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MAY 2026 (Digest)

CURRENT AFFAIRS
MONTHLY

GLIDE

The **PULSE** of UPSC at your fingertips.

Foreword

Officers Pulse Digest is a comprehensive monthly current affairs magazine that serves as a complete resource for UPSC CSE Prelims. It includes significant topics from sources like **The Hindu, Indian Express, Business Standard, Yojana, Kurukshetra, Down to Earth**, and more.

Although “**Officers Pulse- Digest**” is primarily oriented towards Prelims, reading “Officers Pulse- In depth” along with it is crucial for effectively tackling the Prelims examination.

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POLITY

CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) RULES, 2026

Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has notified the **Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026** to digitize the OCI framework through **e-OCI cards, online services, and biometric integration**, while prohibiting minors from holding dual passports.

Key Highlights

- **Electronic OCI (e-OCI) cards** have been introduced alongside physical OCI cards to enable a paperless identity system.
- OCI registration under Section 7A and renunciation applications must now be submitted **exclusively through the official online portal**.
- Minors holding an Indian passport **cannot simultaneously possess** the passport of another country.
- Applicants must provide consent for biometric data sharing for integration with **the Fast Track Immigration Programme (FTIP)**.
- A nationwide electronic database of OCI cardholders will be maintained in Form XXX.
- The processes for **renunciation and cancellation** of OCI status have been digitized, with provisions for appeals and invalidation in cases of non-compliance.
- The requirement to submit duplicate physical documents has been removed, enabling faster verification and processing.

Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)

- Introduced through the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2005, the OCI scheme grants a **special status to foreign citizens of Indian origin**; the PIO scheme was merged with OCI in 2015.
- OCI cardholders enjoy a **multiple-entry lifelong visa**, parity with NRIs in economic,

financial, and educational matters, and exemption from police reporting.

- They **do not enjoy political rights** such as voting, contesting elections, or holding constitutional/public offices.

PRIVILEGE MOTION

Why in News?

A privilege notice was **moved against Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** in the Rajya Sabha **over his remarks on the Parliamentary Standing Committees**.

About

- A privilege motion is moved by an MP when there is an alleged breach of parliamentary privileges or contempt of the House by a **member or a non-member**.
- It is submitted under **Rules 222 (Lok Sabha) and 187 (Rajya Sabha)** and is first examined by the **Speaker/Chairman**, who decides whether to admit it.
- If admitted, the House may discuss it or refer it to the **Committee of Privileges** for detailed examination and recommendations.

Committee of Privileges

- The Committee of Privileges is a **Standing Parliamentary Committee** that examines cases of breach of privilege referred to it by the House.
- It consists of **15 members in Lok Sabha and 10 in Rajya Sabha**, nominated by the Speaker/Chairman.
- It functions in a **quasi-judicial manner**, investigates facts, gives the concerned person a hearing, and submits recommendations to the House. The final decision on action rests with the **House itself**.

Parliamentary privileges

- They are special **rights and immunities enjoyed by MPs and each House under Articles 105 and 194** to ensure independent functioning of the legislature.
- These include freedom of speech in Parliament and immunity from court proceedings for parliamentary work.
- This privilege **extends to the Attorney General of India** (while executing parliamentary duties), **but not to the President (who enjoys separate immunity under Article 361)**.
- They are classified into **collective privileges** (e.g., right to exclude strangers, regulate proceedings) and **individual privileges** (e.g., freedom of speech, immunity from civil arrest during sessions). These privileges remain **uncodified**, and Parliament has not enacted a comprehensive law defining them.

JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Why in News?

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on **One Nation One Election** estimated that simultaneous elections **could save about ₹7 lakh crore and raise GDP growth by up to 1.6%**.

About

- A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) is an **ad-hoc committee constituted by Parliament through a motion passed in one House and agreed to by the other**, to examine a specific Bill or issue requiring detailed scrutiny.
- It is formed using the **procedural flexibility under Article 118 of the Constitution**, which allows Parliament to regulate its own procedure and conduct of business.
- A JPC consists of **Members of Parliament from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**, with representation generally based on

party strength, and Lok Sabha members usually forming a larger share.

- It is a **temporary “mini-Parliament” chaired by a Lok Sabha MP appointed by the Speaker**, with its composition and terms of reference decided by Parliament without any fixed numerical limit.
- Its recommendations are **advisory in nature and not binding on the government**, though they carry persuasive value and are often used for legislative or policy action.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Why in News?

K.C. Venugopal has been **reappointed as the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** of Parliament for the 2026–27 term.

About

- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is a **financial standing committee of Parliament**.
- It serves as a vital financial watchdog ensuring **executive accountability** to the legislature by auditing the revenue and expenditure of the Government of India.
- It is the **oldest parliamentary committee in India**, established in **1921 under the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms**.

Functions of PAC

- It examines **CAG audit reports**, including Appropriation Accounts and Finance Accounts, to assess government expenditure.
- It ensures that **money granted by Parliament is spent only for the intended purposes** and in accordance with legal provisions.
- It recommends **corrective action and systemic improvements** and scrutinises **excess expenditure that is later regularised under Article 115 of the Constitution**.

Membership of PAC

- It consists of **22 members**, including **15 from Lok Sabha and 7 from Rajya Sabha**,

elected annually by **proportional representation through single transferable vote (STV)**.

- The **Chairperson is appointed by the Speaker of Lok Sabha** from among Lok Sabha members.
- Since **1967–68**, it is a well-established convention that the Chairperson is from the **Opposition party**.
- **Ministers are not eligible** to be members, and the committee has a **one-year term**, ensuring independence and periodic reconstitution.



There are three financial standing committees in the Indian Parliament

- *The Public Accounts Committee (PAC),*
- *The Estimates Committee,*
- *The Committee on Public Undertakings (CoPU)*

GRAM PANCHAYATS LEVY SURCHARGE

Why in News?

The Munnar Panchayat has proposed a **surcharge on vehicles** entering the hill station to address **rising traffic congestion** and generate funds for **improved waste management and treatment facilities**.

About

- The constitutional basis for a gram panchayat to levy a surcharge, user fee, or tax rests on the fiscal devolution framework introduced by the **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992**.
- **Under Article 243H(a)**, Panchayats can levy taxes, tolls, and fees only when authorised by the State Legislature through law, and within prescribed limits and procedures.
- **Article 243G** read with the 11th Schedule assigns functions (29 Entries) like **solid**

waste management and tourism-related responsibilities to Panchayats, creating the functional basis for service-linked charges.

- Fiscal powers such as user fees for services like sanitation, parking, and waste management are granted through State laws, including the **Kerala Panchayat Raj Act, 1994**.
- These user charges are intended to recover costs of local services, particularly in areas with high tourist inflow that increases the burden on local infrastructure.

- *The 11th Schedule under Article 243G lists 29 subjects such as agriculture, minor irrigation, animal husbandry, fisheries, rural housing, drinking water, roads, education, health, and welfare of weaker sections, which define the functional domain of Panchayats.*
- *These subjects are not automatically or uniformly devolved to Panchayats, as the extent of devolution varies across States.*

GOVERNOR'S DISCRETION

Why in News?

The Governor of Tamil Nadu exercised his **situational discretion under Article 164** to invite the single largest party to form a coalition government

About

- **Under Article 164(1)**, in the case of a hung Assembly, the Governor exercises **situational discretion**, guided by constitutional conventions, in appointing the Chief Minister to ensure the formation of a stable government.

Other discretionary powers of Governor

- **Reservation of Bills (Articles 200 & 201):** The Governor may reserve a Bill passed by the State Legislature for the consideration of the President, especially if it is unconstitutional or conflicts with Union law.

- **Recommendation of President's Rule (Article 356):** The Governor can report a breakdown of constitutional machinery in the State, enabling the President to impose President's Rule.
- **Summoning, Proroguing, and Dissolving the Assembly (Article 174):** The Governor has discretion in summoning the Assembly and may recommend dissolution in cases of political instability or loss of majority.
- **Seeking Information from the Chief Minister (Article 167):** The Governor can call for information relating to administration and legislative proposals from the Chief Minister.
- **Special Discretion in Union Territory Administration (Article 239(2)):** When acting as Administrator of a Union Territory, the Governor may function independently of the Council of Ministers.

SUPREME COURT JUDGES

Why in News?

The sanctioned strength of the **Supreme Court of India** has been raised to **38 judges (including the Chief Justice of India)** through an ordinance promulgated by the President of India.

About

- The President of India promulgated the ordinance under **Article 123** of the Constitution.
- It amended the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956**, lifting the number of judges from 34 to 38 (including the CJI).

Appointment of Supreme Court Judges

- The Supreme Court Judges are appointed by the **President of India under Article 124(2)** based on the **Collegium system**, consisting of the CJI and the **four senior-most Supreme Court judges**.
- The Collegium recommends names, and although the government may seek clarification, it is **constitutionally bound to appoint reiterated recommendations**.

- The system ensures **judicial primacy in appointments**, though the executive formally issues the appointment notification.

Qualifications

As per **Article 124(3)**, a person is eligible if they are:

- a **citizen of India**, and
- have served as a **High Court judge for 5 years** OR
- been an **advocate of a High Court for 10 years** OR
- are a **distinguished jurist in the opinion of the President**.

Tenure

- The Supreme Court Judges hold office until they attain the age of **65 years**.
- The Indian Constitution does not prescribe a fixed term or minimum duration for the tenure of a Supreme Court judge.

Removal

A Supreme Court judge can be removed only by the President through a **parliamentary impeachment process**, requiring a special majority in both Houses on grounds of **proved misbehaviour or incapacity**.

ORDINANCE-MAKING POWER OF THE PRESIDENT

- **Article 123** empowers the President to promulgate an Ordinance when both Houses of Parliament are not in session and immediate action is required.
- An Ordinance has the same force and effect as an Act of Parliament.
- It must be approved **within six weeks of Parliament's reassembly**, failing which it lapses.

SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION

Why in News?

The rising pendency of cases in the Supreme Court has drawn attention to the increasing number of

Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) filed under Article 136.

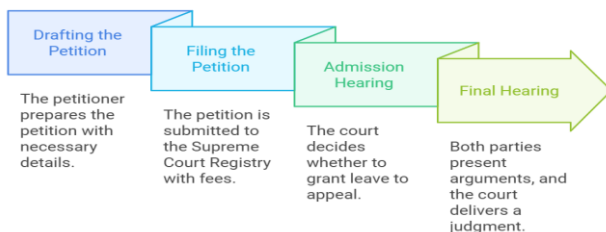
About

- Special Leave Petition is an **extraordinary appellate remedy** under **Article 136** of the Constitution.
- It empowers the Supreme Court to grant special leave **to appeal against judgments**, decrees, orders, sentences, or determinations of any court or tribunal in India (**except** those constituted under laws relating to the **Armed Forces**).
- The concept traces its origin to the **Government of India Act, 1935**.
- Any aggrieved person may file an SLP, generally within **90 days** of the impugned judgment or within **60 days** where a High Court refuses a certificate of fitness for appeal to the Supreme Court.

Key Features

- SLP is **not a matter of right** for an aggrieved party. The Supreme Court **may grant or refuse special leave** entirely at its discretion, making it an exceptional constitutional power.
- SLP acts as a constitutional safety valve where no regular appeal is available but substantial questions of law or grave injustice are involved.
- Once special leave is granted, the petition is converted into a **regular appeal** before the Supreme Court.

Procedure for Filing a Special Leave Petition



DEREGISTRATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Why in News?

The Delhi High Court **dismissed a Public Interest Litigation seeking the deregistration** of the Aam Aadmi Party.

About

- Deregistration of a political party refers to the **cancellation of its registration by the Election Commission of India (ECI)**.
- The **Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951** governs the registration of a political party. But it **does not empower the ECI to deregister parties** for failure to contest elections, hold internal organisational elections, or submit financial returns.
- If deregistered, the party ceases to exist legally and is **barred from contesting any election** under a unified identity.

CONDITIONS TO DEREGISTER A POLITICAL PARTY

The Supreme Court in '*Indian National Congress vs. Institute of Social Welfare (2002)*' held that deregistration is permissible only under limited exceptional conditions:

- If registration was obtained by **fraud or misrepresentation**.
- If the party **ceases to bear allegiance to the Constitution of India**.
- If the party is **declared unlawful by the Central Government**

This ruling significantly restricts the ECI's ability to act against dormant or non-functional parties.

DERECOGNITION OF A POLITICAL PARTY

- *Derecognition is the withdrawal of a party's status as a National or State party by the ECI under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.*
- *A derecognised party is not dissolved; it is downgraded to a Registered Unrecognised Political Party (RUPP). It can still contest elections but loses associated statutory privileges.*



The Election Commission has the power to delist a political party, rather than deregistering.

Delisting is an ECI administrative mechanism to clean up dormant RUPPs.

RUPPs may be delisted or marked inactive for non-compliance such as not contesting elections for 6 years, lack of a verifiable office, or failure in financial disclosures (donations above ₹20,000 and audits).

Delisted parties lose key benefits like 100% tax exemption under Section 13A of the Income Tax

SIKKIM STATEHOOD DAY

Why in News?

Sikkim celebrated its **Statehood Day on 16 May**, marking its integration as the **22nd State of India** and highlighting its transition from a protectorate kingdom to a full-fledged constituent state of the Indian Union.

About

Evolution of Sikkim's Constitutional Status

- **Sovereign Monarchy under the Chogyals (1642-1950):** Sikkim was an independent Himalayan kingdom ruled by the Namgyal dynasty until the mid-20th century.
- **Indian Protectorate under the Indo-Sikkim Treaty, 1950:** Sikkim retained internal autonomy, while India assumed

responsibility for its defence, external affairs, and communications.

- **Associate State Status through the 35th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1974:** Sikkim was granted the unique status of an "Associate State" of India, along with representation in the Indian Parliament.
- **Full Statehood through the 36th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1975:** Following a referendum that overwhelmingly favoured integration and abolition of the monarchy, Sikkim became the **22nd State of the Indian Union** on 16 May 1975.
- **Special Constitutional Safeguards under Article 371F:** It preserves pre-existing laws and institutions in Sikkim, protects the interests of different sections of its population, and grants the Governor special responsibilities for maintaining social and political harmony.

EXPANDED DEFINITION OF ACID ATTACK VICTIMS

Why in News?

The Supreme Court, **invoking Article 142**, expanded the definition of acid attack victims under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 **to include survivors forced to ingest acid** and directed that the ruling **operates retrospectively**, making such survivors eligible for disability certificates and other state support irrespective of when the attack occurred.

About

- **Acid ingestion** causes severe and often **permanent internal damage** to the mouth, throat, food pipe, and stomach, resulting in lifelong medical complications.
- The victims forced to ingest acid suffer injuries comparable to those caused by acid being thrown and therefore deserve **equal legal recognition and protection**.
- The ruling seeks to **remove the earlier exclusion of such survivors** and ensure access to welfare benefits, while

strengthening protection for all victims of acid violence.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016

- Replaced the 1995 law to give effect to the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**, which **India ratified in 2007**, promoting equality, dignity, and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities.

Constitutional safeguards for PwDs are derived from

- **Article 14** (Equality before law), **Article 19** (Freedom and participation), **Article 21** (Life with dignity), **Article 41** (Public assistance for disability).
 - **Entry 26 of the 11th Schedule (Article 243G)** assigns Panchayats responsibility for social welfare, including welfare of PwDs.
 - **Entry 9 of the 12th Schedule (Article 243W)** empowers Municipalities to protect the interests of weaker sections, including PwDs.
- Recognizes disability as an **evolving and dynamic concept** and expands the list of recognized disabilities from **7 to 21**, including autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, acid attack victims, specific learning disabilities, multiple sclerosis, speech and language disability, thalassemia, haemophilia, and sickle cell disease.
 - The Act classifies beneficiaries into **Person with Disability, Person with Benchmark Disability** (minimum 40% specified disability), and **Persons with High Support Needs**.
 - Every child with benchmark disability **aged 6–18 years is entitled to free education**.
 - Reservation for PwDs was increased from **3% to 4% in Government employment**

and from **3% to 5% in Higher Educational Institutions**.

- The Act provides for the creation of **National and State Funds for Persons with Disabilities** to support welfare and rehabilitation measures.

PREVENTION OF NATIONAL HONOURS ACT, 1971

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved an amendment to the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**, making intentional insult to or obstruction of the singing of **Vande Mataram** a punishable offence, on par with the National Anthem.

About

- The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 provides a statutory framework for **protecting the National Flag, the Constitution, and the National Anthem** from deliberate acts of insult or desecration.
- It prohibits acts such as **burning, mutilation, defacement, desecration, trampling, or any form of public disrespect** towards the National Flag and the Constitution.
- It penalizes **intentional prevention, obstruction, or disturbance** during the singing of the National Anthem, with punishment extending up to **three years' imprisonment, fine, or both**.
- The legislation operationalizes **Article 51A(a)** of the Constitution, which enjoins every citizen to respect the Constitution, the National Flag, and the National Anthem as a **Fundamental Duty**.

NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU

Why in News?

Under **Operation RAGEPILL**, the NCB made India's first-ever seizure of 227.7 kg of Captagon, exposing a transnational drug network.

About

- The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), established in 1985 under the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**.
- It is India's **apex drug law enforcement** and intelligence agency functioning under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

Functions

- The NCB **coordinates drug law enforcement efforts** across Central and State agencies while collecting, analysing, and disseminating intelligence on drug trafficking and enforcement trends.
- Enforces the **NDPS Act, 1985** and the **Prevention of Illicit Traffic in NDPS Act, 1988** through its headquarters and zonal offices.

Key Portals and Initiatives

- *Madak Padarth Nishedh Asuchna Kendra (MANAS)*
 - *Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD)*
 - *National Integrated Database on Arrested Narco-Offenders (NIDAAN)*
 - *Darkathon*
- Acts as the national nodal agency for liaison with international organisations such as **INTERPOL, International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), and UN agencies**, and serves as the national contact point for drug-related intelligence and investigations.
 - Monitors emerging threats such as **narco-terrorism, darknet-based drug trafficking**, and cryptocurrency-enabled drug networks, while supporting operations against transnational drug syndicates.

NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL

Why in News?

The **Supreme Court** has taken **suo motu cognizance** of delays by **NCLT benches** in approving resolution plans under the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**, citing concerns over the erosion of time-bound insolvency resolution.

About

- National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) was established in **2016** under **Section 408 of the Companies Act, 2013**, based on the recommendations of the **Balakrishna Eradi Committee**.
- It is a **quasi-judicial body** functioning under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)**.
- It comprises a President (head of the Tribunal), Judicial Members, and Technical Members, with appeals lying before the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** and thereafter to the Supreme Court on questions of law.

Functions

- It adjudicates **corporate civil disputes, including corporate insolvency**, mergers, amalgamations, compromise arrangements, and oppression and mismanagement cases.
- Its jurisdiction is confined to matters assigned under the **Companies Act, 2013**



*The power of Supreme Court of India to take suo motu cognizance is primarily derived from **Articles 32, 129, and 142** of the Constitution. These provisions empower the Court to initiate legal proceedings independently to **protect fundamental rights and deliver complete justice**.*

- **and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016**, primarily dealing with corporate law and corporate insolvency.
- The NCLT follows the **principles of natural justice** and is empowered to regulate its

own procedure under the **Companies Act, 2013**.

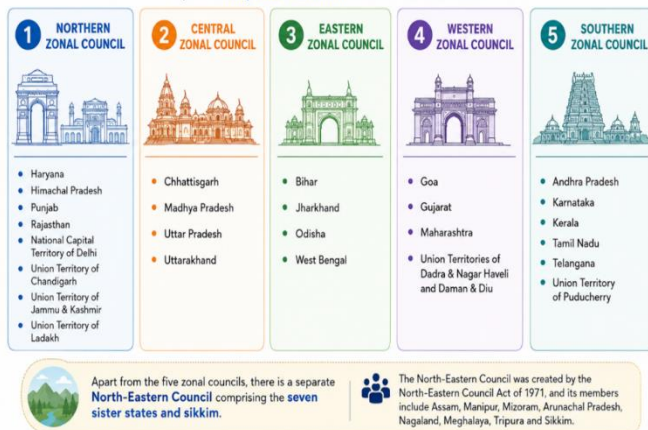
ZONAL COUNCIL

Why in News?

The Union Home Minister chairs **26th meeting of the Central Zonal Council (CZC)** in Bastar, Chhattisgarh.

INDIA'S FIVE ZONAL COUNCILS

Statutory bodies under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 to promote cooperative federalism and inter-state coordination



About

- Zonal Councils were established under the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956** on the recommendations of the **States Reorganisation Commission/Fazl Ali Commission**
- Its objective is to promote cooperative federalism, inter-state coordination, and national integration. Their recommendations are **advisory and non-binding**.
- Zonal Structure and Membership:** India has **five Zonal Councils**—Northern, Central, Eastern, Western, and Southern—while the **North Eastern Council (NEC)** functions separately under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971.

Members

- The **Union Home Minister** serves as the Chairman, and the Chief Ministers act as Vice-Chairmen by annual rotation.
- Composition:** Members include the **Chief Ministers and two nominated Ministers**

from each member State, along with representatives of Union Territories. Chief Secretaries, Development Commissioners, and a nominee of **NITI Aayog** participate as advisors.

- Institutional Mechanism:** Each Zonal Council is supported by a **Standing Committee of Chief Secretaries**, while the **Inter-State Council Secretariat under the Ministry of Home Affairs** functions as the nodal agency for organizing meetings and monitoring follow-up action on recommendations.

Central Zonal Council (CZC)

- The CZC comprises **Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand**.
- It serves as a forum for discussing matters of regional development, inter-state transport, border issues, internal security, and coordination among member States.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Why in News?

The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** took **suo motu cognizance** of a sewage tank cleaning death and injury in East Delhi, seeking a report on investigation and compensation.

About

- The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** is a **statutory body established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**.
- It is mandated to protect and promote human rights relating to **life, liberty, equality, and dignity** as guaranteed by the Constitution and international covenants.
- It inquires into **human rights violations or negligence by public servants** either **suo motu, on petitions, or on court directions**, and examines cases within **one year of occurrence**.

Composition of NHRC

- The Commission consists of a **chairperson, five full-time Members, and seven ex-officio members**, making it a multi-member statutory body.
- The **Chairperson and members are appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of a six-member Selection Committee**, headed by the **Prime Minister**, and including the **Speaker of Lok Sabha, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Leaders of Opposition in both Houses, and the union Home minister**.
- The **Chairperson must be a former Chief Justice of India or a Judge of the Supreme Court**, while members include a Supreme Court judge, a High Court Chief Justice, and three experts in human rights (including at least one woman).
- The **seven ex-officio members** are heads of national commissions including those for **SCs, STs, Minorities, Women, Backward Classes, Child Rights, and Persons with Disabilities**, ensuring inter-institutional coordination.

Suo Motu Jurisdiction of NHRC

- The suo motu Jurisdiction of NHRC lies in **Section 12 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**.
- It can act on **media reports, public grievances, or information from any source**, and initiate inquiries into violations involving **life, liberty, equality, and dignity rights**.
- During such inquiries, it exercises **civil court powers under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**, including summoning witnesses, requisitioning documents, and recording evidence.
- Its powers are **recommendatory in nature**, allowing it to suggest **compensation, disciplinary action, prosecution, or systemic reforms**, but it cannot enforce decisions or punish offenders directly.

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY (NTA)

Why in News?

The National Testing Agency (NTA) **cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination** following allegations of a paper leak.

About

- The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts **standardised and transparent entrance examinations** for higher education in India.
- It is responsible for administering major national-level examinations such as **JEE (Main), NEET-UG, CUET, UGC-NET, and CSIR-NET**, thereby ensuring a common, technology-driven and efficient assessment framework for higher and professional education.
- It is an **autonomous and self-sustained organisation** under the **Ministry of Education**, established in **2017** as a registered society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.

PRO-ACTIVE GOVERNANCE AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION (PRAGATI)

Why in News?

The Prime Minister chairs **51 st PRAGATI Meeting**.

About

- **PRAGATI Platform** is an ICT-based governance platform launched in **2015** to strengthen **Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation**.
- It enables the **Prime Minister to review and resolve issues** related to projects, schemes, and public grievances through direct interaction with Central and State officials.
- Provides a mechanism for **efficient grievance redressal**, addressing public complaints and ensuring accountability in governance delivery systems.

Key Features of PRAGATI

- It operates as a **three-tier system** involving the **Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Union Government Secretaries, and State Chief Secretaries**, ensuring direct Centre–State coordination.
- It integrates **digital data systems, video conferencing, and geospatial technology (including real-time visual evidence from project sites)** for evidence-based monitoring.
- It functions as a **multi-platform interface linked with CPGRAMS (Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System), Project Monitoring Group (PMG), and other databases**, enabling unified tracking of projects, grievances, and programme implementation under PM-led monthly review meetings.

SAMADHAN DIDI

Why in News?

