



STATE PCS CA CONSOLIDATION JAMMU & KASHMIR



**JUNE
2025**



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Opp. Signature
View Apartment,
New Delhi



21,
Pusa Road,
Karol Bagh
New Delhi



Tashkent Marg,
Civil Lines,
Prayagraj,
Uttar Pradesh



Tonk Road,
Vasundhra Colony,
Jaipur,
Rajasthan



Burlington Arcade Mall,
Burlington Chauraha,
Vidhan Sabha Marg,
Lucknow



12, Main AB Road,
Bhawar Kuan,
Indore,
Madhya Pradesh

Content

✦ Reasi to Implement SMILE Scheme	3
✦ Forest Fire in J&K	3
✦ Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary	4
✦ Eurasian Otter in Kashmir	5
✦ Jammu & Kashmir Connectivity Boost	6
✦ Lavender Festival 2025	7

Reasi to Implement SMILE Scheme

Why in News?

Reasi is set to become the **second district in Jammu and Kashmir**, after Srinagar, to implement the **SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) scheme**.

Key Points

- 💡 **SMILE Scheme:** The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** launched the **SMILE scheme** on 12 February 2022.
 - ✦ The scheme **aims to rehabilitate, reintegrate, and empower individuals engaged in begging**, helping them transition into mainstream society through structured support.
 - ✦ The Ministry identified **50 locations across India**, including districts, towns, and cities, for scheme implementation.
 - 📌 **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Temple** in Reasi district is among the selected sites.
- 💡 **Approval Committee Reviews NGO Applications:**
 - ✦ A recent project approval committee meeting evaluated proposals from **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)** interested in implementing SMILE in Reasi.
 - ✦ The scheme is being implemented in Reasi district in collaboration with **Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre Society**.

Vaishno Devi Temple

- 💡 The temple is **located at 5,200 feet in the Trikuta mountains**, sees over one crore visitors annually, with a **12 km trek from Katra**.
- 💡 **Key Landmarks:** Darshani Deodhi, Banganga, Chara Paduka, Indraprastha, Adhkuari, Garbha Joon, Himkoti, Haathi Matha, Sanji Chhat Bhavan, Sher ka Panja and Bhairon Mandir.

Forest Fire in J&K

Why in News?

A **massive forest fire** erupted in the Bhaga village area near **NH-144A in Reasi district, Jammu and Kashmir**, spreading rapidly across hundreds of hectares of land.

Key Points

- 💡 **Forest Fire Risk in J&K:**
 - ✦ In J&K, at least 1,747 square kilometres of forest area have been classified under the **'High Risk' zone** for forest fires, while 62 square kilometres fall under the **'Very High Risk'** category.
 - ✦ **As per official data:**
 - 📌 In 2022–23, a total of 1,553 forest fire incidents were reported, affecting an area of 2,774.21 hectares.
 - 📌 In 2023–24, the **number of incidents significantly declined** to 607, impacting an area of 987.24 hectares.
- 💡 **India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023 and Forest Cover in J&K:**
 - ✦ The **ISFR 2023** highlighted a substantial increase in forest cover which showed a rise of 34.78 sq km in the region's forest area compared to the 2021 assessment.
 - ✦ The report reveals that **J&K has shown an increase of 398.12 sq km** in forest cover in one decade from 2013 to 2023.
 - ✦ According to the Report, the **forest cover of J&K in 2013 was 20,948.27 sq km** while in **2023 the forest cover increased to 21,346.39 sq km**.
 - 📌 **J&K boasts of the highest number of forest types in the country**, an impressive 43, along with the highest average growing stock of 296.22 cubic meters per hectare and the **highest estimated carbon stock** of 174.10 tonnes per hectare.
- 💡 **Forest Fire:**
 - ✦ **About:**
 - 📌 A forest fire refers to an **uncontrolled blaze that spreads through vegetation** taller than 1.8 metres.
 - 📌 These fires often grow into major conflagrations, sometimes **triggered by surface or ground fires** that ignite upper tree canopies.
 - 📌 When the flames leap to the top branches of trees (a phenomenon known as crowning), they can bypass the forest floor and undergrowth, rapidly intensifying.
 - 📌 Such fires often lead to **violent blowups and can evolve into firestorms**, with erratic and extreme fire behaviour.

