

THE PRESS PAD



Monthly **C**urrent **A**ffairs **P**ointers (CAP)

Nov-Dec 2025.

"This compilation of Nov-Dec 2025 Current Affairs has been meticulously curated to assist candidates in grasping the most significant and relevant events that are crucial for exams like UPSC, State PCS, Defence exams, SSC, and others."

by
Aditya



t.me/thepresspad

CONTENTS

INTERNATIONAL 6

- ▶ US attacks Venezuela 6
- ▶ Bulgaria joins the eurozone 6
- ▶ Prime Minister Modi three nation tour 7
- ▶ India-Russia Annual Summit 9
- ▶ Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support (RELOS) 9
- ▶ Erasmus student-exchange programme 10
- ▶ Radar system in China-Japan row 10
- ▶ 20th UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Session 10
- ▶ Social Media ban in Australia 11
- ▶ Pax Silica 12
- ▶ Trump Gold Card 12
- ▶ WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine 12
- ▶ WHO guidelines to combat obesity crisis 13
- ▶ Operation Sagar Bandhu 13
- ▶ International Maritime Organisation Council.. 13
- ▶ G20 Summit in South Africa 13
- ▶ India Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) 14
- ▶ Belem Health Action Plan 14
- ▶ Key takeaways from COP30 15
- ▶ Indigenous people protest at COP30 15
- ▶ COP32 16
- ▶ India-Bhutan relationship 16
- ▶ US and China opens military channels 17
- ▶ China's third aircraft carrier – *Fujian* 17
- ▶ Abraham Accords 17

- ▶ Asia Pacific Accident Investigation Group (APAC- AIG) meeting 17
- ▶ Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) 2025 18
- ▶ 47th ASEAN Summit 18
- ▶ Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit 18
- ▶ 8th Session of the International Solar Alliance Assembly (ISA) 19
- ▶ 2026 Republic Day guests 19
- ▶ Kafala System 19
- ▶ New member to ASEAN 20
- ▶ Sevilla Forum on Debt 20

ECONOMY 21

- ▶ New duty rates for tobacco products 21
- ▶ India's Bullet Train project 21
- ▶ Bharat International Rice Conference (BIRC) 2025 21
- ▶ Chakhao Rice 22
- ▶ India Maritime Week – 2025 22
- ▶ Ship building initiatives 22
- ▶ Export Promotion Mission 22
- ▶ Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) 23
- ▶ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16) 23
- ▶ 'Your Money, Your Right' Movement 23
- ▶ Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 (VB-G RAM G) 24
- ▶ Tex-RAMPS Scheme 24

REPORTS & INDICES 24

- ▶ World Inequality Report 2026..... 24
- ▶ Climate Risk Index (CRI) report 25
- ▶ Global Tuberculosis Report 2025 25
- ▶ Climate Inequality Report 2025 26
- ▶ UNEP Adaptation Gap Report..... 26

POLITY & GOVERNANCE..... 27

- ▶ General category open to all candidates 27
- ▶ Atomic Energy Bill, 2025 27
- ▶ Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan Bill..... 27
- ▶ Sabko Bima Sabko Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025 28
- ▶ BS (Bharat Stage) VI 28
- ▶ Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Act, 2021 29
- ▶ Four Labour Codes..... 29
- ▶ Supreme Court passed opinion on a reference made by President Draupadi Murmu..... 31
- ▶ Personality Rights 31
- ▶ Constitution in the Santhali language 32
- ▶ Constitution Day 2025..... 32
- ▶ Guidelines on tunnel building 33
- ▶ UMEED portal..... 33
- ▶ Sanchar Saathi..... 34
- ▶ SIM Binding..... 34
- ▶ Masala Bonds..... 35
- ▶ Appointment of the new Chief Justice of India 35
- ▶ Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets 35
- ▶ Sahakar Digi Pay and Sahakar Digi Loan 36
- ▶ New royalty rates for critical minerals..... 36
- ▶ Black spot data..... 37

- ▶ Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme 37
- ▶ Urban Invest Window (UiWIN) 37
- ▶ 8th Pay Commission..... 37
- ▶ Uttarakhand turns 25 38
- ▶ Model Youth Gram Sabha..... 38
- ▶ Koyla Shakti Dashboard and CLAMP portal..... 39
- ▶ Rule 3(1)(d) of the IT Rules 2021 39
- ▶ PM-SHRI 39
- ▶ Transit-oriented development 40

DEFENCE / SECURITY 40

- ▶ Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv 40
- ▶ UET of Akash-NG missile system 40
- ▶ MH 60R helicopter squadron- INAS 335 – the ‘Ospreys’ 41
- ▶ SJ-100 civil jets 41
- ▶ DHRUV64..... 41
- ▶ Indian Maritime Doctrine 2025..... 42
- ▶ Women in Territorial Army (TA) battalions..... 42
- ▶ Submarine INS Vaghsheer 42
- ▶ INS Ikshak..... 43
- ▶ INS Mahe 43
- ▶ INS Taragiri..... 44
- ▶ INSV Kaundinya 44
- ▶ Ayni airbase in Tajikistan 44
- ▶ Super Sukhoi programme 45
- ▶ Fighter aircraft escape system..... 45
- ▶ HAMMER air-to-ground weapons 46
- ▶ Third India-Indonesia Defence Ministers’ Dialogue 46
- ▶ Malabar Naval Exercise 2025..... 46

▶ JAIMEX-25.....	47
▶ Trishul Joint Exercise.....	47
▶ Exercise SURYAKIRAN XIX – 2025.....	47
▶ AUSINDEX 2025.....	47
▶ Operation Crystal Fortress.....	48
▶ Operation Pimple.....	48
▶ Ghostpairing.....	48

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY 48

▶ Supermoon.....	48
▶ Project Suncatcher.....	49
▶ BlueBird Block-2.....	49
▶ Skyroot Aerospace Vikram 1 rocket.....	49
▶ Newly named geological structures on Mars... 50	
▶ Alaknanda Galaxy.....	50
▶ ISRO launches India's heaviest satellite CMS-03.....	51
▶ OpenAI launched Atlas.....	51
▶ 3I/ATLAS.....	51
▶ Sentinel-6B.....	52
▶ Integrated main parachute airdrop test.....	52
▶ DRISHTI System.....	52
▶ GPS Spoofing.....	53
▶ Indigenous hydrogen fuel-cell vessel.....	53
▶ GlowCas9.....	53
▶ Medication nimesulide.....	53
▶ Rabies vaccine.....	54
▶ Antibiotic-resistant staphylococci.....	54
▶ Influenza viruses.....	54
▶ Ricin poison.....	55
▶ Red Fort blast – use of explosives.....	55

▶ Wild polio virus.....	56
▶ Encephalomyocarditis virus (EMCV).....	56
▶ Desi genome editing technology.....	56
▶ Birsa-101 to cure sickle cell disease.....	57
▶ Thalassemia.....	57

ENVIRONMENT & GEOGRAPHY.. 58

▶ Artificial intelligence (AI)- enabled decision support system (DSS).....	58
▶ Secondary aerosols.....	58
▶ Galaxy frogs.....	58
▶ Carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM).....	59
▶ New Aravalli definition.....	59
▶ Ban on granting new mining leases across the entire Aravalli range.....	59
▶ Hayli Gubbi volcanic eruption.....	60
▶ Cyclone Senyar.....	61
▶ Cyclone Ditwah.....	61
▶ Silicone-based defoamers.....	61
▶ Global Big Cats Summit.....	61
▶ Sacred Samauma Tree.....	62
▶ Dugongs – India's sea cows.....	63
▶ Humboldt penguins.....	64
▶ Secondary ammonium sulfate.....	64
▶ Tsunami-ready villages.....	64
▶ Bengal Tiger.....	65
▶ New Ramsar sites.....	65
▶ TERI study flags high surfactants level in the Yamuna.....	66
▶ Rock Eagle Owl.....	66
▶ Himachal Pradesh Human Development Report 2025: Climate-Adjusted HDI.....	67

▶ Rhesus Macaque.....	68
▶ Typhoon Kalmaegi	68
▶ Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF)	68
▶ Golden snub-nosed monkey.....	68
▶ Cloud seeding.....	69
▶ Taal Volcano	69
▶ New Ramsar site- Gogabil Lake	70
▶ State of Climate Action Report.....	70
▶ Global Forest Resources Assessment (GFRA) 2025	70
▶ Blackbuck.....	71
▶ Boma technique	71
▶ Cyclone Montha.....	71

PLACES IN NEWS..... 72

▶ Zehanpora in Baramulla – Buddhist site in Kashmir	72
▶ Magh Mela.....	72
▶ Punjab’s 3 new ‘Holy Cities’	73
▶ Sirpur archaeological site.....	73
▶ Harappan site of Rakhigarhi	73
▶ Sokoto state, Nigeria	74
▶ Somaliland.....	74
▶ Thiruparankundram hill, Madurai, Tamil Nadu	75
▶ Seva Teerth	75
▶ Shyok Tunnel.....	75
▶ Venkateswara Swamy temple in Kasibugga, Andhra Pradesh.....	76
▶ Strait of Hormuz.....	77
▶ Lucknow- Creative city of gastronomy.....	77
▶ Chaman Border	77

▶ Iceland	78
▶ Bagh-e-Gul Dawood.....	78

PERSONS IN NEWS 78

▶ Khaleda Zia	78
▶ Kaamya Karthikeyan.....	79
▶ Barham Salih.....	79
▶ Raj Kumar Goyal	79
▶ Ram Vanji Sutar	79
▶ Guru Tegh Bahadur	80
▶ Fatima Bosch.....	80
▶ Vinod Kumar Shukla	80
▶ 1066th Jayanthi celebrations of Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeshwara Shivayogi Mahaswamiji..	81
▶ Nnena Kalu.....	81
▶ Prof Kishore Paknikar	81
▶ Dr Tessy Thomas.....	82
▶ Siddhi Jain.....	82
▶ CEC Gyanesh Kumar.....	82
▶ Donald Trump.....	82
▶ Saalumarada Thimmakka.....	83
▶ Prof Vaidyeswaran Rajaraman.....	83
▶ James Watson	83
▶ Samia Suluhu Hassan.....	83
▶ Zohran Mamdani	83
▶ Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.....	84
▶ Paul Biya	84
▶ Dr Patrick Herminie.....	84
▶ Queen Mother Sirikit.....	84
▶ Sunil Amrith	84
▶ Sanae Takaichi.....	85

► Professor Eknath Vasant Chitnis..... 85
SPORTS..... 85

- FIH Junior World Cup..... 85
- FIH Hockey Women’s Junior World Cup..... 85
- Squash World Cup..... 86
- BWF World Tour Finals 86
- Snicko Technology 86
- World Rapid Championship..... 86
- Anish Bhanwala..... 87
- ISSF World Championship Rifle/Pistol 2025... 87
- 2030 Commonwealth Games..... 87
- 100 Years of Indian Hockey 87
- FIDE World Cup 2025..... 88
- Kabaddi World Cup 2025..... 88
- Blind T20 women’s World Cup..... 88
- Deaflympics 2025..... 89
- ICC Women’s World Cup final 89
- Australian Open Super 500 89
- World Boxing Cup Finals..... 90
- World Kungfu Championships..... 90
- U23 World wrestling championships 90

AWARDS 91

- Booker Prize 2025..... 91
- 6th National Water Awards..... 91
- Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB) Awards 92
- Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2025 92
- Indira Gandhi Peace Prize..... 92
- Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025 93

MISCELLANY 94

- New Geographical Indications (GI) tag from Tamil Nadu..... 94
- The Light and The Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One..... 94
- India International Science Festival (IISF) 2025 94
- Hornbill Festival 94
- Anti-Terror Conference 95
- Year-long celebration marking 150th anniversary of India’s National Song ‘Vande Mataram’ 95
- National Urban Conclave 2025..... 95
- Kashi Tamil Sangamam 4.0 96
- Phool Waalon Ki Sair 96
- Ramman festival 96
- Guru Charan Yatra 97
- Ningol Chakouba festival..... 97
- Good Governance Day 97
- Veer Bal Diwas..... 98
- Human Rights Day 98
- International Anti-Corruption Day 98
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2025 98
- Navy Day 2025 99
- International Cheetah Day..... 99
- Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas 99
- National Press Day..... 99
- Police Commemoration Day 100

Test Your KNOWLEDGE 100

INTERNATIONAL

► US attacks Venezuela

— US President Donald Trump on 3rd January claimed that Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, had been “captured and flown out of the country” after the US carried out widespread strikes on Venezuela. At least seven explosions were heard in the country’s capital, Caracas.

— The US **conducted strikes in and around Caracas**, the capital of Venezuela, under the codename “**Operation Absolute Resolve.**”

— **The US attack** marks a significant escalation after months of strikes on Venezuelan “drug boats” and a massive military build-up in the Caribbean with the deployment of troops, aircraft and warships.

— The US has accused Maduro of drug trafficking and working with gangs designated as terrorist organisations. Maduro has denied these allegations.

— This operation that sent shockwaves across the world was reportedly carried out by the Delta Force, a US military top special mission unit. Delta Force, officially known as the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (1st SFOD-D), is the US Army’s premier Tier-1 special mission unit.

Read in detail | [Here](#)

► Bulgaria joins the eurozone

— Bulgaria, the poorest member of the European Union (EU), became the 21st member of the eurozone on January 1, 2026, bringing it closer to full European integration. Croatia was the last country to join the eurozone in 2023. Bulgaria’s inclusion increases the population of Europeans using the euro to 350 million.

— Bulgaria is retiring the lev, its currency since 1881, which has been pegged to the Deutschmark and later the euro since 1997.

— Bulgaria’s admission to the eurozone makes it the **21st nation out of 27 EU members to do so**. The remaining six use their own currencies instead

— The Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which established the European Union, paved the way for the adoption of a common currency, which would be accepted as the sole legal tender, the euro.



— The eurozone, or officially the euro area, refers to the geographic and economic region comprising those members of the EU that have fully adopted the euro as their official currency.

— Four microstates, Andorra, Monaco, the Vatican City, and San Marino, also use the euro through agreements with the EU, while Kosovo and Montenegro use the euro as their sole currency without an agreement. However, none of these countries is regarded as a member of the eurozone.

Read in detail | [Here](#)

➤ Prime Minister Modi three nation tour

— PM Modi goes on a three-country tour to Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman from December 15 to 18.

INDIA – JORDAN

— In the first leg of his trip, Modi visited Jordan from December 15 to 16 at the invitation of **King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein** to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations and exchange perspectives on regional issues.

— India imports a significant amount of fertilizer from Jordan— making it a key part of India’s food security push — and has also invested in the potash



and phosphate sectors there. There is further potential for such investments to secure India’s requirements.

— This year also marked the **75th anniversary** of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

INDIA – ETHIOPIA

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ethiopian President Abiy Ahmed Ali agreed to elevate the bilateral ties to a strategic partnership.

— Modi planted a sapling at the Ethiopian Parliament, as part of ‘**Ek ped maa ke naam**’ and Ethiopia’s Green Legacy initiative.

— He also laid a wreath at the **Adwa Victory Monument**, which stands as a powerful symbol of Ethiopia's courage, unity and unwavering spirit. The memorial is dedicated to the brave Ethiopian soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice for the sovereignty of their nation at the Battle of Adwa in 1896.

— The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, **H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed** conferred the highest award of Ethiopia the '**Great Honor Nishan of Ethiopia**' upon Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for his contribution towards strengthening India-Ethiopia partnership and for his visionary leadership as a global statesman.

— According to the Department of Commerce, India's total trade with Ethiopia stood at US \$ 550.19 million during 2024- 2025. During this period, India's exports to Ethiopia were US \$ 476.81 million and imports were US \$ 73.38 million.

— India is the second-largest trading partner for Ethiopia.

INDIA – OMAN

— In the final leg of the three-nation tour, PM Modi signed the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, or CEPA**, with Oman.

— It is the second trade deal with a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country after the UAE. The recent trade deal is in an effort to expand market access for its exporters in the West Asian market at a time when steep tariffs in the US market are hurting trade and investments.



— Under the deal, Oman has offered **zero-duty access on 98 per cent** of its tariff lines that could result in \$2 billion worth of exports in the near term.

— Besides CEPA, the two sides signed five pacts on maritime heritage and museums, agriculture, higher education, food innovation and maritime cooperation.

— India imported roughly \$6.6 billion of goods from Oman in fiscal 2025, dominated by crude oil, liquefied natural gas and fertilisers, alongside chemical inputs such as methanol and ammonia.

— Sultan Haitham bin Tarik conferred upon Prime Minister Modi the **Order of Oman award** for his “exceptional contribution to India-Oman ties and his visionary leadership”.

► India-Russia Annual Summit

— Russian President Vladimir Putin visited India for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit from December 4-5. It is the highest institutionalised dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership between India and Russia. So far, 22 Annual Summits have taken place alternatively in India and Russia. The first India-Russia Annual Summit took place in New Delhi in October 2000, during the state visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Key outcomes:

— The two sides inked 16 pacts, ranging from health to maritime cooperation, fertiliser to customs, academic to media collaboration. Defence and nuclear energy cooperation dominated discussions.

— India and Russia signed two pacts on the movement of workers, one aimed at curbing illegal immigration and the other at facilitating labour mobility.

— India and Russia on Friday reiterated their commitments to increase bilateral trade to \$100 billion from the current level of \$70 billion and boost settlements using their domestic currencies.

— Both Sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of combating such common challenges and threats such as terrorism, extremism transnational organized crime, money laundering, terrorist financing and illicit drug trafficking.

— On the matter of Russia and Ukraine, PM Modi said, “India is not neutral, India is on the side of peace” and “we support all efforts towards peace”. Also, the two leaders did not mention the word “war” or “conflict”, and referred to the Ukraine situation as a “crisis”.

► Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support (RELOS)

— Days after his two-day official visit to New Delhi on December 4-5, Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed RELOS, a major **military cooperation agreement** with India, into federal law.

— The agreement sets out procedures governing the movement of military formations, warships, and military aircraft between Russia and India, as well as the arrangements for providing logistical support to each other’s forces.

— It will facilitate the mutual use of airspace by Russian and Indian military aircraft, and has provisions related to port calls by warships of both countries.

— For India, RELOS provides an **institutional framework for access to Russian air and naval bases**, from Vladivostok on the Pacific to Murmansk on the Arctic, for refuelling, repairs, and maintenance, boosting operational reach and readiness, especially for Russian-origin equipment.

— RELOS is similar to existing agreements — **LEMOA** (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement), **COMCASA** (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement), and **BECA** (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement) — with the US.

COMCASA, inked in 2018, permits the US to give India encrypted communications equipment and systems, allowing Indian and US military leaders and their planes and ships to communicate over secure networks in both peace and conflict.

LEMOA, inked in 2016, enables the US and Indian militaries to refuel from one another's military bases and get supplies, spare parts, and services from each other's land facilities, air bases, and ports.

BECA facilitates the sharing of high-end military technology, including access to US geo-spatial, satellite, and drone data.

► Erasmus student-exchange programme

— Britain has announced that it will **rejoin the European Union's** flagship Erasmus student-exchange programme.

— British university and college students and apprentices will be able to study or train in EU countries under the programme without paying extra foreign-student fees from January 2027. In turn, students from EU countries will be able to study in Britain.

— Started in 1987, the EU's Erasmus exchange programme (short for European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students), provides scholarships to students studying in Europe.

— The eligibility of individuals and organisations to participate in Erasmus depends on where they are based. The scheme divides eligible countries into two groups: the first being 'Programme countries'— which include all EU members and some non-EU countries such as Turkey and Iceland. These countries can take part in the scheme in its entirety.

— The other group '**Partner countries**'—which includes India— can only take part in some parts of the Erasmus programme, and are subject to specific conditions.

► Radar system in China-Japan row

— In a latest series of spat between Japan and China, Japan has protested against a Chinese fighter jet, which took off from the Chinese carrier Liaoning, as it locked **fire-control radar** at Japanese military aircraft near Japan's Okinawa islands.

— China's military aircraft J-15 "intermittently" directed its radar at Japanese F-15 fighter jets in two separate incidents. However, there were no reports of any injury or damage and the Japanese airspace was not violated.

— A **fire-control radar lock** is considered as one of the most lethal acts as a military aircraft due to its signals which clearly signifies a potential attack, forcing the targeted aircraft to take evasive action.

► 20th UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Session

— India is hosting the 20th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) from December 8 to 13, 2025, at the historic Red Fort in New Delhi.

— This is the first time that India is hosting a session of the UNESCO panel.

— The event also coincides with the twentieth anniversary of India’s ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

— At this session, Deepavali, India’s spectacular festival of lights, along with 19 other cultural heritages that featured in 2025 list, is now inscribed on **UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

— According to UNESCO, Intangible cultural heritage is “traditional, contemporary and living at the same time”, “inclusive”, “representative”, and “community-based”.

— There are a total of 16 intangible cultural heritages listed in UNESCO ICH.

List of UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity from India:

Intangible Cultural Heritage	Year of Inclusion in the UNESCO list
Diwali	2025
Garba of Gujarat	2023
Durga Puja in Kolkata	2021
Kumbh Mela	2017
Nowruz and Yoga	2016
Traditional brass and copper utensil-making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab	2014
Sankirtana of Manipur	2013
Buddhist chanting of Ladakh	2012
Chhau dance, Kalbelia dance of Rajasthan, and Mudi yettu of Kerala	2010
Ramman festival of Garhwal	2009
Kutiyattam Sanskrit theatre, Ramlila, and Vedic chanting	2008

➤ **Social Media ban in Australia**

— **Australia** has become the first country in the world to enforce a minimum age for social media use, requiring platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and Snap to block more than a million accounts of users **below the age of 16**.

— According to the **new law**, called the ‘Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act’, age-restricted platforms will be expected to take “reasonable” steps to find existing accounts held by under-16s, and deactivate or remove those accounts, preventing them from opening new accounts.

— In India, there is no specific law that regulates the use of social media platforms by children. However, under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, tech companies are required to implement a mechanism for collecting “verifiable” parental consent before processing the personal data of children.

► Pax Silica

— Pax Silica is a **US-led strategic initiative** to build a “secure, prosperous, and innovation-driven silicon supply chain” — from critical minerals and energy inputs to advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, AI infrastructure, and logistics.

— Pax Silica Summit convenes counterparts from Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Australia. India is not part of this.

— Measures under Pax Silica include pursuing new joint ventures and strategic co-investment opportunities, protecting sensitive technologies and critical infrastructure from undue access or control by countries of concern and building trusted technology ecosystems, including ICT systems, fibre-optic cables, data centres, foundational models and applications.

— According to the official statement, “**Pax Silica**” draws from the Latin pax—meaning peace, stability, and long-term prosperity, as seen in terms like *Pax Americana* and *Pax Romana*. **Silica** refers to the compound that is refined into silicon, one of the chemical elements foundational to the computer chips that enable artificial intelligence.

► Trump Gold Card

— On December 10, the Trump administration formally began accepting applications for the “Trump Gold Card”, under which the government plans to provide residency, work rights and a path to citizenship to foreigners who pay at least \$1 million.

— The programme will replace the existing EB-5 visa category. The EB-5 programme, part of the Employment-Based visa ecosystem, was created by Congress in 1990 and administered by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). It grants permanent residency (Green Card) to foreigners who invest in American businesses. Investors must put in at least \$1.05 million (\$800,000 in certain specific cases), and create at least 10 jobs for Americans.

► WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine

— The **second World Health Organization (WHO) Global Summit on Traditional Medicine** was jointly organised by the WHO and the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, from 17 to 19 December 2025 under the theme “*Restoring balance: The science and practice of health and well-being*” at the Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

— The summit witnessed intensive deliberations among global leaders, policymakers, scientists, practitioners, Indigenous knowledge holders and civil society representatives on advancing equitable, sustainable, and evidence-driven health systems.

— The WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library was announced at the summit. It constitutes a new global information resource aimed at strengthening traditional, complementary and integrative medicine (TCIM) within health systems. It is grounded in the Gujarat Declaration (2023) and aligned with WHO’s Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034.

► WHO guidelines to combat obesity crisis

— The World Health Organisation (WHO) has released its first guidelines on the use of a new class of GLP-1 medicines to combat the obesity crisis.

— The WHO recommended long-term use of these medicines for obesity but added that those prescribed these medicines should also undergo intensive behavioural therapy as part of a multi-pronged approach to treating obesity.

— The recommendation is not strong owing to the lack of data on long-term use of the medicines.

— There are currently one billion people living with obesity across the world, including 188 million school-aged children and adolescents. If nothing is done to address the crisis, it is estimated that the numbers will double by 2030

► Operation Sagar Bandhu

— At least 80 people have lost their lives in Sri Lanka as the island nation faces one of its worst disasters, with Cyclonic **Storm Ditwah** tearing through the country.

— Responding to Sri Lanka's crisis, India rolled out 'Operation Sagar Bandhu,' delivering the first batch of relief materials transported by the Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and the frontline ship INS Udaigiri.

► International Maritime Organisation Council

— **India** has been re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council with the highest vote in its category at elections held at its Assembly in London for the 2025-26 biennium.

— The newly elected Council will meet for its 136th session on December 4 and will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair for the next biennium.

— The IMO is the **premier body that oversees the world's maritime sector**, which in turn underpins international trade, transport and all maritime activities.

— The Council is the executive organ of IMO and is responsible, under the Assembly, for supervising the work of the organisation. The Council is made up of **40 Member States**, elected by the Assembly for two-year terms.

► G20 Summit in South Africa

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Johannesburg, South Africa, to attend the 20th G20 Leaders' Summit. This is the first time a G20 Summit is being held on the African continent.

