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# Content

● Oran Lands Classified as Forests.....	3
● Ker Sangri Received GI Tag .....	3
● Urban Improvement Trust (UIT) in Balotra .....	4
● Keoladeo National Park .....	5
● SC Approves Wetlands Near Ana Sagar Lake.....	7
● ASI to Restore Bhand Devra Temple in Rajasthan .....	8
● Tanot Mata Temple and Jaisalmer Fort .....	9
● Development Projects in Rajasthan .....	11
● International Day for Biological Diversity 2025 .....	12
● Non-functioning of Permanent Lok Adalats in Rajasthan.....	14
● Pradhan Mantri Divyasha Kendra (PMDK) in Kota .....	15
● National Cooperative Spice Fair 2025 .....	16
● Krishak Uphar Scheme.....	16
● Maharana Pratap Jayanti.....	17
● Greenfield Airport in Kota .....	18
● Power Purchase Agreement with RVUNL.....	18
● Cheetah Conservation Corridor .....	19
● Elites Smart Government Excellence Award .....	20
● Malaria Elimination in Rajasthan.....	21
● Under-20 National Wrestling Championship.....	21
● Mission Parinda Campaign .....	22

## Oran Lands Classified as Forests

### Why in News?

The Rajasthan government has initiated the process of classifying the community-protected 'Oran' lands as forests. Following this, these sacred groves will be officially notified as "community reserves" under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

### Key Points

#### About Oran Lands:

- ✦ 'Orans' are sacred forest patches in Rajasthan, traditionally protected and managed by rural communities.
- ✦ These groves are dedicated to local deities as part of a **deep-rooted socio-religious tradition**.
- ✦ Rajasthan is home to nearly **25,000 Oran sites**, collectively covering over 6 lakh hectares across the desert landscape.
  - 📌 In Rajasthan, orans are also called—**deora, malvan, deorai, rakhat bani, deo ghats, mandir van and baugh**.
- ✦ Orans also hosts a significant number of **Khejri trees (*Prosopis spicigera*), deer, blackbuck and nilgai** which are also sacred to the **Bishnoi community** of Rajasthan.
  - 📌 These communities living in these oran lands have historically played a **pivotal role in protecting these forests from being cut down**.
- ✦ These lands **support** grazing, provide forest produce, aid natural water filtration, and sustain livelihoods through **livestock** economy.

#### Related Supreme Court Judgement:

- ✦ In a landmark judgment delivered on 18 December 2024, the Supreme Court directed the State government to conduct a detailed mapping of the Oran lands.
- ✦ SC directed the State to implement the **2005 recommendations of the Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** for classifying 'Orans' as forests.

- ✦ However, the **Rajasthan Forest Policy, 2023** classified 'Orans' as **general community lands**, a status considered inadequate for legal protection, leaving them vulnerable to encroachment and ecological degradation.
  - 📌 The SC's **ruling addresses these gaps** by strengthening legal safeguards through formal forest classification.

### Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

- 💡 The Wild Life (Protection) Act, of 1972 **provides a legal framework for the protection of various species** of wild animals and plants, management of their habitats, regulation, and control of trade in wild animals, plants, and products made from them.
- 💡 The act also **lists schedules of plants and animals** that are afforded varying degrees of protection and monitoring by the government.

### Central Empowered Committee (CEC)

#### About:

- ✦ The **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** was **originally constituted** by the Supreme Court in **2002** and later **reconstituted in 2008**.
- ✦ It functioned as an **ad hoc watchdog body to monitor environmental conservation** and compliance with court directives and environmental laws.

#### Recent Reform:

- ✦ As per a **2023 notification by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, the CEC is proposed to be **converted into a permanent statutory body**.
- ✦ This move aims to give the CEC institutional continuity and legal authority to handle key environmental issues on a long-term basis.

## Ker Sangri Received GI Tag

### Why in News?

**Ker Sangri, Rajasthan's famous dish**, has received a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, officially recognising it as a unique regional product prepared using traditional methods.

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### Key Points

#### 🔦 Ker Sangri:

##### ✦ About:

- 📌 Ker Sangri is a **traditional Rajasthani dish** made using two indigenous desert plants:
- 🔦 **Ker** – a small, wild berry.
- 🔦 **Sangri** – a bean that grows on the Khejri tree, native to arid regions.
  - 📌 These ingredients grow naturally in the dry, sandy terrain of the **Thar Desert**.
  - 📌 Historically, Ker Sangri emerged as a survival food during droughts, when fresh vegetables were unavailable.
- 🔦 Over time, it evolved into a beloved delicacy and **cultural symbol of Rajasthan**.
  - 📌 The Khejri tree, which yields the **Sangri bean**, holds deep **cultural and ecological significance**.
  - 📌 It is **considered sacred by the Bishnoi community**, which has preserved the tree for centuries as a symbol of life and sustainability.
- ✦ **Importance of GI Tag for Ker Sangri:**
  - 📌 Prevents counterfeit or inferior versions from diluting its authenticity.
  - 📌 Supports local farmers and artisans by ensuring they receive fair recognition and compensation.

#### 🔦 Other GI-Tagged Products of Rajasthan:

- ✦ Rajasthan boasts several GI-tagged products, showcasing its rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship. These include:
  - 📌 Sojat Mehndi, Bikaneri Bhujia, **Kota Doria**, **Blue Pottery of Jaipur**, **Molela Clay Work**, **Kathputlis of Rajasthan**, **Sanganeri Hand Block Printing**, **Bagru Hand Block Print**, Thewa Art Work, Pokaran Pottery, Nathdwara Pichhwai Painting, **Udaipur Koftgari Metal Craft**, **Bikaner Kashidakari Craft**, Jodhpur Bandhej Craft, Bikaner Usta Kala Craft, **Makrana Marble**.

### Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

#### 🔦 About:

- ✦ A GI tag is a **name or sign used on certain products** that correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.
  - 📌 The GI tag ensures that only authorised users or those residing in the geographical territory are **allowed to use the popular product name**.
- 🔦 It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
  - ✦ A registered GI is **valid for 10 years and can be renewed**.
  - ✦ GI registration is **overseen by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- 🔦 **Legal Framework:**
  - ✦ Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999
  - ✦ WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

## Urban Improvement Trust (UIT) in Balotra

### Why in News?

The **Rajasthan government** has set up the **Urban Improvement Trust (UIT) for Balotra**, following its designation as a **new district carved out of Barmer**.

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- 💡 This initiative was announced in the 2025–26 state budget.

### Key Points

- 💡 **Urban Improvement Trust (UIT):**
  - ✦ UIT, also known as **Nagar Vikas Nayas**, is a **statutory body in Rajasthan**.
  - ✦ It was established under the **Rajasthan Urban Improvement Act, 1959**.
  - ✦ **Objectives:**
    - 📌 Promote **planned townships and industrial corridors**.
    - 📌 Accelerate economic growth and attract further investments.
    - 📌 Streamline **urban governance** and enhance public service delivery.
- 💡 **Significance of UIT Formation in Balotra:**
  - ✦ **Planned Urban Growth:**
    - 📌 Balotra, home to **one of India's largest textile clusters**, has seen rapid industrial growth, and the **UIT aims to curb unplanned expansion** by ensuring sustainable and structured urban development.
  - ✦ **Infrastructure Development:**
    - 📌 The UIT's jurisdiction spans key settlements, **heritage sites**, and new townships, enabling **infrastructure upgrades** like roads, water, sanitation, and housing in line with modern urban standards.
  - ✦ **Economic Growth and Investment:**
    - 📌 Balotra's strong investor interest at the **Rising Rajasthan Summit 2024** highlights its economic potential, while the UIT will offer an institutional framework to support industrial corridors, townships, and growth.
  - ✦ **Decentralised Urban Governance:**
    - 📌 By covering multiple tehsils and villages, the UIT aims to **strengthen decentralised governance** and enhance public service delivery through better urban-rural coordination.

