **about 600–650 mm of annual rainfall**.
 - It needs **moist conditions during the first eight weeks** and relatively dry conditions during flowering and pod development.
- **Temperature:** It grows well at **26–30°C during the rainy season and 17–22°C during the post-rainy season (November–March)**.
- **Soil:** It grows well in **black cotton soils** because these **soils retain moisture**, which benefits the crop during dry spells.
 - It can also thrive in **loamy and well-drained alluvial soils**.
- **Sunlight:** It **needs good sunlight** during pod development.
 - Low sunlight during the monsoon or cloudy weather can lead to poor pod formation.
- **Intercropping:** It is commonly **grown as an intercrop** with many other crops.
- **Major Diseases:** The major diseases affecting pigeonpea are **wilt, sterility mosaic disease, Phytophthora blight, Alternaria blight, and powdery mildew**.
- **Production area:** **Uttar Pradesh** is the **leading producer of it in India**, producing about 0.47 million tonnes from 0.49 million hectares.
 - Other producers are **Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Exporter:** **Mozambique** is an important exporter of pigeonpea (Tur/Arhar) to India.
- **Nutritional value:**
 - It is **rich in protein and carbohydrates** and provides **important minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, and iron**.
 - It is **low in fat and provides good energy**, making it a nutritious part of a balanced diet.
- **Note:** Recently, in a major scientific breakthrough **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** has developed **India's first fully annotated telomere-to-telomere (T2T) reference genome of pigeonpea (*Cajanus cajan* L. Millsp.) variety 'Asha'**.

Exercise VARUNA 2026

News: INS Trishul has arrived at Toulon, France, to participate in the 24th edition of the bilateral maritime exercise VARUNA.

About Exercise VARUNA 2026

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- **Exercise VARUNA 2026** is a **bilateral maritime exercise** between the **Indian Navy and the French Navy**.
- **2026 Edition:** The **2026 edition is the 24th edition** of the exercise.
 - The 2026 edition is hosted by **France at Toulon Naval Base**.
- **Origin:** While the **bilateral exercise** between the two navies were **initiated in 1993**, it was **christened as 'VARUNA' in 2001** and has become a hallmark of **India – France strategic bilateral relationship**.
- **Objective:** The exercise **aims to improve coordination, enhance interoperability, share experiences and best practices**, and foster greater mutual understanding between the two Navies.
- **Key Features of Exercise VARUNA 2026:**
 - **Two Phases:** The exercise includes **professional engagements in harbour and at sea, allowing both Navies to undertake different activities**.
 - **Harbour Phase:** It includes **cross-deck visits, operational interactions and sporting engagements between the two Navies**.
 - **Sea Phase:** The exercise involves **professional engagements at sea to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the two Navies**.
 - **Experience Sharing:** The activities provide opportunities to **share experiences and best practices and enhance interoperability**.
 - **Mutual Understanding:** The engagements help **foster greater mutual understanding between the Indian Navy and the French Navy**.
- **Other India-France Military Exercises:**
 - **FRINJEX:** It is a **joint Army exercise**.
 - **GARUDA:** It is a **bilateral Air Force exercise**.

Rangeet River

News: Sikkim will host a three-day river festival on the Rangeet River to promote sustainable angling, river conservation, tourism and community participation.

About Rangeet River

- The **Rangeet, or Rangit River** is the **largest river in Sikkim**.
- **Origin:** It originates from a **glacier of Mount Kabru in the lower Kanchenjunga region**.

- **Course:** It begins its **course in the West Sikkim** district and flows **past Pelling, Legship and Jorethang** before joining the **Teesta**.
- **Boundary:** During its final flow, the Rangeet forms the **boundary between Sikkim and Darjeeling district of West Bengal**.
- **Tributary of:** The river joins the **Teesta River at Teesta Bazaar**, on the periphery of **West Bengal and Sikkim**.
- **Terrain:** Its banks have thick **forest cover**, while some areas are **used for terrace farming**.
- **Ecological Importance:** Its mountain river **system supports cold-water fisheries**, provides irrigation and freshwater.
- **Hydropower Projects:** It supplies water for small hydropower projects.
 - **The Rangeet Dam** has been **built on the Rangeet River**.
 - It started **operating in year 2000**.
 - It **has a 60 MW capacity**.
 - It is a **45-metre-high concrete gravity structure** with a length of 100 metres.

Subansiri Upper Hydroelectric Project and Subansiri River

News: The Expert Appraisal Committee recommended environmental clearance for SUHEP, subject to Stage-1 forest clearance and concerns over tree felling.

About Subansiri Upper Hydroelectric Project (SUHEP)

- **SUHEP** is a **run-of-the-river hydropower project** planned on the **Subansiri River basin**.
- **Location:** The project is planned near **Menga, 20 km from Daporijo in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Subansiri district**.
- **Objectives:** **Power generation and flood moderation** are the stated objectives.
- **Developer:** **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC)**
- **Key Features:**
 - **Capacity:** The project has a **planned capacity of 1,605 MW**.
 - **Dam:** It envisages a **237-metre-high storage dam** from the deepest foundation level of the Subansiri River.
 - **Reservoir:** The reservoir will have a **surface area of 22.2 sq km** and a **length of around 50 km at full reservoir level**.

About Subansiri River

- **Origin:** The Subansiri River originates in the Tibetan Plateau from the confluence of – Lokong Chu, Chayal Chu and Tsari Chu rivers.
- **Type:** It is a trans-Himalayan and antecedent river that existed before the rise of the Himalayas and continued its course through the mountains.
- **Course:** It flows through Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh before entering Assam.
 - In Assam, it passes near Majuli and merges with the Brahmaputra River at Jamurighat.
 - **Tributary of:** It is a right-bank tributary of the Brahmaputra River
- **Length:** Its total length is approximately 442 km.
- **Major Tributaries:** Its major tributaries include Laro, Nye, Yume, Tsari, Kamla, Jiyadhol, Ranganadi and Dikrong.