— He proposed the formation of a **G20 Global Healthcare Response Team**, **creation of a Global Traditional Knowledge Repository**, an **Open Satellite Data Partnership**, and a **Critical Minerals Circularity Initiative**.

— The G20, or the Group of Twenty, is an informal grouping of 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States), European Union, and African Union.

— Notably, the African Union, a grouping that represents 55 countries, was admitted as a new member of the G20 in June 2023.

► India Brazil and South Africa (IBSA)

— On the sidelines of the G20 summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa meet for the IBSA leaders' meeting.

— Modi told the leaders of Brazil and South Africa that the IBSA grouping can send a message of “unity, cooperation and humanity” at a time when the world appears fragmented and divided.

— PM Modi proposed setting up an **IBSA fund** to promote climate-resilient agriculture and a digital innovation alliance to enable sharing of digital public infrastructure such as the unified payments interface (UPI), health platforms such as CoWIN, cybersecurity frameworks, and women-led tech initiatives.

— IBSA is a unique Forum which brings together **India, Brazil, and South Africa**, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges.

► Belem Health Action Plan

— The Belem Health Action Plan, a **flagship outcome of Brazil's COP 30 Presidency**, was unveiled on the dedicated Health Day of COP30 – 13 November 2025.

— It is aimed at strengthening global health systems to cope better with the impacts of climate change. It is structured around **two cross-cutting principles and concepts**: health equity and ‘climate justice’ and leadership and governance on climate and health with social participation.

— Under the ambit of ‘*The Climate and Health Funders Coalition*’, over 35 leading philanthropies united to address the escalating public health crisis driven by climate change. They committed **an initial \$300 million** to tackle both the causes of climate change and its consequences for health.

— This money would also support the implementation of the **Belem Health Action Plan** and be used for accelerating health solutions where they are needed the most, a statement said.

— The 2025 Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change, which has documented the global health impact of climate change, is the basis for the Belem Action Plan on Health.

2025 Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change

According to the report, the number of climate change-related deaths was in the millions, and millions more were affected by extreme heat, extreme rainfall and flooding, ever more vicious storms and creeping desertification.

* The rate of heat-related mortality has **increased 23%** since the 1990s, pushing total heat-related deaths to an average 546 000 deaths per year.

* The average person was **exposed to 16 days of dangerous heat** in 2024 that would not have been expected without climate change, with infants and older adults facing a total of over 20 heatwave days per person, a fourfold increase over the last twenty years.

* Heat exposure caused 640 billion potential labour hours to be lost in 2024, with productivity losses equivalent to US\$ 1.09 trillion.

* Climate action benefits, as highlighted in the report, state that there were an estimated 160,000 premature deaths avoided every year between 2010 and 2022, from reduced coal-derived outdoor air pollution alone.

(Source: WHO)

► Key takeaways from COP30

— The 30th edition of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30) concluded in Belem, Brazil, on 22nd November. The conference ended with the adoption of the Belem Political Package.

— The Presidency has framed this year’s conference as the “implementation COP,”—was meant to focus less on **what** the world must do, rather on **how** to make it all happen.

— **Belem Health Action Plan:** It is a flagship outcome of Brazil’s COP 30 Presidency, which was unveiled on the dedicated Health Day of COP30 – 13 November 2025. It is aimed at **strengthening global health systems to cope better with the impacts of climate change.**

— **Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF):** Brazil, on 6th November, formally launched the TFFF, which is designed as a “payment-for-performance” model that uses agreed satellite monitoring standards and systems to reward **tropical forest countries** with a continuing source of funding as long as they preserve their forests.

— **Santa Marta conference:** In a move to push for a global phaseout of fossil fuels, Colombia announced an international conference on Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels, to be co-hosted with the Netherlands, in Santa Marta on April 28-29, 2026.

► Indigenous people protest at COP30

— Around 100 people from Brazil’s **Munduruku** Indigenous group staged a protest November 14, blocking the main entrance gate to the Blue Zone — the restricted area set aside for negotiators — at the ongoing COP30 in Belém.

— The Munduruku, who live primarily in the Amazon states of Amazonas, Mato Grosso and Pará, are demanding an end to projects and extractive activities that threaten Indigenous territories, particularly in the Tapajós and Xingu River basins.

— At COP30, Brazil has announced the demarcation of 10 new Indigenous lands, covering almost 1,000 square miles. And about a fifth of the TFFF forest fund is set to go to Indigenous peoples protecting forests.

► COP32

— **Ethiopia** has been confirmed as the host of the 32nd edition of the annual climate change conference (**COP32**) in 2027, even as the choice of next year's host remains uncertain.

— Ethiopia will organize COP32 in its capital city, **Addis Ababa**, the country announced in Belem, Brazil where the COP30 meeting is currently happening.

— The host country of **COP31 next year is still undecided**, with both **Australia** and **Turkiye** persisting with their candidature.

— The COP meetings are held by **rotation in five UN-designated geographical regions** – Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, and Western Europe and Others. Countries volunteer to host the event. But if there are more than one candidate, the respective geographical region selects one by consensus.

— Meanwhile, India has expressed its intention to **host the COP33 event in 2028**, when the conference returns to the Asia region. If allocated, it would be the second time that India will host a COP. New Delhi had hosted COP8 in 2002.

What is COP?

COP is the **governing body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, an international treaty signed in 1992 that provides a basis for climate negotiations.

Each year, the COP brings together representatives of the Parties (countries that have ratified the UNFCCC) to assess progress, negotiate further agreements, and refine commitments.

COP is the world's only multilateral decision-making forum that brings together almost every country on the planet to formulate and implement policy responses to climate change collectively. Currently, there are 198 parties (197 countries plus the European Union) to the UNFCCC.

► India-Bhutan relationship

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on a two-day State Visit to Bhutan from **11-12 November 2025** to attend the 70th birthday celebrations of the fourth king of Bhutan, **Jigme Singye Wangchuck**, the father of the incumbent king, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

— PM Modi also took part in the ongoing **Global Peace Prayer Festival** in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. The 16-day festival, which began on 4th November 2025, is a global initiative dedicated to prayers for world peace and healing of humanity amid ongoing global conflicts.

— The **1,020-megawatt Punatsangchhu-II hydroelectric project** developed jointly by India and Bhutan was inaugurated during this visit.

About Jigme Singye Wangchuck: Popularly known as K4, Jigme Singye Wangchuck became the king of Bhutan — ‘Druk Gyalpo’, or the Dragon King in Dzongkha language — in 1972 at the age of 16, when his father, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, passed away.

In his tenure of over 30 years, K4 interacted with 12 Indian Prime Ministers, from Indira Gandhi to Rajiv Gandhi to Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Dr Manmohan Singh, till he abdicated the throne in 2006 for his son.

➤ US and China opens military channels

— Recently, the US and China have agreed to strengthen communication, maintain stability in bilateral ties, and “**set up military-to-military channels** to deconflict and de-escalate any problems that arise”.

— Washington’s engagement with Beijing at the military level, where it will now be in talks with the Chinese military, will be watched with some concern in capitals of the region, especially in Delhi, Tokyo, and Canberra

➤ China’s third aircraft carrier – Fujian

— The People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has officially inducted *Fujian*, **China’s third aircraft carrier**, and its most advanced one yet.

— The Fujian is China’s third aircraft carrier, with a flat flight deck and **electromagnetic catapults** for take-offs that make it a potentially far more powerful naval weapon than China’s first two Russian-designed carriers.

— Electromagnetic catapults, part of the **Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS)**, use electric power to launch aircraft from a carrier’s deck. Unlike traditional steam catapults, EMALS provides smoother acceleration, enabling the launch of heavier and more advanced aircraft.

➤ Abraham Accords

— US President Donald Trump said that Kazakhstan will join the Abraham Accords to normalize relations between Israel and Muslim-majority nations.

— Kazakhstan already has full diplomatic relations and economic ties with Israel, meaning the move would be largely symbolic.

— The Abraham Accords are a series of agreements to normalise the relationship between Israel and Arab countries. These were signed in September 2020. The UAE and Bahrain became the first Arab countries to formally recognise Israel since 1994.

— Later, Morocco also agreed to normalise relations with Israel, taking the number of Arab countries that recognised the Jewish state to five, with Egypt and Jordan being the only ones to do it earlier.

➤ Asia Pacific Accident Investigation Group (APAC- AIG) meeting

— Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on behalf of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, hosted a four-day Asia Pacific Accident Investigation Group (APAC- AIG) meeting along with a workshop from 28-31 October 2025.

— This is the first time that **India has hosted the APAC-AIG meeting**. This meeting is held annually which is generally hosted by one of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) member states in the APAC region.

— ICAO is a specialised organisation of the United Nations created through the Chicago Convention (formally known as the Convention on International Civil Aviation) of 1944 to promote safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation throughout the world.

► **Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) 2025**

— The 7th Edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue was held at the Manekshaw Centre in Delhi from October 28 to 30, 2025, under the theme of '**Promoting Holistic Maritime Security and Growth: Regional Capacity-Building and Capability-Enhancement**'.

— The IPRD is the Indian Navy's annual, international, apex-level conference, and is the principal manifestation of the Navy's outreach at the strategic level.

— Each successive edition of the IPRD seeks to sequentially focus upon the pillars of the "Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative" (IPOI).

— In 2019, the IPOI was launched at East Asia Summit and in 2020 the IPOI and SAGAR were linked at ASEAN-India summit.

► **47th ASEAN Summit**

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the Summit virtually and declared **2026** as the '**ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation**'.

— Malaysia is the Chair of ASEAN for 2025, and it will be the Philippines in 2026.

— ASEAN, or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, is a grouping of 11 countries — Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the recently added East Timor or Timor Leste.

► **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit**

— The APEC summit was held from October 31 to November 1, 2025, in Gyeongju, South Korea. The permanent secretariat of APEC is located in **Singapore**.

— At the APEC summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the **establishment of a World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization** to govern the technology's development, set international rules, and foster collaboration among nations.

— APEC is a regional economic forum that was established in 1989. Its stated aim was to "leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific and create greater prosperity for the people of the region through regional economic integration".

— The APEC economies are Australia, Brunei, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Hong Kong (as part of China), the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Canada, the United States, Mexico, Peru, and Chile – as located geographically around the Pacific Ocean.

➤ 8th Session of the International Solar Alliance Assembly (ISA)

— The **President of India, Droupadi Murmu**, inaugurated the opening plenary of the Eighth Session of the International Solar Alliance Assembly (ISA) in New Delhi, on October 28, 2025.

— The Assembly witnessed the launch of **five ISA knowledge products** — Ease of Doing Solar 2025, Solar PV Skills and Jobs in Africa, Solar Compass: Special Issue on Integrated Photovoltaics, Global Floating Solar Framework, and Global Solar Trends & Outlook 2025.

— The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a **joint initiative of France and India**, launched during COP21 in Paris in 2015 with the aim of making an unprecedented effort to promote solar energy.

— Headquartered in **New Delhi**, the ISA brings together over 120 member countries to improve energy access and security worldwide and promote solar power as a sustainable transition to a clean energy future.

➤ 2026 Republic Day guests

— In a first, India is inviting the **European Union's leadership** — President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and President of the European Council Antonio Costa — as chief guests for the **77th Republic Day** celebrations.

— An invitation to be the Republic Day chief guest is highly symbolic from the Indian government's perspective. New Delhi has been weaving strategy with hospitality to decide its chief guest.

— Last year (2025), Indonesian **President Prabowo Subianto** was the chief guest at the Republic Day.

➤ Kafala System

— Recently, **Saudi Arabia** has decided to replace the Kafala System with a contractual model, giving migrant workers more rights and freedom to work in the kingdom.

— The Kafala System refers to a **binding contract between migrant workers and their local sponsor**, under which they can only work for the specific employer throughout the period of their residence in the country.

— Under the Kafala System, the employer, who is also the sponsor of the migrant workers, had an undue legal advantage over them as they were not allowed to switch jobs without the Kafala's consent

— Due to its exploitative nature, especially on migrant workers who come to the Middle East for jobs, including domestic work, construction, etc, critics have often called it modern-day slavery.

— In 2009, **Bahrain became the first country in the Middle East** to abolish the Kafala system, while the UAE diluted its Kafala system in 2015, allowing migrant workers whose contracts have expired to obtain a new permit and remain in the country on a 6-month job seeker visa.

— Gulf Cooperation Council countries that still have the strict Kafala system in place are Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman.

► **New member to ASEAN**

— **East Timor** was added as the newest member to the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on October 26.

— East Timor, also known as Timor-Leste, had long attempted to join ASEAN, given the organisation's significance in maintaining economic, political and security coordination in the region.

— With a population of 1.4 million, East Timor is located in the Pacific Ocean to the north of Australia. It constitutes the eastern side of a larger island, while most of the western side is under Indonesian control.

— Current President **Jose Ramos-Horta**, 75, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996. He was jointly awarded with Catholic priest and fellow East Timorese Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, "for their work towards a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor".

— It also marked ASEAN's first expansion in years, after Cambodia last joined it in 1999.

— **Members of ASEAN:** Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, East Timor, Brunei and Laos.

— The **47th ASEAN Summit** is happening in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia under the theme, "Inclusivity and Sustainability".

► **Sevilla Forum on Debt**

— A new global platform to confront mounting debt challenges – the **Sevilla Forum on Debt** was launched on October 22, 2025, at the 16th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16) in Geneva.

— The Forum, a Spanish-led initiative supported by UNCTAD and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), aims to serve as an open and inclusive space for dialogue and action on sovereign debt reform.

— The Forum marks one of the first tangible outcomes of the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)** held from 30 June – 3 July in Seville, Spain.

— Financing for development (FfD) is an ongoing process to align financial flows and policies with economic, social, and environmental priorities.

— Many countries face escalating debt burdens, declining investments, decreasing international aid, and increasing trade barriers. The Conference is seen as an opportunity to close the staggering \$4 trillion annual financing gap, promoting development, bringing millions of people out of poverty, and helping achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which are currently lagging.

ECONOMY

► New duty rates for tobacco products

— The government has notified the new duty rates for tobacco products, including cigarettes and cess rates for paan masala. The new levies on tobacco and pan masala will be over and above the GST rate, and will replace the compensation cess, which is currently being levied on such sin goods.

— From February 1, pan masala, cigarettes, tobacco and similar products will attract a GST rate of 40 per cent, while biris will attract 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST). Along with this, the Health and National Security Cess will be levied on pan masala, while tobacco and related products will attract additional excise duty.

— Compensation cess was introduced to help states make up for the revenue they lost during the initial 5 years of GST implementation. This came under the **GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017**. Subsequently, its levy was extended till **March 2026**, to service the loans raised during the Covid years for providing GST compensation to the states

► India's Bullet Train project

— The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) achieved a breakthrough in its **first mountain tunnel** – and second tunnel overall – in Maharashtra's Palghar. A tunnel breakthrough is the point or moment when a tunnel being excavated from both ends finally connects, marking the completion of a critical work.

— Located between Virar and Boisar bullet train stations in Palghar, the 1.5-km-long Mountain tunnel no. 5 (MT-5) is the longest mountain tunnel in the project. It is almost 55% complete.

— The total estimated cost of the MAHSR project is Rs 1,08,000 crore (approximately). Of these, **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** is funding 81% of the project cost i.e. Rs. 88,000 crores.

► Bharat International Rice Conference (BIRC) 2025

— The inaugural edition of the BIRC 2025 was held at the **Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi**, on 30–31 October 2025.

— It was organised by the Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF) jointly with Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

— India has emerged as the largest producer of rice in the world surpassing China, with a total estimated production of over 149 million MT during 2024-25 season.

— With exports of over 20.19 million tons of rice in 2024-25, India continues to be the largest exporter of rice in the world, contributing over 40% of global rice trade.

► Chakhao Rice

— A pact was signed by APEDA during the 1st BIRC conference which will allow Manipur to introduce another variety of Chakhao (white sticky rice) to the international market after successfully exporting its indigenous black sticky rice.

— Chakhao is a Black Rice variety grown in Manipur. It is glutinous rice with a pleasant aroma and nutty flavour. It is considered one of the healthiest superfoods due to several medicinal and nutritional values, rich in antioxidants, protein, iron, fibre and other essential nutrients.

— The Government of India awarded Chakhao (black variety) the **Geographical Indication Tagging in 2020**.

► India Maritime Week – 2025

— The India Maritime Week 2025 was hosted by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) from October 27 to 31 at NESCO Grounds in Mumbai.

— The theme of IMW 2025 is **‘Uniting Oceans, One Maritime Vision’** – which reflects the timeless Indian ethos of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’.

— The government has decided to invest Rs 70,000 crore in the maritime sector to boost domestic capacity, build greenfield and brownfield shipyards.

— The logo of the proposed National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal in Gujarat was unveiled by Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on the second day of India Maritime Week 2025 in Mumbai.

► Ship building initiatives

— The Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) has notified guidelines for two major shipbuilding initiatives—the **Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme (SBFAS)** and the **Shipbuilding Development Scheme (SbDS)**.

— Under SBFAS, which has a total corpus of ₹24,736 crore, the government will provide financial assistance ranging from 15% to 25% per vessel, depending on the vessel category.

— The SbDS, with a budgetary outlay of ₹19,989 crore, focuses on long-term capacity and capability creation.

► Export Promotion Mission

— The Union Cabinet has approved a six-year Export Promotion Mission (EPM) with an outlay of Rs 25,060 crore.

— Under EPM, priority support will be extended to sectors impacted by recent global tariff escalations, such as textiles, leather, gems & jewellery, engineering goods, and marine products.

— The Mission will operate through two integrated sub-schemes:

* **Niryat Protsahan**: Focuses on improving access to affordable trade finance for MSMEs.

* **Niryat Disha:** Focuses on non-financial enablers that enhance market readiness and competitiveness, including export quality and compliance support, assistance for international branding, and packaging.

► **Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)**

— The government has approved the seven projects worth **Rs 5,532 crore** under the ECMS.

— The scheme was approved by the Union Cabinet in March 2025 with an outlay of Rs 22,919 crore over six years. It seeks to integrate India's electronic industry with global value chains by encouraging production of essential components, sub-assemblies, and raw materials within the country.

— It was expected to generate production of Rs 4.56 lakh crore and bring in incremental investment of Rs 59,350 crore.

— Under this scheme, incentives have been linked to three key parameters: **annual employment generation, capital expenditure needs and annual production.**

— The components that the government is looking to target through the scheme include display modules, sub assembly camera modules, printed circuit board assemblies, lithium cell enclosures, resistors, capacitors, and ferrites, among others.

About the Electronics Sector

↪ Electronics have emerged as India's third largest and fastest growing export category in 2024–25, rising from the seventh position in 2021–22. Total export in 2024–25 was ₹3.27 lakh crore.

↪ The country's electronics production has grown from ₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014–15 to ₹11.3 lakh crore in 2024–25, marking a six-fold increase.

↪ Over the past decade, electronics manufacturing has created around 25 lakh jobs across the country.

► **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16)**

— The **16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16)** took place from 20 to 23 October 2025 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

— The theme of the UNCTAD16 was "Shaping the future: Driving economic transformation for equitable, inclusive and sustainable development".

— UNCTAD, a permanent organ of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, was established in **1964** to promote trade, investment, and development in developing countries.

— It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**, with approximately 190 members.

► **'Your Money, Your Right' Movement**

— The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has called upon citizens to take part in the **'Your Money, Your Right' movement**, an initiative aimed at enabling people to reclaim their unclaimed deposits, insurance proceeds, dividends, and other financial assets.

— He underlined that to make the process of claiming funds simple and transparent, dedicated portals have also been created. They are:

(i) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) – UDGAM Portal for unclaimed bank deposits & balances

(ii) Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) – Bima Bharosa Portal for unclaimed insurance policy proceeds

(iii) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) – MITRA Portal for unclaimed amounts in mutual funds

(iv) Ministry of Corporate Affairs, IEPFA Portal for Unpaid dividends & unclaimed shares

➤ **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 (VB-G RAM G)**

— Both the Houses of the Parliament have cleared the VB-G RAM G Bill which seeks to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) of 2005.

— The VB-G RAM G Bill provides for the issuance of Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards to an adult member of every rural household willing to undertake unskilled manual work.

— The new Bill proposes to raise the number of guaranteed wage employment days in a financial year from 100 to 125.

— Unlike the MGNREG Scheme (MGNREGS), which was primarily funded by the Centre, the new Bill proposes joint funding between the Centre and the state, which will likely lead to a higher financial burden on states.

— The Bill proposes a 60-day pause in the scheme during the peak agricultural seasons of sowing and harvesting, a move said to be aimed at ensuring farm labour availability.

➤ **Tex-RAMPS Scheme**

— To promote research and innovation in the textile sector, the Government of India has launched the Textiles Focused Research, Assessment, Monitoring, Planning, and Start-up (Tex-RAMPS) Scheme.

— The total outlay of the scheme is Rs. 305 crore for the period FY 2025-26 to FY 2030-31.

REPORTS & INDICES

➤ **World Inequality Report 2026**

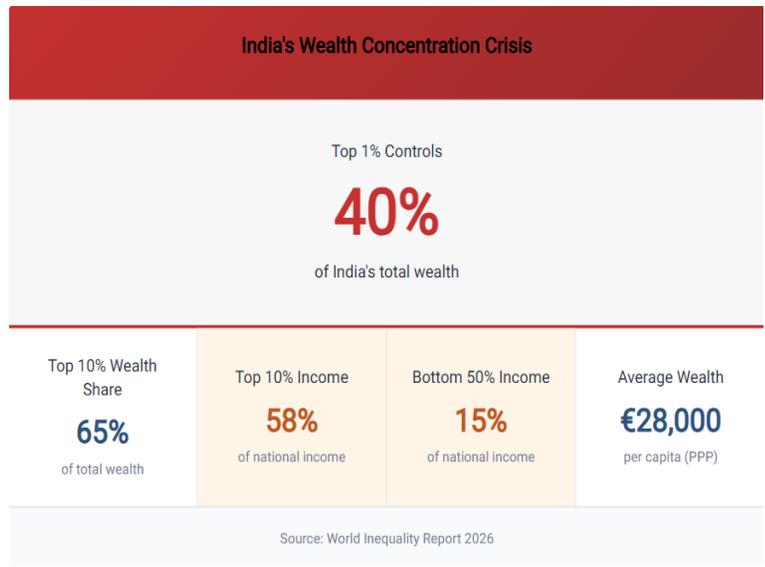
— Income inequality in India remains among the highest in the world, with top 10 per cent of earners capturing 58 per cent of national income, while bottom 50 per cent receive only 15 per cent, according to the latest World Inequality Report 2026.

— According to the report, wealth inequality is even greater in India, with the richest 10 per cent holding around 65 per cent of total wealth and the top 1 per cent holding about 40 per cent.

— The global top 10 per cent owns three-quarters of all wealth, while the bottom 50 per cent holds just 2 per cent.

— The top one-in-a-million, collectively hold 3 per cent of global wealth, more than the bottom half of the world's adult population.

— The World Inequality Report 2026, the third report in the series after earlier 2018 and 2022 editions, is based on the work of over 200 scholars across the world, affiliated with the World Inequality Lab.



► Climate Risk Index (CRI) report

— On the second day of the ongoing COP30 climate conference, the CRI report was released by Germanwatch, a Bonn-based non-governmental organisation.

— According to the report, India has been ranked **9th in the list of countries** worst affected by climate-related disasters in the last 30 years. The last time this index was prepared, in 2023, India was ranked eighth.

— According to the report, globally **8.32 lakh lives were lost between 1995 and 2024** due to extreme weather events, out of which India has recorded 80,000 fatalities, or nearly 9.6% of the global number.

► Global Tuberculosis Report 2025

— The **World Health Organisation** released the Global TB Report 2025 as a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the TB epidemic, and of progress in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of the disease, at global, regional, and country levels.

— The Global TB Report 2025 shows that India has achieved only a 21% reduction in new cases and a 28% reduction in deaths between 2015 and 2024. This does not even come close to the End TB milestones for 2025 — a 50% reduction in TB incidence and 75% reduction in TB deaths.

— According to the report, in 2024, India recorded around 27.1 lakh cases and more than three lakh deaths, making it one of the top contributors to the number of TB cases across the world.

— India diagnosed the highest ever 26.18 lakh cases in 2024, further closing the gap between the estimated number of cases and the ones actually diagnosed.

— There is a significant improvement in India's treatment coverage, which stood at 92% in 2024, increasing from 85% in 2023.

— TB is caused by an organism called **mycobacterium tuberculosis**, which mainly affects the lungs, but can also impact other parts of the body. TB spreads through the air when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or speaks.

World Tuberculosis Day, observed on **March 24** every year, aims to increase public awareness about the global epidemic of tuberculosis (TB) and the numerous efforts being taken to eliminate the disease. The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease. The theme of this year is “**Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver**”, highlights the importance of stronger commitments and action, especially against rising drug-resistant TB.

► **Climate Inequality Report 2025**

— The Climate Inequality Report titled ‘Climate Change: A Capital Challenge, Why Climate Policy Must Tackle Ownership’ was released on 29th October, 2025.

— The report is co-authored by an economist and co-director of the World Inequality Lab, Lucas Chancel, and Cornelia Mohren, Environmental Director, World Inequality Lab.

— According to the report, wealthy individuals fuel the climate crisis through their investments, even more than their consumption and lifestyles.

— At the world level, the top 1% represent 15% of global consumption-based emissions, while they account for 41% of global emissions associated with private capital ownership.

— Climate change can deepen wealth inequality as the share of wealth held by the global top 1 per cent could increase to 46 per cent in 2050 from 38.5 per cent at present if those individuals were to make and own all necessary climate investments in the next decades.