### Rajasthan's Textile Industry

- 💡 **About:**
  - ✦ Rajasthan's textile industry plays a **crucial role in the state's economy**, with a rich heritage and a wide range of traditional and modern production methods.
  - ✦ It is especially known for its vibrant handicrafts, including **block printing, tie-dye (Bandhani), and intricate embroidery**.
- 💡 **Key Features and Significance:**
  - ✦ Rajasthan is a **leading producer of cotton and wool**, contributing significantly to India's overall fibre production.
  - ✦ Rajasthan ranked as the **fourth-largest cotton-producing state** in the country in FY 2023.
    - 📌 **Gujarat, Maharashtra and Telangana** are the other major cotton producing states
  - ✦ **Bhilwara**, often referred to as the **"Textile City of India,"** stands out as a key centre for textile manufacturing and export in the state.
  - ✦ The state is famous for age-old textile techniques such as **Bandhani, Leheriya, Kota Doriya, and Applique**.
  - ✦ The textile sector in Rajasthan effectively combines handwoven traditions with modern machinery, resulting in a diverse range of high-quality textile products.

#### Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit, 2024

- 💡 The Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit was organised in December 2024 in **Jaipur Exhibition Convention Centre (JECC), Sitapura, Jaipur**.
- 💡 The **Investment Summit theme** was **"Replete, Responsible, Ready,"** with discussions on sustainable mining, water security, and women-led startups.
- 💡 Over 32 countries and 20 international organizations joined the thematic sessions and expos showcasing Rajasthan's potential.

### Keoladeo National Park

#### Why in News?

**Keoladeo National Park** in Rajasthan, famously called the **'paradise of birds'**, is now emerging as a **vital sanctuary for turtles**.

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- It shelters eight of the **ten turtle species found in the state**, making it one of the region's richest habitats for turtles.

### Key Points

#### Keoladeo National Park:

##### About:

- It is a **wetland and bird sanctuary located in Bharatpur, Rajasthan**. It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and one of the most important bird-watching areas in the world.
- Chilika Lake** (Orissa) and Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) were recognized as the first **Ramsar Sites of India** in 1981.
- Currently, Keoladeo National Park and **Loktak Lake (Manipur)** are in the **Montreux record**.

- It is known for its **rich avian diversity and abundance of waterbirds**. The park is home to **over 364 species of birds, including several rare and threatened species, such as the Siberian crane**.
- Fauna:** Animals such as **jackals, Sambar, Nilgai, wild cats, hyenas, wild boar, porcupine and mongoose** can be found in the region.
- Flora:** The principal vegetation types are tropical dry deciduous forest dominated by **Babul tree (Acacia nilotica)** intermixed with dry grassland.
- River:** **Gambhir and Banganga** are two rivers that flow through this National Park.

#### Ideal Conditions for Turtle Habitats:

- The unique blend of water bodies, forest cover, and land within the park creates a near-perfect ecosystem for turtles.
- Deep ponds, marshy areas, and dense vegetation offer optimal conditions for turtle nesting, foraging, and reproduction.

#### Turtle Species Found in Keoladeo National Park:

- The park is home to hundreds of turtles, with several believed to be over 200 years old.
  - These **ancient reptiles** add to the park's ecological and cultural richness.
- Among the diverse species, the **Indian Softshell Turtle** is especially significant.

- Thriving in ponds and rivers it plays a crucial role in maintaining aquatic health by feeding on aquatic animals and plants.
- This natural scavenging helps purify water bodies and maintain ecological balance.
- The **Crowned River Turtle**, a herbivorous species marked by yellow-orange stripes on its face, adds to the park's biodiversity.
- Other rare species include:
  - Indian Flapshell Turtle
  - Indian Tent Turtle
  - Indian Star Turtle

### Indian Softshell Turtle (Ganges Softshell Turtle)

#### About:

- The Indian Softshell Turtle, also known as the **Ganges Softshell Turtle**, is a **freshwater species** native to rivers in northern and eastern India.
- It **belongs to the Trionychidae family**, known for turtles with flexible, leathery shells instead of hard scales.

#### Natural Habitat:

- This species primarily inhabits major rivers such as the **Ganges, Indus, and Mahanadi**.
- It is also found in lakes, ponds, canals, and other freshwater bodies.

#### Distinctive Shell Characteristics:

- The **turtle's carapace (upper shell)** is smooth, oval to round in shape.
- Its shell typically appears olive or green, often edged with a yellow border.

#### Conservation Status:

- IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972:** Schedule I
- CITES:** Appendix I

#### Other Notable Softshell Turtles in India:

- Leith's Softshell Turtle:** Endemic to peninsular India and classified as **Critically Endangered**.
- Peacock Softshell Turtle:** Listed as **Endangered** and found in ponds and temple tanks of northeastern India and Bangladesh.

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## SC Approves Wetlands Near Ana Sagar Lake

### Why in News?

The **Supreme Court** has approved the Rajasthan government's comprehensive proposal to develop two new **wetlands** near Ajmer, **aiming to restore ecological balance while ensuring sustainable urban development around Ana Sagar Lake.**

#### Ana Sagar Lake

- 💡 Located in Ajmer, it is an **artificial lake**, built by Prithviraj Chauhan's father **Arunoraj or Anaaji Chauhan** in the middle of the twelfth century (1135-1150 AD).
- ✦ Due to being constructed by Aanaaji, this lake was named **Aana Sagar or Ana Sagar.**
- 💡 It is **one of Ajmer's most popular lakes and one of India's largest lakes.**
- 💡 Later, the Mughal ruler **Jahangir built Daulat Bagh**, also known as **Subhash Udyan**, in the courtyard of the lake.
- 💡 **Shah Jahan** constructed a **marble Baradari (pavilion)** around it in **1637 AD**, which further enhances the beauty of the lake.

### Key Points

- 💡 **Background:**
  - ✦ Ana Sagar Lake, an important **urban water body in Ajmer**, has faced ecological degradation due to unregulated development and human activities in its vicinity.

- ✦ The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** had earlier directed the removal of several **unauthorized structures** in the lake's green zones, including a Seven Wonders replica to protect the lake's ecosystem.

#### Locations of the Proposed Wetlands:

- ✦ Two wetlands will be constructed outside Ana Sagar's catchment area: a 12-hectare wetland at **Foy Sagar (Varun Sagar) Extension** near Hathi-Khera, and a 10-hectare wetland at **Tabiji-1.**
- ✦ These wetlands **aim to improve water retention, biodiversity, and ecological health** in the region.