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How does fire impact forests and wildlife?

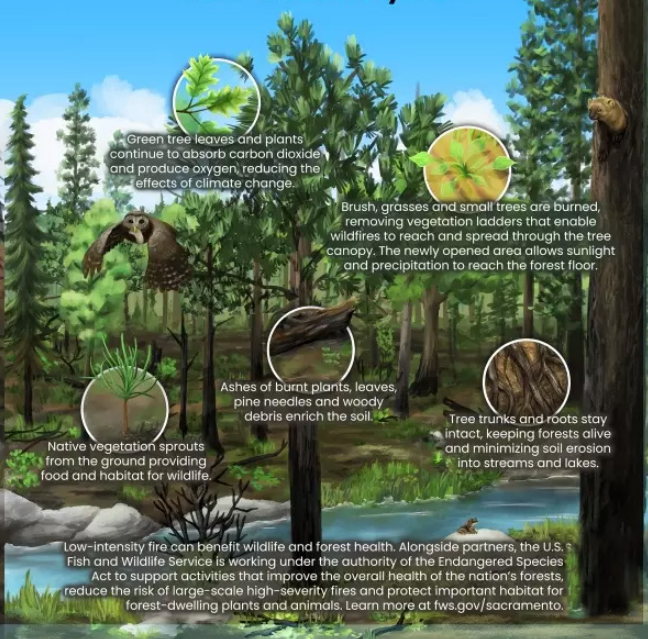
Wildfires are inevitable, but not all fire is harmful to forests. Low-intensity fires can naturally "clean" and thin the forest by removing flammable and thick vegetation on the forest floor. The result is improved habitat for wildlife, healthier soil and new growth of native plants.

It also helps reduce the risk of large-scale high-severity fires that burn through the forest—from the floor to the canopy—with intense heat. High-severity fires across large landscapes can be devastating for wildlife, habitat and surrounding communities.

High-Severity Fire



Low-Intensity Fire



★ Ecological Role of Forest Fires:

- Though typically viewed as destructive, many forest ecosystems depend on **fire for their survival and regeneration**.
- Natural events like lightning strikes in dry forests ignite fires that can benefit biodiversity.

★ Related Government Initiatives:

- National Action Plan for Forest Fires (NAPFF)**, was started in 2018 with the goal of reducing forest fires by informing, enabling, and empowering forest fringe communities and incentivizing them to collaborate with state forest departments.
- The Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme (FPM)** is the only government-sponsored programme dedicated to assisting states in dealing with forest fires.

Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary

Why in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir Government has formed a **Divisional Level Committee** to monitor the **Eco-Sensitive Zone** surrounding the **Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary**.

- The committee will **monitor compliance with the provisions issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.

Key Points

Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary:

★ About:

- This Sanctuary has **twin lakes** namely **Surinsar and Mansar**.
- It spreads across three districts in Jammu & Kashmir: **Jammu, Udhampur, and Samba**.

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✦ Wildlife Richness:

- ✎ Prominent mammal species include **Nilgai (Blue Bull)**, **Indian Barking Deer**, **Leopard**, **Wild Boar**, Jackal, Fox.
- ✎ The sanctuary's forests host a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and climbers.
- ✎ Due to the **presence of high diversity of migratory birds** Mansar and Surinsar wetlands were **designated as Ramsar site in 2005** and claimed as 'Internationally important Wetland area'.
- 💡 These two sites support population of **CITES** and **IUCN Red listed turtle species** as well as one endemic and endangered medusa species i.e. *Mansariella lacustris*.
- 💡 Beside the above uniqueness these two lakes were considered to be important habitats for near about 50 species of fish fauna.

Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)

- 💡 The **National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016)** of the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** stipulated that state governments should declare land falling within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries as eco-fragile zones or Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) under the **Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- 💡 While the 10-km rule is implemented as a general principle, **the extent of its application can vary**. Areas **beyond 10 km** can also be notified by the Union government as ESZs, if they hold larger ecologically important "**sensitive corridors**".
- 💡 The basic aim is **to regulate certain activities around National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries** so as to minimise the negative impacts of such activities on the fragile ecosystem encompassing the protected areas.

Eurasian Otter in Kashmir

Why in News?