— In order to address the dual challenges of climate crisis and wealth inequality, the report suggested three policies avenues:

- (i) A global ban on new fossil fuel investments
- (ii) A financial investment tax on the carbon content of assets
- (iii) Major public investment in low-carbon infrastructure

► **UNEP Adaptation Gap Report**

— Recently, UNEP has released the ‘Adaptation Gap Report 2025: Running on empty’. The series provides regular updates on what is happening globally in planning, implementation, and finance for adaptation to climate change.

— According to the report, the developing countries will require at least USD 310 billion annually by 2035 to adapt to climate change — 12 times more than current international public finance flows.

— The report found that the new collective quantified goal for climate finance (NCQG) is insufficient to meet developing countries’ adaptation finance needs in 2035.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

► General category open to all candidates

— Recently, the Supreme Court held that a recruitment authority cannot exclude a candidate from consideration for open category posts solely because they belong to a reserved category, if they have secured marks above the general cut-off.

— The court clarified that the open or general category is not a closed compartment reserved for candidates of a particular social group. It is a pool open to all candidates on a merit basis. Treating it otherwise, the court held, risks converting affirmative action into a form of exclusion.

— There were **three main challenges** before the Supreme Court. All **three were rejected** by the Court.

1. First, that candidates who had participated in the recruitment process were estopped from challenging it later.
2. Second, allowing reserved category candidates to be considered in the open category at the shortlisting stage amounted to giving them a “double benefit”.
3. Third, that precedents on “migration” of reserved category candidates apply only at the final stage of selection, not at intermediate stages.

► Atomic Energy Bill, 2025

— The government has cleared the Atomic Energy Bill, 2025, also known as the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, which is one of the key amendments being readied to overhaul a couple of overarching laws governing the country’s atomic energy sector.

— This will **enable private companies** to enter nuclear power plant operations in India.

— This amendment is seen as a reform push that could help leverage the commercial potential of the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, nearly two decades after it was inked.

— This is important as the country plans to progressively add 100 gigawatts (GWe) of nuclear capacity by 2047, up from the current installed nuclear capacity of under 8 GWe.

► Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan Bill

— The Union Cabinet has approved the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan Bill that proposes a unified regulator for higher education, replacing existing statutory bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

— The legislation was earlier known as the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill. This move follows recommendations in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for a single regulatory authority to streamline governance and oversight in India’s higher education sector.

► Sabko Bima Sabko Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025

— The Lok Sabha has passed the Sabko Bima Sabko Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025, that seeks to reform India's insurance framework through changes in the Insurance Act, 1938, the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, and the IRDAI Act, 1999.

— The amendment will increase the FDI limit in Indian insurance companies from 74% to 100% to attract investment, facilitate technology transfer, increase insurance penetration and social protection.

— The requirement of Net Owned Funds for foreign reinsurers will also be reduced from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 1,000 crore.

► BS (Bharat Stage) VI

— The Delhi government has announced that no non-BS VI private vehicle registered outside Delhi is allowed to enter the Capital from 18th December, 2025. Cars found not to be compliant are to be stopped from entering Delhi and fined Rs 20,000. Even cars that are BS-VI compliant can be fined Rs 10,000 if found without a valid Pollution Under Control Certificate (PUCC).

— Bharat Stage emission norms are India's standards for regulating pollution from motor vehicles. They set legal limits on exhaust emissions of pollutants such as carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. The norms are based on European emission standards and apply to all new vehicles sold in the country.

— Each successive BS tightens these limits, pushing manufacturers to adopt cleaner engine technologies, better exhaust treatment systems and cleaner fuel.

— BS II norms were introduced in the Capital in 2001, BS III in 2005 and BS IV in 2010 – all several years before the nationwide rollout, as per the Central Pollution Control Board.

— BS VI norms were implemented in Delhi-NCR ahead of the rest of India and became mandatory across the country in April 2020.

Benefits of BS VI norms

Under the BS-VI regime, full modern exhaust after-treatment systems (technologies fitted to a vehicle's exhaust), such as diesel particulate filters (DPFs) and selective catalytic reduction (SCR) units are mandatory. These systems function as filters and chemical reactors within the exhaust stream, breaking down or trapping harmful gases and particles before they are released into the air.

For instance, catalytic converters convert toxic gases such as carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides into less harmful substances like carbon dioxide, nitrogen and water vapour, while DPFs physically trap fine soot particles emitted by diesel engines, cutting particulate matter emissions by over 90%. Hence, BS VI vehicles can significantly reduce particulate matter emissions, as well as other emissions.

► Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Act, 2021

— The Supreme Court on 19th November **struck down key provisions** relating to the appointment process in the Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Act, 2021, as unconstitutional and violative of the separation of powers and judicial independence.

— The Court underlined that “*the Constitution is what the Court says it is*” and Parliament’s “*discretion is broad but not absolute.*”

— The ruling is the latest in a series of five judgments since 2010 in which the Supreme Court has struck down government interference in the regulation of tribunals. The judiciary’s rationale is that since the executive is often a party to litigation before tribunals, it cannot be permitted to play a dominant role in appointing their members.

— Tribunals are quasi-judicial bodies set up to provide speedy and specialised resolution of disputes in areas ranging from taxation and corporate law to administrative matters, thereby reducing the caseload on other courts.

► Four Labour Codes

—The Centre government has implemented the **four long-pending labour codes** covering wages, industrial relations, social security, and working conditions. They will replace 29 fragmented laws with a unified, modern framework.

— The Parliament had cleared the Code on Wages in 2019 and the rest of the three codes in 2020 — Industrial Relations Code; Code on Social Security; and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code.

— Labour is a Concurrent List subject, and while most states have finalised rules aligned with the four Codes, central-level implementation remains pending.

– The Union Government has announced the implementation of **four new labour codes**, replacing and rationalising **29 existing Central labour laws**.

– The intention is to **streamline compliance**, reduce complexity, and eliminate outdated provisions.

– The reform seeks to create a **simplified, efficient regulatory structure** that supports **ease of doing business** while ensuring **strong protection for workers’ rights and welfare**.

– The four codes—covering **wages, industrial relations, social security, and occupational safety**—will now be implemented **uniformly nationwide**, bringing consistency to labour governance.

– The four Labour Codes being operationalised from **21 November 2025** are:

1. **Code on Wages, 2019**
2. **Industrial Relations Code, 2020**
3. **Code on Social Security, 2020**
4. **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020**

- Many earlier labour laws dated back to the **1930s–1950s**, reflecting economic realities very different from today’s world of work.
- These laws were **fragmented, complex, and often restrictive**, leading to compliance challenges for industries and insecurity for workers.

Labour Code	Laws it Subsumed	Key-Provisions
Code on Wages, 2019	Code replaces the following four laws: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of Wages Act, 1936. • Minimum Wages Act, 1948. • Payment of Bonus Act, 1965. • Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a statutory right to minimum wages for all employees across both organized and unorganized sectors. • Employers shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, including transgender identity, in recruitment, wages. • Provisions ensuring timely payment and preventing unauthorized deductions will apply to all employees, irrespective of wage limits.
Industrial Relations Code, 2020	Subsumes 3 labour acts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Union Act, 1926; • Industrial Employment (Standing orders) Act, 1946; • Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed Term Employment (FTE): Allows direct, time-bound contracts with full parity in wages and benefits; gratuity eligibility after one year. • Higher Threshold for Lay-off/Retrenchment/Closure: Approval limit raised from 100 to 300 workers; States may enhance the limit further. • Expanded Worker Definition: Covers sales promotion staff, journalists, and supervisory employees earning up to ₹18,000/month.
Code on Social Security, 2020	Subsumes 9 Labour Acts like Employees' Compensation Act, 1923, Maternity Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All workers including gig & platform workers to get social security coverage. • Expanded ESIC (Employees' State Insurance) Coverage: ESIC now applies pan-India, eliminating the criteria of “notified areas.”

	Act, 1961, etc.	
Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020	Subsumes 13 Labour Acts like Factories Act, 1948, Plantation Labour Act, 1951, Mines Act, 1952 etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers must provide all workers above the age of 40 years with a free annual health check-up. Extension to Hazardous Work: Government can extend the Code's provisions to any establishment, even with one employee, engaged in hazardous or life-threatening occupations.

➤ Supreme Court passed opinion on a reference made by President Draupadi Murmu

— A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has delivered an advisory opinion to the Presidential reference. This is in the 16th Presidential Reference since the Court's establishment.

— The President sought the reference in the Court's judgment in *State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu (2025)* where the court has invoked Article 142 to prescribe timelines for the Governor and President to act on Bills.

— The SC's advice to the President states that while timelines cannot be set and "deemed assent" cannot be granted by the SC itself, states have a right to approach the Court when there is a delay. The advice seeks to protect a line in the sand on the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary.

— The court clarified that if the Governor sits on the bill forever, it would invite "limited judicial scrutiny" though courts cannot go into the merits of the action.

➤ Personality Rights

— Recently, the Delhi High Court restrained the unauthorised commercial use of actor R Madhavan's image and likeness, recognising the personality rights.

— Personality Rights safeguard an individual's name, image, likeness, voice, signature and other identifiable traits from unauthorised commercial exploitation.

— India does not have a standalone statute defining these rights. Instead, courts have assembled them through a combination of intellectual property law and constitutional principles, with personality rights derived from the following:

(i) **Copyright Act 1957:** Section 38A of the Copyright Act grants performers exclusive rights, once consent is provided for commercial use of their performances.

(ii) **Trademarks Act 1999:** This act allows individuals to register distinctive attributes to their persona, such as names, signatures, catchphrases, as trademarks.

(iii) **Article 21:** Courts also draw from constitutional law, where personality rights are located within the right to life. Personal liberty is enshrined under Article 21, which has been expansively interpreted to include dignity, autonomy and privacy.

➤ **Constitution in the Santhali language**

— President Droupadi Murmu has released the Constitution of India in the Santhali language, written in Ol Chiki script. This script was invented in 1925 by Raghunath Murmu. The release of the constitution in Santhali underlines the promise of a more inclusive India, where every community will be able to read, defend, and celebrate their enshrined rights in their own languages.

— In 2003, the **92nd Constitutional Amendment Act** added Santali to Schedule VIII to the Constitution of India, which lists the official languages of India, along with the Bodo, Dogri and Maithili languages. This addition meant that the Indian government was obligated to undertake the development of the Santali language and to allow students appearing for school-level examinations and entrance examinations for public service jobs to use the language.

— According to the 2011 Census of India, there are over 70 lakh (seven million) people who speak Santali across the country, and the community is the third-largest tribe in India, concentrated in seven states in large numbers, including in West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand.

— The Constitution in Santhali offers the Santhali people easier access to a document that enshrines the rights for which leaders like Munda fought.

➤ **Constitution Day 2025**

— President Droupadi Murmu released the digital version of the Constitution of India in nine languages during Constitution Day celebrations at Samvidhan Sadan in New Delhi. This year theme is “Hamara Samvidhan–Hamara Swabhiman”.

— The **nine languages** in which the digital version of the Constitution was released were Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Punjabi, Bodo, Kashmiri, Telugu, Odia and Assamese.

— It is the first time that the **Bodo and Kashmiri** editions of the

The Journey to India's Constitution: Key Milestones (1934-1950)

1934 M.N. Roy proposed idea to form Constituent Assembly	1946 Constituent Assembly constituted under Cabinet Mission Plan	Dec 9, 1946 First session held with 207 members including 9 women	Jan 22, 1947 Objectives Resolution adopted as Preamble
Aug 29, 1947 Drafting Committee formed under BR Ambedkar	Nov 4, 1948 First Draft Constitution presented to Assembly	Nov 26, 1949 Constitution adopted in last Assembly session	Jan 26, 1950 Constitution came into effect as Republic Day

Constitution are being introduced in the history of India. The Punjabi edition of the Constitution is also being updated after almost 50 years.

— **Since 2015**, Constitution Day or Samvidhan Diwas has been celebrated on November 26 to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949.

— Two months later, on **January 26, 1950**, the Constitution came into effect after being signed by 284 members.

— Before 2015, **November 26** was formally observed as the National Law Day in honour of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, who was also the first law minister of independent India.

➤ **Guidelines on tunnel building**

— The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has released comprehensive guidelines for the prevention and mitigation of road tunnel collapses, almost two years after the Silkyara tunnel collapse.

— According to the guidelines, the terms of reference (ToR) for detailed project report (DPR) consultants shall mandate the preparation of a geotechnical baseline report (GBR) and a risk register.

— To produce the foolproof design of a tunnel, the new guidelines suggest investigating special ground conditions such as squeezing, swelling, rock bursts, shallow cover zones, sections beneath perennial streams/nalas, hot water ingress, and the presence of toxic or flammable gases (particularly in the case of long tunnels).

— **Tunnelling in India** is done primarily based on two kinds of technologies: the **new Austrian tunnelling method (NATM)** and the use of a **tunnel boring machine (TBM)**.

— NATM works on the principle of a “design as you go” approach. It is deployed where the rock structure of a mountain is not uniform and behaves differently as the excavation progresses. It involves a controlled blasting method for tunnelling. Whereas, TBM is deployed in areas where the rock formation for a longer stretch is the same.

— The Ministry’s guidelines say that there should be a clear procedure for incorporating NATM, defining how site observations will be used to optimise excavation sequences, and the required excavation and support sheet (RESS) shall be maintained for each round. A similar level of alertness shall be there in case the TBM tunnels as well.

➤ **UMEED portal**

— Recent data has revealed that only 2.16 lakh Waqf properties out of a total of 8 lakh have been registered on the UMEED (Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development) website, as Waqf Board officials prepare to approach tribunals after the deadline for the process.

— The worst-performing state was West Bengal, with registration of just 716 properties being completed out of 80,480 (0.89%) in the state.

— The UMEED portal was launched by the Centre under provisions of the contested Waqf (Amendment) Act with the objective of bringing all Waqf properties under a centralised digital database, with geo-tagging and documentation. The government said it will ensure that the properties are managed and protected better and in a transparent manner.

► **Sanchar Saathi**

— The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has formally withdrawn the directive asking smartphone makers to **preinstall the state-developed cybersecurity app on all new and existing devices**.

— The Sanchar Saathi portal was launched in 2023, and the mobile application in June 2025, to empower users to secure their devices and report fraud.

— What the Sanchar Saathi app does:

- * Allows tracking and blocking of lost or stolen phones anywhere in India, based on the IMEI of the phones.
- * Gives users the option to block lost or stolen mobile phones
- * Can assist police authorities in tracing stolen or lost devices, which can potentially prevent counterfeit phones from entering the black market.
- * Chakshu option allows users to report suspected fraud communications via calls, SMS, or platforms like WhatsApp.

► **SIM Binding**

— Recently, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has directed online messaging platforms to bar users from accessing their services without the SIM card used to register for the application. Technically, it is called SIM Binding.

— SIM binding is a process where a messaging app verifies that the registered SIM card remains active in your device. If the SIM is removed, replaced, or deactivated, the app will stop functioning.

— **The department** has said that the directive is a way to combat rising digital fraud in the country. These directives were sent to companies like WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Arattai, Snapchat, Sharechat, Jiochat, and Josh.

— Drawing its powers from the Telecommunication Cybersecurity Amendment Rules, 2025, which were notified in October this year, the DoT has brought digital service providers under its oversight by classifying them as telecommunication identifier user entities (TIUEs).

— A TIUE is defined as “a person, other than a licensee or authorised entity, which uses telecommunication identifiers for the identification of its customers or users, or for provisioning, or delivery of services.”

► Masala Bonds

— The adjudicating authority of the Enforcement Directorate has served show cause notices to **Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan** along with others in connection with alleged Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violations pertaining to the Masala Bond issued by the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB).

— **Masala Bonds** are rupee-denominated bonds i.e. the funds would be raised from the overseas market in Indian rupees. According to RBI FAQ, any corporate, body corporate, and Indian bank is eligible to issue rupee-denominated bonds overseas.

— FEMA came in 1999 as a successor to the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act or FERA of 1973, with changing economic conditions in a post-liberalisation India. The Act provides for cross-border transactions, foreign investments, and remittances, making India's economy more global, transparent, and investor-friendly.

► Appointment of the new Chief Justice of India

— **Justice Surya Kant**, who has been part of several landmark judgements, including the abrogation of Article 370, took oath of office as the **53rd Chief Justice of India**, succeeding Justice B R Gavai.

— President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to Justice Kant, who will remain in office till February 9, 2027.

— Justice Kant assumed office as Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court on October 5, 2018, and was elevated to the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019.

Memorandum of Procedure: CJI Appointment Timeline

1. **Law Minister Initiates Process:** Union Law Minister seeks recommendation from outgoing CJI at the "appropriate time" (one month before retirement)
2. **CJI Recommends Successor:** Outgoing CJI recommends the seniormost Judge of Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office
3. **Law Minister Forwards to PM:** After receiving CJI's recommendation, Law Minister puts it up to the Prime Minister
4. **PM Advises President:** Prime Minister advises the President in the matter of appointment. By convention, the Centre appoints whoever the presiding CJI recommends

Recent Example: Justice Surya Kant: - CJI B R Gavai recommended Justice Surya Kant on October 27. Justice Kant took oath as 53rd CJI on November 24, 2024

► Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets

— The Cabinet has approved a scheme to promote the manufacturing of **rare earth magnets** with an outlay of Rs 7,280 crore.

— It is a first-of-its-kind initiative, and aims to establish 6,000 metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) of integrated rare earth permanent magnet (REPM) manufacturing in India, to enhance the country's self-reliance and positioning it as a key player in the global REPM market.

— The scheme will support the creation of integrated REPM manufacturing facilities, involving conversion of rare earth oxides to metals, metals to alloys, and alloys to finished REPMs. The total duration of the scheme will be 7 years from the date of award, including a two-year gestation period

— REPMs are one of the strongest types of permanent magnets and are vital for electric vehicles, renewable energy, electronics, aerospace, and defence applications.

► **Sahakar Digi Pay and Sahakar Digi Loan**

— Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah has **launched two mobile applications**—Sahakar Digi Pay and Sahakar Digi Loan—which will enable even the smallest urban cooperative banks to offer digital payment facilities.

— In July 2025, the government unveiled the **new National Cooperative Policy 2025**, replacing one in place for the past 23 years. It will be effective from 2025 to 2045, i.e., approximately until the centenary of India's independence.

— The vision of the new cooperation policy is to build a Viksit Bharat by 2047 through 'Sahkar Se Samridhhi'.

— Notably, the United Nations has declared 2025 the International Year of Cooperatives with the theme "Cooperatives Build a Better World".

► **New royalty rates for critical minerals**

— The Union Cabinet has approved rationalisation of royalty rates for four critical minerals — graphite, caesium, rubidium, and zirconium.

— The decision aims to facilitate indigenous production and reduce imports of these minerals to avoid supply chain vulnerabilities.

Delving Deeper

Last year, a nine-judge constitutional bench in *Mineral Area Development Authority v M/s Steel Authority of India* ruled that Royalty is not a tax.

The majority held that a royalty is not a tax because there is a "conceptual difference" between royalties and taxes. Royalties are based on specific contracts or agreements between the mining leaseholder and the lessor (the person who leases the property) who can even be a private party.

Also, taxes are meant for public purposes such as welfare schemes and creating public infrastructure, whereas the payment of royalties is to a lessor in exchange "for parting with their exclusive privileges in the minerals.

► **Black spot data**

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) will soon release black spot data for 2023 and 2024. It aims to prevent road accidents and fatalities.
- It is based on its ambitious **Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e-DAR)/Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD) system**, which was developed to collect real-time data entered by state police.
- Black spots on National Highways (NHs) are critical stretches where high rates of accidents are recorded.
- Under the existing system, a 500-m stretch is categorised as a black spot if there have been either five or more accidents involving fatalities or grievous injuries, or 10 deaths within a 3-year period.
- The iRAD/e-DAR system was rolled out during 2021 and 2022 for different states.
- **e-DAR captures road accidents** in real time and geo-tags them through an app on phones or tablets used by first responders, which is the police.
- The last black spot series was calculated for 2020-22 and a total of 1,330 critical stretches were identified.

► **Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme**

- During the National Urban Conclave 2025, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Manohar Lal, launched the Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme (DRAP).
- It is a year-long, mission-mode initiative aimed at fast-tracking the remediation of remaining dumpsites across urban India.
- The programme seeks to reclaim valuable urban land for community and infrastructure development, thereby advancing India's vision of achieving **"Lakshya Zero Dumpsites" by September 2026**.
- Under the programme, cities would be offered additional financial support for remediation and waste processing projects; corporate and public sector undertakings would be roped in for supporting the projects; Central and state road agencies would be asked to use the inert waste for road construction projects; and political and administrative leaders would be asked to "adopt" one of the dumpsites.

► **Urban Invest Window (UiWIN)**

- During the conclave, Manohar Lal also launched UiWIN – an initiative of HUDCO, under the guidance of MoHUA.
- It will serve as a one-stop investment facilitation platform for enabling local bodies to raise private funds. It will help cities identify projects, mobilise capital and implement the project, as per the Ministry.

► **8th Pay Commission**

- The government on October 28 approved the **terms of reference (ToR) of the Eighth Central Pay Commission** after having announced its formation in January this year.

— It will revise the salaries of nearly 50 lakh central government employees and allowances of 65 lakh pensioners, which will come into effect from January 1 next year.

— The Eighth Central Pay Commission will be headed by **Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai**, a former Supreme Court judge and the chairperson of the Press Council of India.

— A Pay Commission is constituted by the central government approximately every decade to revise the salary structure of its employees and determine pension payments. Since 1947, **seven Pay Commissions** have been established.

— As per the Terms of Reference, the Eighth Pay Commission will have to keep in view the economic conditions in the country and the need for fiscal prudence, the need to ensure that adequate resources are available for developmental expenditure and welfare measures.

— One additional term has been added this time, to keep in view the unfunded cost of non-contributory pension schemes. This is significant in the backdrop of continuing demands for restoration of the Old Pension Scheme.

► **Uttarakhand turns 25**

— As Uttarakhand marked 25 years of its formation on November 9, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah extended greetings to the people of the state. Along with multiple development projects, Modi launched a commemorative postal stamp on the occasion.

— Uttarakhand, carved out of Uttar Pradesh, became **India's 27th state on November 9, 2000**. The day is celebrated every year as the state's foundation day.

► **Model Youth Gram Sabha**

— The Model Youth Gram Sabha was launched nationwide on 30th October 2025 at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

— It was launched by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (Department of School Education and Literacy) and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

— It is an initiative based on the **Model UN** – an educational simulation of the United Nations – in schools across the country.

— The initiative will be rolled out across more than 1,000 schools nationwide, including Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs), Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs), and State Government Schools.

— As part of the initiative, a mock Gram Sabha will be conducted in identified schools, where students from classes 9-12 will play the roles of sarpanch, ward members, and village-level officials, including village secretary, Anganwadi worker, auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM), and junior engineers.

— They will hold mock meetings of the Gram Sabha, discuss various issues, and prepare the village budget and development plans.

► **Koyla Shakti Dashboard and CLAMP portal**

— The Union Minister of Coal and Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, has launched two digital platforms, the Koyla Shakti Dashboard and the Coal Land Acquisition, Management, and Payment (CLAMP) Portal.

— Koyla Shakti enables real-time monitoring of coal movement through rail, road, and multimodal systems, facilitating data-driven decision-making and predictive analytics for better demand forecasting and logistics planning.

— The CLAMP Portal is a unified digital solution aimed at streamlining land acquisition, compensation, and rehabilitation & resettlement (R&R) processes in the coal sector.

► **Rule 3(1)(d) of the IT Rules 2021**

— The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has notified amendments to the IT Rule, 2021. It amends **Rule 3(1)(d) of the IT Rules, 2021**, which governs intermediary takedown obligations.

— The amendment, which will come into force from 15th November, 2025 provides additional safeguards to ensure senior-level accountability, precise specification of unlawful content, and periodic review of government directions at higher level.

— According to the amendment, content blocking intimations to social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and X can be sent by a senior officer **not below the rank of Joint Secretary (JS)**, or equivalent, and a Director or an officer equivalent in rank where a JS has not been appointed.

— In case of police authorities, only an officer not below the rank of Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), specially authorised, can issue such intimation.

— A periodic review mechanism has been introduced, requiring all intimations under Rule 3(1)(d) to be reviewed monthly by an officer of the rank of Secretary or equivalent in the Appropriate Government, ensuring that actions remain necessary, proportionate, and lawful.

► **PM-SHRI**

— The CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala has agreed to implement the PM-SHRI scheme. This has drawn fire not only from the opposition Congress, but also from within the LDF.

— The Centre's PM Schools for **Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme** was approved in 2022. It seeks to develop 14,500 schools to "showcase" aspects of the NEP 2020. These schools are to be "exemplars" for other schools in their region.

— The scheme is for existing elementary, secondary, and senior secondary schools run by the central government and state and local governments across the country.

► Transit-oriented development

— Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is set to launch **Delhi's first transit-oriented development** in the East Delhi Hub in Karkardooma.

— TOD is an urban development strategy that aims to create the maximum possible numbers of houses, shops, offices and recreational spaces near public transport facilities. It puts public transportation at the centre of the urban development plan.

— For land-owning agencies and governments, TOD appears as a mode of value-capture financing, which allows them to fund public projects through potential increases in land values resulting from these projects.

DEFENCE / SECURITY

► Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv

— A manufacturing modification to a key component of the ALH Dhruv fleet will soon be implemented. This is after the Defect Investigation Committee probing the crash on January 5 that killed three personnel found the need for this specific modification.

— The committee has recommended a manufacturing process improvement of the Non-Rotating Swashplate Bearing (NRSB) for the choppers with the Navy and Coast Guard to improve its fatigue life.