#### Scientific Review and Environmental Assessment:

- ✦ The **National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI)**, appointed by the Ajmer Municipal Corporation, conducted a comprehensive environmental assessment.
  - 📎 NEERI is a premier research institute under the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**, functioning under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
  - 📎 It plays a **vital role in environmental management, pollution control**, and sustainable development through R&D, policy development, and technology innovation.

#### Wetlands

- 💡 **Wetlands** are defined as **areas of marsh, fen, peatland, or water (natural or artificial)** with water that is static or flowing, including marine areas with a depth not exceeding six meters.
- 💡 **Wetlands are ecotone**, having land transitional between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- 💡 **Significance of Wetlands:**
  - ✦ **Natural Water Filters:** Wetlands act as **natural water filters by trapping sediments, breaking down pollutants**, and absorbing excess nutrients.

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- ✦ **Flood Prevention:** Wetlands absorb and store excess water, reducing flood risks by up to 60% and safeguarding homes and infrastructure, according to the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**.
- ✦ **Habitat for Wildlife:** Wetlands, though covering just 6% of the Earth's surface, support over 40% of global species—including threatened ones like the **Sarus Crane**—making them vital wildlife habitats, as per **Space Applications Centre (SAC)**.
- ✦ **Carbon Sequestration:** Wetlands store significant carbon in their soil and vegetation, and the **Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment (INCCA)** highlights their restoration as key to advancing India's climate goals through **carbon sequestration**, cleaner water, and reduced flood risks.

💡 **Some of the Wetlands Located in Rajasthan:**

Protected Area	Wetland
Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>💡 Padam talab</li> <li>💡 Rambagh</li> <li>💡 Malik talab</li> </ul>
Jaisamand Wildlife Sanctuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>💡 Pilader Lake</li> </ul>
Ramgarh Wildlife Sanctuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>💡 Bharutalab</li> <li>💡 Jetsagar</li> <li>💡 Shambhusagar</li> </ul>
Shergarh Wildlife Sanctuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>💡 Acholi dam</li> <li>💡 Padakoh talab</li> </ul>

## ASI to Restore Bhand Devra Temple in Rajasthan

### Why in News?

The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** is set to restore the 10th-century **Bhand Devra temple** in Rajasthan's Baran district, often hailed as the state's "mini Khajuraho."



### Key Points

#### 💡 Architectural Style and Location:

- ✦ The Bhand Devra temple, located on the bank of the **Ramgarh Crater** in Baran district, is built in the distinctive **Nagara architectural style**.
- ✦ Its resemblance to the **temples of Khajuraho** is striking, earning it the nickname "Rajasthan's mini Khajuraho."

#### 💡 Historical Background and Patronage:

- ✦ The temple was originally built as a victory monument by **King Malaya Verma of the Nagavanshi dynasty**.
- ✦ It received renewed patronage in **1162 CE** when **King Trishna Verma** of the Meda dynasty undertook its restoration.
- ✦ These successive contributions reflect the temple's enduring historical and dynastic importance.

#### 💡 Neglect and Loss of Heritage:

- ✦ Years of neglect and apathy have left the temple damaged, with crumbling structures and stolen idols eroding its rich heritage.

#### 💡 A Geological and Cultural Wonder:

- ✦ The adjacent **Ramgarh Crater**, formed by an **asteroid impact** around **165 million years ago**, is among India's rare geo-heritage sites.
- ✦ It is a meteor impact crater of **3.5 kilometres diameter** in **Kota plateau** of **Vindhya range** located adjacent to Ramgarh village in Baran district in Rajasthan.
- ✦ It is officially recognized as India's third crater, with a diameter between the **14 km Dhala crater** in **Madhya Pradesh** and the **1.8 km Lonar crater** in Maharashtra.

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### Nagara or North Indian Temple Style

#### About:

- ✦ Commonly found in northern India, Nagara-style temples are marked by a curvilinear tower (Shikhara), sanctum sanctorum (Garbhagriha), and pillared hall (Mandapa).
- ✦ These temples are usually constructed on a raised stone platform (Jagati) with steps leading to the entrance.
- ✦ The ground plan of a Nagara temple is typically square or rectangular with a four-sided layout.

#### Shikhara (Curvilinear Tower):

- ✦ Early Nagara temples had a single Shikhara, but later ones often featured multiple towers.

#### Garbhagriha (Sanctum Sanctorum):

- ✦ Located directly beneath the tallest Shikhara, the Garbhagriha houses the main deity.
- ✦ It represents the spiritual core of the temple and is often devoid of elaborate ornamentation, signifying inner sanctity.

#### Jagati and Pitha (Elevated Platforms):

- ✦ Nagara temples rest on a high platform known as Jagati, which elevates the temple both physically and symbolically.

#### Adhisthana (Base Platform):

- ✦ Rising above the Pitha and Jagati is the Adhisthana, the base platform upon which the superstructure (temple tower and walls) is constructed.

#### Khajuraho Temple



#### About:

- ✦ Built by the **Chandela dynasty** in the 10th and 11th centuries, these temple groups present a unique example of architecture and sculpture.
- ✦ The number of temples built in the Nagara style has now reduced to only 20, among which the temple of Kandariya Mahadev is especially famous.
- ✦ The temples here belong to two religions – Jain and Hindu.

#### World Heritage Site:

- ✦ It was included in the list of **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** in 1986.

#### Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ✦ ASI, under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organisation for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
- ✦ **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** governs the functioning of ASI.
- ✦ It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- ✦ Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.
- ✦ It was founded in **1861** by **Alexander Cunningham** – the first **Director-General of ASI**. Alexander Cunningham is also known as the “Father of Indian Archaeology”.

## Tanot Mata Temple and Jaisalmer Fort

### Why in News?

The **1,200-year-old Tanot Mata Temple**, situated near the **India-Pakistan border** in Jaisalmer, reopened after a temporary closure prompted by **cross-border tensions**.

- ✦ The **Jaisalmer Fort Palace Museum**, located inside the Jaisalmer Fort, also reopened.

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## Key Points

### Tanot Mata Temple

#### About:

- ✦ It is an **ancient Hindu temple** situated in the **Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan**.
- ✦ It is dedicated to Tanot Rai, a manifestation of the **Hindu goddess Hinglaj Mata**.
- ✦ According to local folklore, the temple was **originally established by a group of tribal communities** who worshipped Tanot Rai as their guardian deity.
- ✦ Over the years, it **evolved into a major spiritual centre**, attracting pilgrims from across the region.

#### Background & Wartime Significance:

- ✦ The temple gained national prominence during the **Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971**.
- ✦ Despite intense shelling by Pakistani forces, **none of the bombs dropped near the temple exploded**.
- ✦ Several unexploded bombs from the 1965 war are now displayed in the **Tanot Mata Museum**, located within the temple complex.
- ✦ Following the 1971 war, the Indian government entrusted the temple's management to the **Border Security Force (BSF)**.

#### Vijay Sthamba and Annual Commemoration:

- ✦ The **Indian Army** constructed a **Vijay Sthamba (Victory Pillar)** within the temple premises to honour India's triumph in the 1971 war.
- ✦ **Every year on 16<sup>th</sup> December**, the temple hosts a commemorative event to celebrate India's victory over Pakistan.

