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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

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Iron Ore Processing Plant in Gadchiroli

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** has granted in-principle forest clearance to Lloyd Metals and Energy Limited for setting up an **iron ore beneficiation plant** in **Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district**.

Key Points

Iron Ore Beneficiation Plant

Location and Forest Land Diversion:

- ✦ The plant is to be set up in **Gadchiroli**, a region affected by **Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)** for decades.
- ✦ The approval permits the diversion of 937 hectares of forest land and the felling of 1.23 lakh trees.
 - ✍ The MoEFCC's **Forest Advisory Committee (FAC)** has recommended **compensatory afforestation** in Chiplun, Ratnagiri district on Maharashtra's coast.

Wildlife Clearance:

- ✦ The plant's area partly overlaps with a critical **tiger corridor** between **Tadoba** and **Indravati Tiger Reserves**, necessitating wildlife clearance from the **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)**.

Significance:

- ✦ **Industrial Development:** The plant is designed to process **raw iron ore (hematite quartzite)**, improving ore quality and supporting steel and allied industries.
- ✦ **Employment and Economic Growth:** It is expected to generate **employment opportunities** and promote regional economic growth, aligning with Maharashtra's push to expand mining and industrial activity in Gadchiroli.

Challenges and Concerns:

- ✦ **Impact on Tribal Communities:** Tribal communities have raised concerns about

displacement and rights violations, underscoring the need for strict **Forest Rights Act (FRA)** compliance and genuine tribal participation.

- ✦ **Environmental Risks:** Extensive tree felling near tiger corridors poses serious biodiversity risks, making **strict monitoring and mitigation measures crucial**.

- ✍ While compensatory afforestation is proposed in Chiplun, Ratnagiri district to offset deforestation, concerns persist regarding the effectiveness of such measures.

Indravati National Park

About:

- ✦ It is situated in the **Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh**.
- ✦ It was **established in 1981** and **declared a tiger reserve in 1983** under India's **Project Tiger**.
- ✦ It is **named after the Indravati River**, which flows from east to west and forms the reserve's northern boundary with Maharashtra.

Vegetation:

- ✦ **Comprises three major forest types:**
 - ✍ Moist Mixed Deciduous Forest with Teak.
 - ✍ Moist Mixed Deciduous Forest without Teak.
 - ✍ Southern Dry Mixed Deciduous Forest.

Flora:

- ✦ Common tree species include **teak, achar, karra, kullu, shisham, semal, haldu, arjun, bel, and jamun**.

Fauna:

- ✦ Hosts one of the last populations of **rare wild buffalo**.
- ✦ Other species include **Nilgai, Black Buck, Sambar, Gaur, Tiger, Leopard, Chital, Sloth Bears, and more**.

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Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve

- 💡 **Location:** It is situated in **Maharashtra** and is the **oldest and largest national park** in the state.
 - ✦ **Tadoba/Taru** is the **local deity** revered by the tribal people in the area.
 - ✦ **Andhari** is derived from the **Andhari river** which flows through the reserve.
- 💡 **Geography:** It contains two primary lakes, **Tadoba Lake** and **Kolsa Lake**, along with the **Tadoba River**.
- 💡 **Biodiversity:**
 - ✦ **Flora:** **Teak**, **semal**, **tendu**, beheda, karaya gum, mahua madhuca, **arjun**, **bamboo** etc.
 - ✦ **Fauna:** Tigers, Indian leopards, sloth bears, gaurs, nilgai, **dholes**, small Indian civets, sambars, **spotted deer**, **barking deer**, and **chital**.

Contributions of Jayant Narlikar

Why in News?

On 20th May 2025, renowned astrophysicist **Professor Jayant Narlikar** passed away in Pune, Maharashtra. He was best known for **developing 'Steady-State Theory', an alternative model of the universe.**



Key Points

- 💡 **His Contributions:**
 - ✦ **The Hoyle-Narlikar Collaboration:**
 - 📎 Narlikar is best known for developing the Hoyle-Narlikar theory alongside his PhD mentor Fred Hoyle, a prominent figure in 20th-century astrophysics.

- 📎 Their work **supported the Steady-State Theory**, an alternative to the **Big Bang model**, suggesting the universe is **eternal and unchanging in density** due to **continuous creation of matter**.
- 📎 **Core Concepts of the Steady-State Theory:** Unlike the Big Bang theory, which proposes a single explosive origin for the universe, the **steady-state model** argues that the universe has **no beginning or end**.
 - The theory **acknowledges the expansion of the universe** but **maintains that new matter is constantly created**, preserving uniform density.
- 📎 **Mathematical Innovations:**
 - Narlikar played a **key role in modifying Einstein's general relativity** to support the creation of matter.
 - It was proposed that **gravity could be influenced not just by local objects, but also by distant matter across the universe**—a revolutionary idea in gravitational physics.
- 📎 He emphasized that a constant density in an expanding universe necessitates continuous matter creation—a cornerstone of the steady-state view.
- ✦ **Gradual Decline of the Theory:** The discovery of **Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation** in 1965 dealt a **significant blow to the steady-state model**.
 - 📎 The CMB is a faint, nearly uniform glow of microwave radiation that fills the observable universe. It is often referred to as the **"afterglow" of the Big Bang**.
 - 📎 CMB's properties aligned closely with Big Bang predictions, providing strong evidence of a primordial explosive event.
 - 📎 **Shift in Scientific Consensus:** Further observations—such as **evolving galaxies**, and **theoretical advancements by Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose on singularities**—bolstered the Big Bang theory.

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- Despite these shifts, Narlikar remained critical of the Big Bang's unresolved assumptions and argued for re-examining alternative models.

✎ **Enduring Scientific Legacy:** Though the steady-state theory fell out of favour, Narlikar's **mathematical frameworks and methodological innovations remain relevant.**

- His work continues to be cited and applied in cosmological and gravitational studies.

💡 About Professor Jayant Narlikar:

✦ Early Life and Academic Excellence:

- ✎ **Born on July 19, 1938**, Dr. Jayant Narlikar grew up on the campus of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), where his father, Vishnu Vasudeva Narlikar, served as Professor and Head of the Mathematics Department.
- ✎ He **pursued higher education at the University of Cambridge**, where he distinguished himself as a **Wrangler and Tyson Medallist** in the Mathematical Tripos — an honour awarded to top-performing mathematics students.

✦ Founding of IUCAA:

- ✎ In 1988, the **University Grants Commission (UGC)** entrusted Dr. Narlikar with establishing the **Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA)** in Pune.
- ✎ He served as the Founding Director of IUCAA until his retirement in 2003, after which he was designated Emeritus Professor.
- ✎ IUCAA, under his leadership, emerged as a globally respected centre for advanced research and teaching in astronomy and astrophysics.

✦ National and International Honours:

- ✎ In recognition of his efforts in science popularisation, **UNESCO** honoured him with the **Kalinga Award in 1996.**
- ✎ The Government of India awarded him the **Padma Bhushan in 1965**, making him one of the **youngest recipients at the age of 26.**

- ✎ He received the **Padma Vibhushan in 2004**, and the **Maharashtra Bhushan**, the state's highest civilian honour, **in 2011.**

- ✎ In 2012, the **Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS)** awarded him for establishing a leading centre of excellence in scientific research.

✦ Literary Contributions:

- ✎ In 2014, his autobiography was selected by the **Sahitya Akademi** for its highest award in regional language (Marathi) writing, further cementing his legacy as a versatile intellectual.

Big Bang Theory

- 💡 **Origin of the Universe:** Proposed by **Georges Lemaître in 1927**, the Big Bang Theory explains how the universe began as a **single, infinitely small and hot point** that expanded and stretched to create the vast universe.
- 💡 **Evidence and Confirmation:** **Edwin Hubble** later confirmed this idea by observing galaxies **moving away from us**, indicating that the universe is still expanding.
- ✦ **Visible and ultraviolet light** from distant galaxies shift to the **infrared wavelengths** as the universe expands.
- 💡 **Formation of Celestial Bodies:** As the universe expanded, it **cooled**, allowing particles to form atoms, which then combined to create celestial bodies such as **planets, asteroids, comets, and black hole.**

Maharashtra Cooperative Societies Act 1960

Why in News?