— These helicopters operate in corrosive saline environments and have to deal with the mechanical stress of deck landings.

— The Dhruv, an indigenously designed and developed ALH, is a twin-engine, multi-role, multi-mission new-generation helicopter in the 5.5 tonne weight class.

— According to the HAL website, a total of 345 helicopters were produced until June 2024 including 313 for the Indian Armed Forces. The choppers together have clocked over four lakh flying hours.

► UET of Akash-NG missile system

— Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully completed the user evaluation trials (UET) of Akash-New Generation, also called Akash-NG, missile system, paving the way for its induction into the Indian Air Force (IAF).

— The development cycle of systems from DRDO broadly consists of three phases:

* Developmental trials

* User-assisted trials in various conditions

* User evaluation trials (UETs).

— The successful UET clears the way for the induction of the system, and an acceptance of necessity (AoN) is issued by the user, which, in Akash-NG's case, is the IAF.

— Akash-NG is designed for the IAF to intercept high manoeuvring aerial threats with low radar cross sections (RCS). RCS or radar signature is a measure of how detectable an object is by radar.

— Akash NG also boasts an extended range of up to 70 km, is sleeker and lighter, and has a much smaller ground system footprint. The missile is canisterised — it can be stored and operated from specially designed compartments — which improves shelf life and simplifies storage and transportation.

► **MH 60R helicopter squadron- INAS 335 – the ‘Ospreys’**

— The Indian Navy has commissioned its second **MH 60R helicopter squadron**, INAS 335, at INS Hansa in Goa on 17 December 2025. The squadron has been nicknamed ‘**Ospreys**’ after the fish-hunting bird of prey.

— The first squadron of these submarine-hunting helicopters, **Indian Naval Air Squadron 334, was inducted at INS Garuda** in Kochi in March 2024.

— The helicopter is designed for a wide range of operations, including anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), search and rescue (SAR) missions, and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC).

— It can be used for vertical replenishment (VERTREP), a naval logistics operation in which supplies are transferred by helicopter between ships at sea or from shore to ship without the ships having to dock or come next to each other.

— The induction coincides with an important milestone as the year 2025 marks 75 years since the Government of India approved the formation of a Fleet Air Arm for the Navy.

► **SJ-100 civil jets**

— The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) inked an MoU with Russia’s Public Joint Stock Company United Aircraft Corporation, for the production of **SJ-100 civil jets**.

— The SJ-100 is a twin-engine, narrow-body aircraft, and is currently in the fleet of around 16 commercial airlines.

— HAL said that SJ-100 will be the game changer for short-haul connectivity. Under this arrangement, HAL will have the rights to manufacture SJ-100 aircraft for domestic customers.

► **DHRUV64**

— India has achieved a major milestone with the launch of DHRUV64, the country’s first homegrown 1.0 GHz, 64-bit dual-core microprocessor.

— It is developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the Microprocessor Development Programme (MDP).

► Indian Maritime Doctrine 2025

— On 2nd December, the Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh Tripathi released the Indian Maritime Doctrine 2025 on Navy Day, with the Service formally recognising “no-war, no-peace” as a distinct category between peace and conflict for the first time.

— The **Indian Maritime Doctrine** is the Navy’s apex guidance document, laying down the principles that govern its strategy, roles and employment across the full spectrum of conflict.

— First released in 2004, revised in 2009 and amended in 2015, the 2025 edition reflects major shifts in India’s maritime environment and strategic outlook over the past decade.

► Women in Territorial Army (TA) battalions

— For the first time, the Army is planning to induct women soldiers in its Territorial Army (TA) battalions, aimed at gradually opening up greater opportunities for women in the force.

— According to the TA website, there are 11 TA Home & Hearth (H&H) battalions, eight of which were raised for Jammu and Kashmir and three for the North-East, in 2004-05.

— The **TA H&H battalions**, comprising the local population, have been raised in the northern and eastern theatres for counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations.

— They assist the regular Army and civil administration in multiple tasks, such as intelligence gathering, road opening, and assistance in case of natural calamities, among others.

— The TA is a citizen’s army of volunteers who willingly enroll in this army to contribute to the nation’s defence.

— The TA provides the volunteers an ideal opportunity to receive military training in their spare time and to serve the nation in times of national emergency and internal disturbances.

► Submarine INS Vaghsheer

— President Droupadi Murmu embarked on a sortie onboard Indian Navy’s frontline submarine INS Vaghsheer off the western coast, becoming only the second President of India to experience an operational submarine voyage.

— Former Indian president APJ Abdul Kalam was the first to undertake such a sortie in February 2006.

— The President, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, took off the Kalvari-class submarine from the Karwar naval base in Karnataka.

— INS Vaghsheer is the sixth and final submarine inducted under the Project-75 Scorpene programme and was commissioned into the Navy in January this year.

— The submarine is equipped with wire-guided torpedoes, anti-ship missiles and advanced sonar systems, enhancing India's underwater combat capabilities. Vaghsheer is named after a type of sandfish found in the Indian Ocean.

► **INS Ikshak**

— The Indian Navy has formally commissioned the INS Ikshak into its fleet at the **Naval Base in Kochi**. This is the third vessel of the Survey Vessel (Large) [SVL] class and the first to be based at the Southern Naval Command.

— According to Ministry of Defence, the name 'Ikshak', means 'Guide' in Sanskrit which defines "the ship's role as a sentinel of precision and purpose".

— Built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd**, Kolkata, INS Ikshak is equipped with state-of-the-art hydrographic and oceanographic equipment, including a high-resolution multi-beam echo sounder, Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV), Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), and four Survey Motor Boats (SMBs).

— The vessel embodies over 80% indigenous content, underscoring the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative and collaborative synergy between GRSE and Indian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

► **INS Mahe**

— The Indian Navy commissioned **INS Mahe**, its first anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft (ASW-SWC) with over 80 per cent indigenous parts, at the Naval Dockyard.

— INS Mahe will operate as a "silent hunter" on the western seaboard, dedicated to safeguarding India's maritime frontiers.

— It is the **first of the Mahe-class ASW-SWCs**, a new generation of indigenous shallow-water combatants. The Mahe-class comprises the newly commissioned INS Mahe and the yet-to-be-commissioned Malval, Mangrol, Malpe, Mulki, Magdala, and Machilipatnam. All these vessels are set to be commissioned in the coming 2–3 years.

— The ships in this class are the largest Indian Naval warships propelled by a diesel engine–waterjet combination. They are designed for underwater surveillance, search and rescue operations, and Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO).

— The ship is capable of undertaking ASW operations in coastal waters, along with advanced mine-laying capabilities. The vessels are designed to fit indigenously developed, state-of-the-art SONARS for underwater surveillance.

► **INS Taragiri**

— Taragiri, the fourth ship of Nilgiri Class (Project 17A) and **the third built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilding Ltd (MDL)**, was delivered to the Indian Navy on **28 Nov 2025**.

— It is built under the codename Project 17A, a follow-on vessel of the Shivalik class or Project 17 frigates that are currently in service.

— The ships are fitted with a supersonic surface-to-surface missile system, a Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles (MRSAM) system, a 76 millimetre upgraded gun, and a combination of rapid-fire close-in weapon systems.

► **INSV Kaundinya**

— INSV Kaundinya, the Indian Navy's pioneering stitched sailing vessel, has undertaken her maiden overseas voyage on 29 December 2025.

— The vessel was flagged off from Porbandar, Gujarat, for Muscat, Oman, symbolically retracing the historic maritime routes that connected India with the wider Indian Ocean world for millennia.

— INSV Kaundinya is a stitched sail ship, based on a 5th-century CE ship depicted in the paintings of Ajanta Caves. The project was initiated in July 2023 through a tripartite agreement signed by the Ministry of Culture, the Indian Navy, and Hodi Innovations, with funding from the Ministry of Culture.

— The ship is named after Kaundinya, a legendary Indian mariner. Legend says Kaundinya sailed to Southeast Asia about 2,000 years ago. After surviving pirate attacks, he married Queen Soma and founded the Funan kingdom.

— Its sails display motifs of the **Gandabherunda** and the Sun, the bow bears a sculpted Simha Yali, and a symbolic Harappan-style stone anchor adorns its deck.

— **Gandabherunda** is a symbol of the Kadamba dynasty which ruled the Konkan and Karnataka coast between 345 and 540 AD. Gandaberunda, with two heads, reflected unstoppable might. It was also the insignia of South India's Vijayanagara Empire in the mid-1300s. It is the state symbol of Karnataka.

— Simha Yali is a mythical lion-like creature symbolizing strength and guardianship over the ship.

► **Ayni airbase in Tajikistan**

— Last month, it came to light that India no longer operates its erstwhile overseas **Ayni airbase in Tajikistan** that gave it a strategic heft in central Asia.

— Ayni was India's only full-fledged overseas base, and its location offered India a military foothold in central Asia and leverage over Pakistan. Its presence projected influence in the region dominated by major powers like Russia and China.

— The airbase was also used by India to evacuate its nationals after the Taliban took control of Kabul in August 2021.

— It is **located around 20 km from Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor**, which shares a boundary with the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and with China's Xinjiang province.

— It is understood that the Tajikistan government was reluctant to renew the lease for the airbase owing to pressure from Russia and China. The withdrawal of Indian presence was carried out subsequently, but quietly. The matter only came to light last month.

➤ **Super Sukhoi programme**

— With the final exit of the MiG-21s last month bringing down the IAF fighter squadron strength to 29 as against the sanctioned 42, there's a push within the government to go ahead with the programme to upgrade the Sukhoi Su-30MKI fleet.

— The **Su-30MKI upgrade programme**, also referred to as the Super Sukhoi programme, is a major midlife upgrade programme that can increase the service life of the multirole fighter by another 20 years.

➤ **Rafale Fighter Jet**

— **President Droupadi Murmu**, the supreme commander of the Indian armed forces, made history by undertaking a sortie in a Rafale fighter jet at the Air Force Station in Ambala, Haryana.

— This marked the first time an Indian President has flown in the advanced French-origin multirole combat aircraft.

— **Group Captain Amit Gehani**, the commanding officer of the IAF's No. 17 Squadron, the 'Golden Arrows', was the pilot of the aircraft carrying the President.

— The President was assisted into the Rafale cockpit by **Flight Lieutenant Shivangi Singh**, the first woman pilot to fly the aircraft.

➤ **Fighter aircraft escape system**

— The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has conducted a successful high-speed rocket-sled test of a fighter aircraft escape system at controlled velocity. The technical achievement places India in an elite club of nations with **advanced in-house escape system testing capability**.

— The test was carried out at the **Rail Track Rocket Sled (RTRS) facility** of the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL), a key DRDO facility in Chandigarh. It was conducted in collaboration with the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) of the **Ministry of Defence** and public sector entity Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

— The rocket sled is a ground-based testing system, which is propelled by rockets to climb to high speeds while moving on rail tracks, simulating the aerodynamic conditions of an aircraft in flight.

— It involved dynamic ejection tests that are significantly more complex than static tests, which occur with the aircraft stationary or at zero altitude and zero speed.

— It is a major strategic milestone because until now, India has had to rely upon test ecosystems abroad to evaluate the performance of the ejection mechanisms. Sources have said that the indigenous tests cost between one-fourth and one-fifth as much as the tests conducted abroad.

— Possessing an in-house dynamic ejection-testing facility boosts India's ability to design, certify, and upgrade ejection systems for both current and future fighter platforms.

➤ **HAMMER air-to-ground weapons**

— India's state-owned Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and French firm Safran Electronics and Defence (SED) signed a joint venture cooperation agreement (JVCA) for the production of Highly Agile Modular Munition Extended Range (HAMMER) smart precision Guided air-to-ground weapons in India.

— Also known as a glide bomb, HAMMER precision-guided munitions have a range of up to 70 km and can be fitted to standard bombs of 250kg, 500kg, 1,000kg weights.

— It is an all-weather weapon which is difficult to intercept and can penetrate fortified structures.

➤ **Third India-Indonesia Defence Ministers' Dialogue**

— The third India-Indonesia Defence Ministers' Dialogue was held in New Delhi on November 27, 2025, where both countries reaffirmed the long-standing strategic partnership and deepened bilateral defence cooperation.

— The details related to BrahMos supersonic cruise missile procurement were also discussed at the Dialogue.

— If the BrahMos deal goes through, Indonesia will be the second country to procure the weapon system from India, after the Philippines which has procured three batteries of the weapon system in 2022.

➤ **Malabar Naval Exercise 2025**

— The annual Malabar naval exercise between the navies of India, the US, Australia and Japan kicked off on November 12 in the Northern Pacific.

— The Indian Navy has deployed its guided missile frigate **INS Sahyadri** for the mega exercise being hosted by the US.

— Exercise Malabar was established as an annual bilateral training activity between India and the United States in 1992.

— **Japan and Australia** first participated in 2007, and Japan joined the naval exercise in 2015 as a permanent member, and Malabar became a trilateral exercise. In 2020, for the first time in over a decade, the exercise saw the participation of all four Quad members.

► JAIMEX-25

— **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sahyadri** participated in the Sea phase of JAIMEX-25 (Japan India Maritime Exercise) from 16 to 18 Oct 2025 and made a port call at Yokosuka, Japan, on 21 Oct 2025 for the Harbour phase.

— JAIMEX, earlier known as JIMEX, has been conducted since 2012. It comprised of complex tactical drills in all dimensions of Naval warfare to enhance interoperability between two key maritime forces in the Indo-Pacific.

► Trishul Joint Exercise

— The Pune headquartered Southern Command of the Indian Army undertakes a **Joint Exercise 'Trishul'** with the Navy and Air Force, with offensive manoeuvres in the creek and desert sectors, and amphibious operations off the Saurashtra coast.

— The exercise comprises joint multi-domain operational exercises encompassing Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), Electronic Warfare (EW), and Cyber capabilities.

— In the initial days, they conducted two critical drills — **Agni Drishti** and the **spectrum dominance exercise Trinetra**.

— The network-centric warfare drill **Agni Drishti** aimed at integrating land, air, space, and unmanned Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets.

— **Exercise Trinetra** focused on electromagnetic spectrum operations and counter-unmanned aerial system kill-chains.

— The **concept of spectrum** dominance refers to the ability to control the electromagnetic spectrum for communications, surveillance, and combat advantage, while denying the same to the enemy.

► Exercise SURYAKIRAN XIX – 2025

— The 19th edition of the Joint Military exercise between India and Nepal is being conducted from 25 November to 08 December 2025 at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.

► AUSINDEX 2025

— INS Sahyadri participates in bilateral exercise AUSINDEX 2025 from November 18 to 20, alongside HMAS Ballarat of Royal Australian Navy in the Northern Pacific.

— AUSINDEX is held every two years and is concentrated on enhancing interoperability between the Australian and Indian navies. It also allows sailors from both navies to share best practices.

➤ Operation Crystal Fortress

— A four-month-long operation — Crystal Fortress — culminated in one of the biggest catches of methamphetamine in Delhi as the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), along with Delhi Police's Special Cell (Counter Intelligence) unit, arrested two drug peddlers.

— The operation drew its name from “Crystal”, referring to methamphetamine, and “fortress”, denoting the secured area where it was hidden, similar to a fort.

— **Methamphetamine** is also known as the “Ice” drug because of its white, crystal-like appearance.

➤ Operation Pimple

— Two infiltrators were killed in a gunfight while trying to cross over into the valley in the Keran sector of north Kashmir's Kupwara on 8th November under Operation Pimple.

— Infiltration attempts by militants traditionally increase during October and November as they try to sneak into the valley before the snow closes the mountain passes and makes any movement across the Line of Control (LoC) difficult.

➤ Ghostpairing

— The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has issued an advisory about an active threat campaign targeting WhatsApp users. The attack uses a new technique called **GhostPairing**, which malicious actors exploit to hijack WhatsApp accounts.

— GhostPairing allows cybercriminals to take complete control of WhatsApp accounts without needing passwords or SIM swaps.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

➤ Supermoon

— The first supermoon of 2026 was visible on January 3. The Moon looked about 30 per cent brighter and nearly 14 per cent larger than the smallest full moon of the year.

— A supermoon is a bit larger and brighter than the usual full moon. This happens when the Moon's perigee or the point in the orbit of the moon is nearest to the Earth. Occasionally, this happens at the same time as a full moon and at that point, it is called the supermoon.

— For a supermoon, it reportedly needs to be at its closest point in its 27-day orbit and fully illuminated by the Sun and this happens every 29.5 days. This alignment is rare and only happens a few times a year as the Moon's orbit changes its orientation due to the Earth orbiting the Sun.

► Project Suncatcher

— Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced that the company has begun work on a long-term research initiative, Project Suncatcher, aiming to start putting solar-powered data centres into space by 2027.

— Project Suncatcher will equip solar-powered satellite constellations with Tensor Processing Units (Google's patented chip capable of high-volume, low-precision computation) and optical links that may scale machine learning computations in space.

► BlueBird Block-2

— India's heaviest launch vehicle LVM-3 placed the US communication satellite Bluebird Block-2 in a precise orbit on 24th December from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

— Weighing **around 6,100 kg**, it was the heaviest satellite launched by an Indian rocket. This marked the sixth operational flight of LVM3.

— BlueBird Block-2 is part of a new generation of satellites that enable space-based cellular broadband services. These allow direct connectivity to regular mobile smartphones without the need for specialised equipment.

— The mission was undertaken as part of the commercial agreement sealed between NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL) — the commercial arm of ISRO — and US-based AST SpaceMobile (AST and Science, LLC).

— LVM-3, earlier referred to as **Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle Mark 3 or GSLV Mk 3**, uses solid, liquid, as well as cryogenic-fuel based engines to put up to 8,000 kg in low Earth orbit (up to an altitude of 2,000 km from Earth's surface) and up to 4,000 kg in geosynchronous orbit (about 36,000 km).

► Skyroot Aerospace Vikram 1 rocket

— On November 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new Infinity Campus of Skyroot Aerospace and unveiled the Vikram-I rocket through video conferencing.

— Skyroot Aerospace, co-founded by IIT alumni and former ISRO scientists Pawan Chandana and Bharath Daka, swiftly rose to be a leading private player in the country's space ecosystem. The company created history in November 2022 by launching **Vikram-S**, India's first privately developed sub-orbital rocket.

— Vikram-1, named after the father of India's space programme Vikram Sarabhai, is the company's first orbital launch vehicle that is capable of placing satellites into orbit.

— It is a multi-stage launch vehicle with a capacity to place around 300 kg of payloads in low earth orbit. It is an all-carbon-fiber-bodied rocket that can place multiple satellites into orbit and features 3D-printed liquid engines.

► Newly named geological structures on Mars



— In the latest list prepared by the International Astronomical Union (IAU)'s Working Group for Planetary System Nomenclature, there are seven Indian names.

— The name of two locations on Mars honours the renowned geologist M S Krishnan, the first Indian to become the director of the Geological Survey of India in 1951.

— IAU has named craters as: **Varkala** (the most visited tourist place in Kerala), **Valiamala** (home of the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology), **Thumba** (birthplace of the ISRO), **Periyar** (Kerala's longest river), and **Bekal** (named after the mid-17th century fort in the northern Kerala town of the same name).

— According to the nomenclature rules for Mars, large craters, of the size 50 km or larger, are named after scientists, while smaller craters are to be named after small towns and villages anywhere in the world with populations of about 100,000 or less.

► Alaknanda Galaxy

— The Pune-based researchers have discovered a well-defined spiral galaxy, remarkably similar in structure to our own Milky Way — the kind of galaxy supposed to have evolved much later.

— They have named it Alaknanda, after the Himalayan river. A striking thing about Alaknanda is its textbook spiral structure. The galaxy has two well-defined spiral arms wrapping around a bright central bulge, spanning approximately 30,000 light-years in diameter.

— According to the current understanding of scientists, the earliest formed galaxies did not have well-defined structures, were chaotic and clumpy, extremely hot and turbulent. But Alaknanda is nothing like that.

— The discovery was made using NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), the most powerful piece of observation equipment put into space, which was launched in 2021.

► ISRO launches India's heaviest satellite CMS-03

— ISRO has successfully launched the **CMS-03 communication satellite** using its biggest launch rocket LVM-3.

— This is the first time that ISRO has put a satellite weighing over 4,000 kg in the distant geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO) from the Indian soil. It was launched from the second Launch Pad (SLP) from Sriharikota.

— LVM-3, earlier referred to as **Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle Mark 3 or GSLV Mk 3**, uses solid, liquid, as well as cryogenic-fuel based engines to put up to 8,000 kg in low earth orbit (up to an altitude of 2,000 km from Earth's surface) and up to 4,000 kg in geosynchronous orbit (about 36,000 km).

— The previous LVM3 mission was the successful launch of Chandrayaan-3, during which India became the first country to successfully land near the lunar South Pole in 2023, according to ISRO.

► OpenAI launched Atlas

— OpenAI has announced its own web browser called Atlas. This followed after artificial intelligence firm Perplexity announced its AI browser Comet.

— The web browser is the gateway to everything – search, docs, shopping, banking, research, entertainment. Owning that interface means companies can control how users reach the web, and observe and optimise user intent directly.

— Whoever owns the interface, owns user data, which can be used as a monetisation channel, the way Google does with its advertisement business.

► 3I/ATLAS

— The interstellar comet 3I/ATLAS is releasing a remarkable amount of carbon-based chemicals, with new observations showing unusually high levels of methanol.

— Methanol is central to early prebiotic chemistry and never previously detected in an object arriving from outside our solar system. Although it is a **simple carbon-based compound**, it acts as a crucial building block for more complex molecules tied to the origins of life.

— Comets or “dirty snowballs” are mostly made of dust, rocks and ice, the remnants from time the solar system was formed over 4.6 billion years ago. In the distant past, people thought of comets as “long-haired” stars that would appear unpredictably in the sky.

— So far, three known interstellar comets have been identified. These are: **Oumuamua, 2I/Borisov, and 3I/ATLAS.**

— Oumuamua (pronounced oh-MOO-uh-MOO-uh), whose name refers in the native Hawaiian language to a messenger arriving from a great distance, was first detected by the University of Hawaii's Pan-STARRS1 telescope in 2017.

► Sentinel-6B

— Sentinel-6B, a joint mission between the United States' **NASA and NOAA, and the European Space Agency**, was launched on November 16 from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.

— It is an ocean-tracking satellite with six onboard science instruments that will measure the rising sea levels and its impacts on the planet.

— Data from Sentinel-6B is expected to improve the accuracy of weather forecasts, including storm and flood predictions, enabling administrators to make better real-time decisions to safeguard public property and protect coastal infrastructure.

► Integrated main parachute airdrop test

— ISRO conducted an 'integrated main parachute airdrop test' for the Gaganyaan mission at Babina Field Firing Range in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh on November 3.

— The system is critical for ensuring safe recovery of the crew module — the capsule in which astronauts sit during a human flight — during re-entry and landing.

— This test was meant to validate the parachute system even in possible extreme scenarios. The scenario chosen for the test was an "asymmetric disreefing" — where one of the two main parachutes unfurls completely slightly later than the other one.

— To avoid sudden jerks as the parachutes deploy on the astronauts' journey back to the earth, the parachutes open slowly in a step by step process known as reefed inflation.

— Reefing essentially limits how much the parachute can open, following which disreefing at a scheduled time allows the parachute to open up completely. The disreefing is done using a pyro device.

— The test saw the deployment of a drogue parachute, followed by two main parachutes, one of which unfurled a little after the first. The test was successful in demonstrating structural integrity and load distribution even in this extreme scenario, according to the ISRO student.

► DRISHTI System

— Indian Railways is planning to install Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technology-DRISHTI- to enhance the safety of freight trains. It is expected to bring greater transparency, visibility and technological assurance to freight security system.

— This new **AI-based Locking Monitoring System 'DRISHTI'** will reduce the traditionally manual checks which are not only time-consuming but also impractical for long-haul rakes under dynamic conditions.

— This new technology is being developed through a collaborative initiative between the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) and the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati Technology Innovation and Development Foundation (IITG TIDF).

► GPS Spoofing

— Incidents of GPS or GNSS interference, primarily jamming and spoofing of the signals, have seen a surge in recent years, raising concerns regarding safe and efficient flight operations globally.

— In the context of aircraft, GNSS interference can broadly be classified into two categories—**jamming and spoofing**. Put simply, jamming involves overpowering GNSS receivers with strong radio interference, making the equipment GNSS-based navigation unusable for some time.

— **Spoofing** is a lot more serious than jamming, or a disruption in signals. GNSS or GPS spoofing is a deliberate act that involves transmitting counterfeit lookalike signals to deceive the receiver into believing that the aircraft position or time, or both, are not what they are supposed to be.

— This could cause abnormal behavior by certain aircraft systems, and unwarranted warnings—like that of terrain or low altitude—being sounded in the cockpit. Spoofing essentially tells the aircraft that it is where it is not supposed to be, and can create confusion in the cockpit.

► Indigenous hydrogen fuel-cell vessel

— Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has flagged off the commercial operation of India's first indigenous hydrogen fuel-cell passenger vessel at Namo Ghat in Varanasi.

— The vessel is the first in India to demonstrate hydrogen fuel-cell propulsion in a maritime setting and features fully indigenous technology. It operates on a Low Temperature Proton Exchange Membrane (LT-PEM) fuel cell system that converts stored hydrogen into electricity, releasing only water as a byproduct.

► GlowCas9

— Scientists from Kolkata-based Bose Institute, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), have designed **GlowCas9**, a bioluminescent version of Cas9 that glows inside cells, by fusing Cas9 with a **split nano-luciferase enzyme** derived from deep-sea shrimp proteins.

