

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 04 February, 2026



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Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana: Rajasthan Ranks First



Why in News?

- In the ranking released under the 'Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana', the state of Rajasthan secured the first position nationwide in January 2026.



Key Points:

- The ranking is based on the overall progress of the scheme across various parameters, including beneficiary registration, payments to beneficiaries, cash benefit transfer to beneficiaries within 30 days, and the timely resolution of all received grievances.

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Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

- **Launch:** Launched by the Central Government on January 1, 2017, as a centrally sponsored maternity benefit scheme.
- This scheme is a key component of the Government of India's 'Mission Shakti' Programme, which focuses on women's empowerment.
- **Concerned Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- **Provisions:** Under the scheme, a woman pregnant for the first time receives ₹5000 in two installments, and a woman pregnant for the second time receives a lump sum of ₹6000 only upon the birth of a girl child and completion of her immunization.

Objectives:

- To provide cash incentives to partially compensate for wage loss so that women can take adequate rest before and after the birth of their first child;
- To improve health-seeking behaviors among pregnant women and lactating mothers;
- To promote positive behavioral change towards girl children by providing an additional cash incentive if the second child is a girl.

Rajasthan's State Tree – Khejri

Why in News?

- On February 2, 2026, thousands of environmentalists in Bikaner launched a movement protesting against the felling of trees in Rajasthan, including the state tree, Khejri. Simultaneously, 363 saints and local people also began an indefinite hunger strike in remembrance of the Khejrli sacrifice.

Key Points:

- The main demands of the protesters are the immediate implementation of a 'Tree Protection Act' in the state and the formulation of rules for the protection of all trees older than 50 years.
- It is noteworthy that Khejri trees are being illegally cut down in Rajasthan as a result of the increasing construction of solar energy projects.

Facts for Prelims:

Khejri:

- **Botanical name** - Prosopis cineraria.
- **Nicknames** - Janti, Shami tree (in scriptures), Seemlo, Pride of Rajasthan, Kalpavriksha of Rajasthan/Kalpavriksha of Thar.
- **Highest concentration of Khejri trees** - Nagaur district.
- **Region with the highest concentration of Khejri trees** – Shekhawati.
- **Khejri flowers** - Neemjhar/Meenjhar, Green fruit - Sangri, Leaves - Loom/Loong.
- A 60 paise postage stamp was issued on Khejri in 1988.
- **Declared as the state tree:** October 31, 1983

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- In 1730, in Khejrli village (Jodhpur), 363 people, led by Amrita Devi Bishnoi, sacrificed their lives by hugging the trees to save the Khejri trees. This incident took place during the reign of the then Marwar ruler Abhay Singh.
- Every year, on the tenth day of the bright half of the month of Bhadrapada, the world's only tree fair is held in Khejrli.
- Khejrli Day was celebrated for the first time on September 12, 1978. Since then, September 12 is celebrated as Khejrli Day every year.
- There are two ancient Khejri trees (considered Kalpavriksha) in Mangaliyawas (Ajmer) where a fair is held on Hariyali Amavasya.
- **Mato** - The Khejri tree is depicted in the royal emblem of Bikaner; it is called Mato.
- **Thar Shobha** - A thornless variety of Khejri developed by the Central Institute for Arid Horticulture (CIAH), Bikaner.

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India's First District with 100% Insured Villages – Alwar

Why in News?

- Alwar has become the first district in the country where 100% of the residents of 9 villages have been insured.

Key Points:

- These 9 villages include Desula of Alwar, Antapada of Laxmangarh, Hanumanta of Kathumar, Lalpur of Ramgarh, Palankheda of Govindgarh, Bichpuri of Malakheda, Marod Khurd of Bilota, Kodalka of Thanagazi, and Bhulla ka Bans of Jharkheda.
- The Government of India and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) have set the target of 'Insurance for All by 2047'.
- The main objective of this campaign is to ensure that every citizen and enterprise has adequate insurance coverage by the time India completes 100 years of independence.
- **Desula Gram Panchayat:** In August 2025, Desula Gram Panchayat of Alwar became the first Gram Panchayat in the country where all residents were provided with insurance coverage.