Teqball

News: Teqball made its debut at the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, with India coming close to winning medals in women's singles and mixed doubles..

About Teqball

- **Teqball** is a hybrid of football and table tennis.
- It is played with a football on a curved table.
- **Origin:** It was invented in Budapest, Hungary, in 2012.
 - It was developed by former professional footballer Gábor Borsányi, entrepreneur György Gattyán, and computer scientist Viktor Huszár.
- **Global Governing Body:** The Fédération Internationale de Teqball (FITEQ) is the global body that organises Global Series and World Championships.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Participants:** Teqball can be played in singles between two players or doubles between two teams of two players.
 - **Equipment:** It uses a size-5 football filled to lower pressure and a curved table with a rigid net.
 - **Format:** Matches are played in best-of-three sets, with 12 points needed to win a set.

- **Touches:** Players **cannot use their arms or hands** and get a **maximum of three touches before returning the ball**.
- **Doubles:** In doubles, **the ball must be passed to a teammate at least once** before being played towards the opponent.
- **Table:** Players **cannot touch the table during play**, reducing the chances of injury through contact.

Status of Teqball in India

- **Federation:** Teqball India was formed in 2019 and is based in Mumbai.
 - It is affiliated with FITEQ.
- **Recognition:** The sport is awaiting recognition from India's Sports Ministry and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).
- **Players:** India currently has around 180–200 registered players.
- **International Performance**
 - At the **2024 World Championships in Vietnam**, Mohamed Anas Baig and Declan Gonsalves won **bronze in men's doubles**.
 - **Asian Games 2026:** India fielded a **three-member** squad in **women's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles**.
 - Quimcy Dsouza competed in women's singles, while Mohamed Anas Baig and Declan Gonsalves competed in men's doubles.
 - Dsouza and Baig also represented India in mixed doubles.
 - India narrowly missed bronze in women's singles and mixed doubles.

Digital Connectivity Rating (DCR) Platform

News: TRAI has launched the Digital Connectivity Rating (DCR) Platform to make property connectivity ratings visible and verifiable to consumers. About

About Digital Connectivity Rating (DCR) Platform



Source – ZEE Business

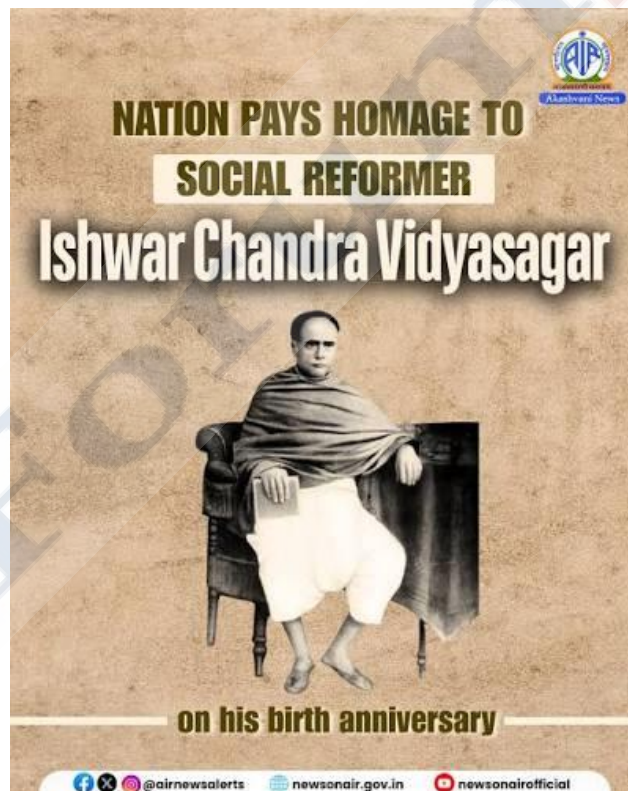
- **Digital Connectivity Rating (DCR) Platform** is an **integrated digital platform** that enables consumers to view the **digital connectivity ratings of residential, commercial, and government properties**.
- **Launched By:** The platform was launched by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (**TRAI**).
- **Legal Backing:** It implements the **TRAI (Rating of Properties for Digital Connectivity) Regulations, 2024**, as amended in 2026, and follows the **Rating Manual 2026**.
- **Aim:** It aims to provide **consumers with credible and comparable connectivity information** to support informed property purchase or lease decisions.
- **Key Features**
 - **Integrated Workflow:** The platform **brings Property Managers, registered DCRAs, and consumers onto a common digital interface** and **supports the complete rating process**.
 - **Digital Assessment:** Registered Digital Connectivity Rating Agency (DCRA) **can assess properties, record test results, manage documents, generate reports, and complete the rating process**.
 - **Mobile Connectivity Testing:** A **dedicated mobile app** enables **authorised DCRAs to conduct in-building digital connectivity measurements** according to the prescribed methodology.

- **Consumer Access:** Consumers can search rated properties by **name, certificate ID, or location, view ratings, and verify digitally signed certificates through QR codes.**
- **Digital Connectivity Rating Agency (DCRA)**
 - A DCRA is a **registered agency authorised to assess and rate the digital connectivity of properties under the DCR framework.**
 - **Registration:** Eligible entities intending to work as DCRA's are **registered by TRAI through the DCR Platform.**

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

News: The nation is paying homage on September 26 to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar on his 207th birth anniversary.

About Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar



Source: News On Air

- **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar** was an Indian educator and social reformer considered the father of Bengali prose.

- He was born on **26 September 1820 at Birsingha in Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal.**
 - He was born into a poor Brahmin family.
 - His real name was **Iswarchandra Bandopadhyay.**
 - He had displayed an exceptional thirst for knowledge from an early age.
- **Later years:** He spent over **12 years at Sanskrit College in Calcutta**, where he studied Sanskrit grammar, literature, Vedanta philosophy, logic, astronomy and Hindu law.
 - In recognition of his remarkable scholarship, he was bestowed with the title **“Vidyasagar,”** meaning **“Ocean of Learning,”** at the young age of 21.
- He studied **English literature and philosophy** and was appointed **principal of Sanskrit College on January 22, 1851.**
- He was also the **first Secretary of Bethune School.**
- **Contribution:**
 - **Education:** Through his celebrated book **Borno Porichoy (Introduction to the Letters)**, he **simplified the Bengali language** and made it accessible to ordinary people.
 - His most enduring contributions were as an **educationist and social reformer**, particularly in **challenging the traditional practices of upper-caste Hindu society.**
 - **Women remained at the centre** of his reform efforts.
 - **Child marriage:** He devoted much of his life to opposing **child marriage** and advocating **widow remarriage.**
 - In a paper written in 1850, he launched a **strong critique of the practice of marrying girls at the age of 10** or even younger.
 - He highlighted the **social, ethical and health-related problems associated with the practice and questioned the validity of the Dharma Shastras** that supported it.
 - He also drew upon **scriptures and ancient commentaries** to argue in favour of **widow remarriage**, asserting that the **“sastras explicitly sanction their remarriage.”**
 - **Widow remarriage:** In 1855, Vidyasagar **published two influential tracts on the Marriage of Hindu Widows.**

- On October 14, 1855, he submitted a **petition to the Government of India**, urging it to consider **passing a law to remove the obstacles to the remarriage of Hindu widows** and to recognize the children born from such marriages as legitimate.
- On July 16, 1856, the **Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, also known as Act XV**, was passed.
- **Polygamy:** He also campaigned **against polygamy**.
 - In 1857, a petition with **25,000 signatures** sought to prohibit polygamy among Kulin Brahmins.
 - A second petition, backed by **21,000 signatures**, followed in 1866.
 - In the 1870s, Vidyasagar argued that polygamy, lacking scriptural sanction, should be **prohibited by law**.
- He played a significant role in **establishing several educational institutions**, including the **Metropolitan Institution (now Vidyasagar College) in 1872**.
 - He also set up **20 model schools** across **Kolkata, Midnapore, Burdwan and Nadia**, providing quality education to students irrespective of their social background.
- **Notable work:** Among his works are **Borno Porichoy (1855), Betal Panchabinsati (1847), Sitar Bonobas (1860) and Shakuntala (1854)**.
 - **Other notable work:** Vidyasagar's literary and social reform writings include **Banglar Itihaas (1848), Jivancharita (1849), Mahabharata (1860), Seetar Vanavas (1860), Bhrantivilaas (1869), Oti Alpa Hoilo (1873), Aabaar Oti Alpa Hoilo (1873), Brajavilaas (1884), and Ratnopariksha (1886)**.
 - His important works on social reform include **Bidhobabivah (1855)**, advocating widow remarriage; **Bahubivah (1871)**, opposing polygamy; and **Balyabivah**, which criticised child marriage.
- He passed away on **29 July 1891**, leaving behind a lasting legacy of **knowledge, compassion, education, and social reform** in the service of nation-building.

India's First Port-based e-Methanol Plant

News: The foundation stone was laid for India's first port-based e-methanol production facility at Deendayal Port Authority in Kandla, Gujarat.

About India's First Port-based e-Methanol Plant



Source – DD India

- **Location:** India's First Port-based e-Methanol Plant will be established at Deendayal Port Authority (DPA), Kandla, Gujarat.
- **Initiative By:** The project is a joint initiative of Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) and Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd (APCL).
- **Funding:** The project involves a total investment of ₹2,300 crore, with DPA and APCL contributing in a 76:24 ratio.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Two Phases:** The first phase will add 50 tonnes per day at ₹1,200 crore, while the second will add 100 tonnes per day at ₹1,100 crore.
 - **Green Fuel Supply:** The e-methanol will support vessels operating on the Asia-Europe International Trade Corridor.
 - **Green-Fuel Ecosystem:** The project will support transportation, storage and supply infrastructure around Kandla.
 - **Production Cost:** Green methanol is expected to cost about US\$750 per tonne, compared with a global rate of about US\$1,300.

About e-Methanol

- Methanol is a chemical compound used as a fuel and in industrial applications.

- **E-methanol** is a low-carbon form of **methanol** produced using **renewable energy** and **captured or recycled CO₂**.
- **Process of Production:**
 - **Green Hydrogen Generation:** **Renewable** electricity is used to **split water (H₂O)** into **hydrogen and oxygen** through **electrolysis**.
 - **CO₂ Capture:** **CO₂** is captured from **industrial sources** or **directly from the air** and used as an **input** for **production**.
 - **Methanol Synthesis:** **Green hydrogen** and **captured CO₂** are **combined** in a **catalytic reactor** under **pressure** to **produce methanol** with **minimal by-products**.
- **Applications:** E-methanol can be used as a **low-carbon fuel** in **shipping** and in **heavy industry** and **chemical manufacturing**.

Cool Leaders Awards

News: The inaugural Cool Leaders Awards were launched at the Global Cooling Pledge Assembly 2026 in Singapore to recognise leadership in sustainable cooling.