Maharashtra Chief Minister announced the **formation of a committee to examine and recommend amendments to the Maharashtra Cooperative Societies Act, 1960.**

- 💡 This move aims to modernize the legal framework governing cooperatives to reflect changing economic realities and promote **inclusive growth.**

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Key Points

- 💡 **The Maharashtra Cooperative Societies Act, 1960:**
 - ✦ It is a state-level law that governs the **establishment, registration, and functioning of cooperative societies** within Maharashtra.
 - ✦ It aims to promote **self-reliance and collective welfare** through cooperative societies.
 - ✦ The Act has been amended several times over the years, with the latest amendments being the **Maharashtra Co-operative Societies (Second Amendment) Act, 2024**.
- 💡 **Need for Legal Reform in the Cooperative Sector:**
 - ✦ Cooperative laws need reform to enable successful cooperative organisations **to list their shares on the market**.
 - 📎 This would facilitate transparent valuation through **market-based share pricing, enhance accountability, and foster greater competitiveness** within the sector.
 - ✦ There is a need to modernize the Maharashtra Cooperative Societies Act, 1960, by **incorporating sector-specific chapters**.
 - 📎 Sector-Wise Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Contributions:
 - The **manufacturing sector contributes 22–24%** to the GDP.
 - The **services sector contributes 52–54%**, generating the **highest Goods and Services Tax (GST)**.
 - The **agriculture and rural sector**, despite **employing 60%** of India's population, **contributes only 12%**.
 - ✦ There is a **need to evaluate the impact of credit societies**, housing cooperatives, consumer societies, and urban cooperative banks.
- 💡 **Kolhapur: A Model of Rural Prosperity:**
 - ✦ Kolhapur's success is attributed to its **high milk production** (70–80 lakh litres daily) and **thriving sugar industries**.
 - 📎 Maharashtra constitutes 25% of India's cooperatives.
 - ✦ A new **Rs 750 crore Mother Dairy plant** has been set up in **Nagpur, Vidarbha** to replicate Kolhapur's success.

Cooperative Societies

💡 About:

- ✦ Co-operatives are voluntary, democratic, and autonomous organisations controlled by their members who actively participate in their policies and decision-making.
 - 📎 **Multi-state cooperative societies** are cooperative societies that have members and **activities in more than one state of India**.
- ✦ Its aim is to serve the interest of the poorer sections of society through the principle of self-help and mutual help.
- ✦ These operate in various sectors such as agriculture, textile, poultry, and marketing.

💡 Types of Cooperatives in India:

- ✦ **Consumers' Cooperatives:** Offer goods at reasonable prices by directly sourcing from producers, cutting out the middlemen. e.g., Kendriya Bhandar.
- ✦ **Producers' Cooperatives:** Assists small producers by supplying essential production materials, including raw materials and equipment.
- ✦ **Cooperative Marketing Societies:** Help small producers sell their products collectively, e.g., Anand Milk Union Limited (AMUL).
- ✦ **Cooperative Credit Societies:** Provide financial services like savings and loans, e.g., Urban Cooperative Banks, Village Service Cooperative Society.
- ✦ **Cooperative Farming Societies:** Help small farmers gain the benefits of large-scale farming, e.g., lift-irrigation cooperatives, cooperatives and pani-panchayats.
- ✦ **Housing Cooperative Society:** Provides cost-effective housing options by acquiring and developing land for its members, e.g. **Employees' Housing Societies** and **Metropolitan Housing Cooperative Society**.

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Konkan's Lateritic Plateau

Why in News?

A study published in a Netherlands-based journal **Aquatic Ecology** explains how **freshwater rock pool size, monsoon patterns, and predators** affect **tadpole** presence on **lateritic plateaus** in **Maharashtra's Konkan region**.

Key Points

Konkan's Lateritic Plateau

About:

- ✦ They are formed through the process of laterization, where **intense weathering and leaching in humid, tropical climates** remove **soluble minerals**, leaving behind iron and aluminum oxides.
- ✦ Found in the **Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats, Rajmahal Hills, Satpura, Vindhya, and Malwa Plateau** in India.
 - ✎ Maharashtra's Konkan region features **ancient lateritic plateaus, locally known as sadas**, formed over millions of years.
- ✦ These plateaus are typically found on elevated terrains and are known for their unique biodiversity and water-holding capacity.

Crucial Habitats for Tadpoles and Biodiversity:

- ✦ These plateaus **host unique freshwater rock pools**, created through natural erosion and weathering processes.
- ✦ The rock pools act as **breeding grounds and tadpole habitats** for frogs living around the area.
 - ✎ Rock pools are **depressions on rocky surfaces with pan - or bucket-shaped pools** that are fed by monsoon rains.
- ✦ Rock pools support not just tadpoles, but also **phytoplankton, zooplankton, algae, aquatic plants**, insects, and vertebrates—many of which are endemic.
- ✦ The lateritic rock pools are **found only along the western coast, from northern Kerala to Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district**.
- ✦ Tadpoles contribute to ecosystem services like **nutrient cycling, sediment removal, and leaf litter breakdown**.
 - ✎ These functions are vital for soil health, water quality, and biodiversity.

Indian Grey Wolf

Why in News?

In the **Kadbanwadi grassland** of the Deccan Plateau in **Pune, Maharashtra**, **Indian grey wolves**—apex predators crucial to the health of grassland ecosystems—are **facing a sharp decline**, driven by habitat disruption from expanding agriculture and the growing menace of feral dogs.



Key Points

Indian Grey Wolf:

About:

- ✎ Indian grey wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) is a subspecies of grey wolf found across Southwest Asia and the Indian subcontinent.
 - It lives in **smaller packs and is less vocal** compared to other wolf subspecies.
 - It is **primarily nocturnal**, hunting from dusk to dawn.
- ✎ These wolves are distinguishable by **brown coats with black-and-white markings** on their backs.

Habitat:

- ✎ It is an apex predator in India's **scrublands, grasslands and semi-arid agro-ecosystems**. Thrives in regions with warmer temperatures.

Conservation Status:

- ✎ **IUCN: Endangered** (population in India: 2,000 - 3,000 individuals).
- ✎ **CITES: Appendix I**.
- ✎ **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I**.

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💡 Kadbanwadi Grassland:

- ✦ It spans approximately **2,000 hectares** and **surrounds Kadbanwadi village**, located about 276 km from Mumbai atop a hill in Indapur tehsil.
- ✦ The **Shegar Dhangar**, a pastoralist community, has long coexisted with local wildlife.
- ✦ Key species include the **Bengal fox**, **striped hyena**, and **Brahminy kite**.
- ✦ The Indian grey wolf is seen as the “**guardian**” of the grassland, playing a vital role in maintaining ecological balance.

💡 Rising Threats to the Wolf Population:

- ✦ **Habitat loss** due to agriculture and semi-urban expansion.
- ✦ **Free-ranging dogs**, which **spread diseases** and cause **genetic hybridisation**.
- ✦ Disease Transmission from Dogs:
 - 📎 **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)** is a highly contagious and fatal disease for wolves, transmitted through direct contact or contaminated surfaces.
 - 📎 **Canine Parvovirus** and **Rabies** pose serious threats to wolves, spreading through bites, saliva, or scratches.
- ✦ **Genetic and Behavioural Risks:**
 - 📎 Cross-breeding between stray dogs and wolves leads to **genetic dilution**, **disrupts wolf pack dynamics**, and creates hybrids with **unpredictable behaviour and health problems**.

💡 Rapid Decline in Wolf Numbers:

- ✦ In 2016, Kadbanwadi had around 70 adult wolves.
- ✦ By December 2024, the count had fallen to 11.
- ✦ The most recent tally recorded just **six wolves** in the region.

💡 Challenges:

- ✦ Officials can remove or kill stray dogs in protected areas like **Kadbanwadi grassland**, a reserve forest, under **Maharashtra Forest Rules (2014)**.
- ✦ However, officials hesitate to act due to potential backlash from animal rights groups.
- ✦ Vaccination of dogs is under consideration, but capturing them remains a challenge.

Dhangar Community

💡 About:

- ✦ The Dhangars are a **traditional shepherd community** spread across several Indian states.
- ✦ Besides **Maharashtra**, they also reside in **Gujarat, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh**.

💡 Legal and Social Status:

- ✦ In Maharashtra, the Dhangars are listed under the **Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT) category**.
- ✦ They typically lead a secluded life, migrating through forests, hills, and mountainous regions.

💡 Population:

- ✦ Dhangar households are **small, tightly-knit, and family-centric**.
- ✦ The community's estimated population is around 1 crore, making up approximately 9% of Maharashtra's total population.
- ✦ The tribe includes nearly **20 sub-castes and clusters**, each with unique customs and cultural practices.