### Jaisalmer Fort

- ✦ The **Jaisalmer Fort** is **India's only 'living' fort**, with residents living within its walls, making its maintenance crucial for their safety.
- ✦ **It was built in 1156 AD by Raja Rawal Singh**, the fort was strategically constructed to protect the kingdom from invasions. It was an important trade centre along the **Silk Route**, connecting India with Central Asia.

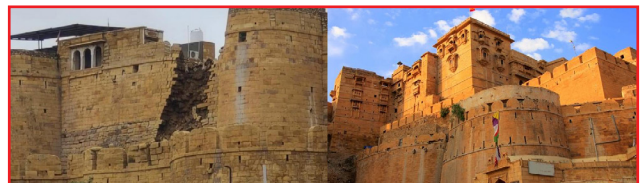
✦ Constructed from **yellow sandstone** that changes colour with sunlight, the fort appears golden, earning it the name **"Sonar Quila" or "Golden Fort."**

- ✦ The **Raj Mahal (Royal Palace)** is the largest palace within the fort, featuring ornate balconies and intricate carvings. It is a splendid example of medieval Rajasthani architecture, featuring a remarkable blend of **Islamic and Rajput style influences**.
- ✦ The **Jaisalmer Fort Palace museum** was **established in 1982** by the **state archaeology department** with the aim of preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of Jaisalmer.

✦ The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** is responsible for the fort's maintenance.

✦ The hill forts of Rajasthan, including **Chittor, Kumbhalgarh, Ranthambore, Gagron, Amer, and Jaisalmer Forts**, were designated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 2013.

- ✦ Jaisalmer Fort along with the Forts of Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh and Ranthambore are protected as **Monuments of National Importance of India** under the **Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act of 1951**.



#### Border Security Force (BSF)

- ✦ The BSF was **raised in 1965**, after the **India-Pakistan war**.
- ✦ It is one of the **seven Central Armed Police Forces** of the Union of India under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- ✦ Other Central Armed Police Forces are: **Assam Rifles (AR), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force**

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**(CRPF), National Security Guards (NSG) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).**

- 💡 The 2.65-lakh force is deployed along the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders.
  - ✦ It is deployed on the Indo-Pakistan International Border, Indo-Bangladesh International Border, and **Line of Control (LoC)** along with the Indian Army and in **Anti-Naxal Operations**.
- 💡 BSF has been defending **Sir Creek** in the Arabian Sea and the **Sundarbans delta** in the **Bay of Bengal** with its state of the art fleet of Water Crafts.
- 💡 It contributes dedicated services to the **UN peacekeeping Mission** by sending a large contingent of its trained manpower every year

## Development Projects in Rajasthan

### Why in News?

The **Prime Minister** of India inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for development projects worth over Rs 26,000 crore in Rajasthan.

### Key Points

#### Highlights of the Development Projects

##### 💡 Focus on Rail Infrastructure:

- ✦ The PM inaugurated the redeveloped **Deshnoke Railway Station** under the **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme** and flagged off the Bikaner–Mumbai express train.
  - 📌 It is part of the **103 Amrit Stations planned for redevelopment** across 86 districts in 18 states and Union Territories, with a total expenditure of over Rs 1,100 crore under the ABSS.
- ✦ These stations integrate modern passenger amenities, improved accessibility, including Divyangjan-friendly facilities, and regionally inspired architecture.
- ✦ He also **dedicated six newly electrified rail lines in Rajasthan** and laid the foundation

stone for the Churu–Sadulpur rail line, part of a nearly 1,000 km electrification drive to support 100% railway electrification, enhance efficiency, and cut emissions.

- ✦ The **modernised railway stations reflect local art, culture, and historical heritage**, turning them into vibrant symbols of regional identity.
  - 📌 **Rajasthan's Mandalgarh station** captures the grandeur of **Rajput traditions**, showcasing regional pride through architectural design.

#### Redeveloped Stations of Other States

- 💡 **Bihar's Thawe station** celebrates the **spiritual legacy of Maa Thawewali** and features traditional **Madhubani artwork**, blending devotion with folk artistry.
- 💡 **Orchha railway station in Madhya Pradesh** radiates the **divine essence of Lord Ram**, reinforcing the region's spiritual heritage.
- 💡 The design of a **Tiruvannamalai station in Tamil Nadu** draws inspiration from **Dravidian architecture**, reflecting South India's classical temple styles.
- 💡 **Gujarat's Dakor station** pays **tribute to Ranchhodrai ji**, embodying the deep religious devotion of the area.
- 💡 In **Telangana**, the **Begumpet station** preserves the architectural legacy of the **Kakatiya dynasty**, highlighting the state's royal past.

##### 💡 Expansion of Road Infrastructure:

- ✦ The Prime Minister laid the **foundation stone for three vehicle underpasses** and several **national highway upgrades**.
- ✦ He dedicated seven key road projects worth over Rs 4,850 crore aimed at improving connectivity to the **Indo-Pak border**, enhancing civilian mobility, and strengthening national security.

##### 💡 Push for Renewable Energy and Power Transmission:

- ✦ PM inaugurated and launched multiple **renewable energy** projects, including large-scale **solar initiatives** in Bikaner and Didwana Kuchaman.

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- ✦ Projects under PowerGrid Mewar and Sirohi Transmission Ltd will expand transmission capacity and support clean energy evacuation.
- ✦ These initiatives will **contribute significantly to India's climate goals** by promoting **sustainable energy** infrastructure.

#### Medical Infrastructure & Water Supply:

- ✦ Nursing colleges in Rajsamand, Pratapgarh, Bhilwara, and Dholpur were inaugurated to strengthen medical education and local healthcare capacity.
- ✦ The **Rural Water Supply and Fluorosis Mitigation Project in Jhunjhunu**, along with the **urban water supply upgrades in seven towns of Pali district** under **AMRUT 2.0**, aim to enhance access to safe and sustainable drinking water in both rural and urban areas.

#### Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme (ABSS)

##### About:

- ✦ The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme **aims to redevelop 1309 stations nationwide**.
- ✦ The redevelopment will provide **modern passenger amenities** along with ensuring well-designed traffic circulation, inter-modal integration, and signage for the guidance of passengers.
- ✦ The Scheme was launched in **February 2023** by the Ministry of Railways.

##### Integrated Approach to Urban Development:

- ✦ The redevelopment is planned with a **holistic approach to urban development**, treating the stations as **"City Centres."**
- ✦ This approach aims to integrate **both sides of the city and create well-designed traffic circulation**, inter-modal connectivity, and clear signage for passengers' guidance.

#### AMRUT 2.0 Scheme

- ✦ The scheme was **launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021**, **subsuming AMRUT 1.0** for the period of 5 years i.e. from the financial year (FY) 2021-22 to the FY 2025-26.
- ✦ Its objectives are **universal coverage of water supply** from 500 cities to about 4,900 statutory towns in the country and coverage of **sewerage/septage management** in 500 cities covered in the first phase of the AMRUT scheme.