Union Minister Jitendra Singh launched 'Samadhan Didi', an **AI-enabled CPGRAMS voice chatbot** to enhance public grievance redressal.

About

- **Samadhan Didi** is an **AI-enabled voice chatbot** launched under the **Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)** to simplify public grievance registration and tracking through voice interaction.
- It has been developed by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** in collaboration with **Bhashini**, the Government of India's multilingual AI language platform.
- The chatbot uses **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** to understand complaints in **simple language, local dialects, and all 22 languages of the Eighth Schedule**, with phased expansion to regional dialects.
- It enables citizens to **lodge grievances through voice without drafting written**

complaints, while automatically identifying the concerned Ministry/Department and routing the complaint through CPGRAMS.

- The initiative aims to **bridge the digital divide and improve accessibility** of grievance redressal, particularly for rural populations, non-literate citizens, women, senior citizens, and other digitally excluded groups.

ONE CASE ONE DATA

Why in News?

The **Supreme Court of India** recently launched two digital initiatives— '**One Case One Data**' and '**Su Sahay**'—to improve judicial administration, case management, and access to justice.

About

The **Su Sahay** chatbot and the **One Case One Data** system were developed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** in collaboration with the **Supreme Court Registry**.

One Case One Data

- It is a **nationwide judicial data integration platform** that links case records from the **Supreme Court, High Courts, district courts, and taluka courts** into a unified digital system.
- Each case is assigned a **single unique digital identity**, enabling seamless tracking of records across different levels of the judiciary throughout the case lifecycle.
- The platform enables **automatic retrieval and online verification of case information**, eliminating duplication of records when cases move from lower courts to higher courts.
- It aims to improve **case management, inter-court coordination, and data accessibility**, while reducing delays arising from fragmented records and manual verification processes.

Su Sahay

- **Su Sahay** is an **AI-powered chatbot** integrated with the **Supreme Court**

website to assist litigants and citizens in accessing court-related services, procedures, and filing information.

CENTRAL PRABHARI OFFICERS (CPO) PORTAL

Why in News?

NITI Aayog has launched the Central Prabhari Officer (CPO) Portal to strengthen real-time governance and accelerate last-mile delivery.

About

- Central Prabhari Officer (CPO) Portal is a **mobile-enabled digital platform** through which CPOs upload field observations and recommendations, enabling districts to act, submit responses, and State Planning Secretaries to coordinate implementation.
- It supports the **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)** and **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)** by facilitating **real-time submission and tracking** of field-level feedback.
- Its objective is to **transform field-level administrative feedback into actionable, monitored policy interventions**, improving accountability and last-mile service delivery.
- It is **developed and overseen by NITI Aayog**, the Government of India's apex public policy think-tank functioning under the **Ministry of Planning**, to promote data-driven governance.

ECONOMY

BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS (BIS)

Why in News?

As part of the **National List of Essential Assistive Products (NLEAP)** initiative by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) through its MHD 09 Technical Committee has published standards for six priority assistive products. This rollout directly supports the Accessible India Campaign (**Sugamya Bharat Abhiyaan**) by ensuring better quality benchmarks.

About

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the national standards body of India, established under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act 2016. It is the successor to the Indian Standards Institution (ISI), which was created in 1947.

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan

- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities).
- **Legal & Global Mandate: Fulfills Article 9 of the UNCRPD** (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and enforces India's **RPwD Act, 2016**.
- **Core Strategy:** A nationwide campaign focused on **retrofitting existing public assets** to create barrier-free environments, rather than just designing new ones.
- **Digital Governance:** Features the **Sugamya Bharat App**, a crowdsourcing mobile tool for citizens to report and track accessibility grievances in public infrastructure.

The Three Pillars

1. **Built Environment:** Retrofitting public buildings with ramps, tactile pathways, and accessible toilets.
2. **Transportation:** Upgrading airports, major railway stations, and public buses for independent travel.
3. **ICT Ecosystem:** Making government websites accessible (WCAG 2.0 compliance) and integrating sign language into public media.

- **Objective:** To ensure the harmonious development of standardization, marking, and quality certification of goods.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Global Representation:** BIS represents India in international bodies like the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

FEMA AMENDMENT

Why in News?

Effective May 1, the Finance Ministry has notified amendments to FEMA allowing overseas companies with up to **10% Chinese or Hong Kong shareholding** to invest in India under the automatic route. While this relaxes the stringent 2020 restrictions to ease passive global investments, the clearance exemption does not apply to entities directly registered in countries sharing a land border with India.

About

The **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)** is India's central legislation regulating cross-border trade, payments, and foreign investments to facilitate open market growth.

Key Objectives

- **Shift to Facilitation:** Unlike FERA, which criminalized violations and focused on conserving foreign exchange, FEMA treats violations as **civil offences** and aims to facilitate external trade and payments.
- **Market Stability:** It promotes the structured growth, stability, and management of India's foreign exchange market.

Types of Transactions Covered

- **Capital Account Transactions:** Alter cross-border assets or liabilities (e.g.,

foreign investments, property transfers, and overseas loans). These are regulated by the RBI in consultation with the Central Government.

- **Current Account Transactions:** Pertain to day-to-day trade, travel, education, and service payments. These are generally unrestricted unless specified by the government.

Regulatory & Enforcement Framework

- **Authorized Persons:** Section 10 defines the duties of authorized entities like commercial banks and money changers to handle foreign exchange under RBI guidelines.
- **Enforcement Directorate (ED):** Established under Section 36, the ED holds absolute power to investigate, search, seize, and enforce compliance regarding FEMA violations.
- **Penalties:** Contraventions incur monetary fines up to three times the quantifiable amount (or ₹2 lakh if not quantifiable). Severe or continued violations can lead to property confiscation inside India and civil imprisonment.

INVERTED DUTY STRUCTURE

Why in news?

The pandemic exposed India's 80% import reliance on lab reagents, prompting a boom of 11,000 biotech startups. However, an inverted duty structure stifles these innovators by taxing imported raw materials higher than finished kits. This tax inversion crushes profit margins, making it nearly impossible to compete with global multinationals.

About

An **Inverted Duty Structure (IDS)** is an economic situation where the tax or customs duty rate on **raw materials (inputs)** is higher than the tax rate on the **finished product (outputs)**.

Why it is introduced?

Governments rarely create an inverted duty structure on purpose. It is usually an accidental byproduct of conflicting policy goals:

- **Consumer Protection:** Lowering taxes on finished goods to keep them affordable for the public.
- **Protecting Raw Material Industries:** Keeping tariffs high on imported raw materials to shield local suppliers from cheap foreign competition.
- **Trade Agreements:** Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) sometimes allow finished goods to enter a country duty-free, while the raw materials to make those same goods domestically remain heavily taxed.

Impact on Business & Economy

- **Blocked Working Capital:** Massive tax funds get trapped in government ledgers, freezing company cash flow and forcing costly short-term borrowing.
- **Higher Retail Prices:** Unrecovered tax credits become business expenses, driving up final costs for the consumer.
- **Kills Local Manufacturing:** Importing finished goods becomes cheaper than importing raw materials to build them locally, crushing initiatives like "Make in India."

COMMODITY DERIVATIVE

Why in news?

India's banking and insurance regulators are blocking institutions from investing in commodity derivatives, citing bad timing. However, SEBI Chairperson Tuhin Kanta Pandey plans to lobby the Central Government to lift these restrictions, aiming to allow banks and pension funds to trade commodities and boost market growth.

About

A **commodity derivative** is a financial contract whose value is linked to the price of an underlying raw material, such as gold, crude oil, or wheat. Instead of buying and owning the actual physical goods, traders buy and sell the contract itself. In

India, these financial instruments are regulated and governed exclusively by the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**. The Indian commodity derivatives market is **primarily** represented by the **MCX iCOMDEX**, a broad-based commodity index developed by the Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd.

- **How it works:** It is an agreement between two parties to buy or sell a specific amount of a commodity at a fixed price on a set future date.
- **Who uses it: Hedgers** (like farmers or airlines) use them to lock in prices and protect themselves against future price shocks, while **speculators** (investors) use them to bet on price movements to make a profit.
- The three most common types of commodity derivatives are futures, options, and swaps.

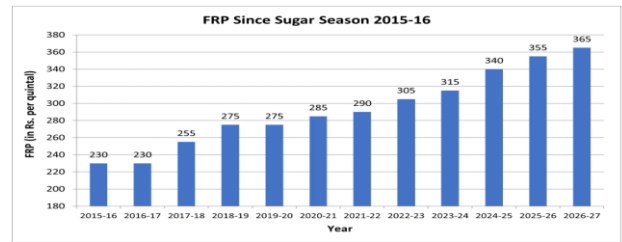
FAIR AND REMUNERATIVE PRICE

Why in news?

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs**, chaired by **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi**, has officially raised the Fair and Remunerative Price, which is the mandatory minimum price that sugar mills must pay to farmers, to **₹365 per quintal** for the upcoming 2026-27 sugar season. This marks a 2.81% increase from the previous season.

About

- **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)** is the minimum price that sugar mills are legally obligated to pay to sugarcane farmers for the crop procured from them.
- It acts as a government guaranteed floor price to protect farmers from market price fluctuations, ensuring they make a profit regardless of whether the sugar mills themselves are profitable.



Legal and Regulatory Framework

The pricing mechanism is legally governed by the **Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966**, which falls under the Essential Commodities Act. By law, mills must clear these payments to farmers within 14 days of sugarcane delivery.

How it is Decided

The price determination involves two primary government bodies:

- **The Recommendation:** The **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** analyzes input costs and trends to recommend a fair price.
- **The Approval:** The final price is formally approved and announced by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, which is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Key Factors Considered

- The actual cost of producing sugarcane.
- The recovery rate of sugar (how much sugar is actually extracted from the cane).
- The selling price of sugar and its industrial by-products like molasses and ethanol.
- Expected profit margins for the growers relative to financial risks

EMERGENCY CREDIT LINE GUARANTEE SCHEME (ECLGS) 5.0

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet of India, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has officially approved a major financial intervention policy, the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 5.0

About

The **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 5.0** is a government-backed relief program designed to provide immediate,

collateral-free loans to businesses hit by financial stress from the West Asia crisis.

- **The Purpose:** To supply quick liquidity to MSMEs and commercial airlines to help them manage cash-flow mismatches, handle rising fuel costs, protect jobs, and keep supply chains running.
- **The Sovereign Guarantee:** The government (via NCGTC) provides a **100% guarantee for MSMEs** and a **90% guarantee for non-MSMEs and airlines** against defaults, encouraging banks to lend confidently.
- **Total Funding Pool:** Out of an overall additional credit flow of **₹2,55,000 crore**, a dedicated **₹5,000 crore** is set aside strictly to rescue the struggling aviation sector.

VIABILITY PLAN 2.0

Why in news?

The Department of Financial Services (DFS), under the Ministry of Finance, has officially approved **Viability Plan 2.0**, a major new regulatory and financial reform framework for India's Regional Rural Banks (RRBs).

About

- The **Viability Plan 2.0** comprises a defined set of **30 performance parameters** anchored around **four main key pillars** viz. **operational excellence, asset quality, profitability, and growth**.
- The **key critical metrics** across these four pillars include **CRAR, credit-deposit ratio, digital adoption, NPA levels, recovery performance, profitability ratios and performance** in implementation of Government of India schemes.

MISSION FOR COTTON PRODUCTIVITY

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recently approved a massive

financial outlay of **₹5,659.22 crore** for Mission for Cotton Productivity

About

The **Mission for Cotton Productivity (2026–27 to 2030–31)** aims to revitalize India's cotton sector. Aligned with the government's **5F vision** (*Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign*), the mission focuses on making India self-reliant by boosting yields, improving quality, and integrating sustainable natural alternatives.

Five Strategic Pillars of the mission

- **Agromony & Seeds:** Developing climate-resilient, pest-resistant, High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds. Scaling up **High Density Planting System (HDPS), Closer Spacing (CS), Integrated Cotton Management, and Extra Long Staple (ELS)** cotton.
- **Infrastructure & Quality:** Modernizing **2,000 ginning/processing factories**. Building accredited, nationwide **testing infrastructure** for global benchmarking.
- **Branding & Traceability:** Using **Kasturi Cotton Bharat** for global certification, premium positioning, and traceability.
- **Digital & Market Access:** Digitally integrating **mandis** (market yards) via e-platforms for transparent price discovery and direct market access.
- **Sustainability & Diversification:** Promoting **waste recycling** and circular economy practices. Diversifying the fibre base with sustainable natural alternatives like **flax, ramie, sisal, milkweed, bamboo, and banana**.

CSIR-CRRI and BPCL

Why in news?

CSIR-CRRI and BPCL have officially been recognized by both the **India Book of Records** and the **Asia Book of Records**. They achieved this for developing the "**Phoenix Geocell**"—the first-of-its-kind technical textile geocell made entirely

from difficult-to-recycle, end-of-life mixed plastic waste.

About Phoenix Geocell

- An innovative **technical textile geocell** designed for roadblock sections and resilient road engineering. It functions as a structural system validated for high **integrity, durability, and field applicability**.
- It is manufactured entirely from **processed, difficult-to-manage end-of-life plastic waste**, transforming an environmental disposal burden into value-added infrastructure.
- It directly addresses two national priorities **sustainable waste management** and **resilient road construction** while driving **circular economy** objectives and resource-efficient engineering.

About CSIR

The organization functions under the **Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India**. Established in **1942** as an **autonomous body** registered under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**, it has grown to become **India's largest public Research and Development (R&D) organization**, playing a pivotal role in advancing scientific and technological innovation across the country.

Leadership Structure:

- **President:** The **Prime Minister of India** (Ex-Officio).
- **Vice-President:** The **Union Minister of Science and Technology** (Ex-Officio).
- **Governing Body:** Headed by the **Director-General (DG)** of CSIR.

CSIR-CRRI

The organization is a **constituent laboratory** of the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**. It was **established in 1952** in **New Delhi** with the objective of conducting **research on the design, construction, and maintenance of roads and runways**.

OFF BUDGET BORROWING

Why in news?

The political and legal battle over off-budget borrowing has taken centre stage in Kerala following the 2026 Assembly elections. The practice has driven a severe fiscal squeeze and deeply strained the state's relationship with the Central government.

About

- Off-budget borrowings are loans that are taken not by the Centre directly, but by another public institution which borrows on the directions of the central government. While it keeps the official fiscal deficit looking low, the government ultimately bears the repayment burden.
- The loan is formally held by the PSU, it stays hidden from the national fiscal deficit calculation.
- Off-budget financing allows governments to bypass fiscal discipline mandated under the **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003**.

How are Off-Budget Borrowings Raised?

- The government asks implementing agencies to raise required funds from the market through loans or by issuing bonds.
- **Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)** and **Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs)** are commonly used to raise such funds.
- These borrowings are typically directed towards subsidies, infrastructure, and welfare schemes.

Borrowings from PSBs

FY	Amount borrowed from PSBs (Rs lakh crore)
2023	4.12
2022	4.93
2021	3.98
2020	3.11
2019	2.51

Off-budget borrowings: Stock and flow

State	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Liabilities	Raised	Liabilities	Raised	Liabilities	Raised
Andhra Pradesh	112,115	38,313	118,394	NA	128,047	35,114
Telangana	97,940	21,803	118,955	20,858	118,629	NA
Kerala	16,459	9,273	25,874	14,313	29,476	8,059
Tamil Nadu	15,369	14,735	27,670	12,357	2,299	NA
Madhya Pradesh	NA	1,255	2,322	534	2,887	564
Karnataka	18,421	3,045	16,682	2,350	17,306	4,029
West Bengal	1,085	4,311	NA	NA	NA	NA
Punjab	4,004	523	4,067	803	2,466	484
Haryana	406	NA	342	NA	279	22
Rajasthan	1,804	NA	1,581	NA	1,279	1,279
Bihar	—	—	1,483	520	1,203	687
Chhattisgarh	3,897	NA	3,873	NA	7,161	NA

Source: SFARs, CAG's SFARs, and state government data.

NATIONAL JUTE BOARD

Why in news?

Ministry of Textiles officially announced a massive technological leap for India's jute sector with the full-scale deployment of the Jute Crop Information System (JCIS).

About

The **National Jute Board (NJB)**, in a high-tech partnership with ISRO and the Jute Corporation of India, has launched a project that marks the first time satellite intelligence and ground-level field observations have been integrated into a single framework to monitor India's massive jute sector.

Digital Mapping Revolution in India's Jute Sector

- **Space-to-Field Partnership:** A high-tech collaboration between **NJB, ISRO, and the Jute Corporation of India** that merges satellite intelligence with ground data for the first time.
- **New Digital Tools:** Replaces slow manual surveys with **BHUVAN JUMP** (a mobile app for geo-tagged field logging) and **PATSAN** (a central web dashboard providing real-time data to officials).
- **Weather and Flood Tracking:** Features a live flood impact model and weather alerts to help major jute-growing districts predict and minimize crop losses from climate shocks.

- **Smarter Policy Planning:** Uses advanced geospatial mapping to run accurate yield experiments, aligning state and national data for precise trade and resource decisions.
- **Future Steps:** NJB is working to expand the system to more districts, launch direct SMS alerts for farmers, and map water and carbon metrics.

ONE CASE ONE DATA INITIATIVE

Why in news?

The Supreme Court of India has officially launched two major digital initiatives '**One Case One Data**' and '**Su Sahay**' marking a massive technology-driven leap toward standardizing and modernizing the Indian judicial system.

About

- **One Case One Data:** A national **digital infrastructure** project that links and synchronizes case records across all court tiers (**Supreme, High, District, and Taluka**). It creates a **single, interconnected database** that eliminates **data silos** and provides an **unbroken digital trail** to track a case through transfers and appeals.
- **Su Sahay:** An **AI-powered chatbot** embedded directly into the **Supreme Court's website** to act as a **24/7 digital helpdesk**. Developed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, it translates complex legal protocols into simple, **conversational guidance** to help citizens track cases and navigate filing procedures easily.

IEPFA

Why in news?

The **Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)** has signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Prasar Bharati** to launch a massive, nationwide financial literacy campaign.

About

The **Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)**, established in 2016 under the Companies Act, 2013, operates under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs with the primary mission of

safeguarding investor interests and driving financial literacy nationwide.

Core Functions and Initiatives

- **Asset Reclamation:** Manages the recovery and refund of shares, unclaimed dividends, and matured deposits/debentures back to rightful investors.
- **Flagship Outreach Programs:** Empowers citizens to make informed financial choices through grassroot initiatives like **Niveshak Didi, Niveshak Panchayat, and Niveshak Shivr.**
- **Fund Management:** Administers the IEPF, which accumulates assets left **unclaimed for 7 years.** This includes unpaid dividends, application money due for refunds, matured debentures, and government grants or donations.

NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE OF INDIA

Why in news?

The escalating **fire safety crisis** has surged into widespread focus following a tragic, fatal building fire in Delhi caused by an electrical short circuit.

About

The **National Electrical Code of India 2023 (SP 30:2023)** is an all-inclusive national standard published by the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**. It serves as the definitive blueprint for regulating safe electrical installation, design, and maintenance practices across the country.

- **Core Definition:** The NEC serves as India's "all-inclusive Electrical Installations Code," offering uniform guidelines to regulate electrical installation practices across the entire country.
- **Formulating Authority:** The NEC is Fauthored, revised, and maintained entirely by the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**, India's national standards body.
- **Primary Objectives:** The primary legal and technical goals of the code are to eliminate electrical accidents, minimize electrical hazards, and significantly lower fire risks caused by faulty wiring.

- **Alignment with Global Standards:** The 2023 edition was specifically written to align India's domestic electrical framework with the latest **International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)** best practices
- **Statutory Mandate:** Under **Regulation 12** of the Central Electricity Authority (Measures relating to Safety and Electric Supply) Regulations, following the National Electrical Code for electrical installations is statutory.

WINDFALL TAX

Why in news?

The recent price hike in retail petrol and diesel across India marks the first major fuel price increase in more than four years. This sharp rise has been triggered by the ongoing war in West Asia, which has disrupted global energy traffic.

About

A **Windfall Tax** is a temporary, higher levy imposed by governments on **specific industries** that experience sudden, dramatic, and unanticipated profit growth due to **favorable external factors** rather than their own investments or expansion strategies.

Features:

- Implemented via the **Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED)** and **Additional Excise Duty (AED)** under central excise laws. It is heavily applied to domestic crude oil production and fuel exports (diesel, petrol, Aviation Turbine Fuel).
- Tax rates are reviewed **fortnightly** by the Ministry of Finance based on international crude oil price margins.
- It is a **retrospective tax** on unearned, unanticipated gains, making it a common point of dispute regarding market certainty.

GOVERNMENT e-MARKET PLACE

Why in news?

Ministry of Commerce & Industry to celebrate the 2026 Incorporation Day of the Government e Marketplace (GeM).

About

The **Government e Marketplace (GeM)**, launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, is India's national public procurement portal. It serves as a mandatory, end-to-end digital platform for Central and State Government Ministries, Departments, and Public Sector Units (PSUs) to buy required goods and services.

Objectives

- **Enhance Procurement:** To drive efficiency, transparency, and speed in public spending while ensuring effective price discovery and economies of scale.
- **Diverse Buying Options:** To provide flexible purchasing methods, including direct purchase, e-bidding, reverse e-auctions, and direct reverse auctions.
- **Mandatory Usage:** To enforce rules requiring government departments to procure their goods and services directly through the portal.

Key Features

- **Fully Digital:** A completely cashless, paperless, and system-driven platform connecting buyers and sellers directly.

Initiatives of Government e Marketplace

- **SWAYATT:** Integrates Startups, Women, and Youth entrepreneurs into the formal government supply chain.
- **Womaniya on GeM:** Empowers women entrepreneurs and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by giving them direct access to government buyers for handicrafts and handlooms.
- **Saras Collection & ODOP Bazaar:** Showcases rural SHG products alongside **One District, One Product (ODOP)** regional and GI-tagged crafts.
- **GeM Bhashini:** Integrates AI-powered translation to make the entire portal fully accessible in **22 official Indian languages**, removing regional barriers.
- **GeM SAHAY:** A fintech initiative providing small businesses with instant, collateral-free digital loans against their government purchase orders.

- **Tech-Driven Accessibility:** Utilizes AI-powered tools and voice-enabled navigation to simplify user interactions.
- **Inclusive Onboarding:** Offers a multilingual Learning Management System (LMS) and region-specific training modules to support and onboard sellers from remote and underserved areas.

MISSION COFFEES OF NAGALAND

Why in news?

Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) and Communications, **Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia**, launched the **Cluster-based Coffee Value Chain Development Mission** branded as "**Coffees of Nagaland**."

About

- **Mission "Coffees of Nagaland"**, developed in close coordination with Nagaland Chief Minister Shri Neiphiu Rio, is a program designed to transition the state from producing raw coffee beans to establishing a premium, high value domestic and international market presence.
- **Total Mission Budget:** The overarching financial blueprint for the mission is set at **₹175 crore**.
- The initiative targets specific agro-climatic zones through two pilot hubs: **Tuophema village in Kohima for Arabica coffee** and **Ghotovi village in Niuland for Robusta coffee**.

Objectives & Strategies

- **Ecosystem Integration:** Connects the entire value chain from cultivation and shared processing infrastructure (washing stations and roasteries) to branding and export logistics.
- **Market Differentiation:** Uses organic certification, GI tagging, and digital traceability under the "**Taste of Eminence**" brand to secure premium global placement and raise farmer incomes.
- **Agricultural Diversification:** Replaces ecologically damaging shifting (*jhum*) cultivation with sustainable coffee farming, aiming to nearly triple yields to 800 kg per hectare.

- **Experiential Tourism:** Blends hospitality with farming through "farm-to-cup" tourism and coffee farm-stays to position Nagaland as a niche eco-tourism hub.

GOLD ETF

Why in news?

Gold ETFs (digital gold) are in the news as a popular refuge for retail investors seeking a safe haven from stock market volatility. However, because funds must buy real bullion to back these digital units, massive ETF buying forces heavy gold imports that widen India's trade deficit and drain foreign currency reserves.

About

A Gold ETF is a **commodity-based, passive investment instrument** that tracks domestic physical gold prices and invests directly in gold bullion.

- **The Asset:** One unit equals **1 gram of gold** and is backed by high-purity physical gold held in paper or digital form.
- **Trading:** Combines the flexibility of stocks with the simplicity of gold. Units are listed and traded continuously at real-time market prices on the **NSE and BSE**.

Features

- **Intraday Trading:** Unlike mutual funds (which trade once a day at market close), ETF prices **fluctuate all day** based on real-time buying and selling.
- **High Transparency & Low Cost:** Direct gold pricing ensures complete transparency, while structural fees are **much cheaper** than active funds or physical gold storage.
- **Passive Strategy:** Focuses on long-term holding to **mirror index performance** rather than daily active trading, eliminating high management fees and transaction costs.