💡 Livelihood and Lifestyle:

- ✦ Their primary **occupation is sheep and goat herding**.
- ✦ They follow a mix of **nomadic pastoralism, semi-nomadic living, and agriculture-based livelihoods** in rural landscapes.

💡 Seasonal Migration:

- ✦ Every year, after the bajra harvest ends in October, Dhangars begin their **seasonal migration to find new grazing grounds** for their livestock.

💡 Cultural Practices:

- ✦ They honour their ancestors through rituals conducted during their migratory journeys.
- ✦ Singing traditional songs, especially at night, is a key aspect of their culture.
- ✦ These songs, known as **Sumbaran**, form a **rich oral tradition** that preserves the history, values, and identity of the Dhangar community.

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Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project

Why in News?

In a significant step towards ensuring **regional water security**, the **governments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to jointly implement the **Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project**.

Key Points

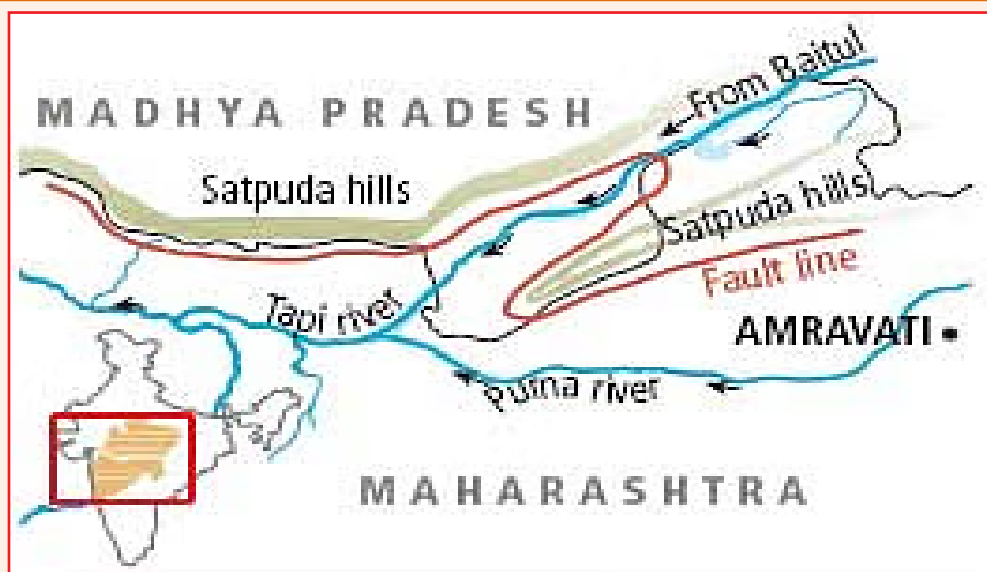
About the Project:

- ✦ The MoU was signed after the first Madhya Pradesh–Maharashtra Inter-State Control Board meeting in 25 years, marking a joint commitment to **sustainably manage inter-State river resources**.
- ✦ **Objective:** The project seeks to address the drinking and irrigation water needs of key regions in both States.
 - ✎ The project plans to **divert water from the Tapti River** (originating in Betul, MP and called Tapi in Maharashtra) to:
 - Serve Nagpur and northeastern **Maharashtra for drinking water**.
 - Support **irrigation in southern and southeastern Madhya Pradesh**, including Burhanpur and Khandwa districts.
 - ✎ The project will use 3,362 hectares in **Madhya Pradesh without displacing villages or requiring rehabilitation**.
- ✦ **Irrigation and Land Coverage Targets:** The project aims to provide permanent irrigation for:
 - ✎ 1,23,082 hectares of Burhanpur and Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh
 - ✎ 2,34,706 hectares of Jalgaon, Akola, Buldhana, Amravati and Nagpur division in Maharashtra.

Other Water Sharing Initiatives of MP: This project marks the third major inter-State water project by Madhya Pradesh within a year, after:

- ✦ **Ken–Betwa link** with Uttar Pradesh.
- ✦ **Parvati–Kalisindh–Chambal link** with Rajasthan.

Tapi River



✦ **About:** The Tapi River is one of the **only three major rivers in India that flow westward**, the other two being the **Narmada** and the **Mahi rivers**.

- ✦ **The Narmada and Tapi rivers** are the major rivers that **flow through rift valleys**.
- ✦ **Origin:** Gawilgarh Hills, part of the central **Deccan Plateau** in south-central Madhya Pradesh.

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States Covered:

- ✦ It covers a total basin area of 65,145 sq.km, which is nearly 2% of India's total geographical area.
- ✦ The river flows through three Indian states:
 - 📌 Maharashtra – 51,504 sq.km. of basin area
 - 📌 Madhya Pradesh – 9,804 sq.km.
 - 📌 Gujarat – 3,837 sq.km.

Geographical Boundaries of the Basin:

- ✦ North – Bounded by the Satpura Range
- ✦ East – By the Mahadev Hills
- ✦ South – By the Ajanta Range and Satmala Hills
- ✦ West – Opens into the Arabian Sea

💡 **Major Tributaries:** The Tapti River's three main tributaries—Purna, Girna, and Panjhra, all originating from the south in Maharashtra.

Hydroelectric Infrastructure:

- ✦ The Ukai Dam is a major hydroelectric project built on the Tapi River.
- ✦ It plays a key role in irrigation, power generation, and water supply for the surrounding regions.

Statue of Shivaji Maharaj at Sindhudurg

Why in News?

On 11 May 2025, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis unveiled a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at the Rajkot Fort in Sindhudurg.



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Key Points

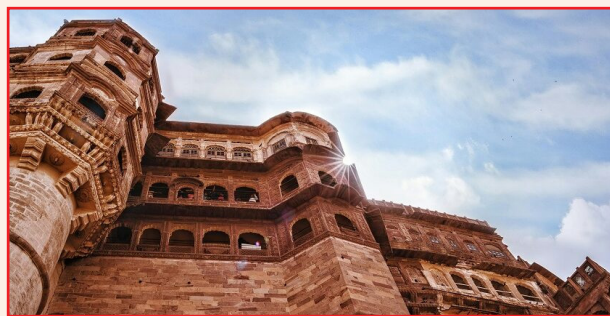
About the Statue:

- ✦ The statue stands **91 feet tall**, including a **10-foot pedestrian base**, making it the **tallest statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in India**.
- ✦ According to the Chief Minister, the grand statue will **inspire future generations and boost tourism** by spurring development in the Sindhudurg region.
- ✦ The **Maharashtra Public Works Department constructed** the statue at a cost of Rs 31.75 crore.
- ✦ Renowned **sculptor Ram Sutar's** company executed the project.
 - ✍ Engineers used **stainless steel framework, M50 grade concrete, and stainless steel bars** to build the structure.
- ✦ The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mumbai** verified the statue's concept and design for structural safety and durability.

About Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj:

- ✦ Born on **19th February 1630**, at **Shivneri Fort, Pune** was a visionary leader from the **Bhonsle clan** and the founder of the **Maratha Empire**, known for resisting the **Mughal Empire** and striving for **self-rule**.
 - ✍ **Major Battles:** Battle of Pratapgad, Battle of Pavan Khind, Sacking of Surat, Battle of Purandar, Battle of Sinhagad, and Battle of Sangamner.
 - The **Wagh nakh**, was used by Shivaji to kill Afzal Khan in the **1659 Battle of Pratapgad**.
 - ✍ **Titles:** Chhatrapati, Shakakarta, Kshatriya Kulavantas, and Haindava Dharmodhhaarak.
 - ✍ **Administration:** Centralized administration with the **Ashtapradhan** (Council of Eight Ministers), abolished the **Jagirdari System**, implemented the **Ryotwari System**, and built a **strong naval force** for coastal defense.
- ✦ Shivaji is renowned for his innovative **guerrilla warfare tactics**, which influenced subsequent rulers and shaped the **Maratha Military Landscapes**.

Rajkot Fort



- ✦ Chhatrapati **Shivaji Maharaj constructed Rajkot Fort** between **1664 and 1667** in **Malvan, Maharashtra**, as part of his **coastal defence strategy**.
- ✦ The fort functioned as a **vital military outpost** for **protecting coastal trade routes** and was **integrated into the broader Sindhudurg Fort complex**.
- ✦ Positioned near **the Arabian Sea**, the fort's robust walls and strategic coastal location reflect the **region's rich maritime heritage** and **naval foresight under Shivaji's rule**.
- ✦ In **1766**, the **British entered into a treaty** with the **Chhatrapati of Karveer** (a branch of the Maratha royal family).
 - ✦ As part of this engagement, the **British sought permission to establish a shipbuilding yard at Rajkot**, highlighting the fort's continued strategic value even in the colonial era.