— It allows real-time observation of genome editing inside living cells. It pioneers the emerging field of **theratracking** or visualizing molecular gene therapy in motion.

► Medication nimesulide

— The Union Health Ministry has banned the manufacture, sale and distribution of the common pain and fever medication nimesulide in all oral “immediate release” formulations above the dosage of 100 mg.

— The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) made the recommendation on nimesulide after reviewing its effect on adults. Nimesulide is known to cause liver toxicity in some cases.

► Rabies vaccine

— The Australian health department recently urged its citizens who may have received a rabies shot in India to check if they needed additional replacement doses amidst concerns about counterfeit rabies vaccines. The UK and the US have released similar advisories.

— The counterfeit vaccines of Abhayrab were detected in several cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Agra, Lucknow, Kanpur, and Patna. Based on the complaints, raids were carried out in Delhi, Mumbai, and Agra.

— Drugs are on the concurrent list. Both the Central and State governments are responsible for regulatory control over the quality of drugs through the provisions of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

— The State Drugs Control Authorities, appointed by the state government, look at the manufacture and sale of drugs while imports, market authorisation and new drugs are the responsibility of the Central Government.

— The Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO) with the Drugs Controller General (India) as its head is the Central regulatory body for enforcing the quality standards of drugs, cosmetics and medical devices in the Central Government.

► Antibiotic-resistant staphylococci

— Researchers from the School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, collected air samples from parts of Delhi and found high levels of antibiotic-resistant staphylococci in both the indoor and outdoor environment.

— Notably, the bacterial load peaked in winter months, explaining why people are more vulnerable to falling sick and developing respiratory infections during this time of the year.

— Staphylococci are spherical bacteria, commonly called “staph.” They exist in clusters and are found on skin and mucous membranes, inside our nasal cavities for example.

— They can cause infections, ranging from minor skin issues (boils, pimples) to severe illnesses like pneumonia, sepsis, or MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, methicillin being an antibiotic from the penicillin family).

— The higher the particulate matter (PM2.5, PM10), the higher the number of bacteria that sticks to them. The particles act as carriers for bacteria, facilitating their transport in the atmosphere, enhancing their toxicity or ability to invade host cells and triggering respiratory infections.

► Influenza viruses

— Scientists have, for the first time, captured real-time footage of influenza viruses “surfing” their way into human cells, a breakthrough that could reshape understanding of how flu infections begin.

— Scientists found that the cell does not simply wait passively for the virus. In fact, it seems to reach out.

— Before entering, the flu virus latches onto specific molecules on the cell's membrane and glides across the surface, almost like surfing, until it reaches an area densely packed with receptors. These clustered sites provide the smoothest entry point.

— Once the virus binds there, the cell begins shaping a small pit beneath it. A protein called **clathrin** strengthens and deepens this indentation. As the pocket expands, it envelops the virus, forming a vesicle that the cell pulls inward. Once inside, the outer coating dissolves, and the virus is set free to begin infection.

➤ Ricin poison

— Recently, the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad arrested three men — including a doctor with a “Chinese medical degree” – for allegedly trying to produce a **lethal chemical compound** called **Ricin**.

— Ricin is essentially a protein that can be extracted from the **castor bean**, largely grown industrially for the production of castor oil in countries such as India, Brazil, and China.

— The seeds typically contain 30 per cent to 60 per cent castor oil, with ricin accounting for **1 per cent to 5 per cent** of the weight of the **solid residue**.

— Once consumed, ricin attaches itself to ribosomes. They are cell organelles made up of RNA and protein. They are responsible for reading genetic code and synthesising proteins.

— Once the poison binds with the ribosome, it stops protein synthesis in cells. And, depending on which cells absorb the poison, a person can suffer multi-organ failure and even death

— There is no antidote or specific treatment for ricin poisoning, and the treatment is symptomatic.

➤ Red Fort blast – use of explosives

— Forensic analysis of explosives that led to the **November 10 blast outside the Red Fort** has confirmed the use of a mixture of **ammonium nitrate and triacetone triperoxide (TATP)**, highly potent chemicals whose sale and handling are heavily regulated.

— **Ammonium nitrate**, commonly used as agricultural manure, is legally sold only through registered vendors. Its access is highly regulated: a district magistrate can permit possession of up to 30 metric tonnes, while larger quantities require PESO (Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation) approval.

— Buyers must state the purpose of use, and the government's **System for Explosive Tracking and Tracing (SETT)** monitors all licensed transactions. Despite this, large-scale illegal sales and purchases still persist.

— Ammonium nitrate can be turned into a powerful explosive when mixed with a fuel oil to create ANFO (Ammonium Nitrate-Fuel Oil).

— A compound used as an explosive should contain oxygen atoms. Ammonium nitrate has three oxygen atoms, RDX contains many oxygen atoms, and trinitrotoluene (TNT) has nine oxygen atoms.

— **TATP**, which is formed from a combination of several chemical compounds, also contains oxygen and can detonate. The accused in the November 10 blast likely created an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) **with a detonator** by mixing ammonium nitrate and TATP.

► Wild polio virus

— **Germany** has found the wild polio virus in a sewage sample in Hamburg, the first such detection in Europe since 2010.

— Polio, short for **poliomyelitis**, is an infectious disease that terrified parents worldwide for much of the first half of the 20th century. Affecting mainly children under five, it is often asymptomatic but can also cause symptoms like fever and vomiting.

— There are two forms of polio: **wild polio and vaccine-derived or variant polio**. Both can cause paralysis and death, but wild polio is rarer and now only endemic to Afghanistan and Pakistan, causing tens of cases annually. The strain found in German wastewater is linked to the strain circulating in Afghanistan.

— India was declared polio-free in January 2014, after three years of zero cases, an achievement that is widely believed to have been spurred by the successful Pulse Polio campaign.

► Encephalomyocarditis virus (EMCV)

— In the first such case reported from any Indian zoo, Shankar, the lone African elephant at the National Zoological Park in Delhi, died in September due to the **rare rodent-borne virus — encephalomyocarditis virus (EMCV)**.

— Studies suggest that African elephants are particularly susceptible to the virus, with outbreaks reported worldwide in captivity and in the wild.

— The virus can be transmitted by food or water contamination caused from feces or urine of a rodent species.

About Shankar: The 29-year-old bull elephant — brought from Zimbabwe in November 1998 — was a diplomatic gift to former President of India Shankar Dayal Sharma. After spending 13 years in solitary confinement, the elephant died on September 17 in its enclosure.

► Desi genome editing technology

— Recently, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has received a patent for genome-edited (GE) technology that deploys the so-called **TnpB or Transposon-associated proteins**.

— It is a “miniature alternative” to the proprietary CRISPR-Cas proteins-based technology to precisely cut and tweak the DNA of plants.

— Similar to commonly used CRISPR-associated Cas9 and Cas12a proteins, TnpB act as “molecular scissors” to cleave the DNA of a gene at a predetermined target site and change its sequence.

— TnpB is only 408 amino acids long and sourced from an extreme environment-surviving bacterium called *Deinococcus radiodurans*.

► Birsa-101 to cure sickle cell disease

— Recently, the government has launched India's first indigenous "CRISPR" based gene therapy for Sickle Cell Disease, which particularly affects India's tribal population.

— The therapy, named "BIRSA 101" is dedicated to **Bhagwan Birsa Munda**, whose 150th anniversary was observed on November 15.

— Sickle cell disease is a **genetic condition** that leads to the body's red blood cells becoming rigid, sickle-shaped, and less capable of carrying oxygen. The shape of the blood cells can also lead to blockages in blood flow, leading to acute episodes of pain, chronic pain, organ damage, anaemia, infections, and strokes.

— To cure the condition, Birsa-101 precisely corrects the mutations in the genetic code that cause the disease. The therapy has to be given as a one-time infusion, after which the body should start producing normal red blood cells instead of sickle-shaped ones

— The same therapy can be used for the treatment of **thalassaemia** — another inherited blood disorder where the body produces little or no haemoglobin.

► Thalassemia

— At least five thalassemia-affected minors have allegedly tested HIV positive in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district after receiving blood transfusions at Sadar Hospital in Chaibasa, prompting a high-level probe by the state Health Department.

— The Madhya Pradesh government has constituted a state-level inquiry team to probe how **five children with thalassemia contracted HIV** during blood transfusions has found major lapses, right from maintaining a record of donors to failing to conduct HIV tests properly. According to the preliminary report submitted by the inquiry team, serious irregularities were found at the blood centre.

— **Thalassemia** is an **inherited genetic hemoglobinopathy**, a group of disorders that lead to defective production of haemoglobin synthesis in the body. This results in low production of red blood cells and a lack of oxygenated blood supply to the body parts.

— Thalassemia is mainly classified into two types: Alpha-thalassemia and Beta-thalassemia. The main difference between these two is the involvement of alpha chain and beta chain production (of hemoglobin), respectively, and clinical presentation.

 **JOIN UPSC PRELIMS TEST SERIES 2026 | 50 Tests | 4,780 Questions**

 For Enrolment & Complete Details : [https://t.me/UPSCMentor_ab]

ENVIRONMENT & GEOGRAPHY

► Artificial intelligence (AI)- enabled decision support system (DSS)

— The Delhi government is exploring the possibility of collaborating with IIT Kanpur on an AI-based, data-driven system to combat pollution in the city.

— The proposed collaboration aims to strengthen the ability of the Capital to identify pollution sources at a granular level, assess their impact, and enable targeted, timely interventions across sectors.

— At present, the Capital relies on Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology Pune's (IITM) DSS. Experts have flagged concerns in the past about the reliability of data.

► Secondary aerosols

— Secondary aerosols now contribute at least one-third of Delhi's annual PM2.5 pollution.

— Primary pollutants emerge directly from factors such as road dust resuspension, construction activity, open burning, vehicle exhaust and industries. Secondary particulate matter, on the other hand, forms after gases are released into the air.

— These gases, known as precursor pollutants, undergo chemical reactions influenced by humidity, temperature and sunlight. They eventually form microscopic particles that penetrate deep into the lungs.

— Among the most dominant of these pollutants in Delhi is ammonium sulfate, a secondary inorganic aerosol. Ammonium sulfate is formed from a gas called sulphur dioxide (SO₂), which is largely released by coal-fired power plants.

— India is currently the world's largest emitter of SO₂, largely due to **coal-based power generation**. In July 2025, the government exempted nearly 78% of coal-fired thermal power plants from installing **flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) systems, weakening SO₂ control at the source**.

► Galaxy frogs

— According to the study, a group of seven galaxy frogs vanished, all likely to be dead, after multiple photographers descended on their habitat, causing disturbances and behavioural changes that could have disrupted their feeding and breeding success.

— **Galaxy frogs (*Melanobatrachus indicus*)** are one of the rarest and most dazzling amphibians in the world that live exclusively under rotten logs in Kerala's Western Ghats. In 2021, they were designated as the flagship species of Kerala's Mathikettan Shola National Park.

— Although galaxy frogs were first discovered in 1878, not much is known about them since they are difficult to find. Measuring between 2 cm and 3.5 cm, these frogs **do not produce sounds**. Scientists believe they use their spots to communicate, making existing data about their population and breeding behaviour deficient.

— The frogs are already listed as **vulnerable to extinction** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

— The study highlighted the need to establish ethical standards in both nature and conservation photography to reduce the negative impact on wildlife and nature.

➤ **Carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM)**

— The European Union on January 1, 2026, began implementing the world's first carbon tax under the carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), which has antagonised much of the developing world, including India.

— In its current form, CBAM would apply a carbon-related charge to the import of goods from the power sector and energy-intensive industrial sectors, such as cement, steel, aluminium, oil refinery, paper, glass, chemical and fertilisers from countries with lower environmental ambitions and regulations than the European Union.

— India largely exports aluminium, iron and steel to the EU, which are expected to be impacted due to the regulation.

— According to the *World Bank*, “a **carbon tax** directly sets a price on carbon by defining a tax rate on greenhouse gas emissions or – more commonly – on the carbon content of fossil fuels”. It is a type of **carbon pricing**, and the other type of carbon pricing is the emissions trading systems (ETS). The CBAM is a form of carbon pricing system.

— The **CBAM** or Carbon Tax was first introduced by the **European Union in 2021**. It taxes certain products coming in from other countries based on their carbon emissions footprint in their production process. For instance, if the imported steel was produced through a process that entailed higher emissions than the emissions standards for that product in Europe, it would be taxed.

➤ **New Aravalli definition**

— As per the definition, the Aravali Hills is defined as any landform located in the Aravali districts, having an elevation of 100 metres or more from the local relief. While two or more Aravali Hills (as defined above) located within the proximity of 500 m from each other, measured from the outermost point on the boundary of the lowest contour line on either side, forms the Aravali Range.

— Based on internal assessments of Forest Survey of India, that barely 8.7 per cent or 1,048 out of 12,081 Aravalli Hills were 20m or higher, thus leaving out a vast number of hillocks out of protection's scope.

➤ **Ban on granting new mining leases across the entire Aravalli range**

— The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has directed states to impose a complete ban on granting new mining leases across the entire Aravalli range, stretching from Delhi to Gujarat, according to a press statement.

— The statement came amidst the ongoing protest to save the Aravallis after the Supreme Court accepted the recommendations of a Union Environment Ministry panel on the definition of the Aravalli Hills to restrict mining.

— **New definition:** Any landform that is at an elevation of 100 metres or more above the local relief will be considered as part of the Aravalli Hills, along with its slopes and adjacent land.

— But the 100-metre benchmark and the use of local relief — the immediate surroundings of a hill — as the measuring base rather than a standardised baseline such as the state's lowest elevation, would result in a very significant part of the Aravalli range not being counted as Aravalli anymore.

— The new Aravalli benchmark does not exclude all landforms under a 100-metre elevation from the range. It identifies all landforms rising at least 100 metres from the local profile as Aravalli Hills. And it is only when two such hills are less than 500 metres apart that the intervening stretch — irrespective of its elevation — will also be counted as part of the range.

— **FSI 3-degree slope formula:** The Forest Survey of India (FSI) has been using a 3-degree slope parameter in the Aravalli Hills since 2010. FSI has defined the Aravallis as follows:

(i) slope $> 3^\circ$

(ii) foothill buffer = 100m

(iii) inter hill distance or valley width = 500m and

(iv) the area enclosed by the defined hills from all sides.

— The new parameters accepted by the SC will leave out large tracts identified as part of the Aravalli range under the FSI's 3-degree slope formula.

— Aravalli extends from Delhi in the north to Gujarat in the south through Haryana and Rajasthan. Rajasthan accounts for nearly two-thirds of the mountain range.

► Hayli Gubbi volcanic eruption

— The Hayli Gubbi volcano in **northeastern Ethiopia** erupted on November 23, by all accounts for the first time in about 12,000 years.

— There was no lava or magma flow, but large amounts of gas and plume, consisting possibly of small fragments of rocks, glass, and some other material, were ejected in an explosive eruption.

— A high-altitude cloud of volcanic ash from this volcano entered the Indian region on Monday afternoon and is expected to fully cross over to China. Several flights from and to India have been diverted due to the ash plume from the volcano.

— The volcanic plume had the potential to block visibility, and interfere with flight operations. The very fine particles could enter the engines and melt inside, potentially causing operational malfunctions.

— The movement of the **volcanic plume** is a short-term phenomenon. Their impact would most likely cease to exist completely within the next couple of days. Over time, the fine particles in the plume get dispersed, and spread out in concentrations that are not a concern anymore.

► Cyclone Senyar

- Cyclone Senyar developed near the Strait of Malacca and adjoining northeast Indonesia.
- The name “Senyar,” meaning “lion,” was submitted by the United Arab Emirates and is part of the pre-approved list of tropical cyclone names used in the region. These lists are compiled under a naming system developed by member countries of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Panel on Tropical Cyclones.
- Senyar is the second cyclone to form in the north Indian Ocean basin during the post-monsoon season this year. Cyclone Montha had hit the Andhra Pradesh coast near Kakinada on October 28.

► Cyclone Ditwah

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an ‘orange’ alert on 30th November for Chittoor, Tirupati, Nellore, Prakasam, and Bapatla districts in Andhra Pradesh as Cyclone Ditwah moves northward and approaches Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts.
- Cyclone Ditwah had developed in the southwest Bay of Bengal. Ditwah is the third cyclonic storm to develop in this basin during the post-monsoon season this year.
- The name ‘Ditwah’, meaning a **lagoon**, was suggested by **Yemen** and is likely derived from Detwah Lagoon on the northwest coast of Socotra.
- Cyclone Ditwah exited Sri Lanka on 29th November afternoon after unleashing severe devastation, leaving at least 153 people dead and 191 missing amid widespread floods and landslides.

► Silicone-based defoamers

- Ecological concerns have been raised over the prolonged use of silicone-based defoamers to prevent frothing in the Yamuna, with a Delhi-based environmental group pointing that the spraying this year has continued far longer than in the previous years.
- The group cited international studies on **polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS)**, the silicone compound used in many defoamers, pointing to research that has reported reduced oxygen transfer, slow biodegradation, and potential impacts on fish and aquatic organisms at high concentrations.
- The reason behind the foaming is usually the presence of phosphates from detergents, and anaerobic bacteria in the water that falls from a height at the Okhla barrage. Pollutants, therefore, are not diluted, causing foaming. The defoamer neutralizes the phosphates.

► Global Big Cats Summit

- India’s Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav while speaking at a high-level ministerial segment at COP30 conference, announced India’s decision to host a ‘Global Big Cats Summit’ in New Delhi next year.

— 17 countries were already formally associated with the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), with over 30 more expressing willingness to join.

— The IBCA is an initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in **April 2023** in Mysuru commemorating the 50th anniversary of **Project Tiger**.

— The **objective of the IBCA** is to ensure cooperation for the conservation of seven big cats: **lion, tiger, leopard, cheetah, snow leopard, jaguar, and puma**, and enhance knowledge exchange and threats associated with them.

MAINS VALUE ADDITION

'Solar Mamas' by Barefoot College International

Barefoot College International, established in 1972, by Sanjit "Bunker" Roy has been training marginalised illiterate and semi-literate women from the Global South to become Solar Engineers and provide access to clean solar energy even in the remotest of regions. They learn how to design, make, install and repair solar lanterns and home-lighting systems and have become affectionately known as "Solar Mamas".

Alongside its flagship solar power course, Barefoot College International offers programs for women in tailoring, beekeeping and sustainable agriculture.

Every woman who completes a program is trained in general health knowledge that they are expected to take back to their villages. The "solar mamas" are health catalysts in another way, by replacing harmful light sources like kerosene.

In recent years, Barefoot College International has scaled up across Africa, with other campuses in Madagascar and Senegal. In Tanzania's semi-autonomous archipelago of Zanzibar, this programme has lit 1,845 homes.

➤ **Sacred Samauma Tree**

— At COP30 in Belem, Brazil where policymakers, leaders and administrators have gathered to discuss ways to combat the global climate crisis, members of Brazil's indigenous communities and local residents are trying to bring to light various aspects of their culture, including the existence of the Samaúma.

— Samauma, known by the Portuguese nomenclature, is a 50-metre **tropical tree of the Malvaceae family**.

— It is considered to be sacred and the queen of the entire tropical forest that covers 40 per cent of Latin America, including large parts of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, among others.

— It is also known as the Kapok tree which can grow up to a height of 70 metres or a 20-storeyed building, forming a natural canopy and towering over other trees in the rainforest.

— These trees have an average lifespan varying from **300-400 years**, their buttress roots sturdy in nature and taller than a full-grown human. Due to their heights, the tree has expansive capacity for carrying out photosynthesis leading to an increased production of oxygen, which is then fed to the world.

— This tree plays a huge role in maintaining the rainfall cycle of the world. The crown of the tree releases large amounts of water vapour daily through the process of evapotranspiration, which leads to the formation of clouds, leading to rainfall.

Samaúma: The ‘Queen of the Forest’ that guides the lost

“It is very easy to get lost inside the rainforests. So, whenever any of us gets lost or if there is any emergency situation inside the forest, the first thing we do is find a Samaúma tree. Then we pick up a stick and start beating its roots. In the silence of the forest, the sound of the stick hitting the tree’s roots echoes, and locals can easily understand that someone is lost in the woods or is in some danger, and is sending signals for help,” Luciene Kaxinawà, a local resident who also hails from the indigenous Kaxinawà community.

➤ **Dugongs – India’s sea cows**

— At the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Conservation Congress, a report titled ‘A global assessment of dugong status and conservation needs’ was launched, highlighting the growing threat to the dugong population in India.

— The IUCN World Conservation Congress took place in **Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 9 to 15 October 2025.**

— The report said that the marine mammal’s long-term survival in the Gulf of Kutch and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was “highly uncertain” and “challenging” respectively. Meanwhile, in the Gulf of Mannar-Palk Bay, its population appears to be “much lower” than in the recent past.

About Dugongs

* Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) are a marine mammal that are believed to have inspired ancient seafaring tales of mermaids due to their gentle, seemingly benign disposition.

* The mammals are exclusively **herbivorous**, and seagrass meadows are their main source of food — the reason why they are also called sea cows.

* In the IUCN Red List of endangered species, sea cows are listed as a species **vulnerable to extinction.**

* In India, they are listed under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, which grants the species the highest legal protection against hunting and trade.

* In the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), it is listed in **Appendix I** which prohibits the trade of the species and its parts.

* They are found in over 30 countries. In the South Asian region, dugongs are primarily found in the Gulf of Kutch, the Gulf of Mannar–Palk Bay region (located between India and Sri Lanka), and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

➤ Humboldt penguins

— Recently, Chilean scientists warned of further risks to the world’s **shrinking population of Humboldt penguins**.

— Chile’s Pacific coast is home to 80% of the world’s remaining Humboldt penguins, and scientists at the Universidad de Concepcion estimate that their numbers have dwindled to fewer than 20,000 from around 45,000 in the late 1990s.

— Last month, Chile’s Environment Ministry classified it as “**endangered**.”

— Competition for food from commercial fishing as well as habitat loss, pollution, bird flu, and the worsening impacts of climate change have contributed to declining numbers.

➤ Secondary ammonium sulfate

— According to a new analysis conducted by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), nearly one-third of Delhi’s annual Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5) pollution is made up of secondary ammonium sulfate.

— It is result of coal plants, industries and agriculture, with the chemically-formed pollutant

— Ammonium sulfate is a secondary inorganic aerosol formed through the oxidation of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) into sulfate. This reacts with ammonia emissions from agriculture and other sources.

— Its formation is enhanced under humid conditions, linking coal-based power generation, industrial activity and agricultural ammonia to elevated PM2.5 levels in Delhi and across the National Capital Region (NCR).

➤ Tsunami-ready villages

— India is set to have over **100 tsunami-ready villages**, becoming the first country in the Indian Ocean region to reach the milestone. The certification is awarded by UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

— Tsunami-ready is a voluntary community-based programme that facilitates tsunami preparedness by actively collaborating with the public, community leaders, local and national emergency management agencies.

— A Tsunami-ready village is certified for those who have:

* High awareness about tsunamis

* Hazard preparedness and mapping

* Public display of evacuation maps

* 24-hour warning systems

* Participation in mock drills, among others.

— Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad, is the coordinating institute for implementing UNESCO-IOC 'Tsunami Ready' initiative. INCOIS operates the Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC), which tracks earthquakes globally and issues tsunami warnings for the Indian Ocean region.

— Tsunami Ready recognition does not mean that a community is tsunami proof; it is rather the acknowledgement and recognition that a community has adopted mitigation measures to cope with their tsunami risk.

► Bengal Tiger

— A government project has revealed the presence of the Bengal Tiger at an altitude of 3,010 metres in **Bageshwar district's Sunderdhunga glacier valley**. A camera trap captured the image of a tiger moving through dense subalpine forest.

— Although the research was undertaken to study the snow leopard, a tiger has now been captured, posing questions over the movement of the animal from the terai region to the hill district.

— Bengal Tiger has vibrant orange fur and dark stripes because of a distinctive genetic mutation.

Facts about the Tiger

🔑 Scientific Name: *Panthera tigris*

🔑 Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972 status: Schedule I.

🔑 IUCN Red List status: Endangered.

🔑 CITES status: Appendix I.

🔑 Habitats: Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas.

🔑 India's Habitat: Shivalik-Gangetic plains, Central India and Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats, North Eastern Hills & Brahmaputra Flood Plains and Sundarbans

► New Ramsar sites

— Siliserh Lake in Rajasthan and Kopra Jalashay in Chhattisgarh have recently been designated as Ramsar Sites, taking the total Ramsar sites in India to 96.

— Kopra Jalashay is the first Ramsar site of Chhattisgarh. According to the IUCN website, "the reservoir is located in the upper catchments of the River Mahanadi. The wetland supports more than 60 migratory bird species, which rely on it for nesting, feeding, and as a stopover site. Notable species include the vulnerable greater spotted eagle (*Aquila clanga*) and the endangered Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*)".

— Siliserh Lake in Rajasthan is a human-made wetland within the buffer zone of Sariska Tiger Reserve. It is in a semi-arid zone, and the Site serves as an important water source for diverse species of the region.

► TERI study flags high surfactants level in the Yamuna

— A new study by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has identified multiple hotspots along the Delhi stretch of the Yamuna river where untreated sewage, industrial effluents and solid waste are contributing to high surfactant levels, ammonia and microplastics in the river.

— During winter times, the Yamuna's flow naturally dips resulting in more concentration of pollutants in the river, making the annual frothing more visible.

— When untreated sewage including detergent-rich wastewater with high concentrations of surfactants enters the river, they get vigorously agitated as the water falls over barrages. The turbulence traps air and reduces the water's surface tension, causing bubbles to form quickly and accumulate as thick, persistent foam.