VARIABLE RATE REPO

Why in news?

RBI used the Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction to inject **₹81,590 crore** of short-term cash into the banking system.

About

A VRR is a **short-term liquidity injection tool** used by the RBI under its Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) to help banks manage temporary cash shortages.

- **Market-Driven Interest:** Unlike the fixed repo rate which is predetermined by the RBI, the interest rate for a VRR is determined dynamically through a market auction process.
- **Tenure & Collateral:** It is a temporary tool with a short tenure of **1 to 14 days**. To borrow funds, banks must provide eligible **government securities as collateral**.

Economic Impact

- **On Banking Liquidity:** Injecting cash increases surplus money for interbank lending, which pushes short-term interest rates lower and keeps them aligned with the policy repo rate.
- **On Retail Borrowers:** Changes in a bank's internal borrowing costs eventually pass through to consumers, influencing the interest pricing on home loans, personal loans, and corporate credit.

SARTHAK PDS

Why in news?

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** approved the continuation of the "SARTHAK-PDS" umbrella scheme with a financial outlay of **₹25,530 crore** over the next 5 years (up to March 2031).

About

- **SARTHAK-PDS** (Scheme for Assistance in Ration Transport and Handling-Income with Automation in PDS) is a comprehensive umbrella scheme approved by the Government of India to modernize and strengthen the nation's **Public Distribution System (PDS)** under the **National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)**.
- The program embeds advanced frameworks including Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing, and Blockchain alongside data-driven oversight through State Command Control Centres to

intelligently optimize and secure the Public Distribution System's supply chain operations.

Objectives

- **Food and Nutritional Security:** Fulfilling the government's legal commitment to provide a dignified life to citizens by ensuring adequate quantities of quality food grains are accessible.
- **Leakage Minimization:** Standardizing the supply chain to eliminate diversion or theft of subsidized food grains before they reach intended citizens.
- **Interoperability:** Enhancing citizen-centric architectures so that beneficiaries can seamlessly access their rations anywhere across the country (building on tech like the *Mera Ration* app)

LOGISTIC PORT PERFORMANCE INDEX

Why in news?

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal officially launched the **Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI)** for the financial year 2024-25 during the 37th Foundation Day celebrations of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) in Mumbai.

About

- **LPPI**, developed by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways under the Sagar Aankalan framework, is a national benchmarking mechanism designed to evaluate and improve the operational performance of Indian ports.
- It aligns with major national blueprints like the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, Maritime India Vision 2030, and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

Evaluation Matrix

The index assesses port operations across three cargo segments, namely **dry bulk, liquid bulk, and container cargo**, by assigning equal weightage to absolute performance and year on year improvement based on:

- Vessel turnaround time & pre-berthing waiting time
- Berth idle time & ship berth day output
- Container dwell time & total cargo handled

Top Performers (FY 2024-25)

- **Dry Bulk Category:** Paradip Port Authority (Odisha)
- **Liquid Bulk Segment:** Sikka Port and Terminals (Gujarat)
- **Container Cargo:** Mundra Port (Gujarat) ranked first, followed by Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) (Maharashtra) in second place.

Global Logistics Impact

Driven by these operational benchmarks and modernization tracking, India's international maritime standing has significantly improved:

- **Logistics Performance Index (World Bank):** India's rank jumped from 44th to **22nd position** in the International Shipments category.
- **Container Port Performance Index 2024 (World Bank):** **Seven Indian ports** now rank among the world's top 100 ports.

ELECTRONIC GOLD RECEIPTS (EGRS)

Why in News?

The **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** expanded India's digital gold market by launching its dedicated **Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) trading segment**. It joins the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), which had previously operationalized EGR trading, to help fully formalize the country's spot gold market.

About

An Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) is a **dematerialized (digital) security** that represents direct ownership of physical gold. It functions as a bridge connecting the traditional physical gold market with the modern electronic financial ecosystem.

How do EGRs Work?

- Physical gold is deposited with a SEBI-registered Vault Manager.
- The deposited gold is converted into Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs).

- EGRs are credited to the investor's demat account.
- Investors can trade EGRs on stock exchanges.
- EGRs can be converted back into physical gold by surrendering the receipts.

The Mechanism and Core Features

- **Legal Status:** Under the *Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956*, EGRs are officially classified as "**Securities.**" They can be bought, sold, and traded on stock exchanges just like equity shares or ETFs.
- **Regulatory Authority:** The entire ecosystem including the stock exchanges, depositories, and vault managers is strictly regulated by the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**.
- **Specifications:** The underlying gold must meet strict purity standards (**995 or 999 fineness**). Trading is highly accessible, featuring micro-denominations starting from as low as **100 milligrams (mg)** up to 1 kilogram (kg).
- **Taxation Framework:** No Goods and Services Tax (GST) is levied when buying or selling EGRs on the stock exchange. A **3% GST is applicable only at the final stage** when an investor requests physical delivery of the gold. Furthermore, converting physical gold into an EGR (and vice versa) does not attract Capital Gains Tax.

ENVIRONMENT

COLD WATER FISHERIES

Why in News?

India's Cold Water Fisheries Emerging as a Key Pillar of the Blue Economy.

About

- Cold water fisheries involve fish species that thrive in water temperatures generally below 20°C.
- Mainly found in the Himalayan and sub-Himalayan states: Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and parts of the Northeast.
- Trout (Rainbow and Brown trout), Mahseer, Snow trout, and carp species in hill reservoirs and lakes.
- Cold water fisheries contribute a small but high-value segment of India's inland fisheries, with trout farming being commercially important.
- Trout is rich in protein and omega-3 fatty acids, while cold water fisheries provide livelihood opportunities in remote mountain regions.
- Kashmir Valley (trout farming), Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand are the leading trout-producing regions.
- The ICAR-Central Institute of Coldwater Fisheries Research (CICFR), Bhimtal, works on breeding, conservation, and sustainable management of cold water fish species.



Representational Photo: AFP

Blue Economy: Sustainable use of ocean and aquatic resources for economic growth, livelihoods, and ecosystem health. While often associated with oceans, the Blue Economy also includes inland fisheries, aquaculture, and freshwater ecosystems.

ABROLHOS CORAL REEFS

Why in News?

Brazil's Abrolhos coral reefs, the most diverse in the South Atlantic, are declining due to rising ocean temperatures caused by climate change.

About

- It is the largest and most biodiverse coral reef system in the entire South Atlantic.
- It is famous for *chapeirões*, which are unique mushroom-shaped coral pinnacles that can grow up to 20 meters tall.
- The warm waters of the Abrolhos Bank serve as a critical breeding and calving ground for humpback whales.
- The region hosts a significant number of marine species found nowhere else on Earth.
- The health of these reefs is a key indicator of climate change impacts on South Atlantic marine ecosystems.



- It was established as Brazil's first Marine National Park to address threats from sedimentation and industrial activity.

NATIONAL WETLAND INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

Why in News?

The Supreme Court is examining whether the Wetlands Rules, 2017 have weakened wetland protection in India by reducing the number of wetlands covered under the law.

About

- The project is launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India.
- The implementing agency is the Space Applications Centre (SAC) under ISRO, working in collaboration with state agencies and wetland experts.
- Its main objective is to create a comprehensive inventory, mapping, and assessment of wetlands in India to improve conservation and management efforts.
- The project utilizes remote sensing and GIS-based satellite mapping, which is combined with ground verification for accuracy.
- It covers all major wetland types across India, including inland wetlands, coastal wetlands, lakes, marshes, mangroves, reservoirs, and waterlogged areas.
- Wetlands are classified using the Ramsar Convention classification system, specifically adapted for Indian conditions.
- The major output is the preparation of a National Wetland Atlas, which

provides detailed state-wise and district-wise wetland data.

- It is significant because it helps identify ecologically important wetlands and supports the effective implementation of the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules.
- It assists in critical areas such as biodiversity conservation, flood control, groundwater recharge, and climate resilience planning.
- The generated data is used by policymakers, researchers, planners, and conservation agencies to ensure better wetland protection and sustainable management.



CANINE DISTEMPER VIRUS

Why in News?

Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) outbreaks have spiked among street dogs and wild predators.

About

- It is a highly contagious, severe, and fatal disease caused by a single-stranded RNA virus from the *Paramyxoviridae* family.
- It spreads rapidly through airborne droplets (sneezing or coughing) or direct contact with infected saliva, tears, respiratory fluids, and urine.
- The virus directly attacks an animal's respiratory, gastrointestinal (digestive), and central nervous systems.

- Infected animals suffer from high fever, nasal discharge, coughing, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle twitches, and fatal seizures.
- While common in domestic and wild dogs (canines), it also affects a wide range of wildlife like foxes, wolves, jackals, large cats (lions/tigers), and pandas.
- There is no known cure for the disease once contracted, making proactive vaccination and supportive veterinary care the only lines of defense.

GLANDERS DISEASE

Why in News?

A joyride horse in Chennai died from Glanders.

About

- It is a highly contagious, chronic, and frequently fatal infectious disease primarily affecting equines like horses, donkeys, and mules.
- The disease is caused by a Gram-negative bacterium known as *Burkholderia mallei*.
- It is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can jump from infected animals to humans through open cuts, abrasions, or mucous membranes (eyes and nose).
- It manifests clinically in three forms based on the organs affected: nasal, pulmonary (lungs), and cutaneous (known as 'farcy', which forms distinct skin nodules).
- Animals contract it primarily by ingesting food or water contaminated with the nasal discharges of infected carrier equines.
- Due to its high potency, history of weaponization, and lack of a vaccine,

the CDC classifies *Burkholderia mallei* as a **Category B bioterrorism agent**.

- It is a legally notifiable disease in India under the *Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals (PCICDA) Act, 2009*.



- It is officially listed as a disease under the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Terrestrial Animal Health Code, requiring mandatory international notification.

H5N1 AVIAN INFLUENZA

Why in News?

Bird flu surveillance was intensified across 38 Karnataka villages following the confirmed H5N1 deaths of over 40 wild peacocks.

About

- Influenza A (H5N1) is a **highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)** virus that mainly infects birds but can spill over into mammals, including humans.
- It is classified under Type A influenza based on two surface proteins: **Hemagglutinin (H)** and **Neuraminidase (N)**.
- It spreads through direct contact with infected bird fluids, saliva, or feces, rather than through insect vectors.
- Human-to-human transmission is rare, but the virus is highly dangerous to

humans, carrying a global case fatality rate of around 50%.

- Outbreaks trigger immediate monitoring for **ILI (Influenza-Like Illness)** and **SARI (Severe Acute Respiratory Infection)** cases in surrounding containment zones.



- Recurrent seasonal spikes in India are frequently linked to winter migratory birds using international flyways.

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA)

Why in News?

India will host the first-ever International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit in New Delhi to strengthen global cooperation for big cat conservation.

About

- International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) was proposed by the Prime Minister of India in 2019.
- Formally launched on April 9, 2023, during the 50th-anniversary commemoration of *Project Tiger* in Mysuru.
- Became a treaty-based intergovernmental organization on January 23, 2025.

Core Objective

- To foster global cooperation for the conservation of seven major big cat

species: **Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.**

- Facilitate knowledge sharing, technical expertise, and collaborative research to halt population decline.

Implementation & Governance

- Implemented through the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- Headquartered in **New Delhi, India.**
- Governance structure includes an Assembly of Members (decision-making body), a Standing Committee, and a Secretariat.

Membership

- Open to all UN member states, including "range countries" (where big cats live naturally) and "non-range countries" interested in conservation.
- The alliance serves as a multi-country, multi-agency coalition involving governments, scientific organizations, and corporate partners.

Need for the Initiative

- Big cat populations are critically threatened by habitat loss, poaching, illegal wildlife trade, climate change, and human-wildlife conflict.
- There was previously no international agency exclusively dedicated to the holistic conservation of these specific species.

Funding

- India has committed **₹150 crore** as initial budgetary support for the 2023–2028 period.
- The alliance is designed to eventually become self-sustaining through

membership fees, multilateral/bilateral funding, and contributions from donor organizations.

Strategic Focus

- **Capacity Building:** Training and resource sharing among nations.
- **Anti-Poaching:** Strengthening transboundary cooperation to curb illegal wildlife trade.



- **Ecological Security:** Protecting apex predators to ensure healthy ecosystems and climate resilience.

LEGACY WASTE REMEDIATION AND BIOMINING

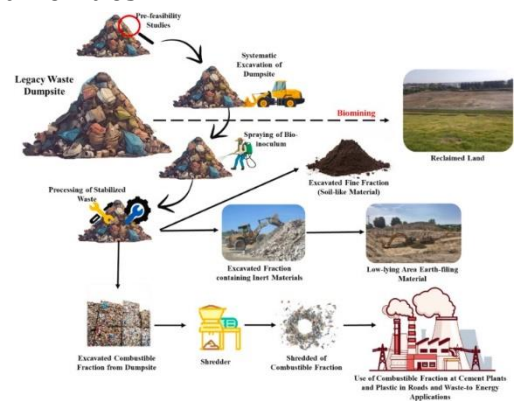
Why in News?

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, conducted a high-level review of the ongoing legacy waste remediation work at the Bhalswa dumpsite in Delhi.

About

- **Definition of Legacy Waste:** Legacy waste refers to the **massive accumulations of solid waste that have been dumped over decades** at unsanitary landfills, often containing a mix of organic, plastic, and inert materials that pose severe environmental and health risks.

- **The Process of Biomining:** Biomining is a scientific, mechanical, and biological process where old waste is excavated, stabilized, and segregated using specialized machinery like trommel screens and air density separators.
- **Resource Recovery:** The process effectively converts "**waste to wealth**" by segregating materials into valuable fractions such as Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) for industrial use, recyclables (plastic, metal), and inert material suitable for construction or landfill capping.
- **Land Reclamation:** A primary objective of biomining is to reclaim vast tracts of urban land previously choked by waste, allowing these areas to be repurposed for green spaces, infrastructure projects, or public amenities.



- **Environmental Impact:** By accelerating the decomposition of organic matter through microbial treatment and removing hazardous materials, biomining helps mitigate groundwater contamination, air pollution from landfill fires, and the release of greenhouse gases.

NATIONAL AMBIENT NOISE MONITORING NETWORK (NANMN)

Why in News?

Due to increasing concerns over excessive noise from public events, celebrations, and urban activities, prompting calls for stricter enforcement of noise-control rules.

About

- The project was established in India by the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- To provide long-term, continuous, real-time monitoring of noise levels in major Indian cities to assess environmental noise pollution.
- The initiative was launched to track noise compliance against prescribed standards.
- The network utilizes **Remote Monitoring Terminals (RMTs)** installed across various noise zones—residential, commercial, industrial, and silence zones—to ensure 24/7 data collection.
- The project was rolled out in phases, initially covering 7 major metropolitan cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Lucknow, and Kolkata) with 35 monitoring stations, eventually expanding to more cities to create a national database.
- It serves as a vital tool for urban planning and policy intervention, providing the data necessary to implement noise abatement measures and enforce the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules.
- The data generated is used by regulatory authorities to identify

"hotspots" of noise pollution and to help state governments and local bodies implement traffic management and noise control strategies.

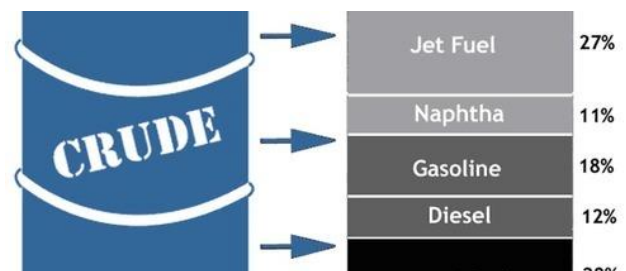
NAPHTHA - OIL BY PRODUCT

Why in News?

Global shipping disruptions have triggered severe naphtha shortages in Japan, threatening the production of plastics, medical supplies, and everyday packaging.

About

- Naphtha is a volatile, flammable liquid hydrocarbon mixture produced as a light intermediate fraction during crude oil refining.
- It is a complex blend of paraffins, naphthenes, and aromatics containing chains of 5 to 12 carbon atoms.
- A low-boiling fraction rich in paraffins that serves as the primary feedstock for making plastics.
- A high-boiling fraction rich in naphthenes that is catalytically reformed into high-octane gasoline.
- It undergoes steam cracking to produce ethylene and propylene, the fundamental building blocks of modern polymers.
- It is processed via steam reforming to extract hydrogen, which is essential for synthesizing agricultural ammonia.



- It is blended into heavy, viscous crude oils to reduce thickness so they can flow smoothly through pipelines.

HYDROGEN TRAIN

Why in News?

Indian Railways has approved the rollout of India's first indigenous Hydrogen Fuel Cell-powered trainset to decarbonize non-electrified rail networks.

Key Features of the Hydrogen Train

- The train is designated to run its inaugural pilot operations on the Jind-Sonipat section in Haryana.
- It features a 10-car trainset layout engineered to run at a designated maximum speed of 75 kmph.
- The trainset is powered by a high-capacity 1200 KW hydrogen fuel cell system that generates electricity electrochemically.
- The operational byproduct of the fuel cell is exclusively water vapor, completely eliminating harmful carbon emissions.
- A specialized, indigenous hydrogen storage, compression, and high-pressure refueling facility has been set up at Jind.
- The system features RDSO-approved automated safety networks, including active hydrogen leak and flame detectors.
- Dedicated maintenance schedules and technical safety protocols have been



finalized at the localized facility in Shakurbasti.

- With this rollout, India joins a limited cohort of nations, including Germany, China, Japan, and the US piloting hydrogen rail mobility.

KANHA TIGER RESERVE

Why in News?

Kanha Tiger Reserve is in the news due to back-to-back cub deaths, raising concerns about its tiger monitoring systems.

About

- It is situated in the **Maikal range of the Satpuras** in Madhya Pradesh.
- It connects directly to **Pench Tiger Reserve and links to Achanakmar Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh.**
- The landscape features a diverse mix of valleys, undulating hills, and flat-topped plateaus.



- It is India's first tiger reserve to have an official mascot, "**Bhoorsingh the Barasingha.**"
- The forest is dominated by moist sal and mixed deciduous trees like bamboo and arjun.
- It is home to **Gond and Baiga tribes** alongside major wildlife like Bengal tigers, leopards, and wild dogs.

NATIONAL CHAMBAL SANCTUARY

Why in News?

The Supreme Court took *suo motu* notice of rampant illegal sand mining in the National Chambal Sanctuary.

About

- It is a unique 600-km long protected riverine zone co-administered by Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.
- It is a critical lotic (flowing water) ecosystem famed for its clean river stretches and deep ravines.
- The sanctuary serves as the ultimate global stronghold for the critically endangered Gharial and the Ganges River Dolphin.
- It was established in 1979 under the flagship "Project Crocodile" initiative to save India's collapsing crocodilian populations.
- The sanctuary is recognized globally as an Important Bird Area (IBA) and remains a prominent proposed Ramsar site.
- Sand is legally categorized as a "minor mineral," vesting all administrative and regulatory rights with individual state governments.



- Illegal sand mining directly destroys the vital river sandbanks needed by gharials and turtles to lay their eggs.

CAMPBELL AND GALATHEA NATIONAL PARK

Why in News?

A petition signed by over 2 lakh people has raised concerns over the environmental impact of the Great Nicobar mega project.

About

- The park is located on Great Nicobar Island, the largest island in the Nicobar group, situated in the eastern Indian Ocean about 190 km north of Sumatra.
- It was officially designated as a national park by the Indian government in 1992.
- The park serves as a core component of the larger Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve.
- It spans an area of approximately 426 square kilometers and is separated from the adjacent Galathea National Park by a 12-km-wide forest buffer zone.
- The landscape is dominated by lush tropical evergreen forests, which are home to a wide variety of orchids and tree ferns.
- It provides a vital habitat for unique wildlife, such as the Nicobar megapode, the Nicobar pigeon, the giant robber crab, and the crab-eating macaque.
- The park is highly significant for ecological research and conservation, particularly for its rich biodiversity and endemic avian species.

About Galathea National Park

- The park is located on Great Nicobar Island, which is part of the Nicobar Islands in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

- It was established in 1992 and named after the 19th-century Danish expedition ship "Galathea."
- It covers an area of approximately 110 square kilometers and is situated adjacent to Campbell Bay National Park, separated by a 12-km-wide forest buffer zone.
- The park is a key part of the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve, which was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2013.
- Its topography includes undulating hills, with Mount Thullier (also known as Mount Galathea)—the highest peak on the island—reaching an elevation of about 642 meters.
- The area is rich in freshwater resources, with several perennial rivers like the Galathea, Jubilee, Amrit Kaur, Dak Aniang, and Dak Tayal originating from Mount Thullier.
- The park serves as a home for the indigenous Shompen community.
- The flora consists of diverse tropical rainforests, mangroves, and coastal vegetation, including various epiphytes and medicinal plants.
- It hosts unique wildlife such as the Nicobar megapode, saltwater crocodile, giant leatherback turtle, crab-eating macaque, and the Nicobar pigeon.

BLACK BUCK POPULATION

Why in News?

Chhattisgarh's Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary has recorded a steady rise in its blackbuck population following a reintroduction programme started in 2018.

About

- It is a medium-sized antelope species native to India and Nepal.
- It primarily lives in open grasslands, dry scrub areas, and thinly forested zones.
- It is found throughout peninsular India and serves as the state animal for Punjab, Haryana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- Males have prominent spiral horns and dark coats, while females are lighter in color and usually hornless.
- They possess excellent eyesight and high running speeds to escape predators.
- They are social, herd-dwelling animals that typically gather in groups of 5 to 50.
- It is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and is classified as "Least Concern" on the IUCN Red List.



PROSOPIS JULIFLORA

Why in News?

India plans to establish its first green methanol plant at Deendayal Port (Kandla, Gujarat) to convert the highly invasive plant *Prosopis juliflora* into clean marine fuel.

About

- It is a thorny shrub or small tree native to Mexico, South America, and the Caribbean.
- The British introduced it to Delhi in the 1920s, and the Gujarat government used it in 1961 to halt the expansion of the Rann of Kutch salt desert.
- It is commonly called *Vilayati Keekar* in North India, *Gando Baval* in Gujarat, and *Seemai Karuvelam* in Tamil Nadu.
- Ranked among the world's top 100 invasive species, it aggressively outcompetes native vegetation and lowers groundwater levels due to its deep root system.



- It has severely degraded Asia's largest tropical grassland—the Banni Grasslands of Kutch—disrupting the livelihoods of local Maldhari pastoralists.
- Despite being an ecological weed, its high energy profile, low acid content, and dense hardwood make it an ideal biomass feedstock for clean energy.

CYPHOSTEMMA ANNAMALAI

Why in News?

Botany researchers from Annamalai University have discovered a brand-new plant species in the southern Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu.

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About

- It is a newly identified plant species belonging to *Vitaceae Juss*, which is commonly known as the grape family.
- It belongs to *Cyphostemma*, which is the second-largest genus in the grape family, comprising nearly 250 species globally.



- It thrives in open, scrubby vegetation within the tropical dry forests of the southern Eastern Ghats.
- It is a climbing vine with a tuberous root system that utilizes surrounding plants and trees for physical support.
- The plant is characterized by white or yellow flower petals and distinctively round, yellow fruits.
- Unlike its closest relative species, it maintains a unique leaf pattern that strictly starts with three leaves and ends with three leaves.

ODANATA SPECIES

Why in News?

A recent ecological survey recorded 143 Odonata species—76 dragonflies and 67 damselflies—including 40 species entirely endemic to the Western Ghats.

About

- It is an ancient order of carnivorous insects popularly known as dragonflies and damselflies.
- The order is divided into three groups: Anisoptera (dragonflies), Zygoptera

(damselflies), and Anisozygoptera (a rare, relict group with only two living species).

- They are primarily associated with freshwater wetlands, ponds, rivers, lakes, and surrounding landscapes.
- They are globally distributed from the tropics to boreal forests, found across all continents except Antarctica.
- They possess minute antennae, elongated slender abdomens, two pairs of transparent wings, and exceptionally large compound eyes.
- They are highly vision-reliant creatures, with more than 80% of their brain capacity dedicated entirely to analyzing visual data.
- They are active diurnal (daytime) fliers that undergo an aquatic larval stage known as a nymph.
- Both adults and larvae are voracious predators, serving as vital bio-indicators due to their extreme sensitivity to water pollution and habitat alterations.

Rare Dragonfly Rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh

- *Gynacantha khasiaca* (**Long-tailed Duskhawker**) has been rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh after a gap of more than 110 years, having last been recorded in 1914.
- The species was found in **Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve**
- It belongs to the Order Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) and possesses large compound eyes, providing near 360-degree vision.
- The *Gynacantha* genus consists of large crepuscular dragonflies that are active during dawn and dusk and are

characterized by pale brown and green coloration.

- The rediscovery underscores the rich biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayas and highlights the need for continued habitat conservation and biodiversity monitoring.