About Cool Leaders Awards



Source – UNEP

- The **Cool Leaders Awards** is a **global recognition initiative** that **honours outstanding leadership** in **sustainable cooling and heat resilience**.

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- **Launched By:** It was launched by the **UNEP Cool Coalition**.
 - It was **introduced at the Global Cooling Pledge Assembly 2026 in Singapore**.
- **2026 Cool Leaders Award**
 - **Singapore:** It was recognised for leadership in **passive cooling and heat resilience**.
 - **United Arab Emirates:** It was recognised for leadership in **district cooling and advancing cooling in global climate and development policy**.
 - **Dong Mingzhu:** The **Chairwoman of Gree Electric Appliances** was recognised for **spearheading the development of ultra-efficient, low-carbon cooling technologies**, including the **Zero Carbon Source air-conditioning system**.

UNEP Cool Coalition

- It is a global platform **for sustainable cooling**.
- **Launched in :** It was **launched in 2019** as a **flagship initiative** of the **UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit**.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Network:** It brings **together over 250 actors, including governments, businesses, cities and financial institutions**, to promote efficient and climate-friendly cooling.

Global Cooling Pledge

- It is the **world's first collective global commitment to reduce the climate impact of cooling**.
- **Launched At:** It was **launched at COP28 in 2023**.
- **Emission and Efficiency Targets:** It aims to **reduce cooling-related emissions by at least 68% below 2022 levels by 2050** and increase the **efficiency of new air-conditioners by 50% by 2030**.
- The **Global Cooling Pledge Assembly 2026** announced a **package of new measures** to accelerate action on sustainable cooling and heat resilience.
 - **Cool Leaders Awards:** It recognizes outstanding leadership in **sustainable cooling and heat resilience**.
 - **Global Roadmap on Heat Resilience:** It provides a framework to **help countries build resilience to extreme heat and protect essential services**.
 - **Nature for Cooling Challenge:** It supports the **use of nature-based solutions, such as urban forests, parks and green roofs, to tackle extreme heat**.

- **Manufacturing Platform:** It brings together **governments and manufacturers** to increase the **availability of efficient cooling equipment and promote low- and ultra-low-GWP refrigerants**.

WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 and India's Position

News: Team India secured 10th position at the 48th WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai 2026, winning 6 Silver Medals and 20 Medal for Excellence.

About WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 and India's Position



Source – MoSD

- The **WorldSkills Competition** is the world's **biggest international skills competition**, bringing together **young people, industry, education and government leaders** from around the world to **advance Technical and Vocational Education and Training**.
- **Frequency:** It is held **every two years**.
- **2026 Host:** It is hosted in **Shanghai, China**.
 - It was held from **23 to 25 September** at the **National Exhibition and Convention Center, Shanghai**.
- **Skills range:** It ranges from **Robotics, Cloud Computing, and Cybersecurity** to **Aircraft Maintenance, Cooking, and Welding**.
- **India's Participation in 2026 edition:**
 - India's participation at WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 was coordinated by the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** under the aegis of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**.

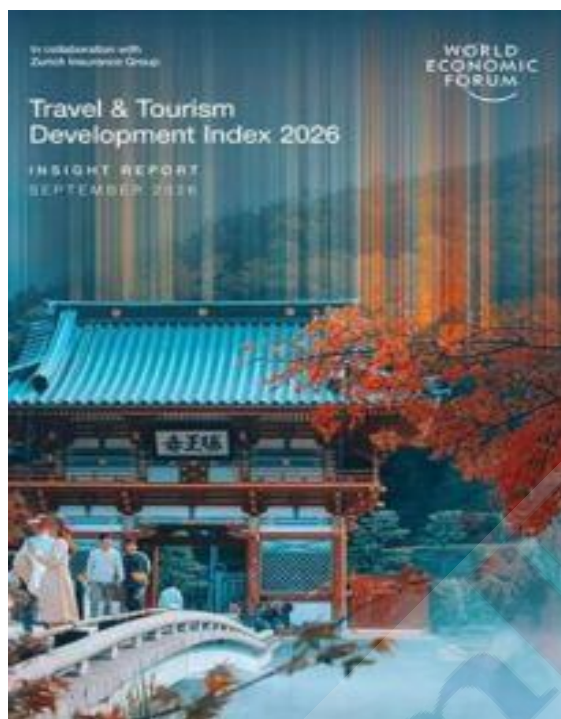
Factly Compilation September 2026

- It is supported from **Sector Skill Councils, industry partners, training institutions, technical experts** and other stakeholders.
- India is represented by its **largest-ever contingent of 70 competitors**, showcasing their talent and skills across **63 different disciplines**.
- This year, India debuted in **11 new and emerging skill categories**, including Dental Prosthetics, Digital Interactive Media Design, Intelligent Security Technology, Landscape Gardening, Optoelectronic Technology, Retail Sales, Unmanned Aerial Systems, Industrial Mechanics, Software Testing, Heavy Vehicle Technology and Aircraft Maintenance.
- **Position:** Team India secured **10th position at the 48th WorldSkills Competition, Shanghai 2026**.
- **Medals:** They won **6 Silver Medals and 20 Medal for Excellence**.
- **Winners of silver medals are:**
 - **Smriti Nambiar** in **Bakery**;
 - **Mohammed Salam** in **Dental Prosthetics**;
 - **Kovid Ajay Gangrade** in **Digital Interactive Media Design**;
 - **Parth Vohra** in **Industrial Design Technology**;
 - **Mehrunissa Begum** in **Logistics and Freight Forwarding**; and
 - **Saniya Joshi** in **Retail Sales**.
- India also secured **20 Medal for Excellence across technical, industrial, digital, creative and service skills**.
 - **Smriti Nambiar, Silver Medallist in Bakery**, was recognised as **Best of Nation for India**.

Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2026

News: The World Economic Forum released the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2026, with India improving to 31st position from 39th in 2024.

About Travel & Tourism Development Index 2026



Source – WEF

- **Travel & Tourism Development Index** assesses the **conditions that support sustainable and resilient tourism development**.
- **Published by:** It is published by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
 - The **2026** edition is published by WEF in collaboration with Zurich Insurance Group.
- **Frequency:** The index is published **biennially**.
- **Origin:** The index was **first launched in 2007 as the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI)**.
 - It was **relaunched in its current form in 2022**, with a broader focus on sustainable and resilient tourism development.
- **Economies Assessed:** The 2026 edition assessed **110 economies**.
- **Objective:** It provides comparable evidence to **help governments, businesses and destination leaders identify conditions and policies** that can help tourism grow sustainably, withstand disruption and support national development.
- **Key Highlights of Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2026**
- **Global Context:**

- **Tourism Recovery:** International tourist arrivals reached 1.5 billion in 2025, 4.4% above pre-pandemic levels.
- **Improved Performance:** 101 of 110 economies improved their scores between 2024 and 2026, while the average score rose 2.1%.
- **Top Ranking :** Japan moved up two places to first, followed by the US, Spain, Australia and France.
- **Employment:** Travel and tourism supported more than 366 million jobs in 2025, about one in every 10 jobs globally.
- **India's Performance**
 - **India's Rank:** India rose to 31st from 39th in 2024, supported by its low travel costs, cultural resources and natural attractions.
 - **Cultural Resources:** India is among the top 10 economies for World Heritage cultural sites, along with China and Mexico.
 - **Areas for Improvement:** Workforce skills, environmental sustainability and tourism infrastructure remain areas requiring improvement.
 - **Economic Contribution:** India, along with nine other large non-high-income tourism economies, collectively accounts for more than 28% of global direct travel and tourism GDP.

Rakhine State of Myanmar

News: A Myanmar military air strike near a market in rebel-held Rakhine State killed at least 49 people and injured 58 others.

About Rakhine State of Myanmar



Source – Al Jazeera

- **Location:** It is located in **southwestern Myanmar**.
- **Bordered by:** It is **bordered by Chin State to the north**, other **Myanmar regions to the east**, the **Bay of Bengal to the west**, and **Bangladesh to the northwest**.
- **Capital:** Sittwe is the **capital of Rakhine State**, formerly known as Akyab.
- **Geographical Features:**
 - **Extent:** Rakhine State stretches from the **Naf estuary in the north** to the **Gwa River in the south**.
 - **Arakan Yoma:** The **Arakan Yoma** forms its *eastern boundary* and **partly separates it from southern Myanmar**.
 - **Coast and islands:** It has a **long, narrow coastline** along the **Bay of Bengal**, with offshore islands such as **Cheduba and Ramree**.
 - **Rivers:** Its principal rivers include the **Naf estuary, Mayu, Kaladan and Lemro** rivers.

New Extradition Portal and PRAHAAR initiative

News: The Ministry of Home Affairs unveiled PRAHAAR and a new extradition portal to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts and bring fugitives back to India.

About New Extradition Portal



Source – PIB

- **New Extradition Portal** is intended to bring together and streamline efforts to secure the return of fugitives from abroad.
- **Launched by:** The **Ministry of Home Affairs** launched the new extradition portal.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Unified Platform:** The portal brings together key bodies—the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**, **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**, and **state law enforcement agencies**—to track and manage extradition requests smoothly once a fugitive is detained abroad.
 - **Inter-Agency Synergy:** It eliminates **communication gaps**, ensuring **zero delay** when transmitting court-approved extradition requests to foreign nations.
 - **Institutional participation:** Senior **officials from central and state police organisations** participated in discussions on extradition and counter-terrorism.

About PRAHAAR Initiative

- **PRAHAAR** is India's first comprehensive **National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy**.
- **Launched by:** The **Ministry of Home Affairs** launched PRAHAAR in February 2026.
- **Aim:** It provides a **proactive, intelligence-led framework to prevent and respond to terrorist activities and radicalisation through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches**.
- **Seven Pillars of PRAHAAR:**

● Prevention	● Using intelligence-led, proactive measures to stop attacks before they occur.
● Responses	● Swift, proportionate, and graded responses coordinated across central and state levels.
● Aggregating Capacities	● A “whole-of-government” approach to modernize forces with advanced tools and weaponry.
● Human Rights	● Ensuring operations are grounded in the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights.
● Attenuating Conditions	● Addressing radicalization and socio-economic vulnerabilities through education and engagement.
● Aligning Efforts	● Strengthening international cooperation via treaties, extradition, and UN-led norms.
● Recovery & Resilience	● A “whole-of-society” approach involving NGOs and community leaders for rehabilitation.

- **Key Features:**

- **Zero tolerance:** The strategy follows a zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism and violence.
- **Proactive doctrine:** PRAHAAR shifts India from a reactive security stance to a proactive doctrine.
- **Real-time intelligence sharing:** PRAHAAR formalises real-time intelligence sharing through the **Multi Agency Centre (MAC)**.
 - It also promotes a swift and coordinated chain of command between State agencies/police and specialised central forces such as the NSG.

- **Technology and security:** It integrates advanced technology and focuses on securing critical infrastructure.
- **Continuous strengthening:** The strategy emphasises continuous analysis of terror incidents, result-oriented action and regular review through the Annual Anti-Terror Conference.