- ✦ AMRUT 2.0 aims to promote the **circular economy of water** through the development of a **City Water Balance Plan (CWBP)** by recycling/reuse of treated sewage, rejuvenation of water bodies and water conservation.
- ✦ The mission also includes a **reform agenda to improve the ease of living for citizens** through the reduction of non-revenue water, better urban planning, strengthening urban finance, and more.
- ✦ Other components of AMRUT 2.0:
  - ✦ **Pey Jal Survekshan** to ascertain **equitable distribution of water**, reuse of wastewater, mapping of water bodies and promote healthy competition among the cities / towns.
  - ✦ **Technology Sub-Mission for Water** to leverage the latest global technologies in the field of water.
  - ✦ **Information, Education and Communication (IEC)** campaign to spread awareness among the masses about the conservation of water.

## International Day for Biological Diversity 2025

### Why in News?

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, along with the **National Biodiversity Authority, Rajasthan Forest Department, and Rajasthan State Biodiversity Board**, hosted a national-level event to mark the **International Day for Biological Diversity 2025 (22<sup>nd</sup> May)** in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

**Note:** India ranks among the 17 mega-diverse countries, covering a land area of 329 million hectares and hosting over 100,000 animal species and 55,000 plant species.

### Key Points

#### International Day for Biodiversity (IDB)

- ✦ It is **observed annually on 22<sup>nd</sup> May** to raise awareness about the importance of conserving biological diversity worldwide.

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- ✦ The **Convention on Biological Diversity** was adopted on this date in 1992 by the **United Nations**.
- 💡 The theme for 2025 is 'Harmony with Nature and Sustainable Development'.
- 💡 In 2000, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** officially proclaimed **22<sup>nd</sup> May** as IDB.
  - ✦ **UNCBD** is a legally binding treaty to conserve biodiversity.
  - ✦ **India is a party to the convention** and enacted the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**.
- 💡 The UNGA designated the years **2011-2020** as the **United Nations Decade on Biodiversity**, aiming to advance the implementation of a strategic plan for biodiversity.

### Highlights of the Event

- 💡 **Launch of National Campaign:**
  - ✦ A fortnight-long campaign on 'Ending Plastic Pollution', as part of the lead-up to the **World Environment Day 2025 (5<sup>th</sup> June)** was inaugurated.
  - ✦ The campaign aims to intensify public engagement and policy discourse on **plastic waste elimination**.
  - ✦ An exhibition on **Biodiversity and Bioresources**, showcasing **India's indigenous biodiversity**, medicinal plants, **traditional crop varieties**, and conservation innovations was also inaugurated.
- 💡 **India's Global Commitment to Biodiversity Conservation:**
  - ✦ India's proactive role in advancing the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)**, highlighted during the **16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP16)** to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2024**.
  - ✦ India demonstrated its leadership in Biodiversity Conservation by:
    - ✍ Submitting Updated **National Biodiversity Targets** (September 2024)
    - ✍ Releasing a revised **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)** on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.

✍ India's conservation achievements include:

- 💡 Expansion of protected wetlands with **89 Ramsar sites** covering 1.35 million hectares.
- 💡 **49 Biodiversity Heritage Sites** notified under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**
  - ✦ The success of the '**Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam**' campaign, launched on **World Environment Day 2024**, which led to 142 crore trees planted globally, involving citizens in environmental stewardship was highlighted during the event.
- 💡 **Resources and Publications Released during the Event:**
  - ✦ Updated NBSAP 2024–2030
  - ✦ India's Seventh National Report (NR7) to the CBD
  - ✦ Compendium on India's Biodiversity Heritage Sites
  - ✦ Brochure on the 2025 Access and Benefit Sharing Regulations under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**

#### Ramsar Sites in Rajasthan

- 💡 **Keoladeo National Park (Bharatpur)**, a globally recognised wetland and bird sanctuary, also known as the **Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary**.
- 💡 **Sambhar Lake**, located across the Jaipur, Ajmer, and Nagaur districts, is India's largest inland saline lake and an internationally recognised Ramsar site.
  - ✦ Designated in 1990, the lake holds ecological significance for its unique biodiversity, serving as a vital **wintering habitat** for migratory birds—including **flamingos, pelicans, and several other species**.

#### Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework(KMGBF)

- 💡 The Kunming-Montreal GBF was adopted during the **15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity** in December 2022.
  - ✦ It aims to support the achievement of **sustainable development goals** and build on previous strategic plans.

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- ✦ The framework sets **four goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030**, covering planning, monitoring, reporting, finance, and capacity development.

📌 Target 3 of the GBF aims to **increase protected areas to at least 30% of the world's terrestrial area by 2030, compared to the current 16%.**

- 💡 It ensures that by 2030 at least 30% of areas of degraded **terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems** are under effective restoration.

#### India's Initiatives Related to Biodiversity Conservation

- 💡 [India Business & Biodiversity Initiative \(IBBI\)](#)
- 💡 [Wetland \(Conservation and Management\) Rules 2010](#)
- 💡 [National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystem](#)
- 💡 [Wildlife Crime Control Bureau](#)
- 💡 [Biological Diversity Act, 2002](#)

## Non-functioning of Permanent Lok Adalats in Rajasthan

### Why in News?

The Rajasthan government's delay in extending the tenure of presiding officers and members has led to the **suspension of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs) functioning in 16 districts** of the state, delaying the resolution of thousands of pending cases.

- 💡 The **State Legal Services Authority** clarified on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2025 that members whose tenure ended cannot participate in **dispute resolution**.

**Note:** In Jodhpur alone, over **972 cases are pending**, while the Rajasthan High Court estimated the total backlog across districts may exceed 10,000 cases.

### Key Points

#### Judicial Response

- 💡 Rajasthan **High Court** took **suo motu cognisance** and expressed concern over the serious implications for access to justice and the **right to a fair trial (Article 21)**.

- 💡 A Division Bench of HC cited the **Supreme Court's** ruling in **Brij Mohan Lal vs. Union of India (2012)**, which permits **judicial review** of policy decisions if found arbitrary or mala fide.

- 💡 A Senior Advocate has been appointed by the HC as **amicus curiae** to assist in the case proceedings.

- ✦ An amicus curiae (literally, "**friend of the court**") is someone who is **not a party to a case** and may or may not have been solicited by a party and who assists a court by **offering information, expertise, and bearing on issues of the case**.

### Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs)

#### About:

- ✦ PLA operates under **Section 22-B of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.
- ✦ It is a statutory body created to **ensure pre-litigation conciliation and settlement**, especially in matters involving Public Utility Services.
- ✦ PLAs provide a **mandatory pre-litigation platform** for parties to attempt conciliation.
  - 📌 However, **Lok Adalats has jurisdiction over both** the pending and pre-litigation matters.
  - 📌 PLAs cannot adjudicate cases involving criminal offences.

#### Composition:

- ✦ Each Permanent Lok Adalat consists of:
  - 📌 One Chairman (typically a retired judicial officer), and
  - 📌 Two other members with experience in public service or law.

#### Binding Nature:

- ✦ The award passed by a Permanent Lok Adalat is **final and binding on all parties**.
  - 📌 If the parties fail to reach a mutual settlement, **the PLA has the authority to decide the case on merits**.
- ✦ No appeal lies against the decision, ensuring quick and conclusive resolution.

### Implications of Non-functioning of PLAs

- 💡 **Access to Justice:** Lok Adalats are an important mechanism for affordable and speedy justice, especially for vulnerable sections.