Facts for Prelims:

- **Mukhyamantri Ayushman Arogya Yojana:** In the state, the Mukhyamantri Ayushman Arogya Yojana (MAAY) (formerly Chiranjeevi Yojana) is being run to provide high-quality healthcare services and insurance coverage to the citizens of the state.
- **Launched:** On May 1, 2021.
- **Provisions:** This scheme provides cashless treatment/medical care up to ₹25 lakh per family per year, with ₹5 lakh in insurance mode and ₹20 lakh in trust mode. It also includes special packages for organ transplants and cochlear implants.
- This scheme is being operated by integrating it with the Central Government's Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).

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Annual Premium:

- In the new phase of this scheme, a premium of ₹1,965 per family has been fixed, covering 1,819 packages under the scheme, of which 1,761 packages are under the insurance mode and 58 packages are under the trust mode.
- Free health insurance premium is provided to families covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), small and marginal farmers, contract workers, economically weaker sections (EWS), senior citizens (above 70 years of age), and individuals affected by COVID-19. The remaining families can join the scheme by paying an annual premium of ₹850 per family, with the remaining premium being paid by the state government.
- **MAA Fund:** To ensure the successful implementation and financial sustainability of the scheme, a 'MAA Fund' of ₹3500 crore has been created in the Rajasthan Budget 2025-26.

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NEWS IN SHORTS

S. No.	News
1.	<p>Atal Innovation Studio and Accelerator (AISA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The state's first and only Atal Innovation Studio and Accelerator (AISA) will be established at the Polytechnic College campus in Jhalana, Jaipur.■ The Atal Innovation Studio and Accelerator (AISA) is an ambitious initiative of the Government of Rajasthan, launched to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities among the youth.■ Concerned Department: Department of Information Technology and Communication.■ Through AISA, a hub for robotics, coding, animation, visual effects, gaming, and comics can be developed in the state.
2.	<p>Bharat Bodh - Aapni Mati Aapno Khel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Organized by: University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.■ Inaugurated by: Neeraj K. Pawan, Chairman, Sports Council of Rajasthan.■ Bharat Bodh - Aapni Mati Aapno Khel is a cultural and sports initiative aimed at promoting Indian roots, traditional games, and regional heritage.
3.	<p>Rajasthan reaches Santosh Trophy National Football Championship Quarterfinals after 55 Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The Rajasthan football team created history in the 79th Santosh Trophy (2025-26) by reaching the quarterfinals of the National Football Championship after 55 years (last time in 1971).■ However, Rajasthan was defeated by Railways 0-2 in the quarterfinal match.

4.

MoU between MGUMST and the Indian Army

- Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Indian Army and Mahatma Gandhi University of Medical Sciences & Technology (MGUMST), Jaipur.
- **Objective:** The main objective of this agreement is to promote excellence in medical education, training, and healthcare for serving and retired military personnel and their children.
- **Admission through NEET:** Children of military families who get admission to medical and dental courses through NEET will be given a scholarship of ₹1 lakh per annum.
- **Paramedical Students:** Students of Allied Health and Paramedical courses will receive one-third of their annual tuition fees as a scholarship.

5.

ICDS Directorate's Tree Plantation Target under the Green Aravalli Campaign

- The Women and Child Development Department, Rajasthan, has set a target of planting 2 lakh saplings in the next one year through the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) Directorate. This plantation will be carried out under the Green Aravalli Campaign.
- These saplings will be planted at the state's 63,000+ Anganwadi centers.
- **Note:** The Government of Rajasthan has sanctioned ₹250 crore for the 'Green Aravalli Development Project' in the State Budget 2025-26.
- **Aravalli Green Wall Project:** In March 2023, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the 'Aravalli Green Wall Project' on the occasion of International Day of Forests, which aims to expand greenery in a 5 km buffer zone around the Aravalli Hill Range across four states.

6.

MoU between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh State Election Commissions

- A significant Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was recently signed between the State Election Commissions of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Objective:** To ensure the smooth, fair, and transparent conduct of the upcoming local body elections in the state.
- Under this MoU, the Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission will provide the Rajasthan State Election Commission with a total of 30,000 control units and 60,000 ballot units on rent for the local body elections.
- **Rajasthan State Election Commissioner:** Rajeshwar Singh.

7.

Piplantri Village (Rajsamand)

- Recently, the Udaipur Tourism Department selected Piplantri village in Rajsamand, famous for its environmental conservation efforts, to be developed as a major 'World Class Rural Tourism Destination'.
- Piplantri is a model village in the country where there is a unique tradition of planting 111 saplings for every girl child born.
- This tradition was started in 2005 by the village's former Sarpanch, Shyam Sundar Paliwal, who has also been awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India.