Illinois Tech University New Campus in India

Why in News?

Illinois Tech University announced that India's **University Grants Commission (UGC)** had formally approved its plan to **open a new campus in Mumbai**, making it the **first American university to receive authorisation** to establish a degree-granting campus in India.

Key Points

About Mumbai Campus:

- ✦ Illinois Tech University will welcome students to its new **Mumbai campus starting in Fall 2026**.

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- ✦ The campus will offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in high-demand fields such as Computer Science, Engineering, and Business.
- ✦ It will deliver the **same** experiential and industry-aligned curriculum as **Illinois Tech's Chicago campus**.
- ✦ It will also include the university's signature Elevate program, which guarantees students access to **hands-on research, internships, and career-enhancing opportunities**.

University Grants Commission (UGC)

About:

- ✦ India's first effort to establish a national education system began with the **1944 Sargeant Report**, which recommended creating a **University Grants Committee**.
 - 📌 Formed in **1945**, the committee initially supervised **Aligarh, Banaras, and Delhi** universities. By **1947**, its scope expanded to include all existing universities.
 - 📌 In **1948**, the **University Education Commission**, led by **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**, recommended its restructuring based on the **UK model**.
 - 📌 In **1952**, the Union Government designated the **University Grants Commission (UGC)** to oversee grants for Central Universities and higher education institutions.
 - Formally inaugurated by **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in 1953**, it became a **statutory body in 1956**. The head office of the UGC is located in **New Delhi**.

Composition:

- ✦ UGC is made up of a **Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and 10 other members**. The Central Government appoints all members of the UGC.

Key Functions:

- ✦ Assess universities' financial needs, and allocate and disburse grants for maintenance, development, and other purposes.
 - 📌 Recommends improvements in higher education and assists in implementation.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Circuit Tour

Why in News?

The **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)** announced the launch of the first **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Circuit Tour** via the **Bharat Gaurav tourist train** starting **9 June 2025**, to commemorate the **350th anniversary of the legendary Maratha ruler's coronation**.

Key Points

Details of the Tour:

- ✦ The initiative is being **jointly promoted by IRCTC, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), and the Government of Maharashtra**.
- ✦ The Bharat Gaurav tourist train will begin its journey on June 9 from **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT), Mumbai**.
 - 📌 It can accommodate a **total of 748 passengers**.

Places Covered Under the Tour:

✦ Raigad Fort (Raigad District)

- 📌 **Significance:** On **6th June, 1674 CE** a grand coronation ceremony of **Shivaji Maharaj** was held on Raigad post, during which he **attained the title of "Chhatrapati"**.
- 📌 The fort served as the **second capital** of Shivaji Maharaj and played an **important role in the administration and expansion** of the Maratha Kingdom.

✦ Shivneri Fort (Junnar, Pune District)

- 📌 **Significance:** **Birthplace** of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
- 📌 Shivneri Fort has ancient origins, with references dating back to the **Satavahana and Yadava dynasties**.
- 📌 Over time, it changed hands from the **Bahmani Empire** to the Marathas under the leadership of Shivaji Maharaj.

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✦ Bhimashankar (near Junnar, Pune District)

- ✎ **Significance:** It is one of the 12 holy Jyotirlinga shrines in India.
- ✎ Originally **built in the 13th century**, the temple reflects the craftsmanship of the **Vishwakarma sculptors**.
- ✎ Maratha statesman **Nana Phadnavis added the shikharas in the 18th century**, while Shivaji Maharaj is believed to have supported worship through his patronage.

✦ Pratapgad Fort (Satara District)

- ✎ **Significance:** The **Battle of Pratapgarh**, fought on **November 10, 1659**, at Pratapgad Fort was a **pivotal victory for the Marathas**, led by Chhatrapati Shivaji, over the Adilshahi forces commanded by **General Afzal Khan**.

✦ Panhala Fort (Kolhapur District)

- ✎ **Significance:** It served as a **crucial Maratha stronghold** and was also the **residence of Shivaji Maharaj during significant periods** of his reign.

- ✎ Earlier, buyers had to register property only at the local sub-registrar's office, even if it was overcrowded or difficult to reach, leading to delays and inconvenience.

✦ The move **simplifies property transactions in high-activity zones** like Mumbai, Pune, and Thane, where real estate deals are frequent.

✦ **NRIs, senior citizens, legal professionals, and real estate agents** will particularly benefit from the flexibility and time saved.

💡 Tech Upgrades:

✦ The **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** is helping modernise backend systems with advanced tech like:

- ✎ **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**-based e-measurements
- ✎ **Drone**-based **land mapping**
- ✎ **Blockchain**-enabled land records

✦ These upgrades aim to:

- ✎ Improve accuracy in records
- ✎ Speed up transactions
- ✎ Prevent fraud, duplication, and property disputes

One State One Registration Policy

Why in News?

On 1 May 2025, the Maharashtra government launched the “One State, One Registration” scheme, enabling citizens to register property documents at any sub-registrar office across the state, irrespective of the property's location.

Key Points

💡 About the Policy:

- ✦ The state government introduced the policy to eliminate the restriction of registering property documents only in the area where the property is located.

National Informatics Centre

- 💡 NIC provides **network backbone and e-Governance** support to the Central Government, State Governments and UT Administrations.
- 💡 NIC has been closely associated with the Government in different aspects of Governance besides establishing a **Nationwide State-of-the-Art information and communication technology (ICT) Infrastructure**.
- 💡 It has also built a large number of digital solutions to support the government at various levels, making the **last-mile delivery of government services to the citizens a reality**.
- 💡 It is under the aegis of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**.
- 💡 It was **established in 1976** and is **located in New Delhi**.

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GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGY

GT facilitates the process of capturing/storing/processing/ displaying/ disseminating information tied to a location (static or dynamic)

TECHNOLOGIES UNDER GT

- **Remote sensing** – Detecting/monitoring the physical characteristics of an area typically from satellite or aircraft
- **Global Positioning System (GPS)** – A satellite navigation system to determine the ground position of an object
- **Geographic Information System (GIS)** – Computer system for capturing, storing and displaying data related to positions on Earth's surface
- **3-D Modelling** – Creating three-dimensional representations of an object or a surface

APPLICATIONS OF GT

- Climate Change and Disaster Management (Ex - Advance Warnings)
- Earth Observation Capabilities (Ex- Vegetation, water quality)
- Healthcare (Ex- Monitoring contact tracing)
- Societal Problems (Ex-Education, livelihood, financial inclusion)
- Logistics (Ex- Tracking goods)
- Real estate (Ex- Analyzing real estate objects remotely)

INDIA'S GEOSPATIAL SECTOR

■ GEOSPATIAL ECONOMY

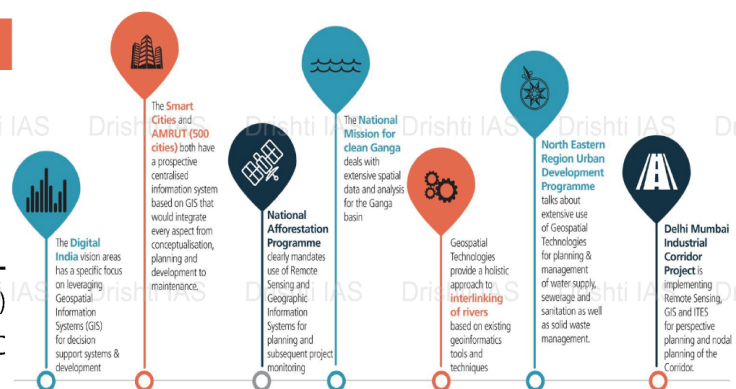
- ◆ Expected to cross ₹63,000 crore by 2025
- ◆ Growth rate of 12.8%

■ National Geospatial Policy 2022

- ◆ **Geospatial Data Promotion and Development Committee** (apex body to be formed)
- ◆ **DST to be the nodal dept.** of GT; GDPDC will recommend DST

◆ Milestones to Achieve:

- By 2030 - High resolution topographical survey and mapping
- By 2035 - National Digital Twin (virtual replica) of major cities/towns



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Pushpak Drone Mission

Why in News?

The central government has appointed the **Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B)** to lead the 'Pushpak – National Mission on Drone Technology', which promotes the **development of indigenous drone technology** across various sectors.