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- 💡 **Case Backlog:** The halt threatens to exacerbate the existing judicial backlog, delaying dispute resolution further.
- 💡 **Disruption of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Framework:** The interruption weakens the alternative dispute resolution ecosystem, pushing more cases back to regular courts.
- 💡 **Litigant Uncertainty:** Pending judgments resulting from the expired tenures of officials leave litigants facing **prolonged uncertainty**, eroding trust in the legal system.

### Lok Adalat

- 💡 **About:** Lok Adalat, or People's Court, is a forum designed for settling disputes either **pending in court or at the pre-litigation stage** through compromise or amicable settlement.
  - ✦ SC emphasises that Lok Adalat is an **ancient Indian system** of adjudication that still holds relevance today, rooted in **Gandhian principles**.
  - ✦ It forms a part of the **ADR system**, which seeks to relieve the burdened Indian courts.
- 💡 **Objective:** Its purpose is to provide **quick, inexpensive justice** without the lengthy and expensive procedures common in regular courts.
  - ✦ In Lok Adalat, there are **no victors or losers**, making it a **harmonious approach** to dispute resolution.
- 💡 **Legal Framework:** Initially functioning as a **voluntary institution** without legal authority, the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987** provided **statutory status** to Lok Adalats.
  - ✦ This Act gave the institution the authority to pass awards with the same effect as a court decree.

## Pradhan Mantri Divyasha Kendra (PMDK) in Kota

### Why in News?

**Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** inaugurated the **Pradhan Mantri Divyasha Kendra (PMDK)** in Kota, Rajasthan, to empower **persons with disabilities** and distribute assistive devices to them.

### Key Points

## Pradhan Mantri Divyasha Kendra (PMDK) Initiative

### About:

- ✦ The PMDK initiative is led by the **Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)**, a public sector unit under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.
- ✦ Its primary goal is to deliver high-quality, affordable assistive devices to senior citizens and persons with disabilities.
- ✦ As of now, **45 PMDK centres are operational** across various states and Union Territories.
  - 📎 The government aims to **expand this network to 100 centres by June 2025**.

### Focus:

- ✦ The newly inaugurated PMDK places special emphasis on visually impaired individuals.
- ✦ It offers a wide range of services, including:
  - 📎 Prosthetics and orthotics
  - 📎 Braille appliances
  - 📎 Mobility aids
  - 📎 Advanced rehabilitation technologies

### Skill Development and Empowerment:

- ✦ The objective is to run vocational training programmes to build skills among beneficiaries.
- ✦ These programmes aim to promote **employment** and entrepreneurship, enhancing the economic independence of persons with disabilities.

### Initiatives for the Empowerment of Disabled People

- 💡 PM-DAKSH (Divyang Skill Development and Rehabilitation Scheme)
- 💡 DeenDayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme
- 💡 Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/fitting of Aids and Appliances
- 💡 National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities
- 💡 Unique ID for persons with disabilities (UDID) card

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## National Cooperative Spice Fair 2025

### Why in News?

**National Cooperative Spice Fair 2025** was organised by the Rajasthan Cooperative Department and Rajasthan State Cooperative Consumer Federation at **Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur**.

### Key Points

#### About the Cooperative Spice Fair 2025

- A variety of **healthy and traditional spices, millet** products and other cooperative products were showcased at the fair.
- This year, **products made from Millet grains (Shree Anna)** have become a special centre of attraction at the fair.
- Various **self-help groups**, cooperative consumer associations and local producers participated in the fair with their diverse product range.
- This fair offers consumers the **opportunity to purchase pure, high-quality, and healthy products directly**.
- The fair promotes **employment** and **economic empowerment** at the local level.

#### Millets

- About:** It is a collective term referring to a number of small-seeded grasses that are cultivated as grain crops, primarily on marginal lands in dry areas in temperate, subtropical and tropical regions.
- Some of the common millets available in India are Ragi (Finger millet), Jowar (Sorghum), Sama (Little millet), Bajra (Pearl millet), and Variga (Proso millet).
- Global and Indian Production:** India is the largest producer of millets, followed by Niger and China.
- Millet Promotion:** 2023 was recognized as the **International Year of Millets** by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**.
- The Indian government promotes millet production under the **National Food Security Mission**.

## Millets

### About

- Small-grained cereals also known as **coarse grains**
- Often referred to as **'Superfood'**
- Among the **first crops to be domesticated** - evidence of millet consumption dates back to the **Indus Valley Civilisation (3,000 BC)**

### Climatic Conditions

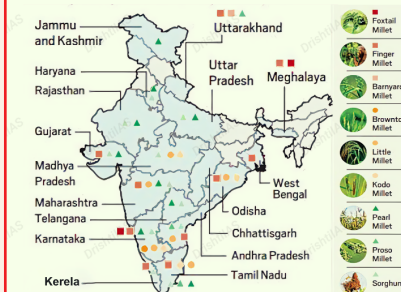
- Mainly a **Kharif crop** in India
- Temperature:** 27°C - 32°C
- Rainfall:** Around 50-100 cm
- Soil Type:** Inferior alluvial or loamy soil

### India and Millets

- Global Largest Millet Producer:**
  - 20% of global production, 80% of Asia's production
- Common Millets:**
  - Ragi** (Finger millet), **Jowar** (Sorghum), **Sama** (Little millet), **Bajra** (Pearl millet), and **Variga** (Proso millet)
  - Indigenous varieties** (small millets) - **Kodo, Kutki, Chenna and Sanwa**
- Top Millets Producing States:**
  - Rajasthan (largest), Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
- Govt. Initiatives:**
  - Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millet Promotion (INSIMP)
  - 'India's Wealth, Millets for Health'
  - Millet Startup Innovation Challenge
  - Hiked **MSP** for Millets
  - Agriculture Ministry declared millets as **"Nutri Cereals"** in 2018

### Significance

- Less expensive, **nutritionally superior**
- High protein, fibre, minerals, iron, calcium and a **low glycemic index**
- Help tackle **lifestyle problems and health** (obesity, diabetes etc.)
- Photo-insensitive, **resilient to climate change & water efficient**



### International Year of Millets - Year 2023

Proposed by India, declared by UNGA



## Krishak Uphar Scheme

### Why in News?

The Rajasthan government conducted a **state-level online lottery** under the **Krishak Uphar Yojana**, awarding prizes worth several lakhs to farmers.

### Key Points

- About Krishak Uphar Yojana:**
  - Through this scheme, farmers are being encouraged to **sell their agricultural products** and receive payment through **eNAM portal** and **e-payment**.

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- ✦ This will empower farmers to maximize the value of their produce by minimizing the influence of middlemen, enabling them to sell directly to consumers.
- ✦ The event was organized under the chairmanship of Secretary of Agriculture and Horticulture at Pant Krishi Bhawan, Jaipur.

#### eNAM Portal

- 💡 The eNAM portal was launched by the Central Government in April 2016.
- 💡 E-NAM is a pan India e-trading platform. It has been created with the aim of creating a unified national market for agricultural products.
- 💡 Under this, farmers can sell their produce online from their nearest market and traders can pay for their produce from anywhere.
  - ✦ As a result, the number of traders will increase, which will also increase competition.
- 💡 Through this, prices can be determined well and farmers will get a fair price for their produce.
- 💡 Currently, 150 commodities including food grains, oilseeds, fibres, vegetables and fruits are being traded on the e-NAM portal. Also, more than 1,005 'Farmer Producer Organizations' are registered on it.