8.

69th National School Handball Championship (Under-19)

- **Event:** Held from January 27 to 31, 2026, in Somnath (Gujarat).
- **Rajasthan's Performance:** The Rajasthan U-19 boys' team won the silver medal. The Rajasthan team was defeated by Gujarat.



History and Culture

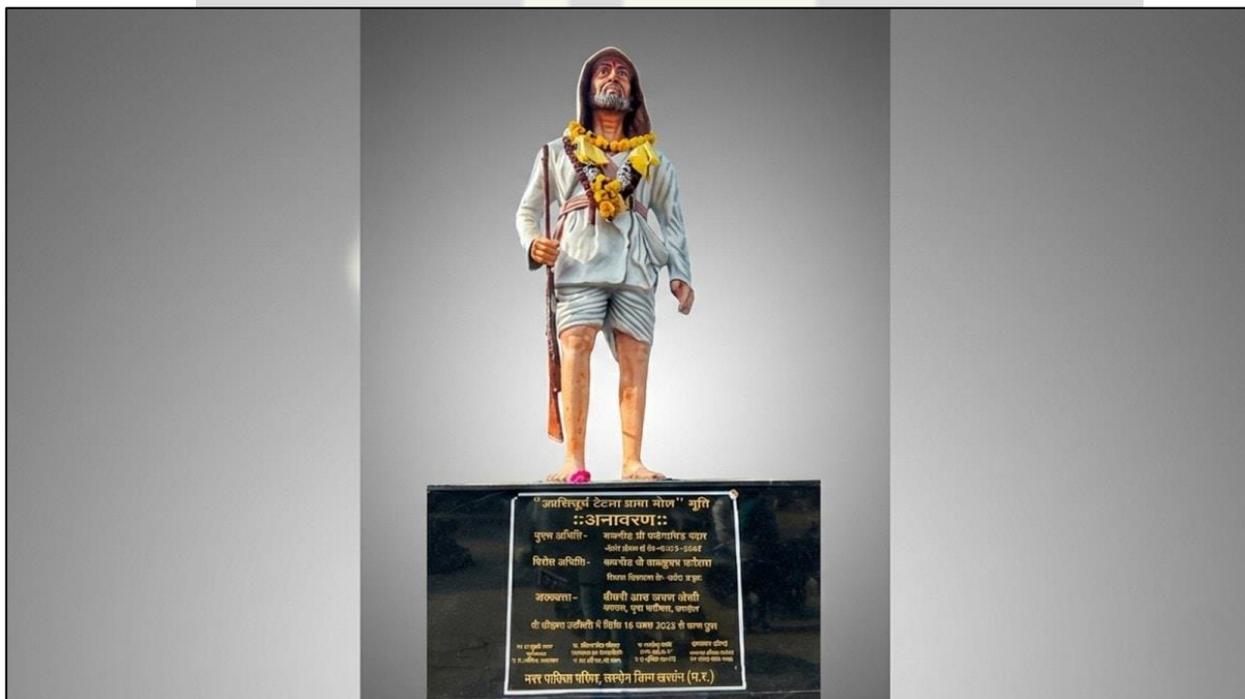


Bhil Tribe and Tantya Mama



Why in News?

- The Madhya Pradesh government will install a metal statue of Tantya Mama of the Bhil community.



Key Points:

Tantya Mama:

- **Introduction:** A prominent tribal freedom fighter from the Bhil community.
- **Contribution:** Actively resisted British colonial rule between 1878 and 1889 due to revenue oppression and exploitation of tribal communities after the 1857 revolt.
- Tantya Mama was called the Indian Robin Hood because he looted money from wealthy landlords and British supporters and redistributed it among the poor and tribal communities.

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Bhil Tribe:

- According to the 2011 census, it is the largest tribal community in India (37.7% of the Scheduled Tribe population).
- **Inhabitants:** Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh.
- Due to their resistance against colonial rule, they were declared a 'criminal tribe' under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871.

Major Rebellions:

- **Bhagat Movement (1908):** Led by Govind Giri, established the Samp Sabha was established (in 1883), and on November 14, 1913, the Mangarh massacre, also known as the tribal Jallianwala Bagh, took place on Mangarh Hill (Banswara, Rajasthan).
- **Eki Movement (1920):** Led by Motilal Tejawat.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Inculcates Distinctive art styles such as Pithora painting (Madhya Pradesh) and Bhil art (dot painting style), and festivals like Bhagoria (Madhya Pradesh) and Gol Gadhedo (Gujarat).