Key Points

Overview of the Mission:

- ✦ The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** launched the 'Pushpak – National Mission on Drone Technology' with a total grant-in-aid of Rs 82.7 crore.

Participating Institutes and Their Focus Areas:

- ✦ **IIT Bombay** has been appointed to lead the mission. It will focus on:
 - Developing hybrid drones and indigenous processors.
 - Creating **Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)** for disaster management, coastal monitoring, and specialised uses.
 - Facilitating collaboration between academia and industry to drive innovation in **next-gen drone technologies**.
- ✦ **Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI) Mumbai** will focus on:
 - Developing secure embedded systems and enhancing drone communication security.
 - Establishing a **dedicated drone security lab and forensic unit** to:
 - Track drone flight patterns within Indian airspace.
 - Detecting and mitigating drone-related threats.

- Contribute to **long-term cyber-security solutions** for drones.

✦ Other participating institutions include:

- CDAC-Thiruvananthapuram
- CDAC-Bengaluru
- IIT-Gandhinagar
- IISER-Bhopal
- Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education (Tamil Nadu)

Mission Objectives and Strategic Vision:

- ✦ The Pushpak mission aims to make India **self-reliant** in drone technology through:
 - ✦ Advanced research and development (R&D).
 - ✦ Strategic partnerships with industry players.
 - ✦ Real-world testing and rapid commercialisation of technologies.
- ✦ The mission will function under the oversight of a **National Steering Committee (NSC)**, comprising senior government officials and domain experts.

The mission aims to:

- ✦ Reduce reliance on foreign technologies.
- ✦ Enhance safety and **national security**.
- ✦ Create employment opportunities in the drone sector.
- ✦ Advance core capabilities in **AI integration, UAV traffic management, and indigenous manufacturing**.

Support for Innovation and Talent Development:

- ✦ Pushpak will promote **faster technology transfer from research labs to the market**.
- ✦ It will provide:
 - ✦ Incubation support to drone-based startups.
 - ✦ Advanced training opportunities for students and researchers in drone-related fields.

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DRONE TECHNOLOGY



Drone is a pilotless flying machine, using aerodynamics for lift, can operate autonomously or remotely, and may carry lethal or nonlethal cargo.



COMPONENTS.

- ✎ Unmanned aircraft (UA)
- ✎ Control system (ground control station - GCS)
- ✎ Control link (specialized datalink)
- ✎ Other related support equipment



CLASSIFICATION.

(as per Drone Rules, 2021)

- ✎ Nano: <250 gm
- ✎ Small: 25 kg to 150 kg
- ✎ Micro: 250 gm to 2 kg
- ✎ Large: >150 kg
- ✎ Mini: 2 kg to 25 kg

APPLICATIONS

- ✎ **Mapping & Surveying** (asset inspection, roof inspections)
- ✎ **Agriculture** (bird control, crop spraying & monitoring etc)
- ✎ Multispectral/thermal/NIR cameras, **Aerial Photo/videography** and Live streaming events
- ✎ **Emergency Response** (search and rescue, marine rescue, fire fighting)
- ✎ **Disaster** (zone mapping, disaster relief etc)
- ✎ **Mining**
- ✎ **Monitoring Poachers**
- ✎ **Meteorology**, Aviation, Payload carrying

DRONES IN DEFENCE

Purpose

- Surveillance and Reconnaissance
- Search and Rescue
- Maritime Surveillance
- Combat Drones
- Offensive (heterogeneous SWARM drones)
- Counter-Terrorism Operations

India's Counter-Drone System

- **Indrajaal** (India's inaugural autonomous drone-defense dome)
- Procurement of combat-capable **Heron drones from Israel**
- Acquisition of **MQ-9B Armed Drones from the US**

RELATED REGULATIONS

- ✎ Aircraft (Security) Rules, 2023
- ✎ Drones Rules, 2021 and Drone (Amendment) Rules, 2022



INDIA'S INITIATIVES.

- ✎ Digital Sky Platform
- ✎ No-Permission-No-Takeoff (NPNT) framework
- ✎ PLI Scheme for Drones
- ✎ Drone Shakti Scheme



ISSUES.

- ✎ Increased risk of armed attacks
- ✎ Data security
- ✎ **Cheaper cost** enables a larger population to procure drones
- ✎ Use of drones in warfare (**remote warfare**)
- ✎ **Procurement by non-state actors** can pose serious threats
- ✎ Ease in **delivering mass destruction weapons**



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Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT)

Why in News?

Union Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the establishment of the **Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT)** at the **World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES)**.

Key Points

About IICT:

- ✦ The newly established IICT will serve as a **centre for talent development** focused on the intersection of **creativity, technology, and innovation**.
- ✦ The institute will house state-of-the-art facilities, including **immersive studios, animation and gaming labs, virtual production setups, editing and sound suites, and smart classrooms** to support hands-on learning and innovation.
- ✦ The **permanent IICT campus** will be built across ten acres at **Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari (Film City), Goregaon, Mumbai**.
 - 📎 Initial operations will commence at a **temporary facility in the Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC)**.
- ✦ Demonstrating broad industry support, seven leading tech companies—**JioStar, Google, Adobe, Meta, Apple, NVIDIA, and Microsoft**—have extended formal Letters of Intent to partner with IICT.
- ✦ This will help strengthen the institute's foundation by **co-developing cutting-edge skills, tools, and platforms** relevant to the evolving creative economy.

WAVES 2025:

- ✦ It is the **first World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit**, held at the **Jio World**

Convention Centre, Mumbai, and hosted by the Government of India.

- ✦ It aims to position India as a global hub for **Media & Entertainment (M&E)**, intellectual property, and technological innovation.
- ✦ The summit highlights India's prowess in content creation and tech innovation across **Broadcasting, Films, Animation, Gaming, Digital Media, Artificial Intelligence**, and more.
- ✦ WAVES 2025 features the **WAVES Bazaar**, a global digital marketplace connecting creators with buyers and investors.

Leopard Census

Why in News?

The **Maharashtra forest department** has released the latest **leopard census**, revealing at least 54 leopards within the park and its surrounding areas.

Key Points

Camera-Trap Survey:

- ✦ The **Wildlife Conservation Society India**, in collaboration with the **Maharashtra Forest Department** and support from **WeWork India Management Limited**, led a large-scale camera-trap survey.
- ✦ The survey covered **Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP)**, **Aarey Milk Colony**, and **Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary (TWLS)**.

Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP)

About:

- 📎 SGNP, formerly known as **Borivali National Park**, is a major protected green space located near **Borivali in northern Mumbai**.
- 📎 The park spans both the **Thane District** and **Mumbai Suburban District** in Maharashtra.

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- With a spread of 103 square kilometres, it ranks among the largest national parks located within a metropolitan city.

✦ Natural Richness and Biodiversity:

- SGNP is known for its dense forests, rich birdlife, diverse butterfly species, and even a small population of tigers.
- The park is home to a variety of trees such as Kadamba, Teak, Karanj, Shisham, and other species including Acacia, Ziziphus, and Euphorbias.

✦ Wildlife in SGNP:

- SGNP supports a wide range of mammals, including mongoose, four-horned antelope, sambar, wild boar, langur, monkey, and panthers.
- Other notable species include the Atlas moth and Magar (mugger crocodile).
- The park records 251 bird species and hosts a large variety of butterflies.

✦ Historical and Cultural Significance:

- At the heart of the park lie the Kanheri Caves, carved between the 9th and 1st centuries BCE by Buddhist monks.
- These caves served as a major Buddhist learning centre and pilgrimage site, sculpted from a basaltic rock outcrop.

💡 Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary:

✦ About:

- Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the Palghar district of Maharashtra, approximately 75 km from Mumbai.
- The sanctuary covers an area of 85 square kilometres, largely consisting of hilly terrain.

✦ Ecological Significance:

- It serves as an important wildlife corridor connecting Sanjay Gandhi National Park

(SGNP) and Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary, supporting animal movement and genetic diversity.

- The landscape includes dense forests, rolling hills, and several streams and small rivers.

✦ Vegetation and Flora:

- The sanctuary's vegetation is a unique mix of Dry Deciduous, Moist Deciduous, and Semi-Evergreen forests.
- Prominent tree species include teak, bamboo, and mango.