Namdapha National Park

- Located in **Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh**, near the **India-Myanmar border**.
- Declared a **National Park and Tiger Reserve in 1983**; it is one of the largest protected areas in India ($\approx 1,985$ sq km).
- Known as the **only protected area in India that hosts all four big cats**—Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard, and Clouded Leopard.
- The **Noa-Dihing River**, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, flows through the park.
- A biodiversity hotspot with ecosystems ranging from **tropical evergreen forests to alpine meadows**, supporting species such as the **Red Panda, Hoolock Gibbon, Hornbills, and Asiatic Black Bear**.

HUMPBACK WHALE

Why in News?

A stranded humpback whale nicknamed 'Timmy' has faced repeated groundings in the shallow, low-salinity waters of Germany's Baltic coast, triggering critical rescue operations and survival concerns.

About

- It is a large, charismatic species of baleen whale officially named *Megaptera novaeangliae*.

- It is easily recognized by a prominent hump on its back and exceptionally long pectoral fins.
- It tracks among the longest seasonal migration routes of any mammal, moving between polar feeding regions and tropical breeding zones.
- It employs a highly coordinated method called "bubble netting" to form an underwater curtain of air bubbles that traps fish.
- It plays an irreplaceable role in marine ecosystems by cycling ocean nutrients and functioning as a massive carbon sink.
- Females grow larger than males and generally give birth to a single calf every two to three years.



- It is classified as "Least Concern" on the IUCN Red List, listed under Appendix I of CITES, and holds Schedule I protection under India's Wildlife Protection Act.

RED SAND BAO SNAKE

Why in News?

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in Hyderabad recently intercepted and rescued a live Indian Red Sand Boa from an illegal wildlife trader in Warangal.

About

- It is a non-venomous snake species legally classified under the scientific name *Eryx johnii*.
- It is an endemic reptile species native only to Iran, Pakistan, and the dry regions of India.
- It prefers dry, sandy environments with loose soil that easily support its underground burrowing habit.
- It follows a strictly nocturnal (active at night) and fossorial (underground) lifestyle to avoid predators.
- It is ovoviviparous, meaning the eggs develop and hatch directly inside the mother's body to give birth to live young.
- It features a thick, reddish-brown body with an average adult length growing to about 75 centimeters.



- Its tail is nearly as thick as its head, giving it a distinct "double-headed" illusion used to confuse predators.
- It is officially categorized as "Near Threatened" on the global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

HUMBOLDTIA NAIRIANA

Why in News?

Researchers have discovered a new evergreen tree species named *Humboldtia nairiana* in the

riparian forests of Kerala's Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary.

About

- It is a newly identified medium-sized evergreen tree belonging to the genus *Humboldtia* and the Fabaceae (pea/legume) family.
- It grows between 5 to 8 meters tall, featuring warty pale-brown bark, a creamy-white inner bark blaze, and unique leaf appendages.
- The tree produces larger flowers with longer supporting stalks (pedicels) and develops elliptic-oblong fruits with short beaks.
- The species is strictly endemic to Kerala and is found exclusively within the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve at an elevation of around 300 meters.
- It faces an extreme threat of extinction, with a total known wild habitat covering less than 2 square kilometers and consisting of fewer than 10 mature individuals.

About Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is situated in the southern Western Ghats of Kerala and forms an integral part of the larger Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve.
- The sanctuary is highly celebrated for its rich tropical evergreen biodiversity, pristine riverine habitats, and complex forest ecosystems.

HARVESTER ANTS

Why in News?

Kenyan Court Penalises Smuggling Ring for Trafficking Over 5,000 Live Queen Ants.

About

Scientifically named *Messor cephalotes*, it is commonly known as the **Giant African Harvester Ant** and is the largest known harvester ant species in the world.

- It is native exclusively to the arid and semi-arid savannas of East Africa, primarily found in Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.
- Smugglers strictly target **queen ants** because they are the only individuals capable of laying eggs to establish new colonies for the highly lucrative international exotic pet trade.
- They act as keystone ecosystem engineers that drastically improve soil aeration, drive underground nutrient cycling, and aid plant seed dispersal.
- Mass extraction disrupts grassland food webs, damages soil quality, and can trigger localized ecological collapses.
- The unauthorized movement of thousands of non-native insects violates sovereign biodiversity frameworks (like the Nagoya Protocol) and presents a severe **invasive species risk** if they escape into foreign ecosystems.



BARN SWALLOW

Why in News?

Barn swallows in Manipur may have lost their migratory behaviour and become resident birds.

About

- The Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is a small, insectivorous songbird known for its striking iridescent blue-black upperparts, cinnamon belly, and long, forked tail.
- Recent research in Manipur's Imphal Valley indicates that some populations have transitioned from being seasonal migrants to permanent residents, staying in the region throughout the year.
- The shift is believed to be caused by favorable local conditions, including a mild climate, reliable food sources, and the availability of human structures for nesting.
- These birds are synanthropic, meaning they live close to human settlements and frequently build their signature mud-cup nests on man-made structures.
- As agile hunters, they serve as natural biological pest controllers by

consuming insects, which helps maintain the health of agricultural and wetland ecosystems.

- The species is classified as 'Least Concern' on the IUCN Red List and is categorized under Schedule-II of India's Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.



GEOGRAPHY

EL NINO

Why in News?

India could face a difficult weather year in 2026 as global climate signals point to the possible return of El Nino, according to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

About

El Niño is the warm phase of the **ENSO (El Niño–Southern Oscillation)** cycle, marked by abnormal warming of sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. It occurs approximately every **3–7 years** and significantly alters global weather patterns.

Formation of El Niño

- **Normal Conditions:** Easterly trade winds push warm surface waters westward toward Southeast Asia, while cold, nutrient-rich waters upwell along the South American coast.
- **Weakening of Trade Winds:** The trade winds weaken or reverse due to westerly wind bursts.
- **Eastward Movement of Warm Water:** Warm water shifts eastward across the Pacific as **Kelvin waves**.
- **Thermocline Deepening:** The thermocline sinks in the eastern Pacific, suppressing the upwelling of cold water.
- **Atmospheric Feedback:** Warmer ocean waters heat the overlying atmosphere, altering pressure systems, jet streams, and global rainfall patterns.

Impact on India

- **Weaker Monsoon:** El Niño is often associated with below-normal southwest monsoon rainfall, increasing drought risk.
- **Agricultural Losses:** Reduced rainfall during the Kharif season can lower yields of water-intensive crops such as rice, sugarcane, and pulses.
- **Intense Heatwaves:** It contributes to more frequent and severe summer heatwaves across many parts of India.

- **Economic Impact:** Adversely affects agriculture, water resources, and rural livelihoods, leading to substantial economic losses and inflationary pressures.

Super El Niño

A Super El Niño is an exceptionally strong event defined by sea surface temperature anomalies in the Niño 3.4 region spiking by at least 20C (3.60F) above the long-term average. Only a few such events have occurred since 1950, with some models now predicting the strongest event in 140 years for the 2026–27 cycle.

DUST STORMS

Why in News?

A massive dust storm swept across Churu and several other districts of Rajasthan, highlighting the structural degradation of the Aravalli range.

About

- A **dust storm**, locally called **Andhi**, is a common meteorological event in arid and semi-arid regions. It is characterized by strong, gusty winds that lift large amounts of loose sand and dust from dry surfaces into the atmosphere, forming dense dust clouds that significantly reduce visibility and deteriorate air quality.

Formation of Dust Storms

- **Extreme Surface Heating:** During the pre-monsoon months (April–June), intense solar heating raises *temperatures over the Thar Desert* and this creates strong convection and atmospheric instability.
- **Development of Low Pressure:** The heated land surface generates a strong low-pressure area. Westerly and southwesterly winds move toward this low-pressure zone, carrying dust from the Thar Desert and adjoining regions.
- **Dust Uplift:** When wind speeds exceed about **35–40 kmph**, loose sand and dust particles are lifted from dry, barren soils and remain

suspended in the atmosphere due to strong turbulent winds.

- **Long-Distance Transport:** In the absence of effective natural barriers, dust-laden winds travel long distances.



Impact Zone

- *Dust storms primarily affect **Northwest India**, including **Rajasthan, Delhi-NCR, Haryana, Punjab, and western Uttar Pradesh**.*
- *With the degradation of the **Aravalli Range**, dust is increasingly spreading deeper into the **densely populated Indo-Gangetic Plains**.*

WESTERN DISTURBANCE

Why in news?

Delhi and North India are set to receive significant relief from scorching heat with forecasts of rain, thunderstorms, and strong winds. Pre-monsoon activity and a Western Disturbance are expected to bring down temperatures sharply, potentially below 40°C, and ease heatwave conditions. Residents are advised to exercise caution during the stormy weather.

About

A **Western Disturbance** is essentially a weather "traveler." It is a low-pressure storm system that originates far away in the Mediterranean region and travels eastward across countries like Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan before reaching India.

Occurrence

- **The Origin:** It starts over the Mediterranean Sea, where cold polar air meets warmer, moist air. This creates a rotating storm system (an extratropical cyclone).
- **The Tracks (Jet Stream):** High-altitude winds known as the **subtropical westerly jet stream** act as the tracks, guiding these storms from west to east across Asia.

- **Picking up Cargo:** As the system travels, it collects extra moisture from the Caspian and Black Seas.
- **The Arrival (Blocking):** When this "moisture train" hits the towering Himalayan Mountains in Northern India, it cannot easily move past them. The mountains act like a wall, forcing the air to rise. As the air rises, it cools, turns into clouds, and releases its "cargo" as rain in the plains or snow in the mountains.

Impact on India

Western Disturbances are the primary reason Northern India experiences weather during the winter months (December to March).

- **Agricultural Lifeline:** They are vital for **Rabi crops** (like wheat, mustard, and barley). This winter rain acts as a natural irrigation system, significantly boosting crop yields and ensuring food security.
- **Mountain "Recharge":** They provide heavy snowfall in the Himalayas. This snow acts as a natural reservoir, which melts during the spring and summer to keep North Indian rivers flowing throughout the year.
- **Climate & Air Quality:** They often bring a brief "wash" that clears out urban air pollution (such as in Delhi) and helps manage temperature fluctuations.

MISSION MAUSAM

Why in news?

NIOT has completed the first field trials of its high-altitude drone under Mission Mausam. The test marks a step towards stronger atmospheric monitoring, pollution tracking and climate research.

About

- **The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** launched **Mission Mausam** in **2024** to strengthen India's weather and climate services.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD), National Centre are implementing the mission for **Medium-Range Weather Forecasting**

(NCMRWF), and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).

- Its objective is to **enhance the accuracy and timeliness of weather observations, forecasting, and climate modeling.**
- The mission seeks to provide reliable weather and climate information to support key sectors such as **agriculture, disaster management, water resources, aviation, and rural development.**

Key Objectives of Mission Mausam

- **Improve weather forecasting** across short-, medium-, extended-range, and seasonal timescales.
- **Enhance monsoon prediction accuracy** through high-resolution weather and climate models.



- **Strengthen observation infrastructure** using advanced radars, satellites, and automated weather stations.
- **Provide sector-specific advisories** for agriculture, disaster management, water resources, and energy.
- **Promote research and innovation** through collaboration with national and international institutions.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MUON ANOMALY

Why in News?

Scientists have developed a more precise theoretical calculation of the **muon's anomalous magnetic moment (muon g-2)**, bringing it into close agreement with experimental measurements.

Muon and the Muon g-2 Anomaly

- **Muon (μ)** is an elementary particle belonging to the **lepton family**, carrying a **-1 electric charge** like an electron.
- It is **about 207 times heavier than an electron** and has a very short lifetime of **~2.2 microseconds**.
- Muons are naturally produced when **cosmic rays interact with Earth's atmosphere** and can also be generated in particle accelerators.
- Being a charged particle with **spin**, a muon behaves like a tiny magnet, characterised by its **magnetic moment**.
- Earlier measurements showed a **4.2 σ deviation** from the Standard Model prediction, hinting at possible **new physics**.
- Improved calculations using **Lattice Quantum Chromodynamics (Lattice QCD)** significantly reduced uncertainties in the theoretical prediction.
- The revised Standard Model prediction now closely matches experimental observations, causing the **Muon g-2 anomaly to largely disappear**.

Applications

- **Medical Imaging & Cancer Treatment:** Advances precision magnets and detectors used in MRI, PET scans, and proton-beam cancer therapy.
- **Muon Tomography:** Enables non-invasive imaging of volcanoes, pyramids, nuclear reactors, and cargo containers using muons.

- **Advanced Computing & Data Analytics:** Drives improvements in high-performance computing, simulations, and big-data processing.
- **Precision Sensors & Electronics:** Enhances the accuracy of sensors, detectors, timing systems, and scientific instruments.

What is Lattice QCD?

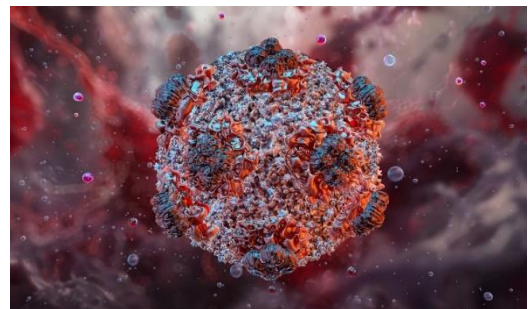
Quantum Chromodynamics (QCD) is the theory describing the **strong nuclear force**. Since strong-force interactions cannot always be solved analytically, physicists simulate them on a **discrete space-time lattice** using supercomputers. This computational method is known as **Lattice QCD**. It enables highly accurate calculations of hadronic contributions to particle properties.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

HANTA VIRUS

Why in news?

The World Health Organization says the Andes virus, a specific species of hantavirus, is found in South America, primarily in Argentina and Chile.



What is Hantavirus?

Hantavirus is a group of **rodent-borne viruses** that can infect humans and cause severe diseases. It is a **zoonotic virus**, with rodents serving as its natural reservoir.

Different hantavirus species are found across **Asia, Europe, and the Americas.**

Transmission

- Primarily spreads through **inhalation of virus particles** from the **urine, droppings, or saliva of infected rodents.**
- Can also spread through:
 - Direct contact with infected rodents or their excreta.
 - Rodent bites (rare).
- **Human-to-human transmission is extremely rare** and has been documented only with the **Andes virus** strain in South America.

Diseases Caused

Hantaviruses cause **Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)**, which affects the **lungs** (mainly in the Americas), and **Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS)**, which affects the **kidneys** (common in Europe and Asia).

Symptoms: Fever, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, nausea, vomiting, cough, and shortness of breath. Severe cases may lead to **fluid accumulation in the lungs (HPS)** or **kidney dysfunction with bleeding (HFRS).**

Treatment

- **No specific antiviral drug or licensed vaccine** is available.
- Treatment is mainly **supportive**, including:
 - Oxygen therapy.
 - Intensive care for severe cases.
 - myFluid and electrolyte management.

THALASSMIA

Why in news?

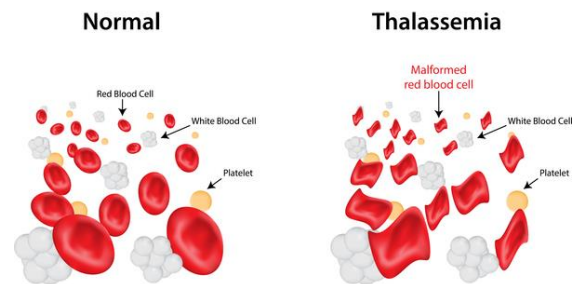
Thalassemia has gained renewed policy attention due to the growing emphasis on prevention over lifelong management. With only **5–10% of children with Thalassemia**

Major in India receiving optimal treatment, preventive strategies are being prioritized.

What is Thalassemia?

- **Thalassemia** is an **inherited (autosomal recessive) genetic blood disorder** characterized by reduced or absent synthesis of **hemoglobin**, leading to **anemia.**

Thalassemia



- It is caused by mutations in genes responsible for the production of **alpha (α)** or **beta (β)** globin chains, resulting in **Alpha Thalassemia** (defective α -globin synthesis) or **Beta Thalassemia** (defective β -globin synthesis, more common in India).
- A child develops **Thalassemia Major** only if **both parents are carriers** of the defective gene called autosomal recessive inheritance pattern.

Symptoms

- Fatigue, weakness, pallor, shortness of breath.
- Delayed growth and puberty.
- Bone deformities, enlarged spleen and liver.
- Jaundice and dark urine in severe cases.

Government Initiatives

- **Comprehensive Guidelines on Prevention and Control of Hemoglobinopathies (2016).**
- **National Health Mission (NHM):** Support for screening, blood banks and treatment infrastructure.
- **Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojana (TBSY):** Financial assistance (up to ₹10 lakh) for Bone Marrow Transplant.

- **e-RaktKosh:** Online platform for blood availability and blood bank services.



India is often referred to as the "**Thalassemia Capital of the World.**" Around **1–1.5 lakh** patients live with thalassemia. Nearly **12,000 children** are born with **Thalassemia Major** annually. **Beta-thalassemia carrier rate: 3–4%** (~35–45 million carriers)

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Why in news?

Multiple Sclerosis Society of India organises awareness event in Chennai

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

About



- **Multiple Sclerosis (MS)** is a **chronic autoimmune disorder** affecting the **Central Nervous System (CNS)**, including the brain and spinal cord.
- In MS, the immune system mistakenly attacks the **myelin sheath**—the protective covering around nerve fibres—disrupting communication between the brain and the rest of the body.
- The exact cause remains unknown, but it is believed to result from a combination of **genetic predisposition** and **environmental factors**, such as smoking, stress, and deficiencies of **Vitamin D** and **Vitamin B12**.
- As there is no single diagnostic test and symptoms often resemble other conditions, **early diagnosis is challenging**.

Symptoms

- Muscle weakness and numbness.
- Fatigue and dizziness.
- Bladder dysfunction (frequent, sudden, or difficult urination).
- Bowel problems.
- Impaired coordination, balance, and movement due to nerve damage

PREGABALIN

Why in news?

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has shifted **Pregabalin** from **Schedule H** to **Schedule H1** under the Drugs Rules, 1945, through a notification issued in May 2026.

About

- **Pregabalin** is a **drug** used for the **treatment of chronic pain, neuropathies, fibromyalgia, and certain neurological conditions.**
- **Misuse of Pregabalin:**
 - **Misuse Among Youth:** Reports from certain States showed **misuse and abuse** of Pregabalin, particularly among youth.
 - **Sedative and Euphoric Effects:** The drug was reportedly **misused for its sedative, euphoric, and dissociative effects.**
 - **Illegal Stocking and Sale:** Recent seizures of illegally stocked and unauthorisedly sold Pregabalin were reported from some parts of the country.
- **Legal Provision:** Schedule H1 forms part of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, and was introduced through a Gazette notification in 2013.
- **Regulated Drugs:** It covers certain third- and fourth-generation antibiotics, specific habit-forming drugs, and anti-tuberculosis (anti-TB) medicines.

- **Legal Conditions for Sale:** The sale of Schedule H1 drugs must be recorded in a separate register, including the prescription and patient details, with records retained for a period of three years.
- **Mandatory Warning Requirement:** Schedule H1 drugs must bear the red “Rx” symbol along with the prescribed Schedule H1 warning label on their packaging.

Inclusion of Pregabalin under Schedule H1:

Pregabalin has been brought under the stricter regulatory framework of Schedule H1 instead of Schedule H.

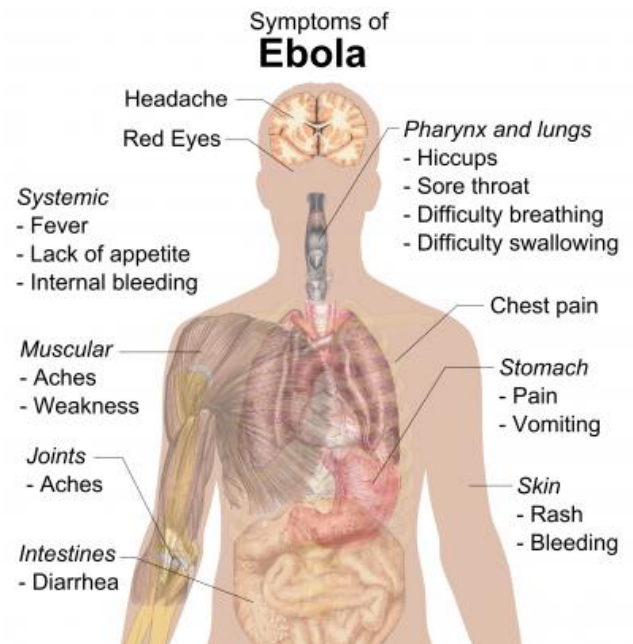
- **Prescription Requirement:** The drug can now be sold only against a valid prescription issued by a Registered Medical Practitioner.
- **Supply Chain Monitoring:** Retailers are required to maintain a separate register containing prescription and sales details.
- **Public Health Protection:** The measure is intended to prevent unauthorized access, curb illegal trafficking, and protect public health from drug misuse.

EBOLA

Why in news?

The recent outbreak of **Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)** caused by the **Bundibugyo virus** in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** and **Uganda** has prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare it a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)**

Origin: First identified in **1976** during simultaneous outbreaks in **Yambuku (DRC)** near the **Ebola River** and **Nzara (South Sudan)**.



About Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)

- Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a severe and often fatal viral disease affecting humans and other primates.
- **Causative Agent:** It is caused by viruses of the **Orthoebolavirus** genus under the **Filoviridae** family.
- **Species:** Six species of Orthoebolaviruses have been identified, of which three cause major human outbreaks:
 - **Ebola virus (EBOV)** – Causes Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).
 - **Sudan virus (SUDV)** – Causes Sudan Virus Disease (SVD).
 - **Bundibugyo virus (BDBV)** – Causes Bundibugyo Virus Disease (BVD).
- **Transmission:**
 - **Animal-to-Human:** Through contact with infected animals such as fruit bats, chimpanzees, gorillas, and monkeys; fruit bats (Pteropodidae family) are considered the natural reservoir.
 - **Human-to-Human:** Through direct contact with the blood, bodily fluids, or contaminated objects of infected or deceased persons.

- **Fatality Rate:** The average case fatality rate is around **50%**, ranging from **25% to 90%** depending on the virus species and quality of medical care.
- **Treatment:** Early supportive care and rehydration improve survival, while monoclonal antibody therapies (**Inmazeb** and **Ebanga**) are available for infections caused by the **Zaire Ebola virus**.

WHO ICHI INITIATIVE

Why in News?

The Ministry of Ayush conducted a two-day consultative meeting to review the development of the **WHO International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI)** and **National Health Intervention Codes (NHIC)** for **Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani (ASU)** systems, aiming to integrate traditional medicine into the global health classification framework.

International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI)

- Developed by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** as a global standard for classifying health interventions.
- Provides a standardized coding system for interventions across healthcare systems.
- Facilitates international data comparison, clinical research, digital health interoperability, and health insurance integration.

National Health Intervention Codes (NHIC) for ASU

- A coding framework being developed for **Ayurveda (NHICA), Siddha (NHICS), and Unani (NHICUM)** interventions.
- Aims to create a scientifically standardized vocabulary aligned with the **WHO-ICHI** framework.
- Enables better documentation, cross-border data exchange, evidence generation, and global recognition of traditional medicine.

Key Highlights

- Initiative follows the **MoU and Donor Agreement** between the Ministry of Ayush and WHO.
- Draft coding directories have been prepared by **CCRAS, CCRS, and CCRUM** using a **four-level hierarchical coding structure**.
- The finalized framework will serve as the basis for the **WHO-ICHI ASU Alpha Draft Editorial Workshop** scheduled for **July 2026**.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MYTHOS AI

Why in News?

U.S.-based AI company **Anthropic** has expanded access to its advanced cybersecurity AI model, **Mythos**, beyond its initial group of vetted security partners

What is Mythos?

- **Mythos** is Anthropic's **most advanced frontier AI model**, designed primarily for **cybersecurity applications**.
- It possesses significantly enhanced **reasoning, coding, and vulnerability detection** capabilities compared to earlier AI models.
- It is intended to identify and help fix critical software vulnerabilities.