After three decades of presumed extinction, researchers spotted the **Eurasian otter**—a key part of **Kashmir's aquatic ecosystem**—in the **Lidder River** at **Srigufwara**, south Kashmir.



Key Points

💡 Eurasian Otter:

✦ About:

- ✎ It is a **semi-aquatic carnivorous mammal**.
- ✎ Its scientific name is *Lutra lutra*.

✦ Distribution:

- ✎ It has one of the **widest distributions of all Palaearctic mammals**.
- ✎ Its range covers parts of three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa.
- ✎ In India, the Eurasian otter is **found in the northern, northeastern, and southern regions**.

✦ Habitat:

- ✎ It lives in a wide variety of aquatic habitats, including highland and lowland lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, swamp forests, and coastal areas.
- ✎ In the Indian subcontinent, Eurasian otters **inhabit cold hilly regions and fast-flowing mountain streams**.

- 💡 India is home to **three otter species** – the **smooth-coated**, the **Asian small-clawed**, and the **Eurasian Lutra lutra**.

✦ Conservation Status:

- ✎ **IUCN:** Near threatened
- ✎ **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule II
- ✎ **CITES:** Appendix I

💡 Rare Sighting in Kashmir:

- ✦ **Locally known as 'Vuder'**, the Eurasian otter was once widespread in Kashmir's **wetlands** and rivers, especially in Dachigam, Rambhara, and Lidder.

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- ✦ The sharp decline in otter populations is attributed to increasing water pollution and rampant hunting for their fur, both of which degraded their natural habitats.

Jammu & Kashmir Connectivity Boost

Why in News?

On 6th June 2025, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** launched a **₹46,000 crore** infrastructure plan to improve connectivity in Jammu & Kashmir.

- 💡 These initiatives aim to promote **tourism**, strengthen **regional links**, and stimulate the **local economy and job opportunities**.

Key Points

Major Infrastructure Projects Inaugurated:

- ✦ **Chenab Rail Bridge:** The **Chenab Rail Bridge** is now the **world's highest railway bridge**.
 - ✍ It will significantly enhance **rail connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar**, facilitating faster and safer travel across the mountainous region.
 - ✍ It is built to withstand wind speeds of up to **260 km/h**.
 - ✍ Reduces travel time between **Katra and Srinagar to 3 hours**.
 - ✍ This bridge symbolizes India's engineering prowess and is part of the **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL)** corridor.

CHENAB BRIDGE
World's highest Railway Bridge

- Connects Kashmir valley to the rest of the nation
- 1315 metres long
- Highest railway bridge in the world (359 metres above the river bed level)
- 35 meters higher than Eiffel Tower in Paris
- Most sophisticated 'Tekla' software used for structural detailing of the arch
- Structural steel suitable for -10°C to 40°C temperature

Design life of the bridge
120 years

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✦ **Anji Khad Bridge:** The Anji Bridge is India's first cable-stayed rail bridge.

- ✎ It is situated **331 meters above the riverbed** and stretching **725 meters**.
- ✎ It connects the towns of **Katra and Raesi**.
- ✎ The bridge, built in challenging terrain, is designed to withstand harsh weather and seismic activity.

✦ **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL):**

- ✎ **Total project cost:** ₹43,780 crore.
- ✎ **Length:** 272 km, including 36 tunnels (119 km) and 943 bridges through rugged Himalayan terrain.
- ✎ It provides **all-weather connectivity** between the **Kashmir Valley** and India, reducing reliance on **disrupted road transport** and enhancing **mobility** and **economic integration** for remote regions.

💡 **Boost to Religious and Tourism Sectors:**

✦ **Launch of Vande Bharat Trains:** The new Vande Bharat Express service will operate between **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Srinagar**.

Chenab River

💡 **Source:** Originates in the upper Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh, formed by the confluence of **Chandra** and **Bhaga** rivers at **Tandi** in Lahaul and Spiti district.

- ✦ **Chandra River:** Originates from glaciers near **Chandra Taal**, east of Bara-lacha la pass.
- ✦ **Bhaga River:** Originates from **Surya Taal** lake, west of the same pass.

💡 **Course:** Flows through the **Jammu region of Jammu & Kashmir**, enters **Punjab in Pakistan**, and merges with the **Indus River**.

✦ **Anji river** is a **tributary of the Chenab River**.