✦ Wildlife and Birdlife:

- Frequently sighted mammals include leopards, wild boars, barking deer, langurs, bonnet macaques, rhesus macaques, and black-naped hares.
- The sanctuary is rich in bird diversity, hosting species such as the Crested Serpent-eagle, Jungle Owlet, White-eyed Buzzard, Oriental Honey-buzzard, Emerald Dove, and Heart-spotted Woodpecker.

✦ Cultural and Religious Importance:

- Tungareshwar is home to several ancient temples, the most notable being the Tungareshwar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, attracting pilgrims and trekkers alike.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)-India

- WCS-India is a Section 25 (association having objects to promote commerce, art, science, religion, charity or any other useful purpose and not having any profit motive) non-profit organization in India, demonstrates a strong commitment to conservation.
- It operates in full compliance with Indian regulations, emphasizing its dedication to preserving the country's natural environment and its rich biodiversity.

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EAT

- True carnivores that are excellent ambush predators
- Feed on anything they can overpower, from mid-size ungulates, to domestic livestock, dogs, birds, and rodents

ACTIVITY

- Mostly solitary, nocturnal creatures, also seen at dusk and dawn in forests. Entirely nocturnal close to human presence
- Territorial.
- Leopard densities can reach 5 animals per 100 sq km in densely populated human landscapes like western India

BLACK PANTHER

- Dark morphs or black leopards, often called black panthers, are the same species, but with recessive melanistic genes
- Spots are hidden under the dark coat

PANTHERA PARDUS FUSCA

INDIAN LEOPARD

Highly adaptable big cat can live close to humans

POPULATION around 7,910 (2014 census in surveyed areas); thought to be around 12,000-14,000 across India	WEIGHT 50-77 kg (males); 29-34 kg (females)	GEOGRAPHIC RANGE Indian subcontinent (all states), Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, China	HABITAT Forest, shrubland, savanna, grassland, rocky areas, mountains, desert
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Coats have black rosettes

Each coat pattern is unique and makes individuals identifiable

Large head, powerful jaws

Have an easily recognisable sawing/rasping call

CUBS

- Females usually give birth to two cubs after a gestation period of 90-105 days
- Only the female cares for the cubs, who remain with the mother for about 1.5-2 years

AGILE CAT

- Excellent at climbing trees
- Can run down a tree head-first
- Can carry large prey up a tree to protect it from other carnivores including tigers and wild dogs

THREATS

- A TRAFFIC study reports that between 2001-2010 at least 2 leopards were killed each week for the illegal wildlife trade in India
- Population has declined by 75-90% in the last two centuries
- Poisoning and retaliatory killing
- Poaching for pelts and body parts.
- Become roadkill when roads and highways run through forests
- Conflict with livestock herders
- Hunting

PROTECTION STATUS:
VULNERABLE on the IUCN Red List

National Ayush Mission Conclave 2025

Why in News?

The **National Ayush Mission (NAM) Conclave 2025** began at **Kaivalyadhama, Lonavala (Maharashtra)**, showcasing the progress made by various States and Union Territories in the Ayush sector.

Key Points

🔦 NAM Conclave 2025:

- ✦ The event aims to set a **roadmap for integrating Ayush into mainstream healthcare**.
- ✦ **Ayush and Health Ministers** from several states, including Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Mizoram, attended the conclave.
- ✦ **Objective:**
 - 📌 Organised by **the Ministry of Ayush**, the event brought together experts, policymakers, and innovators.
 - 📌 Its goal is to make **traditional Indian medicine more accessible, affordable, and evidence-based**.
- ✦ **Key Achievements:**
 - 📌 Since the 2023 NAM Conclave, efforts have led to the formulation of an action plan for better NAM execution.
 - 📌 The establishment of **12,500 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs** increased healthcare access from 1.5 crore (2021) to over 11.5 crore beneficiaries (2025).

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★ State-Level Successes:

- ✍ **Uttar Pradesh:** Now has 3,959 operational Ayush hospitals.
- ✍ **Chhattisgarh:** Promotes integrative medicine for holistic healthcare.
- ✍ **Rajasthan:** Preparing a comprehensive Ayush policy.
- ✍ **Himachal Pradesh:** Uses tech-based integrated Ayush model focusing on women's health.
- ✍ **Mizoram:** Witnessed rapid growth in Ayush popularity post establishment of Wellness Centres.
- ✍ **Sikkim:** Strengthened rural outreach with NAM support.

★ Key Outcomes and Announcements:

- ✍ 5.6 crore people accessed tertiary care in Ayush institutions.
- ✍ **National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) entry-level certification** granted to 1,372 Ayush Health & Wellness Centres.
- ✍ 189 Integrated Ayush Hospitals have been established.
- ✍ Launch of Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs):
 - STGs for metabolic disorders—**Diabetes, Obesity, Gout, NAFLD, and Dyslipidemia**—were released.
 - Developed with inputs from Research Councils and allopathic experts.
 - Guidelines integrate **Yoga, dietary protocols, and clinical procedures** for wider adoption.

National Ayush Mission (NAM)

- 💡 **Launched in 2014** to integrate traditional Indian medicine into mainstream healthcare.
- 💡 Focuses on increasing availability and quality of Ayush services through **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs**.
- 💡 NAM 2023 resolutions included expanding Health & Wellness Centres and integrating Ayush with National Health Programs.

National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH)

- 💡 NABH is a **constituent board of Quality Council of India**, set up to **establish and operate accreditation programmes for healthcare organisations**.
- 💡 **Scope of NABH /Objectives:**
 - ✦ Accreditation of healthcare facilities
 - ✦ Quality promotion: initiatives like Safe-I, Nursing Excellence, Laboratory certification programs (but not limited to these)
 - ✦ IEC activities: public lecture, advertisement, workshops/ seminars
 - ✦ Education and Training for Quality & Patient Safety
 - ✦ Recognition: Endorsement of various healthcare quality courses/ workshops

Iconic Sword of Raghuj Bhosale I

Why in News?

The **Maharashtra government** has successfully reclaimed the **iconic sword** of legendary **Maratha warrior Raghuj Bhosale I**, at an auction conducted by Sotheby's in London.



Key Points

- 💡 **Historic Achievement by Maharashtra:**
 - ✦ The reclaimed item is the **18th-century sword of Raghuj Bhosale I**, a legendary Maratha general and founder of the Nagpur-based Bhosale dynasty.

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✦ Raje Mudhoji Bhosale of the **Nagpur royal family welcomed the move** and praised the timely intervention of both state and central authorities.

✦ Officials confirmed that the sword will soon return to India and is expected to be **displayed in a museum or heritage centre**.

💡 Legacy of Raghuji Bhosale I:

✦ Raghuji Bhosale I (1695–1755) served as a **prominent general under Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj**.

✦ He **earned the title ‘Senasaheb Subha’** for his military prowess.

✦ He **led major campaigns in Bengal (1745 and 1755)**, expanding Maratha control into Bengal and Odisha.

✦ Raghuji also **extended his influence into Chanda, Chhattisgarh, and Sambalpur**.

✦ His **victories in South India**, including over the Nawabs of Kurnool and Cuddapah, helped solidify Maratha dominance.

💡 Historical and Artistic Value of the Sword:

✦ The reclaimed sword is an example of the **‘firangi’ style** — featuring a straight, European blade combined with a locally crafted Mulheri hilt.

✦ The hilt is intricately decorated with **koftgiri gold inlay and wrapped in green cloth**.

✦ An **inscription** in Devanagari reads: **“Shrimant Raghoji Bhosale Senasaheb Subha Firang”**, suggesting the sword belonged to or was custom-made for Raghuji Bhosale.

✦ The European blade bears a manufacturer’s mark, highlighting the global arms trade and Indo-European fusion of the 18th century.

💡 Possible Historical Origins of the Sword:

✦ Experts speculate the sword may have been part of the loot seized by the **British after the 1817 Battle of Sitabuldi**, where the East India Company defeated the Nagpur Bhosales.

✦ It may also have been gifted to the British in the aftermath of the battle.

Nagpur Bhosales

💡 The Nagpur branch of the **Bhonsle dynasty** was **established by Raghoji Bhonsle I in the early 18th century**.

💡 Under Raghoji’s leadership, Maratha influence spread across central and eastern India, including parts of modern-day **Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha**.

💡 The Nagpur Bhonsles **identified themselves as Kshatriyas** and traced their ancestry to the **Sisodia Rajputs of Udaipur**, highlighting their royal heritage.

💡 The family earned the title “Hinganikar” because an ancestor—likely a contemporary of **Maloji Bhonsle (grandfather of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj)**—rehabilitated the village of Beradi near Hingani in present-day Pune.