Key Features

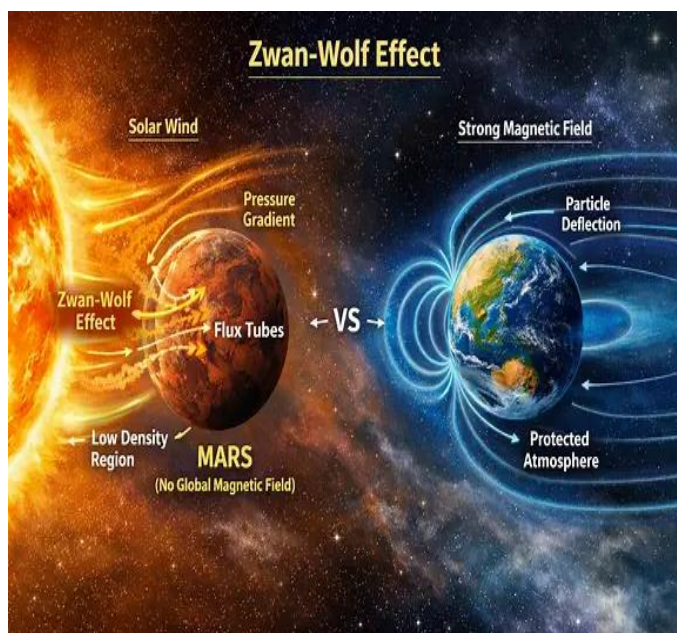
- Advanced reasoning and problem-solving abilities.
- High-level coding and software debugging capabilities.
- Detects **zero-day vulnerabilities** in software systems.
- Assists in securing **critical digital infrastructure**.
- Developed with enhanced **AI safety guardrails** to reduce misuse.

Project Glasswing

- **Project Glasswing** is Anthropic's initiative to provide controlled access to Mythos.
- Access is limited to **trusted governments, critical infrastructure operators, research institutions, and cybersecurity organizations.**
- India is among the countries included in the programme.

SPACE

ZUANWOLF EFFECT



Why in news?

NASA's **MAVEN (Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution)** spacecraft has, for the first time, detected the **Zwan-Wolf effect** in the Martian atmosphere, providing new insights into the interaction between solar wind and Mars' atmospheric escape processes.

Working

- The **solar wind**, a stream of charged particles emitted by the Sun, approaches a planet and is compressed near its magnetic boundaries.
- This compression creates a **magnetic pressure gradient**, which squeezes

charged particles along magnetic field structures called **flux tubes**.

- As the particles move away from the solar wind stream, a **low-density region of charged particles** is formed, producing the **Zwan-Wolf effect**.

Key Observations

- **NASA's MAVEN** detected the Zwan-Wolf effect **for the first time in a planetary atmosphere**, within Mars' ionosphere below **200 km** altitude.
- A **coronal mass ejection (solar storm)** intensified magnetic structures, making the normally weak effect detectable and reducing local charged particle density by nearly **50%**.
- The discovery shows that **Mars, despite lacking a global magnetic field**, can exhibit complex solar wind-atmosphere interactions, improving our understanding of atmospheric loss and offering insights into other unmagnetized bodies such as **Venus and Titan**.

DEFENCE

PROJECT DUPAK

Why in News?

Project Deepak of the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** celebrated its **66th Raising Day** on **4 May 2026**, marking over six decades of developing strategic road infrastructure in the Western Himalayas.

Project Deepak

- **Established:** Raised in **1961** as one of the oldest projects of the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)**.
- **Area of Responsibility:** Covers the districts of **Shimla, Kinnaur, Kullu, and Lahaul-Spiti** in Himachal Pradesh.
- **Road Network:** Responsible for the construction, upgradation, and maintenance of **over 1,100 km** of strategic

roads, including high-altitude border roads.

- **Key Infrastructure:** Constructed the **Hindustan-Tibet Road** and developed key stretches of the **Manali-Leh axis**.
- **Strategic Importance:** Enhances border connectivity, strengthens defence preparedness, and ensures operational readiness in high-altitude regions.
- **Disaster Response:** Undertakes rescue and relief operations during natural disasters, including evacuating stranded civilians and motorists in high-altitude areas.

INS SUNAYNA



Why in News?

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sunayna, deployed as Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR, arrived at Colombo, Sri Lanka, carrying a multinational crew from 16 Indian Ocean countries as part of India's maritime outreach and regional security initiative.

About

The visit aims to strengthen maritime cooperation, interoperability, and diplomatic ties under India's vision of **MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)** and the **Neighbourhood First Policy**

About INS Sunayna

- INS Sunayna is the **second Saryu-class Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV)** of the Indian Navy.
- It was **designed and built indigenously** by **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)**.
- The ship was **commissioned on 15 October 2013** at Kochi.
- It is based under the **Southern Naval Command**.
- It is designed for **fleet support operations, coastal and offshore patrolling, ocean surveillance, protection of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and offshore assets, and escort missions**.

Features of INS Sunayna

- **Propulsion:** Powered by **two diesel engines**, enabling a maximum speed of **over 25 knots**.
- **Advanced Systems:** Equipped with an **Automatic Power Management System (APMS)**, along with modern **navigation, communication, and electronic support systems**.
- **Armament:** Armed with a **76 mm naval gun** integrated with an **electro-optic fire control system, Close-in Weapon Systems (CIWS), and CHAFF launchers** for missile defence.
- **Aviation Capability:** Capable of **embarking and operating a helicopter**, enhancing its surveillance and maritime operational reach.

MAHASAGAR Initiative (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)

- **MAHASAGAR** is India's new strategic vision for the **Global South**, announced by the Prime Minister during his visit to **Mauritius in March 2025**. It builds upon the **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** doctrine launched in 2015.
- The initiative seeks to promote **trade-led development, capacity building,**

sustainable growth, and mutual security, while expanding India's maritime engagement beyond the Indian Ocean Region to the wider Global South.

- It aims to strengthen **maritime security cooperation, Blue Economy partnerships, resilient supply chains, disaster response, and climate resilience**, positioning India as a **preferred security partner and first responder** in the maritime domain.

MISSION DHRISTI

Why in News?

Mission Drishti, the world's first **OptoSAR satellite** developed by Bengaluru-based space startup GalaxEye, was successfully launched aboard a Falcon 9 by SpaceX from Vandenberg Space Force Base on **May 3, 2026**.

Mission Drishti

- **Mission Drishti** is India's largest privately developed **Earth Observation Satellite (EOS)**, weighing **190 kg**.
- It is the **world's first OptoSAR satellite**, capable of capturing **Optical (multi-spectral)** and **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** images of the **same location simultaneously**.

Key Features

- **OptoSAR Technology:** Integrates optical and SAR imaging into a single satellite for simultaneous data capture.
- **All-weather, Day-and-Night Imaging:** SAR can penetrate clouds, smoke, rain, and operate in darkness, overcoming limitations of optical satellites.
- **AI-enabled Image Reconstruction:** Uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate optical-like images from SAR data when cloud cover obstructs optical imaging.
- **Real-time Data Fusion:** Proprietary synchronization technology aligns optical and SAR sensors instantly, eliminating the need for manual data alignment.

Applications

1. Border surveillance and defence.
2. Disaster management (floods, cyclones, landslides).
3. Agriculture and crop monitoring.
4. Infrastructure planning.
5. Insurance and damage assessment.

PROJECT 17A



Why in news?

INS Mahendragiri, the sixth **Nilgiri-class (Project 17A)** stealth guided-missile frigate, was **delivered to the Indian Navy on 30 April 2026**, marking a significant milestone in India's indigenous warship-building programme and strengthening the Navy's maritime combat capabilities.

Project 17A (Nilgiri-class Frigates)

- **Project 17A** is the Indian Navy's programme to build **seven advanced stealth guided-missile frigates**, as successors to the **Shivalik-class (Project 17)** frigates.
- The ships are **designed indigenously** by the **Warship Design Bureau (WDB)** and are being constructed by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai (4 ships)** and **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata (3 ships)**.
- They are equipped with **advanced anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare systems**, powered by a **Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG)** propulsion system

and an **Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS)**.

- With about **75% indigenous content**, the project is a key milestone in **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**, involving over **200 MSMEs** and generating significant employment.

INS Mahendragiri



- **INS Mahendragiri** is the **sixth Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) stealth guided-missile frigate** and the **fourth ship** of the class built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)**.
- It was **delivered to the Indian Navy on 30 April 2026**, marking a major milestone in India's indigenous warship-building programme.
- **Designed by the Warship Design Bureau (WDB)**, it is powered by a **Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG)** propulsion system and carries advanced **anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare** capabilities.
- The frigate incorporates **75% indigenous content**, reflecting India's progress in **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and domestic defence manufacturing.
- It features **stealth technology**, including a **low radar cross-section (RCS)**, radar-absorbing materials, flush-mounted weapons, and infrared signature reduction systems.
- Its advanced combat suite includes **BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles**, **MF-STAR multifunction radar**, and the **MRSAM air defence system**, significantly enhancing the Indian Navy's offensive and defensive capabilities.

- The induction of **INS Mahendragiri** strengthens India's **blue-water naval capability** and its ability to maintain a sustained maritime presence in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

INS SUDHARSHINI



Why in news?

Indian Navy's Sail Training Ship (STS) **INS Sudharshini** has arrived at Antigua after completing a landmark trans-Atlantic voyage under the ongoing Lokayan 26 expedition.

About

- **INS Sudharshini** is an **indigenously built Sail Training Ship (STS)** of the Indian Navy, constructed by **Goa Shipyard Limited** and based at **Kochi** under the **Southern Naval Command**.
- It was **commissioned on 27 January 2012** to provide practical seamanship training, preparing naval cadets to navigate challenging sea conditions and develop essential sailing skills.

Features

- It is a **three-masted barque**, capable of operating under both **sail and engine power**.
- It has a **high endurance**, enabling continuous deployment at sea for **up to 20 days**.
- It is primarily used to train Indian Navy personnel in **ocean navigation**,

seamanship, survival at sea, and handling adverse weather conditions.

Lokayan 26 (Voyage)

- **Lokayan 26** is a **10-month transoceanic expedition** covering over **22,000 nautical miles** across **18 ports in 13 countries**.
- During the voyage, **INS Sudarshini** will participate in major international **Tall Ship events**, including **Escale à Sète (France)** and **SAIL 250 (New York, USA)**.
- The expedition will provide **Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard trainees** with hands-on experience in **long-range ocean sailing, navigation, and international maritime cooperation**.

INS SAGARDHWANI

Why in news?

INS Sagardhwani, the Indian Navy's **Oceanographic Research Vessel (ORV)**, departed **Port Klang, Malaysia**, on **15 May 2026** after successfully concluding a port visit and professional engagement with the **Royal Malaysian Navy**.



About INS Sagardhwani

- **INS Sagardhwani** is an **Oceanographic Research Vessel (ORV)** of the Indian Navy, commissioned in **July 1994**. Its name means "**Voice of the Sea**."
- It was designed by the **Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL)**,

Kochi, and built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE)**.

- The vessel is equipped with **advanced scientific laboratories and oceanographic instruments** for conducting **marine scientific research**, particularly in **marine acoustics and naval oceanography**.
- It has completed **over 200 scientific missions**, supporting the development of **naval weapons, sensors, and oceanographic models**.
- **INS Sagardhwani** works closely with **DRDO laboratories**, including the **Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL)** and the **Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL)**.
- It has also participated in the **Sagar Maitri** initiative, promoting **scientific collaboration and ocean research** among **Indian Ocean Rim (IOR)** countries in line with India's **MAHASAGAR** vision.

TARAGLIDE WEAPONS

Why in News?

The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, in collaboration with the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**, successfully conducted the **maiden flight trial of the Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) weapon** off the coast of **Odisha**, marking a significant milestone in India's indigenous **precision-guided weapon capabilities**.



About TARA (Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation)

- TARA is India's first indigenously developed modular glide weapon system, designed to convert unguided gravity bombs into precision-guided weapons.
- It enhances the **range, accuracy, and lethality** of conventional bombs, enabling long-range precision strikes while remaining cost-effective.
- The weapon can be integrated with **multiple fighter aircraft** in the Indian Air Force, providing greater operational flexibility.
- It is the **first indigenous glide weapon** to employ advanced **low-cost technologies**, making precision strikes more economical.
- **Developed by:** Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.
- The project involves **Development-cum-Production Partners (DcPPs)** and Indian private industries, strengthening the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** initiative and India's domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem.
- The successful trial marks a major step towards **strategic autonomy** by reducing dependence on imported **Precision-Guided Munitions (PGMs)**.

INDIAN COAST GUARD SHIP ICGS ACHAL

Why in news?

Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Achal, the fifth vessel of the indigenous Adamyia-class Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) series, was commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard at Goa Shipyard Limited.

Features of ICGS Achal

- ICGS Achal is an **Adamyia-class Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV)** built by **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** with **over 60% indigenous content**, reflecting India's push for **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** in defence manufacturing.



- The vessel is **52 metres long, 8 metres wide**, has a **displacement of 320 tonnes**, and is powered by a **Controllable Pitch Propeller (CPP)-based propulsion system**, enabling a **maximum speed of 27 knots**.
- It is designed and constructed under **dual-class certification** from the **American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)** and the **Indian Register of Shipping (IRS)**.
- The vessel is equipped with **advanced navigation and communication systems**, a **modern engine room**, and a **small machine gun** for maritime law enforcement.
- It is designed to undertake **coastal surveillance, maritime interdiction, search and rescue (SAR), pollution response, and protection of offshore assets and island territories**.
- As the **fifth vessel in a series of eight Adamyia-class FPVs**, it strengthens the Indian Coast Guard's capability for **maritime security, coastal policing, and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surveillance**.

MISSION DIVYA STRA



Why in News?

India successfully conducted the second flight test of the Agni-5 missile equipped with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology on 8 May 2026 from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha.

Mission Divyastra

- **Mission Divyastra** is the **flight test of the Agni-5 ballistic missile equipped with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology**, conducted by DRDO.
- It marks **India's entry into the select group of countries possessing operational MIRV capability**, significantly strengthening its strategic deterrence.

MIRV (Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle)

- **MIRV** is a technology that enables a **single ballistic missile to carry multiple warheads**, with each warhead capable of striking **different targets independently**.
- After the missile reaches a predetermined point in space, the warheads separate and follow **independent trajectories** toward their designated targets.
- MIRV-equipped missiles can carry **nuclear or conventional warheads**.
- The technology makes interception by **Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD)** systems more difficult, as multiple warheads and decoys can be deployed simultaneously.

- It enhances **second-strike capability**, a key component of a credible nuclear deterrent.

Agni-5 Missile

- **Type:** Surface-to-surface, long-range, nuclear-capable ballistic missile.
- **Range:** Over **5,000 km**.
- **Developed by:** DRDO under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).
- **Launch platform:** Road-mobile, canisterised missile system enabling quick launch and easier mobility.
- Equipped with **MIRV technology**, allowing a single missile to engage multiple strategic targets.

Countries with MIRV Capability

- *United States*
- *Russia*
- *China*
- *France*
- *United Kingdom*
- *India*

K9 VAJRA



Why in news?

the **Indian Army is preparing to procure 300 more K9 Vajra-T self-propelled artillery guns** under a major artillery modernisation programme worth around **₹23,000 crore**, significantly expanding its fleet.

K9 Vajra-T

About

- It is a **155 mm, 52-calibre tracked self-propelled howitzer (SPH)** designed to provide highly mobile, long-range artillery fire support.
- It is **manufactured in India by Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** with **technology transfer** from South Korea's **Hanwha Defense**, based on the **K9 Thunder** platform.
- It was procured under the **'Buy Global'** category of the **Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)** with a high level of indigenous manufacturing.
- Initially inducted for **desert warfare**, it has also been **winterised and deployed in high-altitude areas** along the northern borders following the India–China border standoff.

Key Features

- **Calibre:** 155 mm, 52-calibre tracked self-propelled artillery system.
- **Armour:** All-welded steel armour with protection up to **19 mm** thick.
- **Range:** Can engage targets up to **50 km** (depending on ammunition).
- **Firepower:**
 - Fires **47 kg artillery shells**.
 - **Burst rate:** 3 rounds in 15 seconds.
 - **Maximum rate:** 6–8 rounds per minute for up to 3 minutes.
- **Mobility:**
 - Weighs approximately **50 tonnes**.
 - Can execute a **zero-radius turn**, enhancing manoeuvrability in confined terrain.
- **Fire Control:** Equipped with a **Digital Fire Control System (DFCS)** capable of **Multiple Round Simultaneous Impact (MRSI)**, allowing multiple shells fired at different trajectories to hit the target simultaneously.
- **Ammunition Compatibility:** Can fire a variety of ammunition, including **high-**

explosive, smoke, and illumination shells.

- **Operational Capability:** Suitable for operations in **desert, plains, and high-altitude mountainous terrain** after winterisation.

OPERATION RAGEPILL

Why in news?

The **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)**, under **Operation RAGEPILL**, busted a major international drug trafficking network involved in the smuggling of **Captagon**, leading to the seizure of **227.7 kg of Captagon tablets/powder** valued at about **₹182 crore** in the illegal Gulf market.

About

- **Captagon** is the trade name for **Fenethylline**, a synthetic stimulant drug.
- It was originally developed in **1961** to treat conditions such as **Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**, **narcolepsy**, and **depression**.
- Due to its **high potential for abuse and addiction**, it was placed under international control and is **banned globally** under the **1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances**.
- Today, most Captagon tablets are **illicitly manufactured** and generally contain **amphetamine, caffeine, and other stimulants**, rather than genuine fenethylline.
- It is popularly known as the **"Jihad Drug"** or **"Poor Man's Cocaine"** because of its widespread illicit use in conflict zones and the Middle East.

- Produces euphoria, heightened alertness, reduced fatigue, and appetite suppression. Prolonged use can cause addiction, dependence, anxiety, aggression, hallucinations, and psychosis. It may also lead to serious cardiovascular problems and neurological damage.



UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE



Why in News?

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully completed the final deliverable configuration development trials of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Launched Precision Guided Missile (ULPGM)-V3 at its test range near Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh.

About Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), or drones, are aircraft that operate **without an onboard pilot**, either through remote control or autonomous navigation. They use **pre-programmed software, navigation systems,**

and onboard sensors to perform various missions. UAVs are widely used in **defence, surveillance, agriculture, disaster management, and infrastructure monitoring** due to their ability to provide **real-time data** and operate in remote or hazardous areas.

Types of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

- **Nano UAVs:** Ultra-small drones (generally under 250 g) used for close-range surveillance and reconnaissance.
- **Mini UAVs:** Small drones with moderate endurance, commonly used for mapping, agriculture, and aerial imaging.
- **Fixed-Wing UAVs:** Aircraft with fixed wings designed for long-range surveillance and extended flight missions.
- **Rotary-Wing UAVs:** Helicopter-like drones capable of hovering and vertical take-off and landing (VTOL).
- **Hybrid UAVs:** Combine fixed-wing endurance with VTOL capability for greater operational flexibility.

Applications of UAVs

1. Defence & Security
2. Agriculture
3. Disaster Management
4. Mapping & Surveying
5. Infrastructure Inspection
6. Environmental Monitoring
7. Logistics & Delivery
8. Media & Entertainment
9. Scientific Research
10. Urban Planning & Smart Cities
11. Healthcare
12. Mining & Resource Exploration

SANGHAMITRA

Why in news?

Sanghamitra, the first Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV) being built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers

(GRSE) for the Indian Navy, was launched at Kolkata on 20 May 2026.



About Sanghamitra (Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel - NGOPV)

- Sanghamitra is the first Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV) built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata for the Indian Navy.
- It was launched in May 2026 in the presence of the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, and is named after Sanghamitra, the daughter of Emperor Ashoka.
- It is part of the 11-vessel NGOPV programme, being constructed by GRSE, Kolkata and Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), Goa.
- The vessel is indigenously designed and built to undertake maritime surveillance, defence operations, search and rescue (SAR), protection of offshore assets, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), and anti-piracy missions.
- Its crest features the Ursa Major constellation along with a red and white lighthouse, symbolising guidance, vigilance, and maritime security.

EXERCISE PRAGATI 2026

Why in News?

The maiden edition of the Multilateral Military Exercise PRAGATI 2026 concluded at Umroi Military Station, Meghalaya, with

the participation of over 400 military personnel from 13 countries.

PRAGATI 2026

About



- PRAGATI stands for Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region.
- It is a multinational military exercise hosted by the Indian Army at Umroi Military Station, Meghalaya.
- The exercise is conducted under the principles of mutual respect, equality, and shared regional security.
- It brings together India and 12 partner countries—Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.
- It aims to enhance interoperability, strengthen military-to-military cooperation, share best practices, and develop joint responses to emerging security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Key Features

- Focuses on counter-terrorism (CT) and counter-insurgency (CI) operations in semi-mountainous and jungle terrain.
- Includes joint command planning exercises, tactical-level field drills, and coordinated operational exercises.
- Promotes intelligence sharing and synchronization for multinational operations.

- Facilitates **exchange of battlefield experiences** and **harmonisation of tactical doctrines** among participating armies.
- Features an **Aatmanirbhar Bharat defence exposition**, showcasing **indigenous defence technologies, weapon systems, and tactical equipment** developed by Indian industry.

SURYASTRA



Why in News?

India's indigenous long-range rocket artillery capability received a major boost after **Pune-based private defence company Nibe Limited** successfully conducted firing trials of the **Suryastra** rocket system at the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha**.

About

- **Suryastra** is an **indigenously developed, multi-calibre, long-range rocket launcher system** built by **Pune-based NIBE Limited** in collaboration with **Israel's Elbit Systems**.
- It is based on **Elbit's Precise & Universal Launching System (PULS)** architecture and is capable of delivering **precision surface-to-surface strikes** at ranges of **150 km and 300 km**.
- It is **India's first domestically manufactured long-range precision rocket system** with a **300 km strike capability**.

- During trials, it demonstrated a **Circular Error Probable (CEP) of less than 5 metres**, indicating high accuracy.
- The system can also launch **loitering munitions** with a range of up to **100 km**.

Key Features

- **Multi-Calibre Launcher:** Capable of firing a variety of rockets and guided munitions from a single launcher, enhancing operational flexibility.
- **High Mobility:** Mounted on a **BEML High Mobility Vehicle (HMV)**, enabling rapid deployment and **shoot-and-scoot** operations.
- **Enhanced Survivability:** Quick relocation after firing reduces vulnerability to enemy counter-battery attacks.
- **All-Terrain Capability:** Designed for effective operations across varied geographical and operational environments.

OPERATION NAVJEEVAN



Why in News?

Twenty-seven Maoists, including senior commanders and strike squad members of the banned **CPI (Maoist)** and **Jharkhand Jan Mukti Parishad (JJMP)**, surrendered before the **Jharkhand Police in Ranchi** under **Operation Navjeevan**.

Operation Navjeevan

About

- **Operation Navjeevan** is a **surrender and rehabilitation initiative** of the **Jharkhand Government** aimed at encouraging **Left Wing Extremists (LWE)/Maoists** to surrender and reintegrate into mainstream society.
- It is implemented jointly by the **Jharkhand Police**, **Jharkhand Jaguar (anti-Naxal force)**, and the **CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action)** units of the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**.
- The operation offers **rehabilitation assistance, financial incentives, skill development, and livelihood opportunities** to surrendered cadres under the State's **Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy**.
- It complements the **Government of India's strategy to eliminate Left Wing Extremism**, alongside initiatives such as the **SAMADHAN Doctrine**, **Operation Kagar**, **Operation Double Bull**, **Operation Octopus**, and the **Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA)**.

AGNI-1 BALLISTIC MISSILE

Why in News?

India successfully **test-fired the Agni-1 short-range ballistic missile** from the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha**, under the aegis of the **Strategic Forces Command (SFC)**.

About

- **Agni-1** is an **indigenously developed, nuclear-capable, single-stage, solid-fuel ballistic missile**.
- It is primarily classified as a **Short-Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM)** with a range of **700–900 km**, but can reach up to **1,200 km** with a lighter payload.

- It is powered by a **solid-propellant booster** derived from **ISRO's SLV-3** launch vehicle technology.



- The missile is **road and rail mobile**, and can be launched from **Transporter Erector Launchers (TELs)** or rail-based platforms, ensuring high operational mobility.
- It was developed under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**, launched in **1983**, and was inducted into the **Strategic Forces Command (SFC)** in **2007**.
- Agni-1 is part of India's **Agni missile series**, which includes **Agni-I, Agni-II, Agni-III, Agni-IV, Agni-V, and Agni Prime**.

ADVANCED MEDIUM COMBAT AIRCRAFT (AMCA)

Why in News?

The **Government of India** has issued a **Request for Proposal (RFP)** to Indian private-sector consortia for the development of the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**, India's **first indigenous fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft**.



Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)

About

- The **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)** is **India's indigenous fifth-generation, twin-engine, multirole stealth fighter aircraft** under development.

Fifth-Generation Fighter Aircraft

- Fifth-generation fighter aircraft are **advanced multirole combat jets** designed for **air superiority, ground attack, and precision strike missions**.
- They are equipped with **advanced avionics, sensor fusion, and network-centric warfare capabilities**, enabling superior situational awareness.
- Only a few countries currently operate fifth-generation fighters, including the **United States (F-22 Raptor, F-35 Lightning II)**, **China (J-20 Mighty Dragon)**, and **Russia (Su-57)**.

- It is being designed by the **Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)** under the **DRDO**, with **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** as the production agency.
- The aircraft is expected to be the **largest fighter** in the Indian Air Force's indigenous fleet and will place India among the few nations capable of developing a fifth-generation fighter.