💡 **Major Projects/Dams:**

- ✦ Ratle Hydro Electric Project
- ✦ **Salal Dam** (Reasi)
- ✦ **Dul Hasti Hydroelectric Plant** (Kishtwar)
- ✦ **Pakal Dul Dam** on the **Marusadar River**, a tributary in Kishtwar.

Lavender Festival 2025

Why in News?

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh **inaugurated the 2-day Lavender Festival 2025**, organized by **CSIR-IIIM Jammu**, highlighting **Bhaderwah's transformation into a national hub for agri-business innovation**.

💡 The **cultivation of lavender**, a fragrant flower, has not only given the town a national identity but has also become a symbol of India's rural **startup** revolution.

Key Points

India's Purple Revolution

💡 **About the Lavender Festival:** It is held annually to promote aromatic farming and marks a vital part of the '**Purple Revolution**', a central initiative under the **Aroma Mission** to boost farmer incomes through high-value crops.

💡 **Lavender Cultivation:** The state of Kashmir in India is perceived as the **hub of medicinal plants**.

✦ Lavender, particularly, shows promising potential as a **therapeutic and aromatic herb** that can positively contribute to India's economic and medical prospects.

- ✎ Lavender is suitable for J&K's climate, tolerating cold winters and mild summers.
- ✎ It is a low maintenance crop with the productive life of about 15 years starting from the second year.
- ✎ It provides higher returns compared to traditional crops.

✦ Bhaderwah has **emerged as the lavender capital of India**, turning many former conflict-ridden villages into hubs of agro-based prosperity.

💡 **The Aroma Mission:** It was launched by the **Ministry of Science & Technology** and the **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)**.

- ✦ It aims to promote lavender cultivation commercially to **boost farmers' income**.
- ✦ Lavender oil sells for around ₹10,000 per liter.
- ✦ Other products include medicines, incense sticks, soaps, and air fresheners.

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💡 Mission Progress and Future Plans:

✦ Phase-I Achievements:

- 📎 Reached 46 aspirational districts across India.
- 📎 Trained over 44,000 farmers and entrepreneurs.

✦ Phase-II Goals:

- 📎 Plan to employ over 45,000 skilled workers.
- 📎 Targeting support for more than 75,000 farming households nationwide.

💡 Branding and Market Expansion:

✦ One District One Product (ODOP) Initiative:

- 📎 Lavender is designated as the “Doda brand product” under **ODOP-DEH (Districts as Export Hub) scheme**.
- 📎 Helps promote lavender cultivation and support farmers, entrepreneurs, and agribusinesses.

💡 Overall Mission Objectives:

- ✦ Revolutionize India’s fragrance industry.
- ✦ Expand the aroma sector and generate rural employment.
- ✦ Support cultivation, product refinement, market development, and expansion strategies for lavender.

Significance of the Lavender Festival

💡 Rising Incomes and Employment:

- ✦ Lavender cultivation has become a major source of income for local farmers and entrepreneurs.
- ✦ On average, young individuals involved in lavender farming in the region are earning more than ₹65 lakhs annually.

- ✦ This growth has led to **increased interest in agriculture** as a viable and profitable career option.

💡 Infrastructure and Market Access:

- ✦ Around 50 lavender distillation units are currently operating in Bhaderwah.
- ✦ These units **process lavender into various products** that are distributed to states such as Maharashtra and beyond.
- ✦ The presence of this infrastructure has created a strong value chain and opened new market opportunities.

💡 National Recognition and Policy Alignment:

- ✦ The lavender initiative aligns with national programs like **Startup India** and **Standup India**, which aim to promote entrepreneurship and self-reliance across different sectors.

💡 Expanding the Scope of Startups:

- ✦ Lavender farming in Bhaderwah challenges the traditional notion that startups are limited to technology or urban centers.
- ✦ The model shows that **individuals from diverse backgrounds, including rural and non-technical sectors, can succeed as entrepreneurs**.
- ✦ Efforts are being made to encourage participation from all age groups, including senior citizens, in upcoming editions of the festival.

💡 Interest from Other Regions:

- ✦ The success of lavender cultivation in Bhaderwah has **attracted interest from states** like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the Northeast, with representatives attending the festival to explore its replication.



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Key Points

Details

Summary

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Key Points

Details

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Summary

<div>Summary</div>