Indrayani River

News: As part of the Seva Sankalp initiative, the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) organised a stakeholder consultation on Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) and emergency preparedness at Lonavala and Bhushi Dams.

About Indrayani River



Source: Research gate

- **Indrayani River** is a rain-fed river through Maharashtra.
- **Origin:** It originates at Kurvande village near Lonavala, in the North Western Ghats and flows towards east to meet [Bhima River](#) near Tulapur, Pune.
- **Length:** It covers a total distance of 105.3 km.
- **Tributary of:** It is a tributary of the Bhima River.
- **Associated Pilgrimage sites:** It flows through two pilgrimage centres namely Dehu and Alandi, so it is respected as a sacred river which related with great Saints such as [Saint Tukaram Maharaj](#) and Dnyaneshwar Maharaj.
- It also passes through the industrial town of Pimpri-Chinchwad.

- **Associated Dam:** Valvan dam, Lonavala and Bhushi Dam are situated on the river and its tributaries.

About Lonavala Dam and Bhushi Dam

- **Lonavala Dam and Bhushi Dam** both are situated within the **Indrayani River system**.
- They were constructed in **late 1860s for the Great Indian Peninsular Railway** as a wellspring of water for their steam motors.
 - Water from the dam was **conveyed to Lonavala, Khandala and the switching station of the railroads by cast-press funnels**.
- Bhushi Dam collects water from the **Indrayani River and its tributaries** and releases it through a series of steps that create a waterfall-like effect.

United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

News: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal on Monday addressed the 15th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

About United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice



Source – NOA

- **United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice** is the **world's largest and most diverse gathering of** policy-makers, practitioners, academia, intergovernmental organizations and civil society in the **field of crime prevention and criminal justice**.
- **Organized by:** It is organized by the [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#).

- The Congresses have been **held every five years since 1955** in **different parts of the world**.
- The Congresses provide a forum for
 - the **exchange of views between States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and individual experts** representing various professions and disciplines;
 - the **exchange of experiences in research, law and policy development**; and
 - the **identification of emerging trends and issues** in crime prevention and criminal justice.

About 15th Crime Congress



United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime



Source: UNODC

- The **15th Crime Congress** is being held in **Abu Dhabi 26 September to 1 October 2026**.
- Its theme is “**Accelerating crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: protecting people and planet and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the digital age**”.
- The congress opened with the adoption of the **Abu Dhabi Declaration**, a framework **aimed at boosting international cooperation against digital tech exploitation** and fast-evolving transnational crimes.

PRAMAAN Certificates under the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme

News: The first PRAMAAN certificates were handed over under the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) in New Delhi.

About PRAMAAN Certificates



Source – ToI

- **PRAMAAN** stands for **Programme for Recognition and Accreditation of Sustainable Management Practices for Agroforestry and Natural Forestry Resources**.
 - It is a **nationally accepted, credible and transparent framework** for **certification of forests, wood and non-timber forest products**.
- **Operating Agency:** Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal
- **Accreditation Body:** Certification bodies are accredited by the **National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB)** under the **Quality Council of India**.
- **First Certificates:** The certificates were given to **Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation (APFDC)** and a **farmer associated with the Odisha Bamboo Development Agency (OBDA)**.
 - These certificates are given under the **Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme**.
- **Key Features**
 - **Independent Certification:** Certification is based on **independent third-party audits** rather than self-declaration alone.

- **Standards:** Forest Management certification follows the **Indian Forest Management Standards under the National Working Plan Code (NWPC) 2023.**
- **Market Linkages:** PRAMAAN promotes domestic and international market linkages for certified forests and agroforestry products.
- **International Recognition:** Its accreditation architecture is **benchmarked against international certification frameworks** for recognition among global buyers and regulators.
- **Inclusive Approach:** The scheme brings **farmers, rural and tribal communities, and forest-dependent communities** into a structured certification system.

About Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme

Specification	Details
Purpose	● This national certification scheme promotes sustainable forest management and agroforestry in India through voluntary third-party certification.
Supervised by	● Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (Act as a multi-stakeholder advisory body)
Implementing agency	● Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal (Responsible for overall management of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme.)
Key features of the scheme	● Market incentives – This Scheme offers market incentives to various entities such as state forest departments, individual farmers, FPOs, and wood-based industries, that practice responsible forest management and agroforestry. ● The scheme comprises forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification. ● A distinct Trees Outside Forests Standard is introduced in the newly launched Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme.

FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO 28)

News: India highlighted its forest and landscape restoration initiatives at the 28th Session of COFO in Rome.

About FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO)



Source – NOA

Aspect	Details
About	Committee on Forestry (COFO) is Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s highest global intergovernmental body on forestry.
Establishment	It was established by the FAO Conference at its 16th Session in 1971.
Frequency	It meets once every two years and may hold additional sessions when necessary.
Members	- COFO has 128 Members. - It is open to FAO Members that notify their intention to participate.
Reporting structure	- It reports to the FAO Council on programme and budget matters and - to the FAO Conference on policy and regulatory matters.

Working structure	● Six Regional Forestry Commissions support regional dialogue, ● While the Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agro-silvo-pastoral Systems supports work on dryland ecosystems.
Function	● It reviews FAO's forestry programmes and international forestry problems and promotes concerted action by Members and FAO.