— According to Sciencedirect, "Surfactants are molecules that reduce interfacial energy and increase solubility of other pollutants in water." It reduces the surface tension of the liquid which allows it to mix with oil or water which it normally wouldn't.

— Delhi-based environmental activist Pankaj Kumar said the continued absence of any regulatory cap on surfactants is rendering even upgraded treatment plants ineffective in tackling foam formation.

► Rock Eagle Owl

— Recently, quarrying was halted at Telengana quarry and visitors to the area were also restricted to ensure that the Rock Eagle owl's eggs are not disturbed before they hatch

— The rock eagle owl is a **Schedule I animal**, on the endangered list. Adept at camouflage, it is hard to spot. It's harder still to spot its nest.

— The rock eagle owl or Indian eagle-owl (*Bubo bengalensis*), also called the **Bengal eagle-owl**, is a large-horned owl species native to hilly scrub forests in India. It is usually brown and grey in colour, with a white throat patch that has black stripes.

► Himachal Pradesh Human Development Report 2025: Climate-Adjusted HDI

— According to the Himachal HDI report released on 10th November, remote and sparsely populated districts — **Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti, and Chamba** — have emerged as the most resilient regions to climate-related risks in Himachal Pradesh.

— The report has been prepared jointly by the Department of Environment, Science, Technology, and Climate Change, Government of Himachal Pradesh, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India, under the theme “Building the Future in a Climate-Impacted World”.

— These districts recorded low Hazard Index or HI values compared to others. The values indicated a lower vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

— Districts like Solan, Bilaspur and Shimla, despite having higher Human Development Index (HDI) scores, were at the bottom of the CAHDI, due to their high exposure to climate risks.

— The **HDR report computes the Climate-Adjusted HDI** to illustrate the impact of climate hazards on human development in the state. This is calculated by discounting the human development index of a district by the district’s Hazard Index that quantifies its exposure to climate-related hazards.

— According to the report, “Districts with a high risk of hazards are ranked lower in terms of overall climate-adjusted development, regardless of their original HDI score”.

— The Climate-adjusted HDI discounts a region’s human development progress with its climate vulnerability, providing a more cautious measure of long-term development.

Significance of HP: The forests of Himachal Pradesh form 2.5% of India’s carbon sink, and its rivers sustain 200 million people downstream, giving the state national and global significance.

How Climate Hazards Impact Development: Climate-Adjusted HDI

Innovative metric quantifying how climate-related hazards reduce human development achievements across Himachal Pradesh's districts

$$\text{Climate-Adjusted HDI} = \text{HDI} \times (1 - \text{Hazard Index})$$

Development score discounted by climate exposure

Calculation Process

- 1 Calculate Base HDI**
Combine Health, Education & Income indices
- 2 Measure Hazard Index**
Quantify district's exposure to climate hazards
- 3 Apply Discount Factor**
Subtract hazard impact: $(1 - \text{Hazard Index})$
- 4 Final Adjusted Score**
Multiply HDI by discount factor for climate-adjusted value

KEY INSIGHT
Higher Hazard Index = Greater climate vulnerability = Lower Climate-Adjusted HDI, revealing true development challenges in hazard-prone districts

► Rhesus Macaque

- The standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) has recommended reinstating the Rhesus Macaque species of monkeys under **Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- The recommendation has been made to prevent cruelty, exploitation, and illegal trade of Rhesus Macaque.
- The IUCN Red List status of Rhesus Macaque is **Least Concern**.

► Typhoon Kalmaegi

- Typhoon Kalmaegi brings rain and destruction in Vietnam and the Philippines. It is locally known as **Tino**.
- Kalmaegi is the **13th typhoon** to form in the South China Sea this year. Vietnam and the Philippines are highly vulnerable to tropical storms and typhoons due to their locations along the Pacific typhoon belt, regularly experiencing damage and casualties during peak storm seasons.
- Tropical cyclones have different names depending on their location and strength. They are known as hurricanes in the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, the North Atlantic Ocean and the eastern and central North Pacific Ocean. In the western North Pacific, they are called typhoons.

► Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF)

- The UN Climate Change Conference COP30 is happening in Belém, Brazil, from 6-21 November.
- Brazil, on 6th November, formally launched the TFFF, which is designed as a “payment-for-performance” model that uses agreed satellite monitoring standards and systems to reward tropical forest countries with a continuing source of funding as long as they preserve their forests.
- TFFF aims to mobilise around USD 125 billion through public and private investment, using returns to pay nations that conserve forests. Brazil made the first \$1 billion investment in the facility
- The valuation of environmental preservation through the TFFF stems from the understanding that ecosystems such as the Atlantic Forest, the Amazon, and the Congo and Mekong basins are essential to sustaining life, as we know it today.
- The tropical forests are home to more than 80% of the world’s terrestrial biodiversity. Therefore, they provide ecosystem services to humanity on a global level. What the TFFF seeks is for the world to remunerate part of these services. It is to remunerate forests as the basis of life, as the basis of the economy, for our well-being

► Golden snub-nosed monkey

- Three golden snub-nosed monkeys (*Rhinopithecus roxellana*) were sent to France’s Beauval Zoo in the city of Saint-Aignan this April, to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the People’s Republic of China and France.

— Another trio of golden monkeys arrived at the Pairi Daiza zoo in Brugelette, Belgium, in May. It is seen as a possible successor to the ‘Panda diplomacy’ of China.

— Within China, the golden snub-nosed monkeys today live across a swath of central and southwestern China that includes parts of Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu and Hubei provinces.

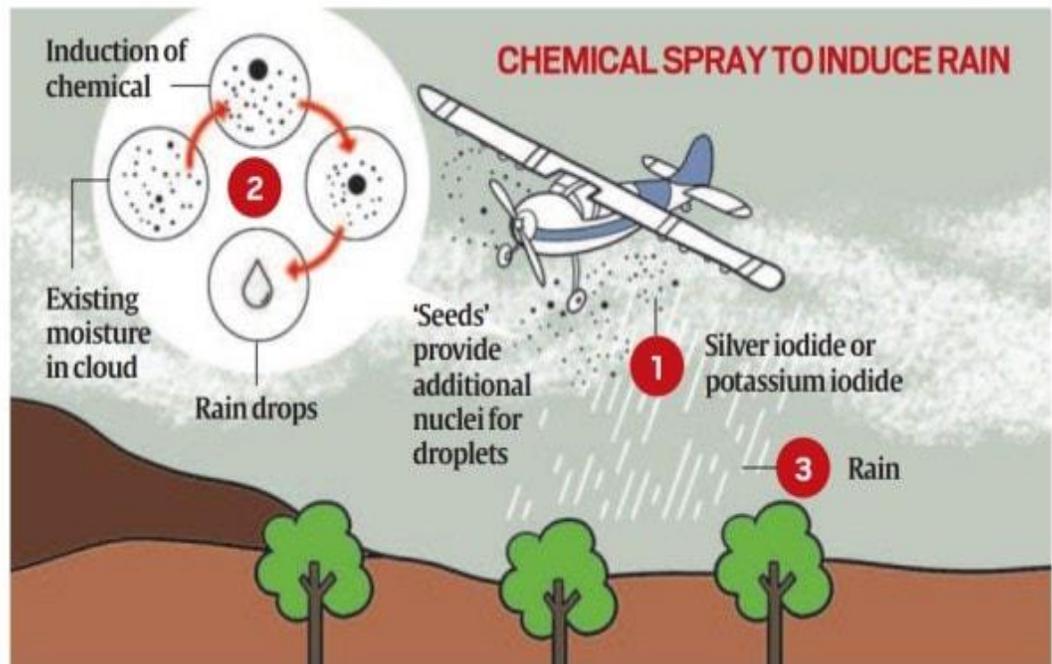
— The IUCN Red List status of the Golden snub-nosed monkey is **Endangered**.

► Cloud seeding

— Recently, Delhi made two attempts at creating artificial rain to help curb pollution levels.

— **Cloud seeding** is a technique “used to modify suitable clouds with ‘seed’ particles to increase rainfall.” Globally, it was first tested in the 1940s.

— It involves releasing salts into clouds to provide nuclei for water vapour to condense around and form droplets to increase the chances of rainfall.



— **In case of cloud seeding**, the seed particles are “cloud condensation nuclei (CCN), a particle on which water vapour condensates” or “ice nuclei particles, a particle on which water freezes”

— To induce rain artificially, clouds are usually injected with salts like silver iodide, potassium iodide, or sodium chloride, which is the ‘seed’. These salts are expected to provide additional nuclei around which more cloud droplets can form. They are dispersed into the cloud either using aircraft or through generators on the ground.

► Taal Volcano

— Recently, the Taal Volcano, located south of **Manila**, experienced a spate of eruptions.

— Taal is classified as a “complex” volcano by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).

— A complex volcano, also called a **compound volcano**, is defined as one that consists of a complex of two or more vents, or a volcano that has an associated volcanic dome, either in its crater or on its flanks.

— The Taal volcano does not rise from the ground as a distinct, singular dome but consists of multiple stratovolcanoes (volcanoes susceptible to explosive eruptions), conical hills and craters of all shapes and sizes.

► **New Ramsar site- Gogabil Lake**

— Gogabil Lake in Bihar becomes the latest addition to the list of Ramsar sites in India, taking the total tally to 94.

— It is an **oxbow wetland** situated between the Rivers Ganga (Ganges) and Mahananda.

— It was declared **Bihar's first 'Community Reserve'**.

► **State of Climate Action Report**

— Ahead of COP30, the State of Climate Action Report 2025 was published by **Change Lab**, as a joint effort of the Bezos Earth Fund, Climate Analytics, the Climate High-Level Champions, ClimateWorks Foundation and World Resources Institute.

— According to the report, not a single one of the 45 indicators assessed is on track to meet the 2030 targets needed to achieve the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to 1.5°C by the end of this decade.

— The report highlighted the key areas where acceleration is needed. The world needs to phase out coal more than ten times faster — equivalent to retiring nearly 360 average-sized coal-fired power plants each year and halting all projects in the pipeline.

— There is a need to reduce deforestation nine times faster. The current levels are far too high — roughly equivalent to permanently losing nearly 22 football (soccer) fields of forest every minute in 2024.

► **Global Forest Resources Assessment (GFRA) 2025**

— India has climbed to the ninth spot globally in total forest area and retained its third rank in annual forest area gain, according to the Global Forest Resources Assessment (GFRA) 2025, released by **the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in Bali**.

— India accounts for 2% of the world's forest areas, with a total of 72.74 million hectares, placing it just behind Indonesia.

— The world's total forest area stands at 4.14 billion hectares, covering 32 per cent of the planet's land. More than half (54 per cent) of this is concentrated in just five countries i.e. Russia, Brazil, Canada, the United States and China.

— According to the report, seven countries and areas – the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Gibraltar, Holy See, Monaco, Nauru, Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands, and Tokelau – reported having no forest at all.

► Blackbuck

— The **blackbuck (Antelope cervicapra)**, which had become “locally extinct” in Chhattisgarh for almost 50 years, today hosts 190 blackbucks in the Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary of Chhattisgarh.

— In 2018, the Chhattisgarh government embarked on an ambitious venture to revive the blackbuck population. As part of the 2021–2026 revival plan, the Chhattisgarh State Wildlife Board translocated 77 blackbucks – 50 from the National Zoological Park in New Delhi and 27 from the Kanan Pendari Zoological Garden, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh — to **Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary**.

— Blackbuck is a graceful, medium-sized antelope that inhabits open grasslands of India and Nepal. They are found only in the Indian subcontinent. Males have corkscrew-shaped horns and black-to-dark brown coats, while females are fawn-coloured.

— The animals are mainly seen in three broad clusters across India-northern, southern, and eastern regions. Due to conservation efforts, **IUCN** was able to relax the blackbuck’s status to ‘**Least Concern**’ in 2017.

— It is listed **under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**. Hunting and poaching blackbucks is a non-bailable offence and can invite a jail term of up to six years. The Bishnoi community worships it.

► Boma technique

— Recently, the Madhya Pradesh forest department has used the helicopter-driven boma technique to capture the key antelope species from Shajapur district and shifted them to the safe zone of the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary to save the standing crops.

— The **Boma capturing technique**, which is popular in **Africa**, involves luring animals into an enclosure by chasing them through a funnel-like fencing. The funnel tapers into an animal selection-cum-loading chute, supported with grass mats and green net to make it opaque for animals, which are herded into a large vehicle for their transport to another location.

► Cyclone Montha

— The IMD warned that a “Deep depression over the southeast Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a Cyclonic Storm” by October 27 and a Severe Cyclonic Storm by October 28. When it does hit the coast, it will be known as Cyclone Montha.

— The name “Montha”, suggested by Thailand, means “fragrant flower” or “beautiful flower.”

— As per the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), a **cyclone** is characterised by **inward spiralling winds** that rotate anticlockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.

— It is also called a hurricane or typhoon in other parts of the world. India often witnesses tropical cyclones, known as such because they develop in the regions between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer.

MAINS VALUE ADDITION

Recently, UNDP India has published an in-depth story on how women in Odisha are using poetry, storytelling, and community leadership as tools for climate resilience and awareness. It entails the story of local “climate champions” like Kanchan Jena from Balasore district who used poetry in local form for climate storytelling. She is part of an initiative called Enhancing Climate Resilience of India’s Coastal Communities (ECRICC) which is helping communities turn hardship into strength. These stories can be used as value addition in your Mains answer on the role of women, local communities, and new voices in the fight against climate change.

“We went to the seashore,

Sorrow filled our hearts

Seeing the waste scattered around,

Which never perishes.

The sea is our ornament,

So, why are you degrading it?

From it we are securing our livelihoods,

By selling the fish it bestows.” – Kanchan Jena

(Source: UNDP India)

PLACES IN NEWS

➤ Zehanpora in Baramulla – Buddhist site in Kashmir

— Recently, the Archaeologists in Jammu and Kashmir have uncovered a 2,000-year-old Buddhist complex in the village of Zehanpora, Baramulla District.

— What set the discovery in motion was an archival photograph preserved in a French museum, showing three ancient stupas standing in Baramulla. The image hinted that the unassuming mounds at Zehanpora might conceal the remains of a significant Buddhist site.

— It was during the Kushan period that the significance of Kashmir in Buddhist history became noticeable, precisely the era to which the Zehanpora remains are dated.

➤ Magh Mela

— Northern Railway (NR) has issued a travel advisory due to the ongoing Magh Mela in Prayagraj.

— The Magh Mela, one of the big religious events after Mahakumbh, is an annual pilgrimage in Prayagraj where devotees bathe at the Sangam on auspicious dates. It is held every year during the Hindu month of Magh, while the Maha Kumbh is held once every 12 years.

► Punjab's 3 new 'Holy Cities'

— The Punjab government has granted the "Holy City" status to **Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, and Talwandi Sabo** through a recent official notification.

— These three cities are the host of Sikh Takhts: the **Akal Takht (Amritsar), Takht Keshgarh Sahib (Anandpur Sahib), and Takht Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo)**. Akal Takht, considered the supreme among the five, was set up in 1606 by Guru Hargobind.

— "Takht" in Persian means an imperial throne. There are **five takhts in Sikhism**. The other two takhts are the Takht Patna Sahib in Bihar, and the Takht Hazur Sahib in Nanded, Maharashtra.

— The new Holy City status will lead to a ban on the sale of liquor, tobacco and cigarettes, and meat within the cities. Additional facilities, such as mini buses and e-rickshaws, will be provided for devotees arriving in the cities to boost religious tourism.

► Sirpur archaeological site

— Chhattisgarh is pushing for a UNESCO World Heritage tag for the 5th-century archaeological site, Sirpur.

— **Sirpur in Mahasamund district** is a 5th–12th Century archaeological site with 34 Hindu, Jain and Buddhist monuments on the banks of the Mahanadi.

— Sirpur, also known as Shripur and Sripura, is a multi-religious urban centre first discovered in 1882 by Alexander Cunningham, a British army engineer who became the first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1871.

— Sirpur was the flourishing capital of **Dakshina Kosala** under the Panduvanshi and later Somavamshi kings.

— The **Lakshmana Temple** (dedicated to Vishnu), one of India's finest brick temples, was built around the 7th Century. The **Surang Tila complex** has multiple shrines in the panchayatana style (one main shrine surrounded by four subsidiary ones).

— A UNESCO tag enhances a site's international recognition, boosting its tourism and revenue.

► Harappan site of Rakhigarhi

— The Central Government has allocated Rs 500 crore in the Union Budget for the development of Rakhigarhi, a site of the ancient Harappan civilisation, with an aim of elevating it "into a global landmark of historical and cultural importance".

— Rakhigarhi is the largest Harappan site in the Indian Subcontinent. It is situated in the Hisar district of Haryana and is located in the Ghaggar-Hakra river plain.

— The site was first excavated by **Amarendra Nath of ASI**. Earlier Mohenjodaro (Pakistan) was considered to be the largest Harappan site until Prof. Vasanth Shinde and his team started fresh excavations at Rakhigarhi.

► Sokoto state, Nigeria

— The United States carried out a strike against Islamic State (IS) militants in northwest Nigeria at the request of Nigeria's government, claiming the group had been targeting Christians in the region. The strike was carried out in Sokoto state.

— The Nigerian government has long been fighting an array of jihadist groups, including Boko Haram and IS-linked factions, but largely in the north-east. However, in recent years, a smaller group – known locally as **Lakurawa** – has sought to establish a base in north-western Sokoto state.

— Note that Nigeria is officially a secular country. It consists of Muslims (53%), Christians (45%), and a small population that practices African traditional religions.



► Somaliland

— Israel became the first country to formally recognise the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland as an independent and sovereign state on December 26, drawing swift condemnation from Somalia and its neighbours.

— The present-day republic claims itself the legal successor of the erstwhile British Somaliland or the Somaliland Protectorate. It comprised self-ruled sultanates under British protectorate between 1884 and 1920 before coming under the Crown's jurisdiction. It was formally established as a British colony in 1920.



— British Somaliland gained independence and became the State of Somaliland, which existed for five days between June 26 and July 1, 1960. The state then voluntarily merged with the former Trust Territory of Somaliland, its Italian-administered neighbour, to form the Somali Republic (1960-69).

— This nation collapsed after a military coup, and the Somali Democratic Republic formed, with General Siad Barre as the leader. The present-day Somaliland came under Somali National Movement (SNM)'s control and was formally established in 1991.

► Thiruparankundram hill, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

— On December 1, Madras High Court ordered temple authorities to light the ceremonial “Karthigai Deepam” lamp at the **Deepathoon** — a stone pillar located on the lower peak of Thirupparankundram Hill — near but not within the Sulthan Sikkandar Avulia Dargah premises.

— For centuries, Thiruparankundram hill has been regarded as a centre of religious coexistence and communal harmony, with it housing the historic Subramaniya Swamy Temple, the Kasi Viswanathar Temple, as well as the Sikkander Badusha Dargah — a 17th-century mosque built long after the temples came into existence.

— Thiruparankundram was at the centre of controversy earlier this year, after some Muslim groups demanded that the hill be renamed Sikkandar Hill.

► Seva Teerth

— The new complex housing the Prime Minister's Office will be called 'Seva Teerth. The new PMO, constructed as a part of the government's Central Vista redevelopment project, is nearing completion and the PMO is likely to shift from South Block to the new complex soon.

— The complex, named 'Seva Teerth', comprises three buildings for the PMO, the Cabinet Secretariat and the National Security Council Secretariat.

► Shyok Tunnel

— Recently, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the Shyok Tunnel on the Durbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DS-DBO) Road that runs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

— Shyok Tunnel is a 920-metre cut-and-cover tunnel on the 255 km long DS-DBO road, which is the only operational road connecting Durbuk to the Depsang Plains and DBO in the north. DBO hosts one of the world's highest operational airfields, which is a key strategic air infrastructure for India.



— The Shyok Tunnel is of key strategic significance as it would provide all-weather connectivity to areas close to the LAC; it would particularly help in the quick mobilisation and redeployment of troops when needed.

— The DS-DBO road is one of the two roads that is aimed at connecting the lower region of eastern Ladakh to DBO. The Shyok tunnel has been built on this road.

► **Venkateswara Swamy temple in Kasibugga, Andhra Pradesh**

— A stampede took place at the Venkateswara Swamy temple in Kasibugga, Srikakulam district, leaving at least 9 people, including two children.

— The Kasibugga temple sees around 10-15,000 devotees every Saturday, owing to its reputation as “**Chinna Tirupati**” (small Tirupati), a temple official said. The temple is modelled after the Tirumala Sri Venkateswara Temple.

— Sources said that a landlord named **Hari Mukunda Panda**, who resides in Kasibugga, had a bitter experience several years ago at the Tirumala temple, when he was unable to perform darshan because he fell ill and security officials removed him from the queue, instructing him to visit the hospital.

— He was able to go inside the next day, but felt that after waiting for eight-nine hours, the darshan of only a few seconds was disappointing. “He vowed to build a temple dedicated to Tirumala Sri Venkateswara Temple.”

MAINS VALUE ADDITION

NCRB data on stampede: According to the NCRB’s report titled ‘*Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India*,’ the number of deaths caused by stampedes spanning from 2000 to 2022 revealed that a total of 3,074 lives had been lost due to stampedes in India. Nearly 4,000 stampede events have been recorded over the last three decades.

► Strait of Hormuz

— Iran on Saturday (15th November) confirmed seizure of a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker as it traveled through the narrow Strait of Hormuz over violations, including carrying an illegal consignment, state media reported.

— A strait is a **narrow water body connecting two larger bodies of water**. The two water bodies that the Strait of Hormuz connects are the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, which further flows out into the Arabian Sea.



— The Strait is in the territorial waters of Iran and Oman, and accounts for a big bulk of the world’s oil trade.

► Lucknow- Creative city of gastronomy

— UNESCO has declared Lucknow a “Creative City of Gastronomy” at the 43rd session of its General Conference in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

— The designation places Lucknow among 70 gastronomy cities worldwide and makes it the second Indian city to win the title after Hyderabad.

— The state’s Directorate of Tourism submitted Lucknow’s nomination to the Ministry of Culture on January 31, 2025, and the Government of India selected the city as the country’s official entry on March 3, 2025.

► Chaman Border

— The Chaman border crossing between **Pakistan and Afghanistan** has partially reopened following a ceasefire between the two countries.

— The Chaman border was sealed when the Pakistan and Afghanistan conflict started, leaving nearly 400 containers carrying goods from the Karachi port stranded at the border.

► Iceland

— Iceland, one of the few places in the world to be free of mosquitoes, recorded its first sighting of the insect. Iceland is currently warming at four times the rate of the rest of the northern hemisphere. This has led to unprecedented glacier melt and frequent heatwaves.

— **Mosquitoes**, like all arthropods, are cold-blooded creatures and cannot regulate their body temperature in response to the surrounding environment. As a result, temperature is one of the biggest drivers of mosquito activity, and most of their species thrive in warmer weather.

— That is why global warming has enabled the insect to proliferate. Several studies have shown that with rising temperatures, mosquitoes can invade and thrive in habitats which once represented hostile environments.

— **Only female mosquitoes** are known to bite humans to get a “blood meal” — they extract proteins from our blood to produce their eggs. Higher temperatures result in a faster rate of blood meal digestion, making mosquitoes hungrier and leading to more bites.

— Note that male mosquitoes usually consume plant nectar, sweet plant secretions, and fruit juices.

► Bagh-e-Gul Dawood

— Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has officially opened Kashmir’s latest tourist spot – the **Bagh-e-Gul Dawood– Kashmir’s first exclusive chrysanthemum garden** – at Cheshma Shahi.

— Cradled between the bluish Zabarwan mountains and the shimmering Dal Lake, the terraced Bagh-e-Gul Dawood – or Chrysanthemum Garden – stands next to Srinagar’s other main attraction, the Tulip Garden.

PERSONS IN NEWS

► Khaleda Zia

— Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh’s first woman Prime Minister, passed away on December 30. She was the chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

— Zia served as Bangladesh’s prime minister three times — 1991-96, briefly in 1996, and again from 2001-06 — and is widely remembered for expanding access to education and initiating key economic and administrative reforms.

— After the fall of military rule, elections in February 1991 brought the BNP to power, and Zia became the country’s first woman Prime Minister. Her government restored the parliamentary system through the 12th Constitutional amendment.

► Kaamya Karthikeyan

— Kaamya Karthikeyan, the daughter of an Indian Navy officer, has etched her name in the record books by becoming the youngest Indian and the second-youngest woman in the world to ski to the South Pole.

— The 18-year-old reached the South Pole on December 27 after completing a challenging 115 km trek on foot.

— Enduring temperatures that dropped to -30°C and battling gale-force winds, Karthikeyan hauled a sledge carrying all her expedition supplies to successfully finish the journey.

► Barham Salih

— The United Nations General Assembly has approved former Iraqi President Barham Salih as the next head of the **U.N. refugee agency**, its first from the Middle East since the late 1970s.

— Salih, 65, will begin a five-year term as the chief of one of the major UN agencies, the UN High Commission for Refugees, in January.

— Formally known as the **Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees**, UNHCR was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1950 in the aftermath of the Second World War to help the millions of people who had lost their homes. It is guided by and acts as the guardian of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

— Under the **1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees** and the subsequent 1967 Protocol, the word refugee pertains to any person who is outside their country of origin and unable or unwilling to return owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

— Notably, **India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention or the 1967 Protocol**. Nor does India have a refugee policy or a refugee law of its own.

► Raj Kumar Goyal

— Former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Raj Kumar Goyal was sworn in as **Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)** in the Central Information Commission by President Droupadi Murmu.