## Maharana Pratap Jayanti

### Why in News?

On 9th May 2025, the 485th **birth anniversary of Maharana Pratap**, one of the courageous and iconic warriors, was celebrated with reverence and honour across the country.

### Key Points

#### 💡 About Maharana Pratap:

- ✦ **Rana Pratap Singh**, also known as Maharana Pratap, was born on 9 May 1540 in Kumbhalgarh, Rajasthan.
- ✦ He was the 13th king of Mewar and the eldest son of Udai Singh II.
- ✦ Maharana Udai Singh II ruled the Mewar kingdom and made Chittor his capital.



- ✍ Udai Singh II was also the founder of the city of Udaipur (Rajasthan).

#### 💡 Battle of Haldighati:

- ✦ The Battle of Haldighati was fought in the year 1576 between Rana Pratap Singh of Mewar and Raja Man Singh of Amer, who was the general of the Mughal Emperor Akbar.
- ✦ Maharana Pratap fought bravely but was ultimately defeated by the Mughal army.
- ✦ It is believed that Maharana Pratap's loyal horse Chetak sacrificed his life while leaving the battlefield.

#### 💡 Re-control:

- ✦ After 1579, the influence of the Mughals on Mewar decreased and Maharana Pratap re-established his dominance over western Mewar including Kumbhalgarh, Udaipur and Gogunda.
- ✦ During this period he also built a new capital, Chavand, near present-day Dungarpur.

#### 💡 Death:

- ✦ Maharana Pratap died on 19 January 1597. After that his son Rana Amar Singh ascended the throne and accepted the supremacy of Akbar's son Emperor Jahangir in the year 1614.

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## Greenfield Airport in Kota

### Why in News?

Recently, the Union Civil Aviation Minister has given in-principle approval for the development of **Greenfield Airport** at Kota, Rajasthan .

### Key Points

#### About the Airport:

- ✦ The proposed airport will serve the city of Kota — known as a major educational and industrial hub — and the wider Hadauti region.
  - ✍ Districts like **Bundi, Baran and Jhalawar** will also get direct benefit from this.
- ✦ The project will facilitate travel for **thousands of students, businessmen and residents of the region and boost the economy** .
- ✦ The development of the airport will also boost **job creation, investment attraction and tourism, thereby boosting local development**.
- ✦ This project is a concrete step towards the **“UDAN” scheme** of the Central Government and strengthening the transport infrastructure in developing India.

#### Greenfield Project:

- ✦ A ‘greenfield project’ refers to a project that does not follow any previous work/project. Infrastructure projects that are built on unused land and do not require remodeling or demolition of the existing structure are called ‘green field projects’.

### UDAN Scheme

#### About:

- ✦ UDAN aims to democratize aviation and enhance regional connectivity, ensuring that even remote regions of the country are accessible by air.
- ✦ The scheme was designed under the **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016**, with a focus on **connecting Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities** through a market-driven yet financially supported model.

- ✦ The **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** serves as the nodal agency responsible for its implementation.

#### Objectives and Significance:

**Objectives & Significance of UDAN Scheme**

- Enhances regional air connectivity by operationalizing unserved and underserved airports across India.
- Makes air travel affordable through Viability Gap Funding (VGF) and operational cost concessions.
- Promotes tourism and boosts local economies, leading to balanced regional development.
- Generates employment opportunities in the aviation sector and related industries.
- Strengthens socio-economic integration by bridging the rural-urban connectivity divide.
- Encourages private participation in aviation through a market-driven approach.

## Power Purchase Agreement with RVUNL

### Why in News?

NLC India Renewables Limited (NIRL), a wholly owned subsidiary of NLC India Ltd. (NLCIL), has signed a **Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)** with Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (RVUNL) for its planned 810 MW **solar power project**.

### Key Points

#### Project Significance:

- ✦ The solar power plant will be located at **Pugal Solar Park** in **Bikaner district, Rajasthan**.
- ✦ The site, situated on barren land, benefits from **high solar radiation**, making it ideal for solar energy production.

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- ✦ This initiative is part of the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (UMREPP) scheme** – Mode B, awarded through competitive tariff-based bidding.

#### 💡 Environmental Impact:

- ✦ The project is expected to generate nearly 2 billion units of **green electricity** annually.
- ✦ It will offset about 1.5 million metric tonnes of **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** per year, contributing to India's low-carbon transition.

#### 💡 Infrastructure and Development:

- ✦ The project will be developed within RVUNL's 2000 MW **Pugal Solar Park**.
- ✦ It marks a milestone for NLCIL, the first CPSU in India to establish 1 GW of **renewable energy** projects.

### Ultra-Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (UMREPP) Scheme

- 💡 It is a scheme to develop **Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (UMREPPs)** under the existing **Solar Park Scheme**.
  - ✦ The scheme was rolled out by the **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE)** in **2014**.
  - ✦ **Solar Park Scheme** is also a scheme of MNRE to set up a number of solar parks across various states in the country. It proposes to provide financial support by the Government of India to establish solar parks.
- 💡 The objective of the UMREPP is to **provide land upfront to the project developer and facilitate transmission infrastructure for developing Renewable Energy (RE) based Power Parks** with solar/wind/hybrid and also with storage systems.

## Cheetah Conservation Corridor

### Why in News?

Rajasthan has become a part of India's first **inter-state Cheetah conservation corridor** along with Madhya Pradesh.

# Cheetah



**Common Name** – Cheetah

**Scientific Name** – *Acinonyx jubatus*  
 • *Acinonyx jubatus jubatus* (African Cheetah)  
 • *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* (Asiatic Cheetah)

**Reintroduction of Cheetah to India:**

- The "Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India" was released by MoEF&CC at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (January 2022).
- Such a plan was first proposed in 2009.
- In September 2022, eight cheetahs landed in India from Namibia.
- The 8 cheetahs have been relocated to the Kuno-Palpur National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
- The relocation of cheetahs to India from Namibia is the world's first inter-continental large wild carnivore translocation project.

Slightly brownish and golden skin; thicker than the Asiatic Cheetahs

More prominent spots and lines on the face

Found all over the African continent

**IUCN Red List Status – Vulnerable**

**African Cheetah**

Slightly smaller than the African ones.

Pale yellowish fawn coloured skin – more fur under body, belly specifically.

Found only in Iran; the country claims there are only 12 of them left. **Year 1952** – Asiatic Cheetah officially declared extinct from India.

**IUCN Red List Status – Critically Endangered**

**Asiatic Cheetah**



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### Key Points

#### 💡 About the Protected Area:

- ✦ The total area of the corridor is **17,000 sq km**, out of which 10,500 sq km is spread in **Madhya Pradesh** and **6,500 sq km** in **Rajasthan**.
- ✦ This corridor includes **Kuno National Park** in Sheopur district of **Madhya Pradesh** as the main site, where cheetah reintroduction project is being implemented.
- ✦ **Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary**, located on the banks of **Chambal River** in Mandsaur district, has been selected to develop the second habitat for cheetahs in Madhya Pradesh.