About COFO 28

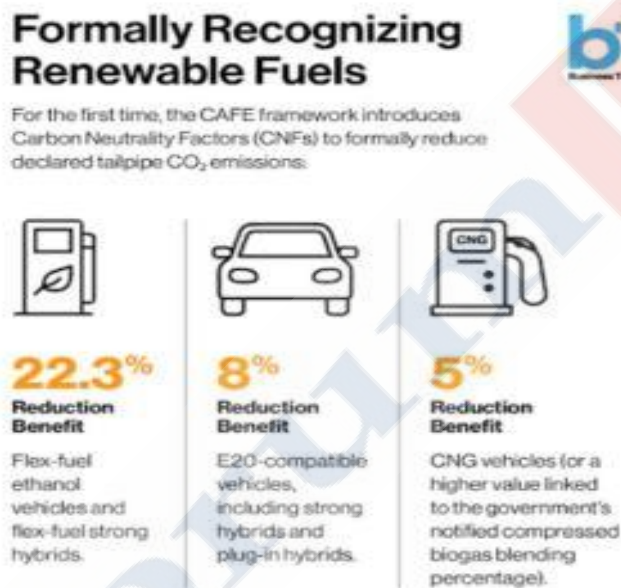
- **Location:** The 28th Session of COFO was held at **FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy**.
- **Organiser:** The session is **organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**.
- **Theme:** The session theme is **"Forests for food, resilience and prosperity."**
- **Concurrent event: 10th World Forest Week**, organised in conjunction with the **COFO session**.
- **Focus Area:** The session focuses on **sustainable forest management, forest and landscape restoration, climate action and resilient forest landscapes**.
- **Key Highlights**
 - **Forest and tree cover:** India's forest and tree cover **stands at 82.74 million hectares, covering 25.17% of its geographical area**.
 - The **FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025** ranks **India 9th globally in forest area and 3rd in net annual forest area gain**.
 - **Carbon sink:** India created an **additional carbon sink of 2.29 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2021**.
 - **Bonn Challenge:** India aims to **restore 26 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2030**.
 - **Landscape Restoration:** The **Aravalli Green Wall** has identified around 6.45 million hectares for restoration, while **MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes)** focuses on mangrove restoration.
 - **Afforestation Campaign:** Under **Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam-Plant4Mother**, more than 3.5 billion saplings have been planted.

- **International Cooperation:** India called for **country-driven implementation, technology transfer, capacity development and sustainable financing**, especially for developing countries.

Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE)-III Framework

News: The government notified the final CAFE-III norms on September 29, which will apply to passenger vehicles from April 2027.

About Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE)-III Framework



Source – BT

- **CAFE-III** is a **fleet-wide fuel-efficiency framework** for **passenger vehicles**.
 - It **requires manufacturers** to keep the **average fuel consumption** of eligible vehicles **within prescribed limits**.
- **Aim:** It aims to **improve fuel efficiency** and **reduce CO₂ emissions**, while **promoting cleaner technologies and alternative fuels**.
- **Notified by:** It was notified by the **Ministry of Power**.
- **Organisation Involved:**
 - **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE):** It **maintains the manufacturer passbook**, receives **compliance data** and allows **credit buyout**.

- **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH):** It will enforce testing, calculation, reporting and certification-related provisions.
- **Origin:** CAFE norms were first notified in 2017 under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
 - CAFE-III was first proposed in 2024.
- **Applicability:** CAFE-III applies to M1 category passenger vehicles manufactured or imported for sale in India.
 - It covers petrol, diesel, LPG, CNG, hybrid, and electric passenger vehicles with a gross weight under 3,500 kg.
- **Different Phases of CAFE Norms:**

Phase	Duration	Key Feature
CAFE-I	2017-18 to 2021-22	● The first phase introduced fleet-level fuel-efficiency standards with a CO₂ limit of 130 g/km.
CAFE-II	2022-23 to 2026-27	● The second phase tightened the standard to a CO₂ limit of 113 g/km.
CAFE-III	2027-28 to 2031-32	● The third phase introduces weight-based fuel-consumption targets, credit trading, cleaner-vehicle benefits and technology credits.

- **Key Features of CAFE-III**
 - **Progressive targets:** Annual fuel-consumption targets **become stricter and decline progressively** between FY 2027-28 and FY 2031-32.
 - **Credit and debit system:** Manufacturers **earn credits** when actual consumption is below the target and **accumulate debits** when it exceeds the target.
 - **Credit trading:** Manufacturers **can pool or trade credits** with other manufacturers or buy them from the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** to offset deficits.
 - **Cleaner vehicles:** Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Range-Extended Electric Vehicles (REEVs) receive a **3.0 volume factor**, meaning each such vehicle is counted as three vehicles for the fleet calculation.

- **Alternative fuels:** Carbon Neutrality Factors (CNFs) provide a **benefit by discounting declared tailpipe CO₂ emissions.**
- **Technology credits:** Manufacturers **can claim 1 g CO₂/km** for each specified fuel-saving technology, subject to an **overall limit of 9 g CO₂/km.**
- **Small manufacturers:** Manufacturers with **fewer than 1,000 eligible vehicles are exempt** from the specific CAFE target but must still report their fuel consumption.

About Bharat Stage (BS) Norms

- **Bharat Stage (BS) emission standards regulate the output of air pollutants** from **internal combustion and spark-ignition engines**, including motor vehicles.
- **Established by:** These standards are established by the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** under the **Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.**
- **Based on:** The BS regulations are **based on European emission standards.**
- **Key Difference between CAFE and BS-VI:** CAFE primarily **targets CO₂ emissions**, while **BS-VI addresses overall emissions**, including **Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Sulphur Oxides (SOx).**

India's new Sites in UNESCO Tentative List – Bagh Cave Paintings and Group of Temples of the Chambal Valley

News: India's UNESCO Tentative List now has 78 sites, with 5 additions including Bagh Cave Paintings, Group of Temples of the Chambal Valley among others.