Key Features

- **Stealth Design:** Incorporates advanced low-observable features to minimise radar detection.
- **Internal Fuel & Weapons:** Equipped with a **6.5-tonne internal fuel capacity** and an **internal weapons bay** for carrying missiles and precision-guided munitions.
- **Twin-Engine Configuration:** **AMCA Mk1** will be powered by **GE F414 engines**, while

the **AMCA Mk2** is planned to use a **110 kN indigenous engine** being developed by **DRDO's GTRE** with foreign collaboration.

- **Multirole Capability:** Designed to undertake **air superiority, strike, interception, and electronic warfare missions**.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INTERPOL

Why in News?

INTERPOL led major global operations against cybercrime and counterfeit pharmaceuticals, highlighting its role in combating transnational organized crime.

About

- **INTERPOL** is the world's largest international police organization, facilitating cooperation among police agencies across countries.
- It was established in **1923** and headquartered in **Lyon, France**.
- It has **196 member countries**; **India** joined in **1949**.
- It provides the **I-24/7 communication network** to share criminal data, track fugitives, and combat transnational crimes.
- **INTERPOL has no power to arrest or investigate on its own**; all enforcement actions are carried out by national law enforcement agencies.

















CBI and INTERPOL

- Every INTERPOL member country has a **National Central Bureau (NCB)** that acts as the official contact point for INTERPOL activities.
- In India, the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** serves as the NCB-New Delhi.
- **Inbound Requests:** The CBI receives INTERPOL requests from other countries and coordinates with Indian police and agencies.
- **Outbound Requests:** When Indian agencies need help tracing fugitives abroad, the CBI forwards the request to INTERPOL for international action.

INTERPOL Notices

- **INTERPOL Notices** are international alerts issued through INTERPOL to help member countries share crime-related information and cooperate in investigations and law enforcement.

- Issued at the request of member countries, international tribunals, the International Criminal Court, or the United Nations, Notices help locate wanted persons, seek information, and support the enforcement of international sanctions.

INTERPOL NOTICES TYPES AND THEIR PURPOSES		
NOTICE TYPE	CORE OBJECTIVE / PURPOSE	
 RED NOTICE	To seek the location and arrest of wanted persons wanted for prosecution or to serve a sentence. <i>(Note: It is NOT an international arrest warrant).</i>	
 BLUE NOTICE	To collect additional information about a person's identity, location, or activities in relation to a criminal investigation.	
 GREEN NOTICE	To provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed criminal offences and are likely to repeat them in other countries.	
 YELLOW NOTICE	To help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.	
 BLACK NOTICE	To seek information on unidentified bodies.	
 ORANGE NOTICE	To warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing an imminent threat to public safety.	
 PURPLE NOTICE	To provide information on modus operandi, procedures, objects, devices or hiding places used by criminals.	
 INTERPOL-UN SECURITY COUNCIL SPECIAL NOTICE	Issued for entities and individuals that are the targets of UNSC Sanctions Committees.	

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY

Why in News?

India is actively fast-tracking negotiations to transition from an "Association Country" to a **full-time member** of the International Energy Agency (IEA).

About

- IEA is an **autonomous intergovernmental organization** working under the umbrella of the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**.
- It was established in 1974, after the **1973 Oil Crisis** to help countries deal with oil supply disruptions.
- It is headquartered in **Paris, France**.
- It aims to **monitor oil markets and coordinate emergency responses** during oil shortages.
- **Current Focus (3 Es):**
 - **Energy Security** – Ensure reliable energy supplies.
 - **Economic Development** – Support growth through efficient energy markets.

- **Environmental Sustainability** – Promote clean energy and address climate change.

IEA Membership

There are three levels of participation.

1. Member Countries (31 countries)

- Full members of the IEA.
- Traditionally must be members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

2. Accession Countries

- Countries undergoing review to become full IEA members.
- Working to meet all membership requirements.

3. Association Countries

- Cooperate closely with the IEA but are not full members.
- Includes India.
- India is exploring the path toward full membership.

Important IEA Reports

- **World Energy Outlook** - Tells how the world's **energy demand** may look in the future under different scenarios.
- **Global EV Outlook** - Tracks the growth of **Electric Vehicles (EVs)** worldwide.

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

Why in News?

WIPO released its flagship report titled *“Technology on the Move,”* which analyzes how technological innovations (AI, biotech, quantum) diffuse globally.

About

- The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** was established in **1967** through the **WIPO Convention**.
- It became a **specialized agency of the United Nations (UN)** in **1974**.
- WIPO is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

- WIPO works to develop a **balanced and effective international intellectual property (IP) system**.
- Its goal is to encourage **innovation, creativity, and technological development** for the benefit of all countries.
- WIPO has **194 member states**, including **India**.
- WIPO publishes **Global Innovation Index annually**.

Functions

1. Global Policy Forum

- WIPO serves as a **neutral platform where countries discuss and negotiate international intellectual property (IP) rules and treaties**.
- It helps member states develop common standards for protecting intellectual property worldwide.

2. Global IP Protection Services

WIPO manages international systems that allow inventors, businesses, and creators to seek IP protection in multiple countries through a **single application**.

(a) Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

- Enables inventors to file **one international patent application** and seek patent protection in many countries.

(b) Madrid System

- Allows businesses to register and protect their **trademarks** in multiple countries through a single application.

(c) Hague System

- Enables designers to obtain international protection for their **industrial designs** through one application.

3. Dispute Resolution

- Through the **WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center**, WIPO helps resolve

intellectual property and commercial disputes without going to court.

- It provides **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)** mechanisms such as arbitration and mediation.

4. Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

- WIPO assists developing countries in strengthening their intellectual property systems.
- It provides **training, technical expertise, and institutional support** to modernize national IP offices and improve IP administration.

CARICOM

Why in News?

India and CARICOM continue to aggressively operationalize the landmark diplomatic framework established during the **2nd India-CARICOM Standalone Summit**.

About

- **CARICOM (Caribbean Community)** is a regional organization that promotes **economic integration, political coordination, social development, and security cooperation** among Caribbean countries.
- It was established on **4 July 1973** through the **Treaty of Chaguaramas**.
- It's founding members are Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago
- It replaced the **Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA)**.
- It is headquartered in **Georgetown, Guyana**.



• Four Pillars of CARICOM

- **Economic Integration:** It creates a unified Caribbean market through the **CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME)**.
- **Foreign Policy Coordination:** It enables member states to present a common position in international forums.
- **Human & Social Development:** It promotes cooperation in health, education, labour, and social welfare.
- **Security Cooperation:** It strengthens regional efforts against terrorism, drug trafficking, maritime threats, and disasters.

India-CARICOM Relations

At the India-CARICOM Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed a **7-Pillar Strategic Framework**.

It follows a **C-A-R-I-C-O-M Framework**.

- **C - Capacity Building:** India supports skill development through Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) scholarships, training programmes, and technology centres.
- **A - Agriculture & Food Security:** Cooperation in agricultural research and food security to reduce CARICOM's import dependence.
- **R - Renewable Energy & Climate Change:** Partnership in solar energy and climate resilience through Line of Credit and the International Solar Alliance.
- **I - Innovation, Technology & Trade:** Sharing India's Digital Public Infrastructure (UPI, DigiLocker) to promote digital governance and trade.
- **C - Cricket & Culture:** Strengthening people-to-people ties through sports cooperation and cultural exchanges.
- **- Ocean Economy & Maritime Security:** Collaboration in the blue economy, maritime surveillance, and coastal security.

- **M – Medicine & Healthcare:** Enhancing access to affordable healthcare through generic medicines and pharmaceutical cooperation.

CINBAX-II

Why in News?

The Indian Army contingent recently proceeded to Cambodia to participate in the **second edition of the India-Cambodia Joint Military Exercise, CINBAX-II 2026.**

About

- **CINBAX-II** is a joint military exercise between the **Indian Army** and the **Royal Cambodian Army**.
- It was conducted in **Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia**, focusing on operations in **semi-urban and jungle terrain**.
- It involved **280 personnel: 120 Indian soldiers** (mainly from the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment) and **160 Cambodian troops**.
- It was held under **Chapter VII of the UN Charter**, with drills on peacekeeping, cordon-and-search, and tactical operations.
- It focused on **modern warfare**, including drone operations, anti-drone systems, sniper training, and coordinated command structures.



Significance

- It strengthens India's **Act East Policy** by deepening defence cooperation with Cambodia and other ASEAN countries.
- It enhances India's role as a **reliable security partner** in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It supports the **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** vision by improving joint capacity to tackle regional security challenges.

- It showcases **indigenous defence technologies**, creating opportunities for future defence exports and defence partnerships.

INDIA-NORDIC SUMMIT

Why in News?

In May 2026, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook a historic five-nation European tour, culminating in **Oslo, Norway**, for the **3rd India-Nordic Summit**.

About

- The **Nordic region** comprises five sovereign nations (**Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland**) in Northern Europe.
- They represent a **collective GDP of over \$1.8 trillion** with highly advanced in technology, innovation, clean energy, and sustainability.
- India offers a huge market, skilled workforce, and digital expertise.



Key Outcomes of the 2026 Summit

Transition to a Strategic Partnership

- The relationship was formally elevated to a **Trusted Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership**.
- The primary focus areas under this framework include renewable energy, **green hydrogen**, digital infrastructure, circular bio-economy, and sustainable manufacturing.

EFTA Catalyst & Investment Commitment

- The summit emphasized implementing the **India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)**.

- EFTA countries reaffirmed their commitment to **invest \$100 billion in India and create 1 million jobs over the next 15 years.**

Key Sectoral Cooperation Areas

- **Blue Economy & Green Shipping:** India, Norway, and Denmark will cooperate on cleaner shipping, wind-powered vessels, and sustainable aquaculture.
- **Arctic Research:** India, Norway, and Iceland will expand research at India's Arctic station **Himadri** in Svalbard.
- **Geothermal Energy:** Iceland will support geothermal power development in **Puga Valley, Ladakh** through technology transfer.
- **Development Cooperation:** India and Norway will jointly support projects in the Global South using India's Digital Public Infrastructure (UPI, Aadhaar-based systems).

Geopolitical Significance

- **UNSC Reform:** All five Nordic countries reiterated support for India's **permanent membership in a reformed UN Security Council.**
- **NSG Membership:** The Nordic bloc backed India's entry into the **Nuclear Suppliers Group** and other export-control regimes.

INDUS WATER TREATY AND PCA RULING

Why in News?

India rejected the May 15, 2026 ruling on water storage limits at its Indus hydroelectric projects, stating that it does not recognize the tribunal's authority.

About

Indus Waters Treaty

- Indus Water Treaty was signed in **1960** by **Jawaharlal Nehru (India)** and **Ayub Khan (Pakistan)**, with the **World Bank** acting as mediator.
- **River Sharing:**
 - **Eastern Rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej)** → Exclusive use by India.

- **Western Rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab)** → Mainly for Pakistan; India can use them for domestic needs, navigation, and run-of-river hydropower.

- **Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** is a joint India-Pakistan body that meets regularly to share data and discuss water issues.
- **Three-Level Dispute Resolution:**
 1. **Questions** → Resolved by the PIC.
 2. **Technical Differences** → Referred to a Neutral Expert.
 3. **Legal Disputes** → Referred to a Court of Arbitration (CoA).

Under the IWT, the **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)** acts as the **secretariat for the treaty-specific Court of Arbitration (CoA)**, providing administrative and logistical support.



PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION

- *PCA was established in 1899 during the Hague Peace Conference; headquartered at the Peace Palace, The Hague (Netherlands).*
- *It is not a permanent court, it has no permanent judges and mainly provides administrative support for arbitration tribunals.*
- *It helps resolve disputes involving countries, international organizations, and private parties through arbitration.*
- *The PCA is not a UN body and is different from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which is the UN's principal judicial organ.*

- The **PCA itself does not decide the dispute;** the CoA constituted under the treaty does.

ELECTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

Why in News?

The process to select the next **UN Secretary-General** is underway, as **António Guterres** completes his second term on **31 December 2026.**

The new Secretary-General is expected to assume office in **January 2027**.

About

- The **UN Secretary-General (UNSG)** is the head of the **UN Secretariat**.
- Under **Article 99 of the UN Charter**, the Secretary-General can bring issues that threaten international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council.
- He works with world leaders and **uses diplomatic efforts** to prevent, manage, and **resolve international conflicts**.
- He **heads the UN Secretariat and implements decisions taken** by the General Assembly, Security Council, and other UN bodies.

Appointment & Election Process of the UNSG

The selection process is governed by a mix of strict statutory provisions under the UN Charter and informal, unwritten conventions established over decades.

- Under **Article 97 of the UN Charter**, the UN Secretary-General is appointed by the **UN General Assembly** on the recommendation of the **UN Security Council**.
- The candidate must receive at least **9 votes out of 15** in the Security Council and must not be vetoed by any of the **five permanent members (P5)**.
- After the Security Council's recommendation, the General Assembly approves the candidate, usually by **consensus (acclamation)** rather than a formal vote.
- The **UN Secretary-General serves a five-year term**.
- The **UN Charter does not limit the number of terms**, but by convention, most Secretaries-General serve a **maximum of two terms**.
- Conventionally, the post of UN Secretary-General is informally **rotated among**

different world regions to ensure broad **global representation**.

- By convention, citizens of the **five permanent Security Council members (US, UK, China, France, and Russia)** are not considered for the post to maintain the office's neutrality and independence.

UN NON-PROLIFERATION REVIEW CONFERENCE

Why in News?

The **11th Review Conference (RevCon)** took place at the UN Headquarters in New York from **April 27 to May 22, 2026**, under the presidency of **Ambassador Do Hung Viet** of Vietnam.

About

- **Review Conference (RevCon)** of the Non-Proliferation Treaty are held every **five years** to review progress on the NPT's three pillars, **non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy**.
- Any final declaration requires **unanimous agreement**; an objection by even **one country** can block its adoption.

Key Outcomes and Concerns of the 2026 NPT Review

- The **2026 NPT Review Conference** ended **without a final agreement** because unanimous support from all member states was required.
- This is the **second consecutive failure**, following the deadlock at the 2022 Review Conference.
- UN Secretary-General **António Guterres** warned that growing mistrust and tensions are increasing the risk of nuclear conflict.



NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

- *Non-Proliferation Treaty is an international treaty aimed at **preventing the spread of nuclear weapons**, promoting the **peaceful use of nuclear energy**, and advancing **nuclear disarmament**.*
- *It was opened for signature in **1968**, came into force in **1970**, and was extended indefinitely in **1995**.*
- *It is based on three pillars: **Non-proliferation, Disarmament, and Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy**.*
- *It recognizes five **Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS): US, Russia, UK, France, and China**.*
- ***India, Pakistan, Israel, and South Sudan** have not signed the treaty, while **North Korea** withdrew in **2003**.*
- ***Review Conferences** are held every **five years** to assess its implementation, mandated by **Article VIII of the Treaty**.*

BRICS SAI LEADERS' SUMMIT

Why in News?

India hosted the **5th BRICS Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) Leaders' Summit** in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**, under India's 2026 BRICS Chairmanship year.

About

BRICS SAI Framework

- **Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs)** are the highest public auditing bodies of a country, such as the **Comptroller and Auditor General of India** in India.
- The **BRICS SAI Framework** is a specialized forum under BRICS that brings together the audit institutions of member countries.
- It promotes **cooperation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building** among public auditors.

- The framework helps countries address new challenges in auditing government spending and development programmes.
- It encourages a shift from merely checking rules and accounts to assessing the **performance, impact, and outcomes** of public policies using data-driven methods.
- The theme of the summit is **"Ease of Living with a Focus on Urban Mobility"**.
- **Sub-themes:**
 - Audit of the Urban Sector
 - Audit of Urban Mobility

Key Outcomes

Bengaluru Declaration

- Reaffirmed commitment to **good governance and public accountability** in urban mobility.
- Emphasized **system-level evaluation** rather than assessing individual projects.

BRICS SAI Work Plan 2027-28

- Promotes sharing of **audit tools, methodologies, and data practices**.
- Focuses on **preventive and risk-based auditing** instead of only post-facto compliance checks.

TERRITORIAL WATERS AND BOTTOM TRAWLING

Why in News?

The Fisheries Minister of Sri Lanka urged the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to completely ban bottom trawling, citing severe ecological devastation to marine resources and the ongoing livelihood conflicts impacting northern Sri Lankan fishermen within their territorial waters.

About

Territorial Waters & UNCLOS Maritime Zones

1. Baseline

- The **low-water line along the coast** from which all maritime zones are measured.

2. Internal Waters

- Waters **inside the baseline** (bays, rivers, lakes, ports).

- The coastal state has **complete sovereignty**.
- Foreign ships **do not have the right of passage**.

3. Territorial Sea (0–12 Nautical Miles)

- Extends up to **12 nm** from the baseline.
- The coastal state has **full sovereignty** over water, airspace, seabed, and subsoil.
- Foreign ships can pass through under **innocent passage**.

4. Contiguous Zone (12–24 Nautical Miles)

- Extends up to **24 nm** from the baseline.
- The coastal state can enforce laws related to:
 - Customs
 - Taxation (Fiscal)
 - Immigration
 - Sanitation/Pollution

5. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (Up to 200 Nautical Miles)

- Extends up to **200 nm** from the baseline.
- The coastal state has **exclusive rights over natural resources** such as fish, oil, gas, and minerals.
- It can build **artificial islands and offshore structures**.
- Other countries still enjoy freedom of navigation.

- Bottom trawling drags heavy nets across the seabed, **destroying coral reefs, seabed habitats, and fish breeding grounds**.
- The nets catch many non-target species, such as juvenile fish, sea turtles, and other marine animals, which are often discarded dead.

India and Sri Lanka Issue

- The narrow **Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka** has **closely spaced maritime boundaries**.
- Indian fishermen who enter Sri Lankan waters using bottom trawlers often face arrest by the Sri Lankan Navy.
- Sri Lanka has **banned bottom trawling since 2017**.
- Under the **Deep Sea Fishing Scheme** (now part of **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana [PMMSY]**), the government provides financial support to help fishermen shift from bottom trawling to **deep-sea fishing**, especially tuna fishing.

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

Why in News?

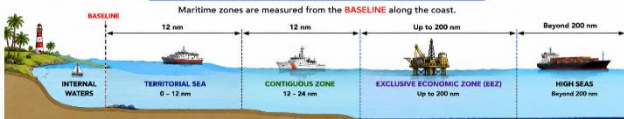
In May 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the sudden surge of **Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)** in the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** as a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)**.

About

- **PHEIC (Public Health Emergency of International Concern)** is a serious disease outbreak that can spread across countries and requires coordinated international action to control it.
- It is defined under the **International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005)**.
- It represents the **second-highest level of global alert** under the IHR legal framework.
- "Pandemic Emergency" is the **highest level of global alarm**, above a PHEIC.

UNCLOS MARITIME ZONES

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA (1982)



	INTERNAL WATERS	TERRITORIAL SEA	CONTIGUOUS ZONE	EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ)	HIGH SEAS (Beyond 200 nm)
EXTENT FROM BASELINE	Landward of the baseline	Up to 12 nautical miles (nm) (~22.2 km)	From 12 nm up to 24 nm	Up to 200 nm	Beyond 200 nm
SOVEREIGNTY / JURISDICTION	Complete sovereignty of the coastal state.	Full sovereignty over airspace, water column, seabed and subsoil.	Limited sovereignty – can enforce laws related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs • Fiscal (taxation) • Immigration • Sanitary (pollution) 	No absolute sovereignty, but the coastal state has exclusive economic rights over natural resources (living & non-living) and construction of artificial islands and structures.	No state sovereignty. Open to all states under international law.
RIGHTS OF OTHER STATES	No right of passage for foreign vessels.	Right of innocent passage for foreign ships. Submarines must navigate on the surface and show their flag.	Foreign states enjoy the right of navigation and other international lawful uses.	Freedom of navigation and overflight for all states remains.	Freedom of navigation, overflight, laying of submarine cables and pipelines, etc.
KEY POINTS	Examples: Bays, Harbors, Inlets, ports.	Coastal state can make laws, but must allow innocent passage.	Used to prevent and punish infringement of customs, fiscal, immigration & sanitary laws.	Includes rights for fishing, mining, oil & gas extraction, marine research, etc.	Common heritage of mankind – used primarily for international purposes.

1 nm (nautical mile) = 1.852 km | 12 nm = 22.2 km | 200 nm = 370.4 km

Bottom Trawling

- **Bottom trawling** is a fishing method in which **large, heavy nets are dragged across the seafloor to catch fish and other marine organisms**, often collecting them indiscriminately.

Criteria for Granting PHEIC Status

- The final determination of a PHEIC is made by the WHO Director-General, based on advice from an **IHR Emergency Committee**.
- An outbreak can be declared a **PHEIC** if it meets **at least two of the four criteria** specified in **Annex 2 of the International Health Regulations (IHR)**.
- The four criterias are:
 - The situation **must be serious**,
 - Should be **sudden, unusual/unexpected**,
 - **Carry cross-border** public health implications,
 - Requires **immediate international action**.



INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS (IHR), 2005

- It is a **legally binding global health agreement** followed by 196 countries, including **all WHO members**.
- It aims to **prevent and control the spread of diseases across countries** while minimizing disruptions to international travel and trade.
- Countries **must maintain systems for disease surveillance, reporting, and emergency response**, especially at airports, ports, and border entry points.

PLACES IN NEWS

DAS ISLANDS

Why in News?

Das Island (UAE) was in the news as LNG tankers continued loading and exporting cargoes from the island during the 2026 disruptions in the **Strait of Hormuz**, despite heightened regional security concerns and restrictions on vessel-tracking systems.

About

- Das Islands is an offshore island located in the **Persian Gulf**, situated approximately 160 km northwest of the mainland of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- The island belongs to and is governed by the **United Arab Emirates (UAE), specifically under the Emirate of Abu Dhabi**.
- It has its **own dedicated port facility** (UN/LOCODE: **AEDAS**), equipped with active oil terminals and multiple berths to cater to large oil tankers and cargo vessels **navigating the Persian Gulf corridor**.
- It is primarily a **major crude oil, sulphur, and liquefied natural gas (LNG/LPG) export port**.



MARSHAL ISLANDS

Why in News?

The World Bank approved an additional **US\$9 million in financing** to help the Republic of the Marshall Islands manage sharply higher energy costs affecting households, businesses, public services, and the national budget.

About

- The **Marshall Islands** is an island country located in the **Central Pacific Ocean**.

- It lies **northeast of Papua New Guinea** and **southeast of the Federated States of Micronesia**.



- Geopolitically, it forms part of **Micronesia**, one of the three major Pacific Island regions, alongside **Melanesia** and **Polynesia**.
- It is a low-lying coral island nation consisting of **29 coral atolls** and **1,156 individual islands and islets** spread across a vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean.
- The islands are organized into two parallel chains running in a **northwest-southeast direction**:
 - **Ratak Chain** – also known as the “**Sunrise Chain**” (eastern group)
 - **Ralik Chain** – also known as the “**Sunset Chain**” (western group)
- It’s capital is **Majuro**.

MAYON VOLCANO

Why in News?

The Mayon Volcano in the Philippines **recently erupted, prompting authorities to raise the alert to Level 3** (on a 5-step scale) due to active lava fountaining, dangerous pyroclastic flows, and ashfall.

About

- It is located in the province of **Albay**, on the southeastern part of **Luzon Island, Philippines**.

- It is globally renowned for its **highly symmetrical, near-perfect conical shape**, built up by layers of alternate lava flows and pyroclastic materials.



- It is a classic **Stratovolcano** (also known as a **Composite Volcano**).
- It sits on the *Circum-Pacific Belt* (Ring of Fire).
- It was formed due to a **convergent plate boundary**, specifically the **subduction of the Philippine Sea Plate beneath the Philippine Mobile Belt**.
- It typically exhibits **Strombolian eruptions**, lava flows, ashfall, **pyroclastic density currents (PDCs)**, and lahars.
- It is the **most active volcano in the Philippines**. Its most devastating historical eruption occurred in February 1814, completely burying the town of Cagsawa.

MUSANDAM PENINSULA

Why in News?

The Musandam Peninsula has garnered heightened geopolitical and geographical attention due to regional maritime security dynamics in the Strait of Hormuz, alongside recent satellite mapping studies

About

- The **Musandam Peninsula** is the northernmost part of the **Oman**. It is an **exclave of Oman**, meaning it is geographically separated from the rest of the country by the **United Arab Emirates**.
- The Musandam Peninsula forms the **southern side of the Strait of Hormuz**.
- It separates the **Persian Gulf** from the **Gulf of Oman** and the **Arabian Sea**.