💡 The Nagpur Bhonsles ruled over a **region rich in iron and copper**, materials that were expertly used to produce both everyday tools and high-quality weaponry.

💡 The weapons manufactured under the Bhonsles were celebrated for their superior **craftsmanship, artistry, and functional design**—reflecting a blend of martial skill and aesthetic excellence.

Maharashtra 65th Foundation Day

Why in News?

Maharashtra celebrated its **65th Foundation Day** on **1st May 2025** with grand events across the State, showcasing its **rich cultural, historical, and social legacy**.

Key Points

💡 Historical Significance of Maharashtra Day:

✦ Pre- Independence:

📌 Before independence, present-day Maharashtra and Gujarat were part of the **Bombay Presidency**—a large British administrative region with diverse linguistic and cultural communities.

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★ Post-Independence:

- ✍ After **India gained independence in 1947**, the Bombay Presidency was **reorganized into Bombay State**.
- ✍ The new state **included both Marathi and Gujarati-speaking populations**, leading to **rising linguistic tensions** over time.
- ✍ Marathi-speaking citizens launched the **Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti**, demanding a separate state for Marathi speakers.
- ✍ The **Gujarati-speaking community began advocating for the formation of a separate state** of Gujarat.

★ Fazal Ali Commission:

- ✍ In **1953**, the Central Government appointed the **Fazal Ali Commission** to examine state boundaries and recommend reorganization.
- ✍ Based on the Commission's report, the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956** was enacted.
- ✍ However, **Bombay State remained undivided**, leading to further discontent as it was not reorganized on a linguistic basis.
- ✍ The **United Maharashtra Movement (Samyukta Maharashtra Andolan)** gained widespread support and witnessed several instances of protest and martyrdom.

★ Formation of Maharashtra and Gujarat:

- ✍ Responding to mass movements, the Central Government passed the **Bombay Reorganisation Act, 1960**.
- ✍ On 1 May 1960, Bombay State was officially divided into two separate states:
 - **Maharashtra for Marathi and Konkani-speaking people.**
 - **Gujarat for Gujarati and Kutchi-speaking communities.**

★ Significance of the Reorganisation:

- ✍ The formation of Maharashtra and Gujarat provided **constitutional recognition to linguistic identity in India**.
- ✍ It set a **precedent for future state formations** based on language and cultural cohesion.

💡 State-Level Celebrations:

- ★ The state Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis paid homage to **martyrs of the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement** at Hutatma Chowk in Mumbai.
 - ✍ He reiterated the State's vision of becoming a trillion-dollar economy, drawing inspiration from figures like **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** and **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**.
- ★ CM announced a **new 100-day development initiative** aimed at accelerating **infrastructure growth** and **strengthening the State's economy**.
- ★ He also announced a Cabinet-approved policy to **develop Maharashtra's shipbuilding, shipbreaking, and ship repair sectors**.
 - ✍ The policy aims to **build a robust industrial ecosystem**, boost economic growth, and generate substantial employment.
- ★ In Mumbai, **Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan** and former Governor Ramesh Bais participated in ceremonial events, **paying tributes** to Maharashtra's historical icons including **Shivaji Maharaj, B.G. Tilak, V.D. Savarkar, Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule**, and Dr. Ambedkar.

CareEdge State Ranking Report 2025

Why in News?

Maharashtra has emerged as the top-performing state in the **CareEdge State Ranking Report 2025** released by **CARE Ratings Ltd (CareEdge Ratings)**, India's **second-largest rating agency**.

Key Points

💡 The CareEdge State Rankings:

★ About:

- ✍ It is the **second edition of the CareEdge State Rankings**, which offers a holistic evaluation of state performance across seven key pillars:
 - Economic performance
 - Fiscal management
 - Infrastructure development
 - Financial sector growth

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- Social development
- Governance quality
- Environmental sustainability

Together, these pillars are **assessed using 50 measurable indicators**.

✦ Aim:

- ✎ The primary aim is to **provide a quantitative, data-driven evaluation of how Indian states are performing** across critical development dimensions.
- ✎ The rankings serve as a **benchmarking tool to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities** for policy improvement.

✦ Approach and Methodology:

- ✎ The report adopts an **objective and evidence-based approach**, focusing on both sustained growth and the inclusiveness of development models.
- ✎ It also evaluates investment potential, making the **findings relevant for businesses, investors, and policymakers**.

✦ Scope of the Assessment:

- ✎ The rankings encompass a broad spectrum of **governance** and development indicators, offering a comprehensive picture of state-level competitiveness.
- ✎ The assessment reflects both current performance and long-term capacity for growth.
- ✎ The **rankings exclude Union Territories** and aim to present a data-driven assessment of state competitiveness and investment appeal.

💡 State's Ranking 2025:

✦ Top Performers Among Large States:

- ✎ **Maharashtra** secured the top rank in CareEdge Ratings' 2025 Composite State Ranking.
- ✎ **Gujarat and Karnataka** followed, occupying the second and third positions respectively.
- ✎ Western (Maharashtra, Gujarat) and Southern states (**Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu**) dominate the **top five ranks**.

✦ Bottom Performers Among Large States:

- ✎ **Bihar (17th), Jharkhand (16th), and Madhya Pradesh (15th)** were the lowest ranked large states.

✦ Performance Highlights by Region:

- ✎ **Western States:** Excelled in **economic, fiscal, and financial development** indicators.
- ✎ **Southern States:** Strong performers in governance, environment, financial development, and economic pillars.
- ✎ Group B (Northeast, Hilly & Small States) Rankings:
 - **Goa topped the list**, with high scores in financial development, infrastructure, fiscal, social, and economic indicators.
 - **Other top performers:** Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, and Assam.
 - **Nagaland (11th), Manipur (10th), and Arunachal Pradesh (9th)** were at the bottom of Group B.

💡 Notable Subject-wise Highlights:

✦ Economic Rankings:

- ✎ **Gujarat led the economic pillar**, driven by strong per capita GSDP, FDI inflow, and Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF).
- ✎ **Karnataka and Maharashtra** followed due to robust industrial and service sector contributions.
- ✎ In **Group B, Sikkim performed best**, led by strong GSDP and sectoral output.

✦ Fiscal Rankings:

- ✎ **Odisha ranked highest** due to effective **debt management**, low revenue deficit, and prudent expenditure.
- ✎ Gujarat and Maharashtra followed.
- ✎ In Group B, **Uttarakhand** stood out for maintaining low deficits and better public spending.

✦ Financial Development Rankings:

- ✎ **Maharashtra topped this category** with high credit disbursements and deep penetration of mutual funds and insurance.

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✎ **Telangana and Haryana followed;** the latter excelled in NBFC credit and PMJDY balances.

✎ Goa led Group B with a wide margin.

✦ Infrastructure Rankings:

✎ **Punjab and Haryana** led among large states due to high power availability, rail density, and irrigated land.

✎ In Group B, Goa performed best, backed by strong scores in road and rail density, air traffic, and doctor availability.

✦ Social Rankings:

✎ **Kerala topped the social pillar** with impressive indicators, though it lagged in unemployment.

✎ **Tamil Nadu** also showed consistent performance.

✎ In Group B, Goa and Mizoram led with strong outcomes in literacy, infant mortality, and poverty reduction.

✦ Governance Rankings:

✎ **Andhra Pradesh topped with high scores** in court efficiency, business environment, and public e-services.

✎ **Madhya Pradesh followed,** noted for judicial delivery and digital governance.