— The Central Information Commission is headed by the CIC and can have a maximum of 10 Information Commissioners. At present, Anandi Ramalingam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari are the Information Commissioners.

► Ram Vanji Sutar

— Internationally **renowned sculptor Ram V Sutar** passed away on 18th December, leaving behind a distinguished body of work, from the **Statue of Unity** to Mahatma Gandhi's statue at Parliament. He was 100.

— Sutar designed the Statue of Unity in Gujarat—the world’s tallest statue at 182 metres—and also won acclaim for his Mahatma Gandhi bust, which was replicated and sent to 450 cities across India and outside.

— Among his other notable works are the 45-foot-tall Chambal monument, the seated Mahatma Gandhi statue installed outside the old Parliament building in New Delhi, and its larger replica at the Vidhana Soudha in Karnataka. He also created the 108-foot-tall Kempe Gowda statue at Bengaluru airport.

— Sutar was awarded Padma Shri in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan in 2016. In October 2018, he was honoured with the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony, and in November 2025, he was conferred with the Maharashtra Bhushan, the state’s highest civilian honour, in recognition of his lifetime of artistic achievement.

➤ **Guru Tegh Bahadur**

— There is some confusion regarding the date of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom. This year the 350th anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur-ji’s martyrdom is observed on **November 25**.

— Born on April 1, 1621, at Guru Ke Mehal, Amritsar, Tegh Bahadur was the youngest child of Guru Hargobind and the ninth Sikh guru. He was beheaded on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1675, in Delhi.

— Guru Tegh Bahadur founded the City Anandpur Sahib, which was geographically well-suited to defend against a big army. Tegh Bahadur earlier name was Teyag Mal. His father and the sixth Guru of Sikhs, Guru Hargobind Sahib (1595-1644), changed the name to Teg Bahadur. He got his name from his fighting and sword skills on the battlefield.

➤ **Fatima Bosch**

— The Miss Universe 2025 pageant concluded with Miss Mexico, **Fatima Bosch**, taking home the crown. Victoria Kjær Theilvig of Denmark, the 73rd Miss Universe, was crowned the winner at the pageant finale.

— Miss India Manika Vishwakarma, unfortunately, made it only to the Top 30.

— With more than 70 years of legacy, the Miss Universe Organisation, founded in 1952, is a platform for women around the world that promotes leadership, education, social impact, diversity, and personal development among its contestants and titleholders.

— The host country for next year has been announced. **Puerto Rico** is all set to host the 75th silver jubilee edition of the pageant. This will be their third time hosting the Miss Universe pageant.

➤ **Vinod Kumar Shukla**

— The recipient of the 59th Jnanpith Award 2024, Vinod Kumar Shukla dies at 88.

— The Jnanpith Award is the highest literary honour in India given to writers who have excelled in literature in different Indian languages.

— Shukla becomes the **first person from Chhattisgarh** state who was awarded this honour. His first booklet of poetry ‘Lagbhag Jai Hind’ was published in 1971. His major novels include ‘Naukar Ki Kameez’. ‘Deewar Mein Ek Khidki Rahti Thi’ and ‘Khilega To Dekhenge’.

➤ **1066th Jayanthi celebrations of Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeshwara Shivayogi Mahaswamiji**

— The President Droupadi Murmu, inaugurated the 1066th Jayanthi celebrations of **Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeshwara Shivayogi Mahaswamiji** at Malavalli, Mandya district, Karnataka

— According to Sutturmath’s website, “Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeshwara Shivayogi Mahaswamiji was a great saint of the 10th century A D. He came into fame while restoring peace between two warring kings, **Rachamalla IV of Gangas of Talakadu** and **Rajaraja Chola I of the Chola dynasty**.”

— “Adi Jagadguru Shivayogi Swamiji advised both kings to abandon war and choose peace. As a result, both the kings reached out to each other to extend a hand of friendship.”

— “After this incident, King Rajaraja Chola requested Shivayogi Swamiji to set up a Math to celebrate this event. On his request, Adi Jagadguru Shivayogiji established the Math on the banks of the River Kapila at Suttur, near Nanjangud Taluk of the Mysuru district.”

➤ **Nnena Kalu**

— Artist Nnena Kalu has become the first artist with a learning disability to win the acclaimed Turner Prize.

— Kalu, who is autistic with limited verbal communication, won the prize for her cocoon-like sculptures, which she makes by twisting, swirling and knotting found fabric and VHS tape.

— Established in **1984** and named after English painter JMW Turner, the Turner Prize is an annual recognition awarded to a British artist — an artist working primarily in Britain or an artist born in Britain working globally.

➤ **Prof Kishore Paknikar**

— Renowned scientist Dr Kishore M Paknikar, former Director of the Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, and Distinguished Visiting Professor at IIT Bombay, has been selected as one of the first recipients of the **Prime Minister Professorship** instituted by the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), Government of India.

— He will be hosted at COEP Technological University, Pune, for a period of five years .

— The **Prime Minister Professorship** is a new national initiative aimed at strengthening India’s research ecosystem by placing highly experienced scientists in universities that have strong teaching foundations but need sustained research leadership.

— The Prime Minister Professorship will provide a fellowship of Rs. 2,50,000/- per month, along with a research grant of Rs. 24,00,000/ per annum and an overhead of Rs. 1,00,000/- per annum, for a duration of five years.

► Dr Tessy Thomas

— Renowned aerospace engineer who helped shape the country's strategic missile programme, Dr Tessy Thomas, was honoured with the eighth Paulos Mar Gregorios Award 2025. The award recognises her "outstanding contribution in women empowerment, space and missile technology".

— The award was instituted in the memory of Paulos Mar Gregorios, the scholar, theologian and former President of the World Council of Churches.

► Siddhi Jain

— Siddhi Jain became the first female cadet to be awarded the President's Medal for overall order of merit. She was selected for the 149th course of the National Defence Academy (NDA) as part of the second batch of female cadets.

— Women's entry into the NDA became possible after an interim order passed by the Supreme Court in August 2021 while hearing a plea seeking directions to allow eligible women to appear for the NDA and Indian Naval Academy examinations conducted by the UPSC.

► CEC Gyanesh Kumar

— **Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar** took over as the 2026 chair of International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (**International IDEA**), a Sweden-based intergovernmental organisation. India assumed the annual Chairship from the 2025 Chair, Switzerland

— International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) with a mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide. India has been a member since 1995. The organisation includes 35 democratic countries and two observer nations.

► Donald Trump

— US President Donald Trump has been given the **inaugural FIFA peace prize** at the 2026 World Cup draw in Washington.

— FIFA says the new peace prize is meant for "individuals who help unite people in peace through commitment and special actions". However, the details of the selection process have not been made public.

► Saalumarada Thimmakka

— Noted environmentalist and Padma awardee Saalumarada Thimmakka passed away at the age of 114 on 14th November.

— Thimmakka, renowned as the '**Tree Woman of India**' who planted thousands of trees around her village in south Karnataka, is set to have a funeral with full state honours on Saturday afternoon at her village.

— She was the recipient of many awards, including the **Padma Shri award in 2019** for her afforestation efforts, the Nadoja Award, the Karnataka Kalpavalli Award, and the Godfrey Phillip Award.

► Prof Vaidyeswaran Rajaraman

— Prof Vaidyeswaran Rajaraman, who is credited with establishing the first professional course in computer science in India at IIT Kanpur in 1965, dies at the age of 92.

— A Bhatnagar Prize winner, Rajaraman was also honoured with a Padma Bhushan in 1998, besides several other awards.

► James Watson

— American molecular biologist James Dewey Watson, most noted for his discovery of the **structure of DNA**, has died at the age of 97.

— Watson and his co-author **Francis Crick**, in a 1953 academic paper in Nature, proposed the double helix structure of the DNA molecule.

— Nine years later, Watson, Crick, and Maurice Wilkins were awarded the **Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine** "for their discoveries concerning the molecular structure of nucleic acids and its significance for information transfer in living material".

► Samia Suluhu Hassan

— Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan won the country's disputed election with more than 97% of the vote.

— Her two main opponents had both been prevented from running, leaving her virtually unopposed.

► Zohran Mamdani

— Zohran Mamdani won the **New York City's Mayor election** to become the first Muslim and first South Asian mayor in the USA.

— Mamdani was born in Kampala, Uganda, to renowned academic Mahmood Mamdani, a Ugandan scholar of Indian heritage, and acclaimed filmmaker Mira Nair, best known for 'Monsoon Wedding' and 'The Namesake'.

► Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

— Spiritual leader **Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar** has been honoured with the 2025 World Leader for Peace and Security Award by the Boston Global Forum (BGF) and the AI World Society (AIWS) for his contributions to peace-building, reconciliation and humanitarian service.

— The award marks the 10th anniversary of the World Leader for Peace and Security Award (2015-2025), which celebrates world leaders who embody moral courage, visionary governance and compassion in advancing global peace and ethical progress.

► Paul Biya

— Cameroon's top court has confirmed President Paul Biya, the **world's oldest head of state**, as the winner of the 12 October election.

— The 92-year-old leader has ruled the central African country since 1982. The Constitutional Council said Biya received 53.66 per cent of the vote.

► Dr Patrick Herminie

— Vice-President C P Radhakrishnan attended the swearing-in ceremony of the **President of Seychelles**, Dr Patrick Herminie, in Victoria, Seychelles, on 26th October on behalf of India.

— Herminie represents the United Seychelles party, which led the country for four decades before it lost power in 2020. It was the governing party from 1977 to 2020.

► Queen Mother Sirikit

— **Thailand's Queen Mother Sirikit**, who supervised royal projects to help the rural poor, preserve traditional craft-making and protect the environment, died on 24th October. She was 93.

— Sirikit Kitiyakara was born into a rich, aristocratic family in Bangkok on Aug. 12, 1932, the year absolute monarchy was replaced by a constitutional system. Both of her parents were related to earlier kings of the current Chakri dynasty.

— Sometimes dubbed the "Green Queen," she also set up wildlife breeding centres, "open zoos," and hatcheries to save endangered sea turtles.

► Sunil Amrith

— **Historian Sunil Amrith** has been named the winner of the 2025 British Academy Book Prize for *The Burning Earth: An Environmental History of the Last 500 Years*, a panoramic account of how human ambition has transformed the planet, and how the planet, in turn, has shaped human history.

— Amrith has become the **13th winner** of the British Academy’s non-fiction book prize which has been awarded annually since 2013. It recognises work that “searches for truth and reason in difficult places, and shines a light on the connections and divisions that shape cultural identity worldwide.”

► **Sanae Takaichi**

— Sanae Takaichi has been **elected Japan’s prime minister** by its parliament, making her the **first woman to hold the office**.

— Takaichi will replace Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, ending a three-month political vacuum and wrangling since the Liberal Democratic Party’s disastrous election loss in July.

— Takaichi is among the Japanese politicians who have stonewalled measures for women’s advancement. Takaichi supports the imperial family’s male-only succession and opposes same-sex marriage and allowing separate surnames for married couples.

► **Professor Eknath Vasant Chitnis**

— Veteran **space scientist Professor Eknath Vasant Chitnis** passed away in Pune on Wednesday (22nd October). He was 100.

— Among the pioneers of the country’s space programme, Chitnis had played a key role in establishing the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro).

— His most significant contribution came through the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) in 1975-76, which he directed. This project conducted educational programmes in 2,400 villages across six states using Nasa’s ATS-6 satellite, and laid the groundwork for the digital revolution.

SPORTS

► **FIH Junior World Cup**

— Germany beats Spain to win the FIH Junior World Cup 2025. This is their eighth title win. The events were held in Chennai and Madurai.

— The Indian Hockey team won the Bronze medal after defeating Argentina.

► **FIH Hockey Women’s Junior World Cup**

— The Netherlands sealed their third consecutive world title at the FIH Hockey Women’s Junior World Cup, triumphing in Santiago, Chile, after defeating Argentina in the final, to reaffirm their historical dominance in the category.

— The Dutch side reached a record sixth world title and completed a third consecutive crown following their triumphs in 2022, 2023, and now 2025.

— Belgium secure the bronze medal, following a convincing 5-1 victory over China in the third-place play-off.

► Squash World Cup

— India scripted history, clinching its maiden Squash World Cup title to become the first Asian country to achieve the feat after overwhelming Hong Kong 3-0 in the summit clash.

— The historic win at the Express Avenue Mall here marked an improvement on India's previous best finish of a bronze medal at the 2023 edition.

— The triumph also made India only the fourth country after Australia, England, and Egypt to win the Squash World Cup title.

► BWF World Tour Finals

— South Korea's **An Seyoung** won the **BWF World Tour Finals** title, winning her 11th international title of 2025. She defeated **Wang Zhiyi** in Hangzhou, People's Republic of China.

— She became the first badminton player to earn over USD 1 million in prize money in a season. She clinched the BWF World Tour Finals title which had a reward of USD 240,000, that took her total prize money for the year to US \$ 1,003,175.

— France's Christo Popov beat world champion Shi Yuqi 21-19 21-9 to win the men's title and became the first French player to win the year-ending championships.

► Snicko Technology

—During the Ashes test between England and Australia, Snickometer technology, commonly known as 'Snicko', has been the point of controversy.

— The Snickometer is a decision-making technology system used to determine whether a batter has hit the ball during a video review.

— The technology shows replays in frame-by-frame pictures with a waveform created to display if there has been contact between bat and ball.

► World Rapid Championship

— The World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025 is taking place in Doha, Qatar, from December 26 to 30. The five-day event, which started with the Rapid Championship, ran for the first three days till December 28 and is followed by the Blitz Championship for the last two days on December 29 and 30.

— The 2025 FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship is a 13-round Swiss tournament that crowns this year's World Rapid Chess Champion.

— Magnus Carlsen won the World Rapid Championship 2025, making his sixth World Rapid Championship title. GM Vladislav Artemiev won the Silver medal. India's Arjun Erigaisi claimed a bronze medal at the FIDE World Rapid Championship in Doha, finishing on 9.5 points.

— Arjun thus became the only male player from India to end up with a podium finish at a World Rapid Championship since five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand.

— In the women's section, the veteran Koneru Humpy also won a bronze medal. Aleksandra Goryachkina defeated Zhu Jiner to win her maiden world rapid championship.

► Anish Bhanwala

— Anish Bhanwala became the **first Indian shooter to ever win a medal in the men's 25m rapid fire event** at the World Championships with a silver in the final at Cairo, Egypt.

— India has sent a 40-member squad to Cairo for the ongoing World Championships. The contingent includes Paris 2024 Olympic medallists Manu Bhaker and Swapnil Kusale.

► ISSF World Championship Rifle/Pistol 2025

— At the ISSF World Championships in Cairo, Egypt, the Indian shooters bagged four medals – one gold, one silver and two bronze – on the opening day of the competition.

— Army shooter **Ravinder Singh** won the gold in men's 50m pistol – a non-Olympic **shooting** event – while also helping India win the team silver in the event.

— In the women's 10m air rifle – an Olympic event – Olympian **Elavenil Valarivan** also picked up two medals by striking bronze in both the individual and team categories.

— Elavenil Valarivan also became **only the third Indian shooter** after Anjum Moudgil (silver in 2018) and Mehuli Ghosh (bronze in 2023) to win an individual medal in the women's 10m air rifle event at the World Championships.

► 2030 Commonwealth Games

— Ahmedabad has been formally confirmed as the venue of the 2030 Commonwealth Games. India last hosted the CWG in 2010 in Delhi.

— India is likely to push for the inclusion of yoga as a medal sport at the centenary edition.

► 100 Years of Indian Hockey

— To mark the centenary celebrations of Indian hockey on November 7, Hockey India organised a major event at the Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium in New Delhi, with parallel events taking place across more than 550 districts in India.

1885: The first hockey club was formed in Calcutta. Ten years on, the Bengal capital was home to India's first tournament, the Beighton Cup. Bombay soon followed suit with the Aga Khan tournament. The two competitions kick-started competitive hockey in India

1903: Punjab joins the party. The sport had existed in the state for years in the form of Khido Khundi, in which players hit a cotton ball with a curved wooden stick. Army units stationed in Punjab made hockey popular and by 1903, it was included in the Punjab University Sports Tournament

1907: A B Rosser, an Anglo-Indian from Bengal, led the first attempt to form a national federation to synchronise the growth of hockey in India, but in vain. Another attempt was made in 1920 by Charles Newham, who had founded the Punjab Hockey Federation, but that too failed

1925: In November 1924, the chief of the now-defunct Western India Hockey Association, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Luard, addressed all hockey associations across the country and invited them for a meeting in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. This meeting was held on November 7, 1925. This very meeting led to the official foundation of the Indian Hockey Federation, which paved the way for the sport's growth

— On November 7, 1925, hockey got a formal structure in India with the creation of the national federation. In 2009, it was replaced by **Hockey India**. It is the official governing body entrusted with overseeing all hockey-related activities—both men’s and women’s—across the country.

— It is affiliated with the International Hockey Federation (FIH), the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), and the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF).

— The Indian Hockey team has won **13 Olympic medals**, including 8 gold, 1 silver, and 4 bronze.

► **FIDE World Cup 2025**

— The FIDE World Cup 2025 took place in Goa, India, from October 30 to November 27.

— Uzbekistan’s **Javokhir Sindarov** became the youngest player to win the Chess World Cup after he beat China’s Wei Yi in the final’s tiebreak.

— This was the first time in 25 years that India hosted the biennial event and record Indian players were Indian.

— The total prize money fund for the tournament is \$2 million. The winner will get \$120,000. The runners-up will receive \$85,000. The 3rd placed players get \$60,000 while \$50,000 has been reserved for the player that finishes fourth.

— The FIDE World Cup is the event that offers the top three finishers direct qualification for the 2026 Candidates Tournament, which determines the challenger for the World Chess Championship.

► **Kabaddi World Cup 2025**

— The **Indian women’s kabaddi team** won the **Women’s Kabaddi World Cup** after defeating Chinese Taipei 35–28 in the final in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

— This was the Indian women’s kabaddi team’s second World Cup crown on the trot, having also won the inaugural edition hosted in Patna, Bihar, back in 2012.

— This was the second edition of the Women’s Kabaddi World Cup which was held after a gap of 13 years. In the inaugural edition, the Indian women’s team defeated the Iran team.

► **Blind T20 women’s World Cup**

— India won the **inaugural Blind Women’s T20 World Cup** after defeating Nepal by seven wickets in the final played at the P Sara Oval in Colombo.

— After electing to field, India restricted Nepal to 114 for 5. In response, India chased down the target in 12.1 overs, with Khula Sharir unbeaten on 44 off 27 balls.

— India and Sri Lanka co-hosted the event, with fixtures in Delhi, Bengaluru, and Colombo.

► Deaflympics 2025

— Deaflympics 2025 was held in **Tokyo, Japan**, from November 15 to 26. This was the 25th Summer Deaflympics, 101 years after the inaugural edition held in Paris in 1924.

— India won **20 medals** – nine gold, seven silver, and four bronze – at Deaflympics 2025. Indian shooters accounted for 16 medals. India finished at **rank 6th**.

► ICC Women's World Cup final

— India created history as they defeated South Africa by 52 runs in the Women's World Cup final at Navi Mumbai and clinched their maiden ICC Trophy.

— This is the 13th edition of the Women's World Cup, and so far Australia have won seven times, England four times, and New Zealand and India have lifted the trophy once.

— According to the official site of the Olympics, **the Women's ODI Cricket World Cup** was first played in 1973, two years before the inaugural men's World Cup, the oldest global event in the sport.

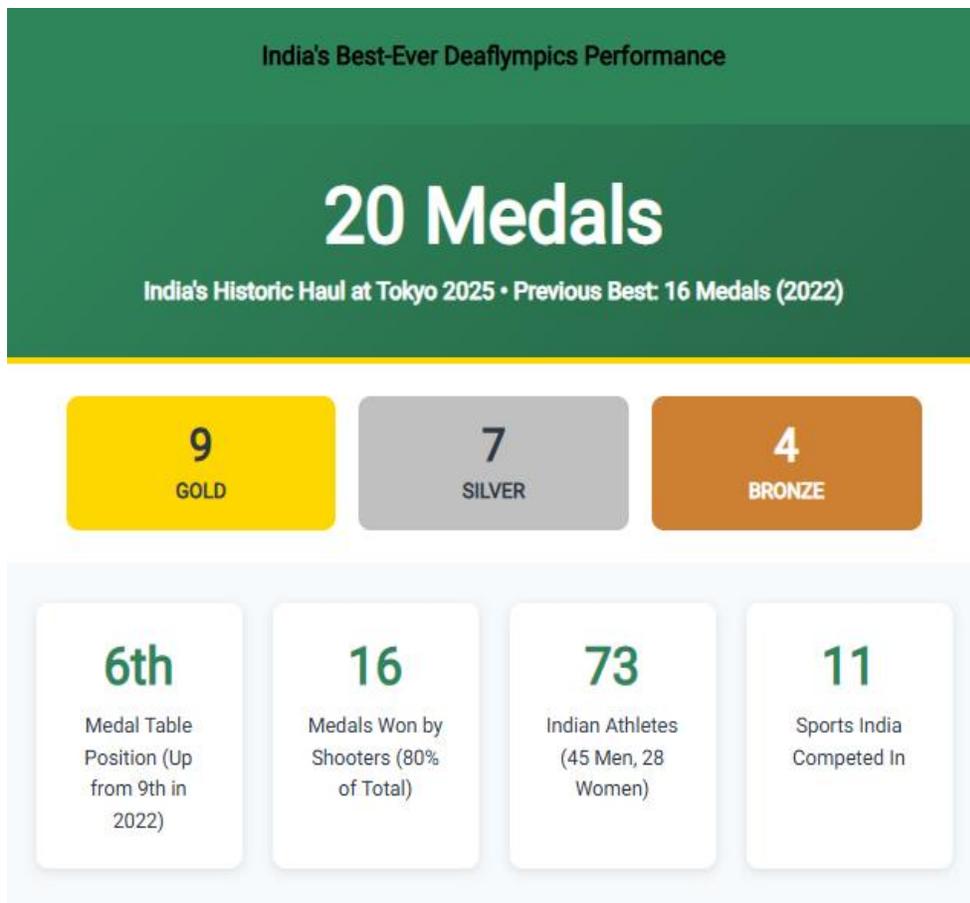
— The **Women's Cricket World Cup** 1973 was contested by seven teams with teams battling for 60 overs – not 50 – and a league table deciding the winners instead of a knock-out competition.

— India hosted and made their debut in the 1978 tournament, and they were joined by Australia, England and New Zealand.

► Australian Open Super 500

— Lakshya Sen ended a long drought of titles, winning the Super 500 Australian Open at Sydney, beating Japanese Yushi Tanaka 21-15, 21-11.

— This is Sen's third Super 500 title, and he converted his second final of the year, after losing Hong Kong.



► World Boxing Cup Finals

— The Indian boxing contingent concluded the **World Boxing Cup Finals** with a total of 20 medals (nine gold, six silver, and five bronze). This is the first time that India has won in all weight categories in a global championship of the sport.

— The women's team finished with **seven gold, one silver, and two bronze medals**, while the men's team finished with **two gold, five silver, and three bronze medals**.

— The World Boxing Cup Finals is a tournament incorporated for the first time in the calendar of the new international body of the sport that allows eight boxers to compete in every category, starting from the quarter-finals.

FULL LIST OF INDIAN MEDALLISTS:

Gold: Minakshi Hooda (women's 48 kg), Nikhat Zareen (women's 51 kg), Preeti Pawar (women's 54 kg), Jaismine (women's 57 kg), Parveen Hooda (women's 60 kg), Arundhati Chaudary (women's 70 kg), Nupur (women's 80+ kg), Sachin Siwach (men's 60 kg), Hitesh Gulia (men's 70 kg)

Silver: Pooja Rani (women's 80 kg), Jadumani Singh (men's 50 kg), Pawan Bartwal (men's 55 kg), Abhinash Jamwal (men's 65 kg), Ankush (men's 80 kg), Narender Berwal (men's 90+ kg)

Bronze: Sumit (men's 75 kg), Jugnoo (men's 85 kg), Naveen Kumar (men's 90 kg), Saweety Boora (women's 75 kg), Neeraj Phogat (women's 65 kg)

► World Kungfu Championships

— The World Kungfu Championships, previously known as the World Traditional Wushu Championships, were held from October 14 to 20 in Emeishan, China.

— It is hosted by the **International Wushu Federation (IWUF)** for the Chinese martial art of wushu, or kung fu. This year's competition saw participants from 54 countries.

— **Purnima Linda**, from Jharkhand's Adivasi Oraon tribe in Ranchi's Kanke village, clinched two bronze medals at the competition held in China's Emeishan this year.

► U23 World wrestling championships

— Indian wrestler **Sujeet Kalkal** was crowned the U-23 World Champion in the 65 kg category, after he defeated Uzbekistan's Umidjon Jalolov.

— It's only the third time an Indian male wrestler has won a gold medal at this level – only Aman Sehrawat (2022) and Chirag Chikkara (2024) have done this before, both in the 57kg category.

— In the Championship, India finished with nine medals – one gold, two silvers and six bronze – that concluded in Novi Sad, Serbia on 27th October, 2025.

— In the women's 59kg category, Sarika won the Silver medal and Hansika Lamba also won the Silver in women's 53kg.

AWARDS

► Booker Prize 2025

— **David Szalay** has been named the winner of the 2025 Booker Prize for his novel **Flesh**.

— *Flesh*, Szalay's sixth work of fiction, is a taut, time-spanning novel that moves from a Hungarian housing estate to London's gilded enclaves. Written in his trademark spare prose, it dissects detachment and longing with surgical precision. *Flesh* focusses on an emotionally detached man who is unravelled by a series of events beyond his grasp.