- **Oman** controls the southern side through the Musandam Peninsula.
 - **Iran** controls the northern side through its coastline and islands.
 - It is often referred to as the "**Norway of the Middle East**" because of its spectacular coastline.
- The Afsluitdijk is regarded as a pioneering example of:
 - Flood control
 - Storm-surge protection
 - Coastal engineering
 - Large-scale land reclamation

Its coast is characterized by:

- Deeply indented shorelines
- Narrow sea inlets
- Steep mountain slopes descending into the sea
- The highest point in the region is **Jabal Al-Hartim**, rising to approximately **6,847 feet (about 2,087 metres)** above sea level.

AFSLUITDIJK DAM

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alongside the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, visited the iconic **Afsluitdijk Dam** in the Netherlands.

About

- The **Afsluitdijk** is one of the world's most celebrated hydraulic engineering projects.
- It was constructed between **1927 and 1932**, it is a **32-kilometre-long sea-enclosure dam** that transformed the geography and water-management system of the Netherlands.
- It was built across the **Zuiderzee**, a shallow saltwater inlet connected to the North Sea.
- It connects the provinces of **North Holland** and **Friesland**.
- It also serves as an **important transportation corridor**, carrying a major four-lane highway across the dam.

SCHEMES & INITIATIVES

PRADAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA

Why in News?

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), the Prime Minister shared an article written by Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan. About

About

- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)** is a flagship scheme of the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**, launched in May 2016 to provide clean cooking fuel (LPG) connections to poor and rural households that traditionally relied on polluting fuels such as firewood, coal, and cow-dung cakes.
- The scheme aims to **improve women's health, reduce indoor air pollution, enhance energy access, and promote environmental sustainability** by encouraging the adoption of clean cooking practices.

Eligibility under Ujjwala 2.0

- To be eligible for an Ujjwala 2.0 LPG connection, an adult woman from a poor household without an existing connection must belong to specific socio-economic categories—such as those listed in the **SECC 2011, SC/ST groups, or government welfare programs**—or otherwise submit a **14-point self-declaration**.

RASHTRIYA BAL SWASTHYA KARYAKRAM (RBSK)

Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the revised RBSK 2.0 guidelines, at the

National Summit on Good Practices and Innovations in Public Healthcare Service Delivery..

About

- **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)** is a child health screening and early intervention programme launched in 2013 under the **National Rural Health Mission**.
- The scheme aims to improve the **overall health and quality of life of children from birth to 18 years** by ensuring early identification and timely treatment of the four major categories of health conditions, known as the **4 Ds—Defects at Birth, Deficiencies, Diseases, and Developmental Delays including Disabilities**.

Target Age Group under RBSK

- Covers **children from birth to 18 years of age**.
- Includes **children aged 0–6 years** residing in **rural areas and urban slums**.
- It also covers **school-going children enrolled in Classes I to XII in Government and Government-aided schools**.
- The programme ensures periodic health screening, early detection, and referral services for eligible children across these age groups.

Key Features of RBSK 2.0

- **Expanded Screening Coverage:** The programme broadens the scope of health screening to include:
 - Developmental disorders and disabilities.
 - Mental health and behavioural issues.
 - Lifestyle-related health risks.
 - Risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as **diabetes** and **hypertension**.
 - Additional health conditions, including **kidney disorders** and other emerging child health concerns.

- **Digital Health Ecosystem:** Introduction of **digital health cards** for children to maintain comprehensive health records and enable continuity of care.

PRADHAN MANTRI JAN AROGYA YOJANA

Why in News?

The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) continues to be one of India's largest government health insurance schemes. In 2026, several updates have improved coverage, digital access, and hospital enrollment to make healthcare more accessible for low and middle-income families.

About

PM-JAY is the insurance component of **Ayushman Bharat**, providing financial protection against high medical expenses for poor and vulnerable families. It is the world's largest government-funded health insurance scheme.

Key Features

- **Coverage:** Up to **₹5 lakh per family per year** on a family floater basis.
- **Cashless Treatment:** Available at empaneled public and private hospitals across India.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:** Includes hospitalization, medicines, diagnostics, and pre- (3 days) & post-hospitalization (15 days) expenses.
- **No Restrictions:** No limit on family size, age, or gender; pre-existing diseases covered from day one.

Eligibility

- **Rural Households:** SECC-2011 deprivation categories (SC/ST families, landless labourers, kutcha-house households, tribal groups, etc.).
- **Urban Workers:** Occupational groups such as domestic workers, street vendors, sanitation workers, construction workers, transport workers, artisans, etc.
- **Senior Citizens:** All persons aged **70 years and above** (since Sept 2024), irrespective of socio-economic status.

- **Automatic Inclusion:** Manual scavengers and bonded labourers.

Exclusions

- OPD consultations and standalone diagnostic tests.
- Cosmetic surgeries and fertility treatments.
- Drug/alcohol rehabilitation programmes and organ transplants.

ATAL INNOVATION MISSION

Why in News?

Prime Minister highlights the Government's strong push towards youth-led development and the emergence of a robust innovation ecosystem

About

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), established in 2016 under NITI Aayog, is India's flagship initiative to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

Key programmes:

- **Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL)** — Rs 20 lakh per school for STEM problem-solving in 10,000 schools;
- **Atal Incubation Centres (AIC)** — Rs 10 crore grant to set up startup incubators;
- **Atal New India Challenges (ANIC)** — grant up to Rs 1 crore for technology solutions to national problems;
- **Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACIC)** — innovation centres in Tier 2/3 cities. Over 10,000 ATLs operational.

Who is Eligible for Atal Innovation Mission?

- **ATL:** Government or aided schools (Class 6-12), with required infrastructure and teacher commitment
- **AIC:** Academic institutions, R&D organizations, or industry bodies with experience in incubation
- **ANIC:** Indian startups, MSMEs, individuals, research institutions with validated technology solutions.

JAN SURAKSHA SCHEMES

Why in News?

The three flagship Jan Suraksha Schemes—Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY)—completed 11 years of providing affordable social security.

About

- Prime Minister of India launched the Jan Suraksha Schemes on **2015**, to create a **universal social security system for all Indians**.
- Aimed primarily at the **unorganized sector and vulnerable populations**, these schemes provide low-cost life insurance, accidental insurance, and old-age pension support through a seamless, digitized framework.

Jan Suraksha Schemes:

- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)**
 - **Nature:** A one-year life insurance cover of Rs. 2 lakh for death due to any reason.
 - **Eligibility:** Individual bank/post office account holders in the age group of 18 to 50 years.
- **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY):**
 - **Nature:** An accidental insurance scheme providing Rs. 2 lakh for accidental death/total disability and Rs. 1 lakh for partial disability.
- **Eligibility:** Available to account holders in the age group of **18 to 70 years**.
- **Atal Pension Yojana (APY):**
 - **Nature:** A guaranteed pension scheme for the unorganized sector, providing a monthly pension of **Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000 after age 60**.

- **Eligibility:** Open to bank account holders aged **18 to 40 years** who are not income tax payers.
- **Benefits:** The pension is guaranteed for the subscriber, then the spouse, after which the entire corpus is returned to the nominee.

SOCIAL ISSUES

SEHAT MISSION

Why in News?

Union Ministers launched the 'SEHAT Mission' (Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation) in New Delhi. This historic initiative marks the first formal convergence of India's agriculture and health sectors to address malnutrition and the rising burden of non-communicable diseases.

About

- The **SEHAT (Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation)** Mission is a major national initiative designed to bridge the gap between farming, nutrition, and public health. It represents a whole of government approach, shifting India's healthcare strategy from a reactive model (treatment) to a proactive one (prevention through proper nutrition).
- The mission is a joint national partnership between **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** and **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**.
- Launched with the objective of building a framework for **'Healthy Food, Healthy Farms and a Healthy India'**.

Key Features:

- **Bio-fortification of Crops:** Developing and promoting crop varieties naturally enriched with essential micronutrients **like zinc and iron**.
- **Promotion of Traditional Grains:** Reemphasizing the consumption of climate-resilient and nutrient-dense millets such as **Kodo, Kutki, Ragi, Jowar, and Bajra**.
- **Integrated Farming Systems:** Encouraging rural families to combine crop cultivation with **animal husbandry, fisheries, and beekeeping** to ensure diverse and balanced family nutrition.
- **Farmer Health & Safety:** Implementing scientific interventions and awareness

programs to protect farmers from risks associated with pesticide exposure and hazardous chemicals.

- **Dietary Solutions for NCDs:** Researching and promoting food alternatives that can function as medicine to help prevent and manage lifestyle **diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and cancer**.
- **'One Health' Approach:** Addressing the interconnected health of people, animals, and the environment through joint planning between medical and agricultural scientists.
- **Science-Based Policy Support:** Creating real-time dashboards and research databases to align agricultural policy with national nutrition strategies.

NATIONAL ONE HEALTH MISSION

Why in News?

The Government of India has intensified its **One Health Mission** to enhance national preparedness and response against emerging public health threats by integrating human, animal, and environmental health systems.

About

- It was launched in **2024**, the initiative adopts a **collaborative and multidisciplinary One Health approach**, bringing together the **human, animal, and environmental health sectors** to address health challenges in an integrated and coordinated manner.
- It was launched to safeguard national health by **unifying human, animal, and environmental surveillance systems** to ensure robust pandemic preparedness and integrated disease control.
- **Nodal Agency:** Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA).

Governance of the National One Health Mission:

- **Executive Committee:** The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) as chair

with Principal Scientific Adviser as vice chair and Member Health, NITI Aayog is a permanent invitee.

- Secretaries of various stakeholder departments and two states (on rolling basis) are members.
- The committee provides overall policy guidance for the progress of the mission and its associated activities.
- **Scientific Steering Committee:** It is chaired by the PSA and has Secretaries/DGs of all stakeholder departments and two states (on rolling basis) as members.
- It provides overall scientific direction, oversight and guidance to the National One Health Mission.

COAL GASIFICATION

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet has approved a Rs. 37,500 crore scheme to promote surface coal and lignite gasification projects, aimed at boosting domestic syngas production.

About

- Coal Gasification is a **thermo-chemical process** that converts solid coal into a pressurized gaseous fuel known as **syngas (synthesis gas)**.
- In this process, coal reacts with a controlled amount of oxygen (or air) and steam at high temperatures (about 1000–1400°C) and high pressure.
- Unlike conventional combustion, coal undergoes **partial oxidation** rather than complete burning, producing a gas mixture primarily composed of **carbon monoxide (CO), hydrogen (H₂), carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and water vapour (H₂O)**.
- The resulting syngas can be cleaned and utilized for power generation or as a feedstock for producing chemicals, fertilizers, and liquid fuels. As impurities are removed before utilization, coal gasification is considered a cleaner alternative to direct coal combustion.

How Does the Process Work?

- **Drying:** Moisture is removed from the coal.
- **Pyrolysis:** Coal is heated in the absence of oxygen to release volatile gases.
- **Oxidation:** A controlled amount of oxygen or air is added to partially combust the coal, generating heat.
- **Reduction:** Steam reacts with hot carbon to form syngas through water-gas reactions.

Applications

- Used to generate electricity in gas turbines.
- Converted into **urea fertilizer** for agriculture.
- Processed into chemicals such as methanol.
- Used as a source of hydrogen for industrial applications.

Types of Coal Gasifiers

- **Fixed Bed Gasifier:** Simple design, used in smaller applications.
- **Fluidized Bed Gasifier:** Efficient for low-grade coal; allows uniform temperature distribution.
- **Entrained Flow Gasifier:** Operates at higher temperatures; suitable for large-scale production and cleaner output.
- **Underground Coal Gasification (UCG):** Converts coal to gas while it is still underground—suitable for deep or unmineable coal seams.

THARU TRIBES

Why in news?

The Uttar Pradesh government has recently launched a scheme to adopt the unique culture of its ethnic Tharu tribe across the world. The intention is to put Tharu villages on the tourism map, and generate employment and financial independence to the tribal population.

About

Habitat: Indigenous tribe of the **Terai region** along the foothills of the **Shivalik Himalayas**; found in **Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar**, and Nepal.

- **Language:** Speak **Tharu (Tharuhati)**, an Indo-Aryan language.

- **Economy:** Primarily dependent on **agriculture**, cattle rearing, fishing, hunting, and collection of forest produce.
- **Social Structure:**
 - **Patrilineal** and **patrilocal** society.
 - Strong tradition of **joint families**.
 - Women enjoy **greater property rights** compared to many traditional Hindu communities.
- **Religion:** Follow a syncretic faith combining **Animism, Hinduism, and Nature Worship**.
- **"Tharu"** is believed to be derived from **"Theravada"**, indicating historical links with **Theravada Buddhism**.



ZONI TRIBES

Why in news?

Members of the Zomi community in Manipur are planning to bring the body of the late Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Vungzagin Valte to the national capital to stage a protest outside the BJP headquarters.

About

- The Zomi are part of the larger **Zo ethnic group, which includes Mizo, Kuki, and Chin communities**. The term "Zomi" means Zo people.
- **Habitat:** Inhabiting Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Assam, and extending into Burma (Chin State, Sagaing division) and Bangladesh (Chittagong Hills).
- **Origin:** Centuries-old settlers of mountainous regions between India and Myanmar.

- **Physical features:** Tibeto-Burman traits, short height, straight black hair, brown eyes.
- **Language:** Speak one of the Kukish language dialects within the **Kuki-Chin linguistic family**.
- **Festivals:** Chapchar Kut – celebrated after jhum clearing with traditional dance and feasts.
- **Social identity issue:** The British-imposed name "Chin" is considered derogatory; Zomi prefer self-identification as Zo.

SWATH BHARAT PORTAL

Why in news?

The Government of India as a major step towards creating a unified digital health ecosystem launched the Swasth Bharat Portal

About

- The Swasth Bharat Portal is a Government of India initiative to **streamline the workflow of healthcare functionaries by integrating multiple health programme portals** into a single platform.
- It acts as a **one-stop aggregator platform** to integrate programme systems via APIs, enabling interoperability and reducing administrative burden
 - It is a single platform
 - To eliminate duplicate data entry, streamline reporting, and support faster decision-making across health programmes.
- The portal is ABDM-compliant and supports **integration with ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account)**, enabling seamless and secure exchange of patient health records.

NATION URBAN LIVELIHOOD MISSION 2.0

Why in news?

The Union Cabinet on May 4, 2026 approved the second phase of the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM 2.0). The scheme will run through 2030 and cover all statutory towns across India.

About

- The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA) launched the NULM in 2013 by replacing the existing Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY).
- It got its current name Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) in 2016.
- **It focuses on:**
 - Organising urban poor in their strong grassroots level institutions (self-help groups [SHGs]) to improve their livelihoods on a sustainable basis.
 - Creating opportunities for skill development leading to market-based employment and
 - Helping them to set up self-employment ventures by ensuring easy access to credit.
- **Implementation:**
 - The primary target of NULM is the **urban poor, including the urban homeless.**
 - NULM was implemented in all district headquarter towns (irrespective of population) and all other towns with **population of 1 lakh or more as per Census 2011.**
 - Funding will be shared between the Centre and the States in the ratio of 75:25.
 - For North Eastern and Special Category States, this ratio will be 90:10.

DAY-NULM 2.0?

The government will facilitate eligible individual **urban poor or a group of such persons to avail microcredit of up to Rs 4 lakh and Rs 20 lakh**, respectively. This microcredit will be provided at a subsidized interest of 5%.

JEEVAN APP AND SHATAYU DASHBOARD

Why in news?

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment officially launched the JEEVAN mobile application

and the SHATAYU geriatric caregiver dashboard during a National Workshop in New Delhi.

About

JEEVAN (Joint Elderly Empowerment & Virtual Assistance Network)

A mobile application providing a **single-window support platform for senior citizens.**

Key Features:

- Information on **Central & State welfare schemes**, pensions, and healthcare benefits.
- **SOS emergency button** linked to emergency services and elder helplines.
- Directory of **verified senior citizen homes and day-care centres.**
- Elder-friendly interface with **large fonts, voice assistance, and simplified navigation.**

SHATAYU (Senior Holistic Care Assistance and Training For Your Utility)

A national dashboard for **tracking, certifying, and deploying geriatric caregivers.**

Key Features:

- Real-time information on **availability of trained caregivers** at district and state levels.
- Tracks **training, certification, and skill development** of caregivers.
- Integrates data from NGOs, healthcare institutions, and skill councils.
- Maintains a **verified caregiver database** with credential validation.

Nodal Agency: Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE)

National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates of India

Why in news?

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the National Health Accounts (NHA) estimates for India for the financial year 2022-23.

About

The **National Health Accounts (NHA)** is India's official framework for measuring and tracking health expenditure across the healthcare system. Released by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, it follows the **World Health Organization-endorsed System of Health Accounts (SHA) 2011** methodology and provides a comprehensive picture of who finances healthcare, who manages the funds, and where health spending is utilized.

Key Components

- **Total Health Expenditure (THE):** Total spending on healthcare from public and private sources, including capital investments.
- **Current Health Expenditure (CHE):** Spending on healthcare goods and services consumed during the year, excluding capital investments.
- **Government Health Expenditure (GHE):** Health spending by the Union Government, States, UTs, local bodies, and autonomous public institutions.
- **Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE):** Direct payments made by households for healthcare services without reimbursement.

Key Findings (NHA 2022–23)

- **Government Health Expenditure (GHE) as % of GDP** increased from **1.15% (2013-14)** to **1.43% (2022-23)**.
- **GHE as a share of Total Health Expenditure** rose from **28.6%** to **41.7%**.
- **Per capita Government Health Expenditure** increased nearly threefold from **₹1,042** to **₹3,121**.
- **Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) as a share of THE** declined significantly from **64.2%** to **43.4%**.
- **OOPE as a percentage of GDP** fell from **2.58%** to **1.49%**.
- **Social Security Expenditure on Health** increased from **6%** to **10%** of THE.
- **Private Health Insurance Expenditure** rose from **3.9%** to **8.4%** of THE.

Current Health Expenditure is distributed across different levels of the healthcare delivery pyramid:

- **Primary Care:** Receives the highest share of public funds, accounting for nearly 49% of Government Health Expenditure. This includes sub-centers, primary health centers, and health and wellness centers.
- **Secondary Care:** Accounts for roughly 30% of public health spending, covering district hospitals and community health centers.

Tertiary Care: Receives approximately 15% to 20% of the public budget, focusing on specialized medical colleges and advanced multi-specialty research institutes.

NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASE

Why in news?

The **79th World Health Assembly** brought together global and regional leaders, Member States, donors, development partners, and technical experts to strengthen collaboration and accelerate efforts towards the elimination of **malaria and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)**.

About

- Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a diverse group of conditions caused by a variety of pathogens (including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi and toxins) and associated with devastating health, social and economic consequences.
- NTDs are mainly prevalent among impoverished communities in tropical areas, although some have a much larger geographical distribution.
- It is estimated that NTDs affect more than 1 billion people, while the number of people requiring NTD interventions (both preventive and curative) is 1.495 billion.
- These diseases are called “**neglected**” because they have historically ranked very low on the global health agenda, when they have appeared at all, receiving little attention and funding.
- NTDs include **Guinea worm, Chikungunya, Dengue, Kala Azar (Visceral**

Leishmaniasis), and Elephantiasis (Lymphatic Filariasis), among others.

- Every year on **30th January**, the global community comes together to mark World NTDs Day and renew its commitment to eliminating its burden worldwide.

NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY 6.0

Why in news?

The Union Health Ministry has released the National Family Health Survey-6 (NFHS-6) findings, showing significant progress in maternal and child health alongside a sharp rise in obesity and diabetes among Indian adults.

About

- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale, multi-round household survey conducted across India to provide reliable data on population, health, nutrition, and family welfare indicators.
- It is one of the most comprehensive sources of health data in the country and plays a crucial role in shaping public health policies.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)
- **Nodal Agency:** International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, conducts the survey on behalf of the MoHFW.

Key Findings of the NFHS-6

Maternal and Child Health: The survey recorded significant progress in maternal and child health indicators:

Institutional Deliveries: Institutional deliveries rose to 90.6% from 88.6% in NFHS-5 (2019-21). Reflects sustained expansion of public healthcare and schemes like Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) and Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA).

Caesarean Section Deliveries: C-section deliveries rose sharply to 27.2% from 21.5%.

- In private healthcare facilities, the rate jumped to 54.1% from 47.4%.

- In public health facilities, it rose to 16.9% from 14.3%.
- In urban areas, the rate stands at 40%, far exceeding the WHO optimal threshold of 10-15%.

Antenatal Care

- 95.9% of pregnant women received antenatal care.
- 76.2% received care in the first trimester (up from 70%).
- Mothers receiving at least four antenatal visits rose from 58.5% to 65.2%.

Maternal Nutrition

- Mothers consuming iron-folic acid (IFA) supplements for 100+ days rose from 44.1% to 54.9%.
- Those consuming IFA supplements for 180+ days rose from 26% to 37.8%.

Child Nutrition and Health

- Improvements in Child Nutrition
- Stunting among children under 5 declined from 35.5% to 29.3%.
- Severe wasting dropped from 7.7% to 5.2%.
- Underweight children declined marginally from 32.1% to 31.8%

Child Health

- Acute respiratory infection symptoms fell from 2.8% to 1.9%.
- Severe diarrhoea prevalence dropped to 0.5%.

Breastfeeding

95.6% of infants under six months were being breastfed during the survey period.

Vaccination Coverage

- Full vaccination coverage among children aged 12-23 months rose from 83.8% to 87.1%.
- 95.6% of children received most vaccinations through public health facilities.
- Rotavirus vaccination coverage rose dramatically from 36.4% to 85.4%.
- Second dose of measles-containing vaccine coverage increased from 58.6% to 71.8%.

Fertility and Contraception

- Total Fertility Rate (TFR) held steady at 2.0, just below the replacement threshold of 2.1.
- Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) rose from 66.7% to 69.1%.

Menstrual Hygiene

Use of hygienic methods of menstrual protection among women aged 15-24 years rose from 77.6% to 79.2%.

Rising Burden of Non-Communicable Diseases

Sharp Rise in Obesity:

Women: The proportion of women aged 15-49 who were overweight or obese rose from 24% to 30.7%.

- **Urban areas:** 42.8% of women are overweight or obese.
- **Rural areas:** 25.5% of women are overweight or obese.

Men

- The proportion of men aged 15-49 who were overweight or obese rose from 22.9% to 27.3%.
- **Urban areas:** 36.3% of men are overweight or obese.
- **Rural areas:** 23% of men are overweight or obese.

Rising Diabetes Prevalence

Men

The proportion of men with high blood sugar (>140 mg/dl) or taking medication rose from 15.6% to 20.9%.

- **Urban areas:** 23.9% of men affected.
- **Rural areas:** 19.7% of men affected.

Women

The proportion of women with high blood sugar rose from 13.5% to 17.8%.

- **Urban areas:** 21.9% of women affected.
- **Rural areas:** 16.2% of women affected.

UNIQUE METHODS OF MANAGEMENT OF INHERITED DISORDERS (UMMID)

Why in news?

The Government of India dedicated the UMMID (Unique Methods of Management of Inherited

Disorders) Network to the nation to strengthen diagnosis, prevention, and management of rare genetic disorders through genome-based and precision-driven healthcare.

About

- UMMID is a DBT initiative that promotes early detection and management of inherited genetic disorders through genetic diagnostics, counselling, screening, and capacity building.
- **Objective:** To improve **diagnosis, screening, counselling, and management of rare and inherited genetic disorders** through affordable and accessible genomic healthcare.
- **Ministry:** Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology

Key Components

- **Genetic Diagnostics:** Molecular and cytogenetic testing for rare genetic disorders.
- **Prenatal & Newborn Screening:** Early detection and intervention.
- **Genetic Counselling:** Guidance on inheritance patterns and reproductive choices.
- **Capacity Building:** Training healthcare professionals in genomic medicine.
- **Community Outreach:** Expanding services to **Aspirational Districts** and underserved regions.

Three Major Pillars

- **NIDAN Kendras:** Genetic diagnosis and counselling centres.
- **Outreach Programmes:** Awareness and service delivery in Aspirational Districts.
- **Training Centres:** Capacity building for clinicians and laboratory personnel.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

PRESIDENT'S COLOUR AWARD

Why in News?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah lauded the NDRF at the President's Colour Award ceremony in Ghaziabad.

About

NDRF Conferred President's Colour Award

- The award is one of the **highest honours** bestowed upon a military, police, or paramilitary force for exceptional service to the nation.
- It recognizes the NDRF's outstanding contribution to **disaster response, rescue operations, and humanitarian assistance**.
- During the event, foundation stones were laid for **six new Regional Response Centres** to strengthen disaster preparedness.
- The award reflects the NDRF's commitment to the goal of **"Zero Casualty" disaster management**.

About NDRF

- Established under the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**.
- Formally raised on **19 January 2006**.
- Functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
- Acts as India's specialized force for **disaster rescue, relief, and emergency response**.
- Responds to both **natural and man-made disasters** across the country.

SACHET (INTEGRATED ALERT SYSTEM)

Why in News?