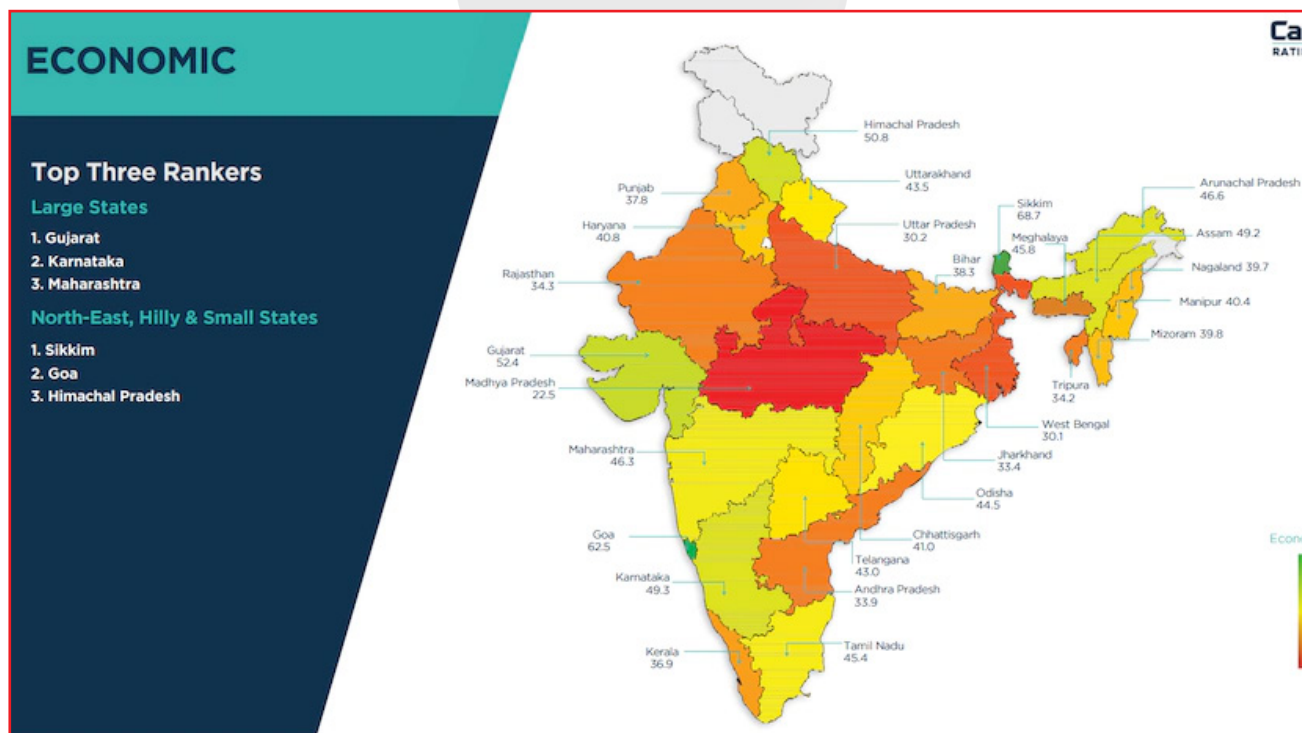
✎ In Group B, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh **excelled in governance metrics.**

✦ Environment Rankings:

✎ Karnataka led in air quality and **renewable energy.**

✎ Telangana performed well in forest cover growth and drinking water access.

✎ In Group B, Himachal Pradesh stood out with strong performance in **green energy, water access, and forest conservation.**



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WAVES 2025 Summit begins in Mumbai

Why in News?

The Government of India begins the **World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025** at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai.

Key Points

WAVES 2025:

- ✦ It is a global summit for the **media and entertainment (M&E) industry**, organized by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.
- ✦ It aims to **promote dialogue, innovation, and collaboration** across the media and entertainment (M&E) sector, boosting India's role as a global hub for digital content and innovation.

Four Core Pillars of the Summit:

- ✦ **WAVES 2025 is built around four key thematic tracks:**
 - ✍ Broadcasting & Infotainment
 - ✍ **AVGC-XR** (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics & Extended Reality)
 - ✍ Digital Media & Innovation
 - ✍ Films
- ✦ These tracks cover a wide spectrum from traditional broadcasting to cutting-edge technologies such as **generative AI**, virtual reality, and the **metaverse**.

Create in India Challenge & The Creatosphere:

- ✦ A key attraction is the **"Create in India Challenge"**, which received over **85,000 entries**, including **1,100 from abroad**.
- ✦ After a rigorous selection process, **750 finalists** will showcase their talent at the **Creatosphere**, a dedicated exhibition space.
- ✦ **The Creatosphere includes:**
 - ✍ Masterclasses and workshops
 - ✍ A gaming arena
 - ✍ **The Grand Finale** of the challenge
 - ✍ The WAVES CIC Awards

Global Media Dialogue and Thought Leadership:

- ✦ On 2 May, the **Global Media Dialogue** will bring together policymakers, media professionals, and industry leaders to discuss **international collaboration, media ethics, and innovation**.
- ✦ The **Thought Leaders Track** will host global CEOs and experts for plenary and breakout sessions, focusing on **strategic partnerships and emerging trends**.

WaveXcelerator:

- ✦ The **WaveXcelerator platform** will connect **startups with investors and mentors** through live pitch sessions.
- ✦ It aims to **nurture innovation** and accelerate the growth of India's **media and entertainment startup ecosystem**.

WAVES Bazaar and Viewing Room Library:

- ✦ The **WAVES Bazaar** will serve as a marketplace for content creators and media professionals to explore **collaboration and content trade**.
- ✦ The **Viewing Room Library** will screen **100 curated films** from **eight countries**, including India, the USA, Germany, Sri Lanka, and the UAE.

Bharat Pavilion:

- ✦ The **Bharat Pavilion** will feature four immersive storytelling zones — **Shruti, Kriti, Drishti, and Creator's Leap** — under the theme **"Kala to Code"**.
- ✦ These zones celebrate India's transition from traditional arts to **digital creativity and global cultural engagement**.

Technology, Innovation & Community Media:

- ✦ The **Exhibition Pavilion** will showcase the latest **technological innovations** in the media and entertainment sector.
- ✦ A **National Sammelan on Community Radio** will highlight the role of local radio in **empowering communities and amplifying grassroots voices**.

Cultural Showcase:

- ✦ WAVES 2025 also features a **cultural programme** with Indian and international performances, celebrating the power of media to foster **cross-cultural dialogue and understanding**.

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Multi Modal Logistic Park in Nagpur

Why in News?

Under the **PM Gati Shakti initiative**, the **Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP)** at Nagpur, Maharashtra began commercial operations to boost seamless connectivity and reduce travel time across transport modes.

Key Points

About MMLP Nagpur:

- ✦ The Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) Nagpur is developed by **National Highway Logistics Management Limited (NHLML)**.
- 📎 NHLML, a wholly owned subsidiary of **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**, has partnered with a private

developer to build the MMLP over 150 acres in three phases under a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model**.

- ✦ The total **concession period is 45 years**, with a project cost of Rs 673 crore.
- 📎 **Phase-I** is being developed with an investment of Rs 137 crore.
- ✦ The project is expected to **generate employment, support regional economic development**, and position Nagpur as a logistics hub within central India.

Strategic Importance:

- ✦ MMLP Nagpur aims to **enhance multi-modal freight movement**, reducing both logistics cost and transit time.
- ✦ It will **provide modern warehousing and real-time tracking capabilities** to improve the efficiency of India's freight ecosystem.

Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP)

About:

- ✦ Developed under a '**Hub & Spoke**' model, the MMLP will integrate multiple modes of freight transport through **highways, railways & inland waterways**.
- ✦ The Multi Modal Logistic Park project is poised to **develop state-of-the-art large scale warehousing facilities** for different types of commodities, to become a **one stop solution for all services** related to cargo movement like **warehousing, custom clearance, parking, maintenance of trucks etc.**
- 📎 **It will have all the facilities like** warehouses, railway siding, cold storage, custom clearance house, yard facility, workshops, petrol pumps, truck parking, administrative building, boarding lodging, eating joints, water treatment plant, etc.

Focus:

- ✦ The MMLPs will focus on a **technology driven implementation** for a state-of-the-art freight management system.
- 📎 Many value-added services like **packaging, repackaging and labelling** will be available in these projects.
- ✦ MMLP will be a **freight handling facility for mechanised material handling and value-added services** along with other associated facilities.

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

- 📌 NHAI was established under the **NHAI Act of 1988** under the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**.
- 📌 It oversees the **National Highways Development Project (NHDP)** and other projects.
- 📌 India's national highway network covers about **146,000 kilometers**.

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PM GatiShakti

- 💡 The PM Gati Shakti, launched in October 2021 is a transformative Rs. 100 lakh crore initiative aimed at **revolutionising India's infrastructure** over the next five years.
- 💡 It has been developed as a **Digital Master Planning tool** by **BISAG-N (Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics)**.
 - ✦ It has been prepared in a **dynamic Geographic Information System (GIS) platform** wherein data on specific action plans of all the Ministries/Departments have been incorporated within a comprehensive database.
- 💡 The plan seeks to **accelerate project completion**, reduce timelines, and enhance India's global competitiveness by breaking down inter-ministerial obstacles.
- 💡 The vision of PM GatiShakti is to **create a world-class infrastructure** that improves the **ease of living, boosts economic growth** and makes Indian businesses more competitive.

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Summary

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Details

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