Booker Prize 2025 Winner			
David Szalay <i>Flesh</i>			
HERITAGE First Hungarian-British Booker Winner	BORN Canada, Grew up in London	CURRENTLY LIVES Vienna, Austria	PUBLISHED WORKS 6 Novels, BBC Radio Dramas
PREVIOUS RECOGNITION Shortlisted 2016, Gordon Burn Prize	NOVEL THEME Explores modern masculinity and emotional detachment across Hungarian housing estates to London's elite circles		

— Six authors were shortlisted for the **Booker Prize 2025**: Kiran Desai (*The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny*), Andrew Miller (*The Land in Winter*), David Szalay (*Flesh*), Susan Choi (*Flashlight*), Katie Kitamura (*Audition*), and Benjamin Markovits (*The Rest of Our Lives*).

— Indians who have won the Booker Prize: V.S. Naipaul (In a Free State, 1971), Salman Rushdie (Midnight's Children, 1981), Arundhati Roy (The God of Small Things, 1997), Kiran Desai (The Inheritance of Loss, 2006), and Aravind Adiga (The White Tiger, 2008).

India's Booker Prize Legacy	
5 Indian/Indian-Origin Booker Winners Since 1971	
1971	V.S. Naipaul <i>In a Free State</i>
1981	Salman Rushdie <i>Midnight's Children</i>
1997	Arundhati Roy <i>The God of Small Things</i>
2006	Kiran Desai <i>The Inheritance of Loss</i>
2008	Aravind Adiga <i>The White Tiger</i>
SPECIAL RECOGNITION Midnight's Children won Booker of Bookers (1993) and Best of the Booker (2008)	

► 6th National Water Awards

— **Maharashtra** has bagged the first prize for the Best State in the 6th National Water Awards which were given out by President Droupadi Murmu at Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi.

— **Gujarat** emerged in the second position, and **Haryana** was in the third.

— Instituted by the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga

Booker Prize: Key Historical Milestones			
1969 Prize Launched	1969 First Winner: PH Newby	1970 First Woman Winner: Bernice Rubens	1976 First Televised Ceremony on BBC
2005 International Booker Prize Launched	2013 Longest Winner: 848 pages (Eleanor Catton)	2020 Digital Submissions Begin	2024 Last Winner: Samantha Harvey (Orbital)

Rejuvenation (DoWR, RD &GR), under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the awards are a part of a campaign to spread awareness about water management and water conservation on a national level.

— It focuses on the “good work and efforts made by individuals and organisations across the country in attaining the government’s vision of a Jal Samridh Bharat.

► **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB) Awards**

— President Droupadi Murmu presented the first-ever Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB) Awards, with Telangana emerging as the top performer among states and UTs in the construction of water conservation structures.

— **Telangana** topped the list with the construction of 5.2 lakh water conservation structures under JSJB 1.0 initiative, followed by Chhattisgarh (4.05 lakh) and Rajasthan (3.64 lakh).

— The Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari Awards, launched in 2024 under **Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain (JSA: CTR) campaign**, honor outstanding community-driven water conservation efforts.

► **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2025**

— 20 children are awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP), which was conferred by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, during a special ceremony on 26 December 2025 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

— Conferred annually, the award recognises exceptional achievements of children (aged 5-18) across six categories: Bravery, Social Service, Environment, Sports, Art & Culture, and Science & Technology.

— The selection is made by the PMRBP Committee, constituted by the Minister for Women and Child Development and chaired by the Secretary, MWCD, with domain experts as members. Awards are conferred only on the Committee’s recommendation, based on the exceptional merit and societal impact of achievements, and are approved by the Minister for Women and Child Development.

— A maximum of 25 awards are conferred annually. The PMRBP Committee can relax this limit in exceptional cases. Each award carries a Medal and a Certificate.

— The award is generally not conferred posthumously. However, in rare and highly deserving cases, the PMRBP Committee may consider a posthumous conferment.

► **Indira Gandhi Peace Prize**

— The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2024 was presented to **Michelle Bachelet**, the first and only woman President of Chile and a former chief of UN Human Rights. Bachelet is a two-term President of Chile (2006-2010 and 2014-2018).

— The prize consists of an award of Rs.10 million and a trophy with a citation. The trophy is made of **Haematite Jasper**, the same stone which is used at the samadhi of Indira Gandhi at Shakti Sthala, New Delhi. Haematite Jasper is one of the hardest varieties of stone found in India and is estimated to be 2000 million years old.

► Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025

— The winners of the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025, the country's highest recognition for exemplary and inspirational contributions in the fields of science, technology, and innovation, was announced on 25th October.

— It comprises four awards — Vigyan Ratna for lifetime achievement, Vigyan Shri for scientists of all ages, Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB) for scientists under 45 years, and Vigyan Team for collaborative research work.

— These awards were instituted in 2023 after disbanding all existing science awards, including the coveted Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize. VY-SSB is a replacement for the Bhatnagar Prize, which too used to be given to outstanding scientists below 45 years old.

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025

India's Highest Science Recognition - Four-Tier Awards Structure

VR

Vigyan Ratna

Lifetime Achievement in Science

2025 Winner:

Prof. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar (Physics)

VS

Vigyan Shri

Scientists of All Ages (Posthumously)

2025 Winners Include:

Dr. Gyanendra Pratap Singh, Dr. Yusuf Mohammad Seikh, Dr. K Thangaraj, Prof. Pradeep Thalappil, and more

VY

Vigyan Yuva-SSB

Scientists Under 45 Years (Replaces Bhatnagar Prize)

2025 Winners Include:

Dr. Jagdis Gupta Kapuganti, Dr. Satendra Kumar Mangrauthia, Shri Debarka Sengupta, Dr. Deepa Agashe, and more

VT

Vigyan Team

Collaborative Research Excellence

2025 Winner:

Aroma Mission CSIR Team (Agricultural Science)

Awards Restructuring 2023

Instituted after disbanding all existing science awards, including the coveted Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize. Announced on 25th October 2025.

MISCELLANY

► New Geographical Indications (GI) tag from Tamil Nadu

— Five Products from Tamil Nadu secured GI tags, taking the states total to 74.

— These products are: Woraiyur cotton sari, Kavindapadi nattu sakkarai (jaggery powder), Namakkal makkal pathirangal (soapstone cookware), the traditional Thooyamalli rice variety and Ambasamudram choppu saman (wooden toys).

► The Light and The Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated “The Light and The Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One”, an exhibition in New Delhi on January 3 to present the Piprahwa Gems, the sacred Buddhist relics.

— The Piprahwa relics, comprising gems and jewels, were discovered in 1898 by William Claxton Peppe during the excavation of a stupa in Uttar Pradesh’s Piprahwa village, in present-day Siddharthnagar district.

— In possession of his great-grandson Chris Peppe, the relics were repatriated to India recently, after their scheduled auction at Sotheby’s Hong Kong was stopped.

— Considered sacred in Buddhist heritage, the Piprahwa relics, deposited by the Sakyas, Lord Buddha’s kin, also comprise his bone fragments, crystal caskets and gold ornaments.

► India International Science Festival (IISF) 2025

— Recently, the India International Science Festival (IISF) 2025 was held at Vivekananda Hall, CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR), Pusa Campus, New Delhi. The event was jointly organised by CSIR-NIScPR and CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL).

— The theme of the festival is “Vigyan Se Samruddhi: for Aatmanirbhar Bharat”. It aimed to celebrate and advance the spirit of science-led growth for a self-reliant and prosperous India.

► Hornbill Festival

— The 26th edition of the Hornbill Festival began in Nagaland on 1st December. Often referred to as the “Festival of Festivals,” the Hornbill Festival is one of the **most iconic cultural events** in Nagaland.

— The festival is named after the Great Hornbill which is found in primarily evergreen and moist deciduous forests, primarily inhabiting the canopy of tall trees.

— It is classified as **Vulnerable** by the IUCN and is protected under **Schedule I** of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.

— In India, Greater Hornbills are found in the Western Ghats and the Himalayas. It is the state bird of Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala.

► Anti-Terror Conference

— Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated a two-day 'Anti-Terrorism Conference-2025' in Delhi, where he said that the investigation into the Pahalgam terror attack will put Pakistan in the dock on international platforms.

— The conference was organized by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

— The event saw the launch of **three major initiatives**: An updated NIA crime manual, the Organised Crime Network Database, and the Lost/Looted and Recovered Weapon Database.

► Year-long celebration marking 150th anniversary of India's National Song 'Vande Mataram'

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi kicked off the year-long commemoration of the song Vande Mataram on 7th November, marking its 150 years. It is being organised by the Ministry of Culture.

— The programme marked the formal launch of the year-long nationwide commemoration – November 7, 2025 to November 7, 2026 – celebrating 150 years of the composition written by **Bankim Chandra Chatterji** in 1875.

— The national song "Vande Mataram" by Bankimchandra Chatterji was written on Akshaya Navami which was on November 7, 1875.

— Vande Mataram first appeared in the literary journal **Bangadarshan** as part of his novel **Anandamath**.

— The song, invoking the motherland as the embodiment of strength, prosperity and divinity, gave poetic expression to India's awakening spirit of unity and self-respect. It soon became an enduring symbol of devotion to the nation.

— On January 24, 1950, the Constituent Assembly of India unanimously adopted 'Vande Mataram' as the national song.

► National Urban Conclave 2025

— The two-day National Urban Conclave was organised at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, on 8-9 November 2025.

— It brings over participants that including policymakers, urban planners, experts, and stakeholders, to deliberate on the theme "**Sustainable Urban Development and Governance**" through intensive brainstorming sessions across six thematic areas.

— During the inaugural session, the Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Manohar Lal, launched the Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme (DRAP), the Swachh Bharat Mission – Knowledge Management Unit (KMU), and Urban Invest Window (UiWIN).

► Kashi Tamil Sangamam 4.0

— The Kashi Tamil Sangamam, carrying forward the cultural and civilisational link between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, began in Varanasi on 2nd December.

— This year's theme is “**Let Us Learn Tamil – Tamil Karkalam**,” placing Tamil language learning and linguistic unity at the centre of the Sangamam.

— Organised by the Education Ministry, the first edition was held in 2022. This year's programme involves teachers traveling from Tamil Nadu to Varanasi to teach Tamil to school students there. Students from Uttar Pradesh will also visit Tamil Nadu to learn the language at educational institutions in the State.

► Phool Waalon Ki Sair

— Amid uproar, *Phool Waalon Ki Sair* (procession of the florists), an annual festival symbolising communal harmony in the national capital, has received permission to be held at its original venue, Aam Bagh in Mehrauli.

— The week-long festival is unique as the Hindu and Muslim communities together offer the floral *chaadar* and *pankha* at the **Dargah of Khwaja Bakhtiar Kaaki** in Mehrauli. Another floral *pankha* and *chhatra* (canopy) is offered at the ancient temple of **Devi Yogmaya in Mehrauli**.

— The festival has its origins in the early 19th century, when the Mughal empire was beginning to decline. Prince Mirza Jahangir had fired at the British resident and was exiled to Allahabad.

— His mother, **Mumtaz Mahal Begum**, promised that once her son returned, she would walk barefoot from the Red Fort to the dargah of Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki in Mehrauli to offer her gratitude.

— When her prayers were answered, it is said, local flower-sellers scattered flowers along her route and made floral fans (*pankhas*) which were offered at both the Kaki dargah and Yogmaya Temple.

— From this act grew an annual fair instituted in 1811, bringing together people of different faiths in a syncretic celebration. It was halted during British rule in 1942 and revived in 1962 by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

► Ramman festival

— President **Droupadi Murmu** attended a special session of the **Uttarakhand Assembly**, where Speaker Ritu Khanduri Bhushan presented her with a Ramman mask and a book on the centuries-old festival celebrated in the state's Garhwal region.

— Ramman is a festival celebrated annually in late April during Baisakhi at the twin villages of Saloor-Dungra in Uttarakhand's Chamoli. It is dedicated to the tutelary god, Bhumiyaal Devta, a local divinity whose temple houses most of the festivities.

— The festival involves theatrical performances of the Ramayana and local legends, in which people sing songs and wear masks while dancing. There are 18 different types of masks made of Bhojpatra, Himalayan birch, that performers wear during the event.

— In 2009, Ramman was inscribed in the list of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

► **Guru Charan Yatra**

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people to have darshan of the sacred 'Jore Sahib' during the Guru Charan Yatra, from New Delhi to **Bihar's Patna Sahib Gurudwara**, which commenced on October 23.

— The Jore Sahib, meaning **holy or sacred shoes**, are a pair of footwear belonging to Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Sikh Gurus, and his wife Mata Sahib Kaur.

— It is considered a sacred relic as it is revered as the personal belongings once worn by the Sikh spiritual leaders.

— The pair of footwear, measuring 11" by 3½" for the right foot of the 'Dasam Pita', or Tenth Father, and 9" by 3" for the left foot of Mata Sahib Kaur, are sacred relics deeply revered in Sikhism.

— **Guru Gobind Singh**, the last human Guru of the Sikhs, founded the Khalsa Panth, or the community of the pure. He declared the **Guru Granth Sahib** as the eternal successor.

► **Ningol Chakouba festival**

— The Manipur government organised the 46th 'Fish Fair-cum-Fish Crop Competition' at Hatta Kangjeibung, Imphal, which is a part of the Ningol Chakouba festival.

— Ningol Chakouba festival falls on the second lunar day of the Manipuri calendar's Hiyangei month (November). Ningol means 'married woman' and Chakouba means 'invitation for a feast'.

— On this day, married women are invited to their parents' home for a feast. The invitation comes from the son(s) of the parental family of the Ningols, generally a week in advance.

— The essence is to strengthen the bond of affection among the brothers and sisters, daughters and parents of a family.

► **Good Governance Day**

— Good Governance Day is observed annually on **December 25**, the birth anniversary of **former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee**. It was announced in 2014 to observe this day as Good Governance Day.

— This day aims to raise awareness among citizens about government accountability and effective administration while promoting the practice of "good governance" among civil servants.

— National Unity Day was first observed in 2014 following the Government of India's decision to honor Sardar Patel's exceptional contributions to nation-building.

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a **special ₹150 commemorative coin** and stamp as a tribute on this occasion.

► **Veer Bal Diwas**

— Veer Bal Diwas is annually observed on **December 26**.

— This day commemorates the brave events that took place at Anandpur Sahib Fort, where Guru Gobind Singh, along with his family and disciples, were compelled to flee as the Mughal Army encircled the Anandpur fort.

— During the chaos, Guru Gobind Singh's youngest sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, were captured by the Mughal forces and pressured to convert to Islam.

— The two young boys courageously refused to abandon their faith, and consequently, Wazir Khan ordered them to be bricked alive around December 26, 1705. In 2022, December 26 was declared as Veer Bal Diwas to honour and remember their sacrifice.

► **Human Rights Day**

— Human Rights Day is observed on December 10 every year. It is the day when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

— The theme for the year 2025 is 'Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials'.

— On December 10, 1948, the UNGA approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at a meeting in Paris – laying one of the foundation stones of the international order that emerged following the horrors of World War II.

► **International Anti-Corruption Day**

— International Anti-Corruption Day has been observed every year on December 9 since 2005 to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it.

— The theme for this year is '*Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity.*'

— The eleventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (the UN Anti-Corruption Conference) is scheduled from 15-19 December 2025 in Doha, Qatar.

(Source: United Nations)

► **International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2025**

— Every year, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is marked globally on **December 3** to promote the rights and well-being of people with disabilities at every level of society and development.

— It was first celebrated annually in 1992, following its proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 47/3.

— The theme for this year is “**fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress**”.

➤ Navy Day 2025

— December 4 is annually celebrated as India’s Navy Day. December 4 marks **Operation Trident**, when the Indian Navy inflicted heavy damage on Pakistani vessels in Karachi harbour amid the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971.

— Interestingly, the date behind the commemoration has changed over time. On October 21, 1944, the Royal Indian Navy held its first Navy Day. By 1945, it was celebrated in Bombay (now Mumbai) and Karachi on December 1. After Indian Independence and until 1972, it was marked on 15 December.

➤ International Cheetah Day

— Every year, December 4 is marked as International Cheetah Day to raise awareness about the shrinking Cheetah population.

— In 2022, India launched the Project Cheetah to introduce African cheetahs into India from Namibia and South Africa. Initially, 20 cheetahs were imported from the two countries.

— India was home to **Asiatic cheetahs**, and not the African subspecies that were introduced in 2022. The Asiatic cheetah is classified as a “**critically endangered**” species by the IUCN Red List and is believed to survive only in Iran. While African Cheetah is listed as a **vulnerable (VU)** species on the IUCN Red List.

➤ Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas

— On the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, President Droupadi Murmu, along with distinguished dignitaries, paid floral tributes at the statue of Bhagwan Birsa Munda at Prerna Sthal in the Parliament premises.

— **November 15** is the birth anniversary of the **tribal icon Birsa Munda**, who was born on this date in 1875. Since 2021, his birthday has been celebrated as ‘Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas.’

— Known as “Dharti Aba” (“Father of the Earth”), Birsa organised the “Ulgulan” or the Munda Rebellion against British oppression in the late 1890s.

➤ National Press Day

— **November 16** is observed as the National Press Day to celebrate the role of a free and responsible press in India. The day commemorates the establishment of the Press Council of India, which began its operations on this day in 1966.

— This year’s theme focuses on **safeguarding press credibility amidst rising misinformation**, highlighting the growing importance of accurate and ethical reporting.

► Police Commemoration Day

— The Police Commemoration Day is observed, every year on October 21, to remember the sacrifices of ten policemen who died in Chinese firing in 1959.

— So far since Independence, 34,418 Police personnel have sacrificed their lives for safeguarding the integrity of the nation and providing security to the people of this country.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Get exam-focused comprehensive **Daily UPSC Current Affairs Summary** for quick understanding, easy revision, and retention. [[Click Here](#)]

Test your **UPSC CSE 2026** preparation | Practice **daily subject-wise MCQs** to strengthen concepts, and improve accuracy. [[Click Here](#)]

UPSC ETHICS (GS-IV) Playlist @ [[UPSC CSE with Daksha](#)]

Contact for Mentorship UPSC Prelims 2026 + Mains 2026: [https://t.me/UPSCMentor_ab]

Test Your KNOWLEDGE

The best way to remember facts for UPSC and other competitive exams is to recall them through MCQs. Try to solve the following questions.

QUESTION 1

Consider the following statements about Gandabherunda:

1. Displayed on sails of the INSV Kaundinya
2. Used by the Kadamba dynasty
3. State symbol of Karnataka

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 2 only (d) 1, 2, and 3

QUESTION 2

Consider the following statements:

1. The euro as currency is used only by the members of the European Union (EU).
2. Bulgaria became the 21st nation out of 29 EU members to adopt the euro.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

QUESTION 3

In 2021, Galaxy Frog was declared the flagship species of which of the following national parks?

- (a) Mathikettan Shola National Park
(b) Kudremukh National Park
(c) Sri Venkateswara National Park
(d) Mrugavani National Park

QUESTION 4

Ram Vanji Sutar, an Indian sculptor who was awarded the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan, designed which of the following?

- (a) The Statue of Unity (b) Gateway of India
(c) Rashtrapati Bhawan (d) India Gate

QUESTION 5

Among the following who are eligible to benefit from the “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act”?

- (a) Adult members of only the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households.
- (b) Adult members of below poverty line (BPL) households.
- (c) Adult members of households of all backward communities.
- (d) Adult members of any household.

QUESTION 6

Consider the following statements about the UN High Commission for Refugees:

- 1. It was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1950 in the aftermath of the Second World War.
- 2. It is guided by the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 Protocol.
- 3. India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention.

Which of the above-mentioned statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

QUESTION 7

Consider the following statements:

- 1. Since Independence November 26, the day the Constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly, is celebrated as Samvidhan Divas.
- 2. This year for the first time the Bodo and Kashmiri editions of the Constitution are being introduced in the history of India.

Which of the above-mentioned statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

QUESTION 8

Operation Sagar Bandhu, launched by the Indian government, for which of the following countries?

- (a) Sri Lanka
- (b) Bangladesh
- (c) Nepal
- (d) Indonesia

QUESTION 9

Consider the following statements:

- 1. The Indian team won the Women’s Kabaddi World Cup after defeating Bangladesh in the finals.
- 2. The inaugural edition of the Women’s Kabaddi World Cup was held in Patna, Bihar, back in 2012.

Which of the above-mentioned statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None

QUESTION 10

Consider the following statements about the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar:

- 1. It is given to children below the age of 20 years.
- 2. No award is given posthumously.
- 3. In 2025, there were 20 recipients of this award.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

QUESTION 11

Consider the following statements:

- 1. Constitution is launched in Santhali language.
- 2. Santhali language uses the Ol Chiki script.
- 3. The 94th Constitutional Amendment Act added Santali to Schedule VIII to the Constitution.

Which of the above-mentioned statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

QUESTION 12

Consider the following pairs:

Organisation	Location of Headquarters
1. Asian Development Bank	Tokyo
2. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation	Singapore
3. Association of SouthEast Asian Nations	Bangkok

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 only
 (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 3 only

QUESTION 13

Consider the following countries:

1. Brunei
2. New Zealand
3. Papua New Guinea
4. Indonesia
5. Malaysia

Which of the above-mentioned countries are part of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)?

- (a) 1, 3, 4, and 5 (b) 2, 3, and 4
 (c) 1, 2, 4, and 5 (d) 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

QUESTION 14

Which of the following statements correctly describes the Black spots on National Highways?

- (a) A 500-m stretch is categorised as a black spot if there have been either five or more accidents involving fatalities or grievous injuries.
 (b) A 300-m stretch is categorised as a black spot if there have been either ten or more accidents involving fatalities or grievous injuries.
 (c) A 500-m stretch is categorised as a black spot if there have been 30 deaths within a 3-year period.
 (d) A 300-m stretch is categorised as a black spot if there have been 20 deaths within a 2-year period.

QUESTION 15

Ramman is a religious festival of which state?

- (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Odisha
 (c) Uttarakhand (d) Gujarat

QUESTION 16

In India, Legal Services Authorities provide free legal services to which of the following types of citizens?

1. A person with an annual income of less than Rs.1,00,000
2. Transgender with an annual income of less than Rs. 2,00,000
3. Member of Other Backward Classes (OBC) with an annual income of less than Rs. 3,00,000
4. All Senior Citizens

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 3 and 4 only
 (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1 and 4 only

QUESTION 17

Consider the following Intangible heritage:

1. Yoga
2. Chhath Puja
3. Diwali
4. Garba

Which of the above are included in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
 (c) 1, 3 and 4 only (d) 3 and 4 only

QUESTION 18

Consider the following pairs:

Wetland/Lake	Location
1. Hokera Wetland	Punjab
2. Kopra Jalashay	Rajasthan
3. Rudrasagar Lake	Tripura
4. Siliserh Lake	Chhattisgarh

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one pair (b) Only two pairs
(c) Only three pairs (d) All four pairs

QUESTION 19

With reference to ‘dugong’, a mammal found in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a herbivorous marine animal.
2. It is found along the entire coast of India.
3. It is given legal protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 3 only

QUESTION 20

Consider the following statements:

1. The Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) was launched at COP30.
2. Ethiopia’s capital Addis Ababa, has been confirmed as the host of COP32.

Which of the above-mentioned statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1 only
(c) 2 only (d) None

QUESTION 21

Which of the following statements is correct about the Kafala System?

- (a) It is a new remittance transfer system adopted by the EU for migrant workers.
(b) International trading system of the Gulf Cooperation Council for oil exchange.

(c) Set of rules that tourists have to follow while entering the GCC countries.

(d) It is a binding contract between migrant workers and their local sponsor.

QUESTION 22

Consider the following statements about the Global Forest Resources Assessment (GFRA) report:

1. Released by UN FAO
2. India is globally ranked ninth in the total forest area

Which of the above-mentioned statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 2 only (d) None

QUESTION 23

Consider the following statements about the UNCTAD:

1. It is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964.
2. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

QUESTION 24

With reference to the history of India, “Ulgulan” or the Great Tumult is the description of which of

the following events?

- (a) The Revolt of 1857
(b) The Mappila Rebellion of 1921
(c) The Indigo Revolt of 1859 – 60
(d) Birsa Munda’s Revolt of 1899 – 1900

QUESTION 25

The Global Peace Prayer Festival is celebrated in which of the following countries?

- (a) Bhutan (b) Nepal
(c) India (d) Maldives

QUESTION 26

Strait of Hormuz is located between

- (a) Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara
(b) Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman
(c) Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea
(d) Red Sea to Gulf of Aden

QUESTION 27

With reference to 'IFC Masala Bonds', sometimes seen in the news, which of the statements given below is/are correct?

1. The International Finance Corporation, which offers these bonds, is an arm of the World Bank.
2. They are the rupee-denominated bonds and are a source of debt financing for the public and private sector.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

QUESTION 28

Consider the following statements about Rock Eagle Owl:

1. Categorised as Schedule I under the Wildlife Protection Act.
2. native to hilly scrub forests in India

Which of the above-mentioned statements are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 2 (d) None

QUESTION 29

Thirupparankundram Hill, which was recently in the news, is located in which state?

- (a) Kerala (b) Tamil Nadu
(c) Karnataka (d) Andhra Pradesh

Answer Key (1–29)

Q. No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Ans.	D	C	A	A	D	D	B	B	A	A	A	B	D	A	C	A	C	A	C	A	D	C	A	D	A	B	C	C	B

If you missed Current Affairs Pointers (CAP) of the Past Month | [September – October 2025, read it here.](#)