India's SACHET alert system sends real-time disaster warnings via SMS and Cell Broadcast, helping authorities reach millions instantly with life-saving information across regions and languages.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- *The **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** is the specialized United Nations agency responsible for **information and communication technologies (ICTs)**.*
- *It was founded in **1865** as the **International Telegraph Union** and became a UN specialized agency in **1947**.*
- *Headquarters: Geneva.*

About

SACHET is a **disaster early warning platform** envisioned by the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** to provide **real-time, geo-targeted disaster alerts** to citizens.

Key Facts

- Developed by **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** under the Department of Telecommunications.
- Based on the **Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)** recommended by the **International Telecommunication Union**.
- Delivers alerts through **SMS, Cell Broadcast, Mobile App, TV, Radio, Social Media, Browser Notifications, RSS Feeds, and Satellite**.
- Operational across **all States and Union Territories** of India.
- Sends **location-specific disaster and emergency warnings** to affected populations.
- Users can receive alerts for their **current location** or subscribe to alerts for any district/state in India.

- **SACHET Mobile App** provides warnings from authorized government agencies and disaster management authorities.

ART & CULTURE

ATTIRAMPAKKAM, AND VADAMADURAI, A PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Why in News?

Experimental archaeologist Anbazhagan K. of the University of Madras is in news for conducting interactive archaeology workshops using hands-on demonstrations like stone tool knapping. He also promotes experiential learning through field visits to sites such as **Attirampakkam and Vadamadurai in Tiruvallur district.**

About

Attirampakkam

- **Attirampakkam** is an important archaeological site located in the **Kortallayar River Basin, about 60 km from Chennai.**
- It is considered an **Indian national treasure** as it is one of the few well-excavated and accurately dated sites covering a long span of human evolution.
- The site was first scientifically explored by **Robert Bruce Foote** in **1863.**
- It provides a clear stratigraphic sequence showing the transition from **Acheulian Culture** to **Middle Palaeolithic Culture.**
- The lowest layers contain **Acheulian tools** such as hand-axes and cleavers, dated to about **1.5 million years ago.**
- It also contains **Middle Palaeolithic stone tools**, characterized by smaller and more refined flakes, dating from about **385,000 to 172,000 years ago.**
- The site has significantly changed the understanding of human evolution in South Asia by pushing back the beginning of the **Middle Palaeolithic Culture** by over **100,000 years.**

- No **hominin fossils** have been found at the site, making it difficult to identify the exact human species that made the tools.
- The findings suggest a complex history of human evolution, possibly linked to early human migrations from Africa or independent technological innovation in the region.

Vadamadurai (Tamil Nadu)

- **Vadamadurai** is an important **Lower Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) site** located near Chennai in Tamil Nadu and is associated with the **Madras Stone Tool Industry.**
- The site was excavated by **K.D. Banerjee (1966-67)** and yielded evidence of early human occupation.
- Archaeological findings indicate the presence of both **Pre-Acheulian and Acheulian cultural phases.**
- Stone tools discovered include **hand axes, cleavers, flakes and other quartzite implements**, suggesting tool-making activities at the site.
- The inhabitants primarily depended on **hunting and food gathering** and used stone tools for cutting, digging and hunting purposes.
- Along with **Attirampakkam** and **Gudiyam**, Vadamadurai is one of the key prehistoric sites that provide evidence for the technological and cultural development of early humans in South India.

CHOLA COPPER PLATES

Why in News?

The 11th-century Chola Copper Plates, also known as the **Leiden Plates**, were recently **returned to India by the Netherlands during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit**, marking a significant achievement in the repatriation of India's cultural heritage.



About

- The **Chola Copper Plates**, especially the **Anaimangalam (Leiden) Plates**, are official royal charters of the **Chola Empire (9th–13th centuries CE)**. They served as permanent records of land grants, tax exemptions (pariharas), and religious endowments.
- They record the grant of **Anaimangalam village near Nagapattinam**, Tamil Nadu, to the **Chulamanivarma Vihara**, a **Buddhist monastery** founded by King Sri Mara Vijayotunga Varman of the Srivijaya Kingdom (present-day Indonesia).
- The grant was first promised by **Emperor Raja Raja Chola I**, formally executed by **Rajendra Chola I**, and later supplemented by **Kulottunga Chola I** after a diplomatic appeal from Javanese envoys.
- The collection consists of **21 large plates and 3 small plates**. The large plates contain 5 Sanskrit inscriptions in Grantha script (mainly royal genealogy) and 16 Tamil inscriptions, while the

smaller plates carry additional Tamil records.

- The plates are linked by a bronze ring bearing the **Chola royal seal**, featuring the tiger, Pandya twin fish, and Chera bow, along with symbols of authority such as the white umbrella (parasol), chamaras (fly-whisks), and a swastika.
- The Tamil inscriptions meticulously record land boundaries (sometimes measured by the path of a walking elephant), water rights, tax immunities, and the responsibilities of local assemblies (Sabha and Ur).
- The plates provide strong evidence of Chola maritime diplomacy and their support for religious pluralism through patronage of a Buddhist institution.
- Other important **Chola inscriptions** include the **Karandai Copper Plates** (military history and Brahmin grants), the **Tiruvallangadu Plates** (Rajendra Chola I's northern conquests), and the **Anbil Plates** (genealogy of early Chola rulers).

NALANDA UNIVERSITY

Why in News?

Bihar's **Nalanda University** has formally integrated the ancient Indian tradition of **Śāstrārtha** into its academic calendar through the **Shastrarth initiative**, reviving a historic system of philosophical, religious, and intellectual debate.



About

- **Nalanda University** was established in the **5th century CE** by **Kumaragupta I** of the Gupta dynasty, who was also known as **Shakraditya**.
- The university flourished under the patronage of **Harshavardhana**, the **Pala dynasty**, and other rulers such as **Bhaskaravarman** and the **Shailendra dynasty** of Indonesia.
- It is regarded as the world's first residential university, accommodating about **10,000 students and 2,000 teachers** at its peak. It specialized in **Mahayana Buddhism** while also teaching Vedas, logic, grammar, mathematics, astronomy, Ayurveda, and philosophy.
- The university attracted scholars from across Asia, including Chinese monks **Xuanzang** and **Yijing**. Notable scholars associated with Nalanda include **Aryabhata**, **Nagarjuna**, **Dharmapala**, and **Dharmakirti**.
- Nalanda faced repeated attacks and destruction first by the Hunas in the 5th century, later by the Gaudas of Bengal in the 7th century, and was finally devastated around **1193 CE** by **Bakhtiyar Khilji**, during which its famous library **Dharma Gunj** was burned.
- The site was identified as ancient Nalanda by **Alexander Cunningham** in 1861 and was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 2016.
- A new **Nalanda University** was established in 2010 through an Act of Parliament near the ancient ruins at **Rajgir** to promote international academic and cultural exchange.

CHIEF DISCIPLES OF BUDDHA: SARIPUTTA AND MAHA MOGGALLANA

Why in News?

The Holy Relics of Buddha's chief disciples, **Arhant Sariputra** and **Arhant Maudgalyayana (Maha Moggallana)**, recently returned to India after a 10-day public exposition in **Mongolia**, where around one lakh devotees paid homage.

About

- **Sariputta and Mahamoggallana** were the **closest spiritual companions of the Buddha** and served as primary leaders in the early monastic community (Sangha).
- They were born on the same day in adjacent villages, **Upatissa and Kolita**, situated near present-day Nalanda, India.
- Their relics are considered symbolic of the **two essential pillars of Buddhist practice: wisdom and direct meditative experience**. They are highly revered as representations of the "**Noble Sangha**," one of the Three Jewels of Buddhism.

Arahant Sariputta

- He is traditionally recognized as the disciple who was **foremost in wisdom**.
- His legacy is defined by his profound clarity and deep understanding, representing the **intellectual core of the Buddha's teachings (Dhamma)**.

Arahant Mahamoggallana

- He is celebrated for his extraordinary **meditative achievements and spiritual powers**.
- He embodies the mystical, experiential, and **compassionate aspects of Buddhist practice**, often acting as a protector and guide within the early community.

The Path of the Arahant

- In Buddhism, an "**Arahant**" is a person who has attained ultimate spiritual liberation, having realized the true nature of reality and achieved **nirvana**.
- Having transcended all worldly attachments and cravings, an Arahant is **no longer subject to the cycle of rebirth**.
- In the **Theravada tradition**, reaching this state is considered the final objective of the spiritual journey and is typically achieved by those living a monastic life.

SACRED EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY RELICS OF TATHAGATA

Why in News?

The Sacred Exposition of the Holy Relics of the Tathagata was inaugurated in Leh on Buddha Purnima and announced by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, highlighting rare relics from the Piprahwa Stupa.



About

- It is a **public exhibition** of sacred Buddhist relics (**Sarira-Dhatu**) associated with **Gautama Buddha (Tathagata)** for public veneration.
- **Tathagata** is a title of Gautama Buddha, meaning "**the Enlightened One**" or "**one who has realized the truth.**"

- The relics are preserved at the **National Museum** and displayed only during special exhibitions under strict security.
- Most relics originate from **Piprahwa Stupa**, linked to ancient **Kapilavastu**, the capital of the Shakya clan.
- The relics were first discovered in **1898** by **William Claxton Peppe** and later confirmed by **Archaeological Survey of India** excavations (1971–77) under **K. M. Srivastava**.
- They include **bone fragments, ashes, jewels, gold sheets, and sacred caskets**.
- The exposition is organised at different places (e.g., **Leh, Ladakh 2026**) to promote Buddhist heritage, tourism, and public awareness.
- It highlights India's role as a **custodian of Buddhist heritage** and promotes **Buddhist cultural diplomacy**.
- The initiative spreads Buddhist values of **peace, compassion, non-violence, and ethical living**.
- It supports **Buddhist circuit development, heritage conservation, and international cultural exchange**.
- Similar sacred expositions have been held in **Thailand, Mongolia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Russia**.

Refer to the January 2026 Digest for the topic 'Piprahwa'.

SOMNATH TEMPLE

Why in News?

Recently, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple, the Prime Minister highlighted its restoration as a symbol of India's cultural revival, civilisational continuity, and national pride.

Refer to the January 2026 Digest for the topic ' Somnath Temple '.

QUTB SHAHI TOMBS COMPLEX

Why in News?

Recently, a signature campaign was launched in Hyderabad to support the preservation and conservation of the **Qutb Shahi Tombs Complex**.



About

- The Qutb Shahi Tombs complex is situated near the **Golconda Fort** in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The complex was developed by the **Qutb Shahi dynasty**, which ruled the region from **1518 A.D to 1687A.D**.
- It is recognized as one of the largest and most well-documented royal necropolis complexes in India, housing approximately **30 individual tombs**, several mosques, and a specialized mortuary bath used for funeral rituals.
- The structures were commissioned by the Qutb Shahi rulers to inter dynasty members, their families, and loyal officials throughout their 170-year reign.
- The complex is a prominent example of **Indo-Islamic architecture**, characterized by a **synthesis of Persian, Pathan, and local Hindu design traditions**.

- The primary material used is **grey granite stone**, which is finished with decorative stucco work to create smooth, ornamental surfaces.
- **Design Specifications:**
 - Each **mausoleum** is built on a raised, quadrangular terrace with staircases on all sides.
 - The base of each tomb is typically square, featuring a prominent dome on top.
 - The architecture is distinguished by pointed arches that enhance both structural stability and visual elegance.
- The scale of the tombs reflects the status of the deceased; smaller tombs are generally single-storeyed, while larger, more significant monuments feature two storeys.
- **Completion:** Construction of these royal tombs ceased in **1687** following the **conquest of Golconda by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb**.

TREATY OF SUGAULI (1816)

Why in News?

Nepal recently objected to the use of the **Lipulekh Pass** route for the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra** and reiterated its claim over the **Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura** region, leading to renewed attention on the India-Nepal boundary dispute.



About

- The Treaty of Sugauli was signed in **1816** after the **Anglo-Nepalese War (Gorkha War)** between the **British East India Company** and the **Kingdom of Nepal**.
- It formally ended the war and established diplomatic relations between the two sides.
- Nepal ceded major territories to the British, including **Kumaon** and **Garhwal**.
- Nepal surrendered its claims over the **Terai region** and withdrew its territorial claims in **Sikkim**.
- Nepal agreed to accept a British Resident in **Kathmandu**, increasing British influence over its external affairs.
- The treaty fixed the **Kali (Mahakali) River** as Nepal's western boundary.
- However, it did not clearly define the river's source, leading to present-day India–Nepal disputes over **Kalapani**, **Lipulekh**, and **Limpiyadhura**.
- Nepal considers **Limpiyadhura** the source of the Kali River, while India regards the source as near **Kalapani**, treating the area as part of **Pithoragarh**.
- Unlike many princely states, Nepal was not required to pay an annual subsidy to the British EIC, and the treaty helped avoid major future conflicts during the colonial period.
- The treaty remains the key historical and legal document for discussions on India–Nepal territorial boundaries and border demarcation.

KOMAGATA MARU

Why in News?

The 1914 **Komagata Maru** incident has returned to public attention after Diljit Dosanjh referenced it during his appearance on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, highlighting the historic struggle of Indian migrants against discriminatory immigration policies in Canada.



About

- The **Komagata Maru (Guru Nanak Jahaz) incident (1914)** involved a Japanese steamship chartered by **Gurdit Singh Sandhu**.
- It challenged Canada's "**Continuous Journey Regulation, 1908**," which effectively blocked Indian immigration.
- The ship carried **376 Punjabi passengers** from British India via Hong Kong to Vancouver.
- It was denied entry, leading to a long legal dispute, with a **Shore Committee** formed by the local Indian community for support.
- After court rejection, it was forced to leave Canadian waters in July 1914 under naval escort.
- On return to India, at **Budge Budge** (near Kolkata), clashes during forced transfer to Punjab led to police firing, killing 20 and arresting many.
- The event inspired the **Ghadar Party** and strengthened revolutionary sentiment.

- It exposed the contradiction of Indian loyalty to Britain during WWI amid denied rights.
- In **2016**, the Canadian PM formally **apologized** in Parliament.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Ministers of India and Sweden exchanged commemorative gifts highlighting the cultural and intellectual legacy of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, marking his historical visits to Sweden and strengthening India–Sweden cultural ties.

About

- He was born on May 7, **1861**, in **Calcutta** (now Kolkata), Bengal Presidency.
- He published his **first poems** at the age of 16 under the pen-name '**Bhanusimha**'.
- He was the **first non-European and the first Asian** to be awarded the **Nobel Prize in Literature** (1913) for his collection *Gitanjali*.
- He is the only person to have composed the national anthems of two sovereign nations: **India (*Jana Gana Mana*)** and **Bangladesh (*Amar Shonar Bangla*)**.
- **Knighthood:** He was knighted by the British Crown in 1915, but he **renounced the title in 1919** in protest against the **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre**.
- He is credited with modernizing Bengali prose and poetry. He pioneered the short story form in Bengali literature. His notable works include *Gitanjali*, *Ghare-Baire*, *Gora*, *Manasi*, *Balaka*, *Sonar Tori*, *The Hungry Stones and Other Stories*, and *The Glimpses of Bengal Life*. He is also remembered for his iconic song '**Ekla Chalo Re**'.
- He was an influential artist and musician. He wrote over **2,230 songs**, known as **Rabindra Sangeet**, characterized by a distinct lyrical and fluid style. In his later years, he painted around 3,000 paintings.
- He believed in universal humanism, transcending barriers of caste, creed, and nationhood. He was a vocal critic of narrow, aggressive nationalism, advocating for a synthesis of Eastern and Western values.
- He championed "**naturalism**" in education, emphasizing that learning should occur in harmony with nature. This led to the establishment of **Shantiniketan** (1901), which focused on the holistic development of the child and discouraged rote learning in favour of creative self-expression.
- He founded **Visva-Bharati University (1921)**, designed as a meeting place for diverse cultures and intellectual traditions. Shantiniketan was inscribed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2023**.
- **Social Reform:** He was a progressive thinker who **opposed untouchability** and championed the cause of rural upliftment and education for the marginalized.
- He passed away on August 7, **1941**, in Calcutta.

SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARD 2025

Why in News?

The Sahitya Akademi has announced its **annual awards** for 2025, honoring outstanding literary works across 24 Indian languages, reflecting the country's rich linguistic and cultural diversity.

About

- The Sahitya Akademi was **established in 1954** as an **autonomous organization** under the **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India, dedicated to **promoting literature in Indian languages**.
- The award is conferred annually for the most outstanding book of literary merit published in any of the **24 recognized languages**, which include the **22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution, plus English and Rajasthani.
- **Eligibility:** The work must be an original contribution by an Indian national and must have been published **within the five years** preceding the award year.
- **Selection:** The awards are recommended by a distinguished jury of **three members in each language** and approved by the **Competent Authority of the Sahitya Akademi**.
- **Award Components:** Each awardee receives an **engraved copper plaque**, a shawl, and a **cash prize of ₹1,00,000**.
- **Nature of Award:** Unlike the Jnanpith Award, which recognizes an author's lifetime contribution, the Sahitya Akademi Award is conferred for a specific, **single outstanding literary work**.
- **Categories:** The 2025 awards span various genres, including poetry, novels, short stories, essays, literary criticism, autobiography, and memoirs.
- **Related Honors:** The Akademi also confers the **Yuva Puraskar** (for young writers aged 35 and below) and the **Bal Sahitya Puraskar** (for children's literature) to encourage budding talent and enrich literature for younger readers.

INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE 2026

Why in News?

The novel **Taiwan Travelogue** by Yáng Shuāng-zǐ, translated by Lin King, won the **International Booker Prize 2026**, becoming the **first book originally written in Mandarin Chinese** to receive the award.

About

- The **International Booker Prize** is one of the world's most prestigious awards for translated fiction, **awarded by the Booker Prize Foundation** in the **United Kingdom**.
- It is awarded annually for the best **novel or short-story collection** originally written in a language other than English, translated into English, and published in the UK or Ireland.
- Originally established in **2005** as the **Man Booker International Prize**, it has been awarded annually for a single work of fiction since **2016**.
- Its **objective** is to promote high-quality world literature and recognize both the **author and translator**.
- **Eligibility** is open to works in any language other than English that are translated into English and published in the UK and/or Ireland.
- The award carries a **£50,000 prize**, shared equally between the author and translator, while each shortlisted author and translator receives **£2,500**.
- In **2026**, **Taiwan Travelogue**, written by Yáng Shuāng-zǐ and translated by **Lin King**, won the award, becoming the first book originally written in **Mandarin Chinese** to receive the prize.
- The novel explores themes of **history, colonialism, power, class, and love**

through a fictional translation of a rediscovered Japanese travel memoir.

SWANG (FOLK THEATRE OF HARYANA)

Why in News?

Recently, the **folk theatre form Swang** gained **international recognition** through the successful staging of the popular Swang play "Jaani Chor" by artist Satish Georgy Kashyap.



Swang, Indian Form of Theatre

About

- **Swang (Swaang/Svang)** is a traditional **folk theatre form of Haryana**, also popular in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab, and is among the **oldest folk entertainment traditions of North India**.
- The term originates from the Sanskrit word *Svangam*, meaning "**imitation**" or "**impersonation**."
- It is an **open-air theatre** form performed in village squares, combining music, dance, mime, and dialogue.
- Dating back to the **15th–16th centuries**, it was influenced by the **Bhakti Movement** and ancient Indian theatrical traditions described in the *Natyasastra*.
- **Themes** include mythological stories, devotional tales, folk romances, and social issues such as dowry, caste discrimination, and corruption.
- **Music** is central to Swang, with instruments like the **harmonium**,

dholak, nagara, and sarangi; dialogues are often poetic in style.

- **Pandit Deep Chand Bahman ("Shakespeare of Haryana")** and **Lakhmi Chand ("Surya Kavi" of Haryana)** are its most celebrated exponents.
- It helps preserve local dialects and oral traditions; traditionally performed by all-male troupes, though women's troupes now also participate.
- Swang is regarded as a precursor or close relative of other North Indian folk theatre forms such as **Nautanki and Raas Leela**.

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA (IFFI)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting appointed noted **filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker as the Festival Director for the 57th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** to be held in Goa.

About

- **International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** was established in 1952 as **Asia's first international film festival**. The inaugural edition was organized by the **Films Division of the Government of India** under the patronage of **Jawaharlal Nehru**.
- It is the **only FIAPF-accredited competitive film festival in South Asia** under the "Competitive Feature Films" category.
- Since **2004 (35th edition)**, **Goa** has been the permanent venue of the festival.
- It is jointly organized by the **National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)**, the Ministry of Information &

Broadcasting, and the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG).

- The festival aims to provide a global platform for cinema, promote excellence in film art, encourage appreciation of diverse film cultures, and strengthen international friendship and cooperation.
- It is guided by the Vedic philosophy of “**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**” (**The World is One Family**).
- Its permanent insignia is the **Peacock**, India’s national bird.
- Major awards include:
 - **Golden Peacock** – awarded to the **Best Film**.
 - **Silver Peacock** – awarded for **Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Debut Film of a Director**.
 - **Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award** – awarded for exceptional contribution to world cinema.
- IFFI promotes cultural exchange and creative commerce through the **Indian Panorama** section, showcasing the best contemporary Indian cinema along with international competitive and non-competitive segments.

THE PRESIDENT CONFERS PADMA AWARDS 2026

Why in News?

The President of India, Draupadi Murmu, presented the **Padma Awards 2026 (Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri)** at the Civil Investiture Ceremony-I held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 25 May 2026.

About

- The Padma Awards, **instituted in 1954**, are among the **highest civilian**

honours in India and are announced **annually on the eve of Republic Day**.

- The awards are conferred in three categories: **Padma Vibhushan** (for exceptional and distinguished service; 2nd-highest civilian award after **Bharat Ratna**), **Padma Bhushan** (for distinguished service of a high order), and **Padma Shri** (for distinguished service).
- The selection process involves a **Padma Awards Committee**, which is **constituted by the Prime Minister every year**, and the awards are **conferred by the President of India**.
- **Eligibility** is open to all persons without distinction of race, occupation, position, or sex; however, government servants including those working with PSUs are generally ineligible, with **specific exceptions granted only for doctors and scientists**.
- In the ***Balaji Raghavan v. Union of India (1996)*** case, the Supreme Court clarified that these awards are not "**titles**" within the meaning of **Article 18(1)** of the Constitution and cannot be used as prefixes or suffixes to the names of recipients.
- Since 2014, there has been a policy focus on the "**People's Padma**," aimed at identifying and honouring "**unsung heroes**" individuals from the grassroots level whose contributions have historically gone unnoticed.
- The total number of awards (excluding **posthumous awards** and those to foreigners/NRIs/PIOs/OCIs) generally does not exceed 120 in a year, though this limit can be relaxed in exceptional circumstances.
- Unlike some other honours, Padma Awards can be conferred posthumously.

- For the year 2026, the President approved 131 Padma Awards, which include **5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri**.
- The 2026 list reflects a diverse representation, including **19 women**, 6 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, and **16 posthumous awardees**.

NATIONAL SPORTS BOARD AND NATIONAL SPORTS TRIBUNAL RULES, 2026

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Government notified rules for the functioning of **the National Sports Board (NSB) and National Sports Tribunal (NST)** under the **National Sports Governance Act, 2025**, to strengthen sports governance and ensure speedy resolution of sports-related disputes.

About

National Sports Board (NSB)

- Established under the **National Sports Governance (National Sports Board) Rules, 2026** framed under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025.
- Consists of a **Chairperson and two Members** appointed by the Central Government from a panel recommended by the **Search-cum-Selection Committee**.
- Rules provide for the Board's composition, tenure, salary, allowances, service conditions, powers and functions.
- Functions as the **central authority for granting recognition to National Sports Bodies (NSBs)**.
- Ensures compliance with **governance, financial and ethical standards** by National Sports Bodies.

National Sports Tribunal (NST)

- Established under the **National Sports Governance (National Sports Tribunal) Rules, 2026**.
- Rules provide for the appointment, re-appointment, tenure, salary, allowances, service conditions and powers of the Chairperson and Members.
- Functions as a **dedicated adjudicatory body for sports-related disputes**.
- Aims to provide **independent, speedy, effective and cost-efficient dispute resolution** and reduce reliance on civil courts.
- Seeks to reduce multiplicity of litigation through a **single-window mechanism** for sports disputes.
- Incorporates digital governance measures, including a dedicated online portal for filing disputes, submission of documents, issuance of notices, virtual hearings, communication of orders and maintenance of records.
- Enhances accessibility and transparency in sports dispute resolution.

PADMA DOREE

Why in News?

The North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC) has launched '**Padma Doree**', a unique cross-cultural textile initiative that **blends Northeast India's sustainable Eri (Ahimsa) silk with Madhya Pradesh's rich Chanderi weaving heritage**. Unveiled by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) in line with the *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat* vision, the launch features a three-day interactive exhibition and fashion show celebrating artisan collaboration and sustainable luxury.