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- ✦ Districts like Kota, Bundi, Baran, Jhalawar, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli and Chittorgarh of Rajasthan are included in this project .
- ✦ In future, it is proposed to include the forest areas of Jhansi and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh in this corridor.

#### 💡 Institutional support:

- ✦ The project has technical guidance from the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** and **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)**.
- ✦ Experts have described this project as a **unique model of wildlife conservation in Asia**, which can become an example for other countries.

#### 💡 Features of the Corridor:

- ✦ This corridor will facilitate **natural and uninterrupted migration** of cheetahs between protected areas .
- ✦ It establishes a **strategic wildlife connectivity** between the two states, the first of its kind initiative in India.
- ✦ The goal of the project is restoration and conservation of **grassland-based ecosystems** .
- ✦ The corridor is being designed to bring together the friendly, safe and natural habitats of the cheetahs.

### National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

#### 💡 Introduction:

- ✦ It is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
- ✦ It was **established in the year 2005** with the recommendations of the **Tiger Task Force** .
- ✦ It was constituted under the enabling provisions of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006 to strengthen tiger conservation .

#### 💡 Objective:

- ✦ To provide statutory powers to **Project Tiger** so that its directions are legally complied with.
- ✦ To promote Centre-State accountability in the management of tiger reserves by providing a basis for MoUs with States within a federal framework .
- ✦ Ensuring oversight by Parliament .
- ✦ Addressing the livelihood interests of local people in the areas around Tiger Reserves.

## Elites Smart Government Excellence Award

### Why in News?

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Limited (RMSCL) has been awarded the **Elites Smart Government Excellence Award, 2025** .

### Key Points

#### 💡 About the Award:

- ✦ The award was presented in a function organized jointly by **Elites Technomedia** , Editor in Chief of **e-Government Magazine** , **Department of Information Technology and Communication** and **Department of Personnel of Rajasthan**.
- ✦ **RMSCL** has been awarded this award for **technological innovations in healthcare** such as **e-medicine** and **e-device software** .

#### 💡 E-medicine software:

- ✦ It enables **transparent monitoring of the supply, distribution and availability of medicines** across all hospitals in the state .
- ✦ This software provides **real time data on availability and shortage of medicines**.

#### 💡 E-Tools Software:

- ✦ This system **connects all the medical institutions of the state on an online platform** .
- ✦ This provides **prompt information on equipment shortages or defects**, making **timely supply and repairs possible**.

#### 💡 Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Limited (RMSCL):

- ✦ It is a **state government public sector undertaking**, established in **2011** to **strengthen the medical and health services in Rajasthan** .
- ✦ Its main function is to **ensure the supply of essential medicines, medical equipment and other health facilities in the state**.

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## Malaria Elimination in Rajasthan

### Why in News?

On the occasion of **World Malaria Day 2025**, Rajasthan has been included in **Category-1 for malaria elimination at the national level**.

### Key Points

- 💡 **Drastic Drop in Malaria cases :**
  - ✦ **Rajasthan** has emerged as one of the **leading states in malaria elimination**, due to its effective strategies and innovative measures to combat seasonal diseases like **malaria, dengue, and chikungunya**.
  - ✦ According to the State Public Health Director, **while 2213 malaria cases** were reported in 2024, only 59 cases have been reported **so far in 2025**.
- 💡 **Success of Public Awareness Campaign :**
  - ✦ Under IEC activities (Information, Education, Communication), the general public was made aware through means like **larva demonstration, audio-video publicity, pamphlets and posters**, which strengthened the prevention of the disease.
  - ✦ **Anti-larval spraying, focal spraying, fogging and source reduction activities were carried out** across the state from 1 April 2025. The program was effective in both urban and rural areas.
- 💡 **Special Attention in High Risk Districts :**
  - ✦ **Indoor Residual Spray (IRS) was carried out** in two phases in 9 high-risk districts namely Alwar, Balotra, Barmer, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Pratapgarh, Salumber, Sriganganagar and Udaipur to control the sources of infection.

#### Malaria

- 💡 Malaria is a deadly disease caused by the **Plasmodium parasite**, which is spread by the bite of infected **female Anopheles mosquitoes**.
  - ✦ There are five species of Plasmodium parasites that cause malaria in humans, and two of these **parasite species (P. Falciparum and P Vivax)** are more dangerous.

- 💡 Malaria is mainly found in tropical and subtropical regions of **Africa, South America and Asia**.
- 💡 When a mosquito bites an infected person, it also becomes infected. The person who is bitten by this mosquito gets malaria parasites in his body. After reaching the liver, the parasites develop and infect the red blood cells.
- 💡 Fever and flu-like symptoms, such as **chills, headache, muscle aches and fatigue**, are **symptoms of malaria**. It is worth noting that malaria is treatable and can be prevented.

### World Malaria Day

- 💡 It is celebrated every year on April 25. It was **established in 2007** by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** to raise awareness about malaria and take action to eradicate it.
- 💡 The theme of World Malaria Day 2025 is **"Malaria Ends with Us: Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite"**.

## Under-20 National Wrestling Championship

### Why in News?

The **Under-20 National Wrestling Championship** was organized in **Kota district of Rajasthan** from 20 to 22 April 2025 under the aegis of **Rajasthan State Wrestling Association**.

### Key Points

- 💡 **About the competition:**
  - ✦ It is organized by the **Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)**.
  - ✦ **This event was held for the first time in Rajasthan** at Raghurai Endo Sports Complex in Kota district.
  - ✦ **More than 800 wrestlers from 26 states and union territories** participated in it.
  - ✦ Competitions were held in men's **Greco-Roman and freestyle**, and **women's freestyle categories**.
  - ✦ There were **10 weight categories** in each category.

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## ✦ Winner:

- ✎ Haryana won first place by winning a total of 16 gold medals.
- ✎ Delhi secured second position by winning a total of 6 gold medals while Uttar Pradesh secured third position by winning 3 gold medals.

**Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)**

- 💡 WFI is the governing body of wrestling in India. Its headquarter is located in New Delhi.
- 💡 It is recognised by the Government of India and the Indian Olympic Association.
- 💡 It organises various national and international level wrestling competitions including the Pro Wrestling League, National Wrestling Championships and Asian Championships.
- 💡 The WFI also provides support and training to Indian wrestlers participating in the Olympic Games.

## Mission Parinda Campaign

### Why in News?

'Mission Parinda' campaign was launched by Baran district administration of Rajasthan on the occasion of Panchayati Raj Day.

### Key Points

## 💡 About the campaign:

- ✦ The objective of this campaign is to provide water to birds in summer and to raise awareness towards environmental conservation and biodiversity.
- ✦ In the first phase of the campaign, water containers will be installed in all government offices which will be regularly filled with cold water.
- ✦ In the second phase, nests will be installed, which will provide safety and comfort to the birds, especially in summer. These nests will be specially made from grass and coconut fibres.
- ✦ The district administration has also appealed to the general public to join this campaign and install water containers at their homes and workplaces.

**National Panchayati Raj Day**

- 💡 The day, celebrated on April 24, marks the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, through which Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were granted statutory status.
- 💡 It was first organised in the year 2010.



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