About Bagh Cave Paintings



Source – India Tales

- The **Bagh caves** are located on the **southern slope of the Vindhyan range** in **western Madhya Pradesh**.
- They are situated on the banks of the **Baghani River**.
- These are **not natural** but were carved over a period of time during the **Satavahana period**.
- **Features:**
 - They consist of **nine rock-cut Buddhist caves**.
 - They were **excavated on a perpendicular sandstone rock face of a hill** across the seasonal stream of Baghani.
 - These rock-cut Buddhist monasteries are **renowned for their stunning mural paintings**, which illustrate the Jataka tales.
 - The **earthy reds, yellows, and greens of the murals** offer a **rare** glimpse into the **spiritual and artistic traditions of ancient Buddhism**.
 - Out of the original **nine** caves, **only five** have **survived**, all of which are **viharas or resting places for monks**, having a **quadrangular plan**.
 - **Cave 4**, also known as the **Rang Mahal**, is the most important of the five caves that still exist (Palace of Colors).
 - **Tempera** was used to paint the **Viharas of Bagh's** walls and ceilings, **with shards still evident in Caves 3 and 4** (remnants also observed in Caves 2, 5, and 7).
 - **Cave 2** is popularly known as "**Pandava Cave**" and stands as the best-preserved rock-cut monastery in the complex.

About Group of Temples of the Chambal Valley



Source: MP Tourism

- The **Group of Temples of the Chambal Valley** are located in the **Chambal valley region of present-day Morena district in Madhya Pradesh**.
- They include **Bateshwar, Padavali and Kakarmath**.
- These were **built between the 8th and 11th centuries CE**.
- They show the **development of the regional Nagara style of temple architecture** under the **Gurjara-Pratihara and Kachchhapaghata dynasties**, which ruled the region during this period.
- They share similar features, including the use of **sandstone in dry masonry, planned temple layouts, and detailed sculptures** incorporated into the temple structures.
- **About Bateshwar temple:**
 - It was built mostly during the **Gurjara-Pratihara period between the 8th and 10th centuries CE**.
 - It **comprised of more than 200 small shrines arranged across a terraced hillside landscape**.
 - It is **constructed entirely of finely dressed sandstone blocks without mortar**.
 - The shrines **illustrate advanced structural knowledge and modular temple construction techniques**.
 - It demonstrates a **wide typological range of Nagara-style shrines**, from the temple with **simple flat-roof to developed shikhara atop sanctum**.
- **About Padavali Temple Complex:**

- It is associated with the **Kachchhapaghata rulers** and dates back to the **10th century CE**.
- The original **sanctum is no longer present**, but the remaining **mandapa and entrance porch** have **beautifully carved pillars, beams and ceilings**.
- The carvings show **detailed religious themes** and reflect the close connection between **architecture and sculpture** in the [Nagara style](#) of Central India.
- **About Kakarmath temple:**
 - It was constructed in the **early 11th century CE under the Kachchhapaghata ruler Kirtiraj**.
 - It was **built on a high platform and constructed in dry masonry** using precisely interlocked sandstone blocks.
 - It features **a long shikhara and axial plan** comprising a sanctum, vestibule and pillared hall.
- **Chausath Yogini Temple:** Another temple in the region is **Chausath Yogini Temple at Mitaoli**.
 - It is **geographically related to this group, but represents a distinct architectural and ritual tradition**.
 - It is associated with **Yogini cult worship and circular temple design**.
 - It has a **distinct universal value within the broader context of Yogini temple traditions** in India.

India's new Sites in UNESCO Tentative List – Ginnorgarh and Udaigiri Caves

News: Five new sites and serial transnational proposals have been added to India's UNESCO Tentative List, taking the total to 78 sites.

About Ginnorgarh Fort



Source – FPJ

- **Location:** The **Ginnorgarh Fort** is located inside the [Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary](#) in **Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Built by:** It was developed by the **Raj Gond rulers of the Garha Kingdom**.
- It served as the **principal fortified capital of the Raj Gond rulers in central India**.
- **Historical Period:** The fort functioned as a major **political and administrative centre** from the early **16th century until the early 18th century**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Strategic setting:** The fort uses **steep slopes, ravines** and thick **vegetation** as natural defensive features.
 - **Three-tiered layout:** It is **divided** into the **morchha, amghera and inner royal core**, reflecting **administrative, military and social hierarchy**.
 - **Fortifications:** The complex has **fortification walls reaching up to 82 feet**, along with bastions and gateways.
 - **Palatial remains:** The ruined **seven-storey Rani Mahal** contains **halls with domical ceilings** and **wall paintings** showing **animals, birds, floral and geometric designs**.
 - **Water management:** The fort had **65 stepwells and four lakes** that collected and stored rainwater for year-round supply.

- **Indigenous technology:** Construction used lime, surkhi, stone, wood, jaggery and Bael pulp, showing adaptation to local climate and terrain.

Udaigiri Caves



Source – Wikipedia

- **Location:** The **Udaigiri Caves** are located on **Udaigiri Hill in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Built by:** It was developed **primarily under Gupta patronage** between the **late 4th and early 5th centuries CE**.
- The site **contains 20 excavated caves** with **shrines, sculptures, inscriptions and circulation paths**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Gupta art:** It preserves an **early stage of Hindu sacred architecture and iconography**.
 - **Varaha relief:** **Cave 5 contains** the celebrated monumental **Varaha panel, an important example of Gupta sculptural expression**.
 - **Religious elements:** The complex contains **Shaiva and Jain elements** alongside its dominant **Gupta-period Brahmanical programme**, particularly its **Vaishnava imagery** and association with **kingship**.
 - **Integrated sacred landscape:** The caves, sculptures, inscriptions, topography and water-related features together form an **integrated ritual landscape** in which the natural hill was transformed into a **sacred and political setting**.