Geography and Geology

The Evolutionary History of Kaziranga

Why in News?

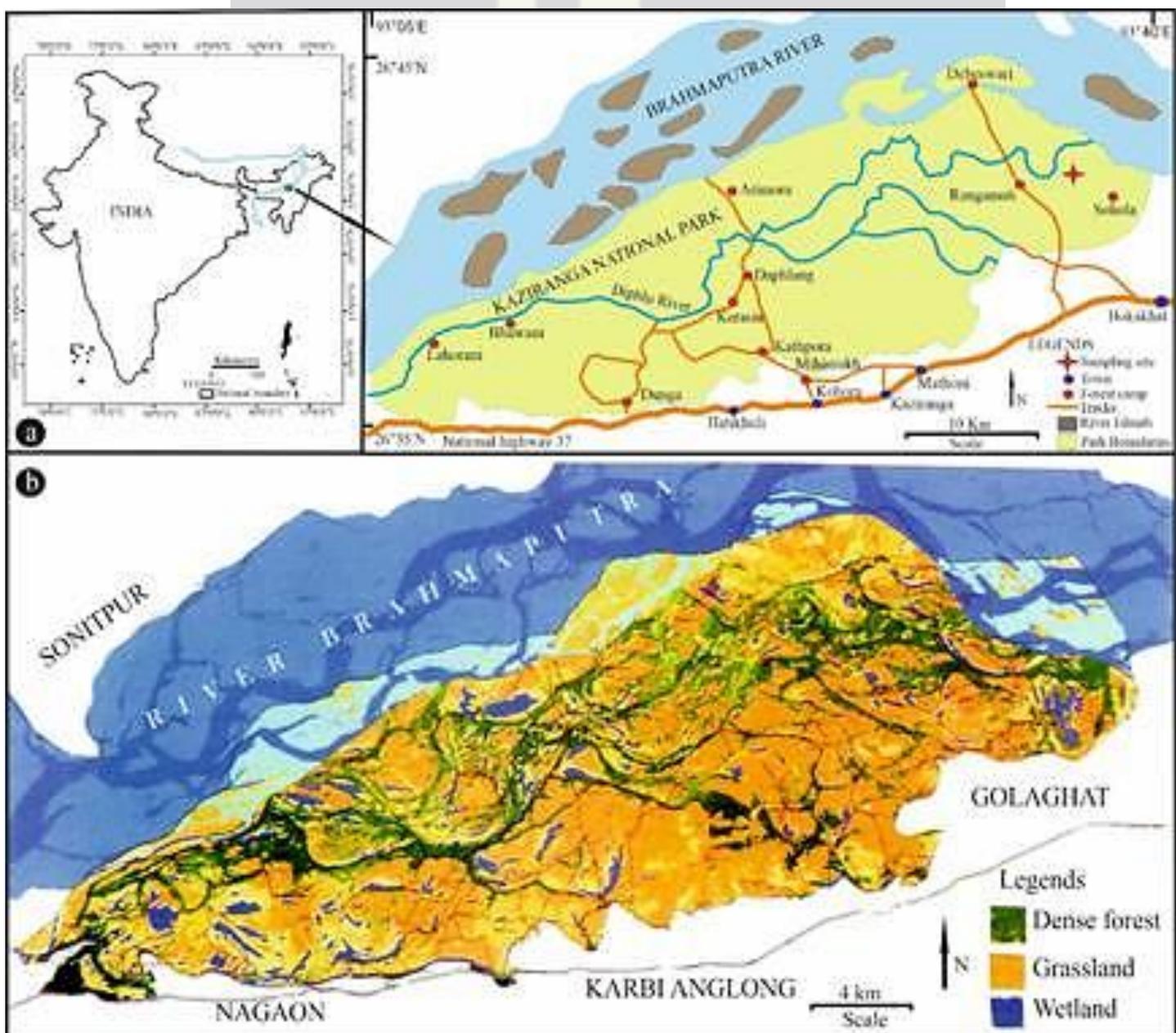
- Scientists from the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), have uncovered the first long-term paleoecological record related to paleovegetation dynamics in Kaziranga National Park (KNP) using pollen grains from the soil beneath the park's wetlands.



📌 Key Points:

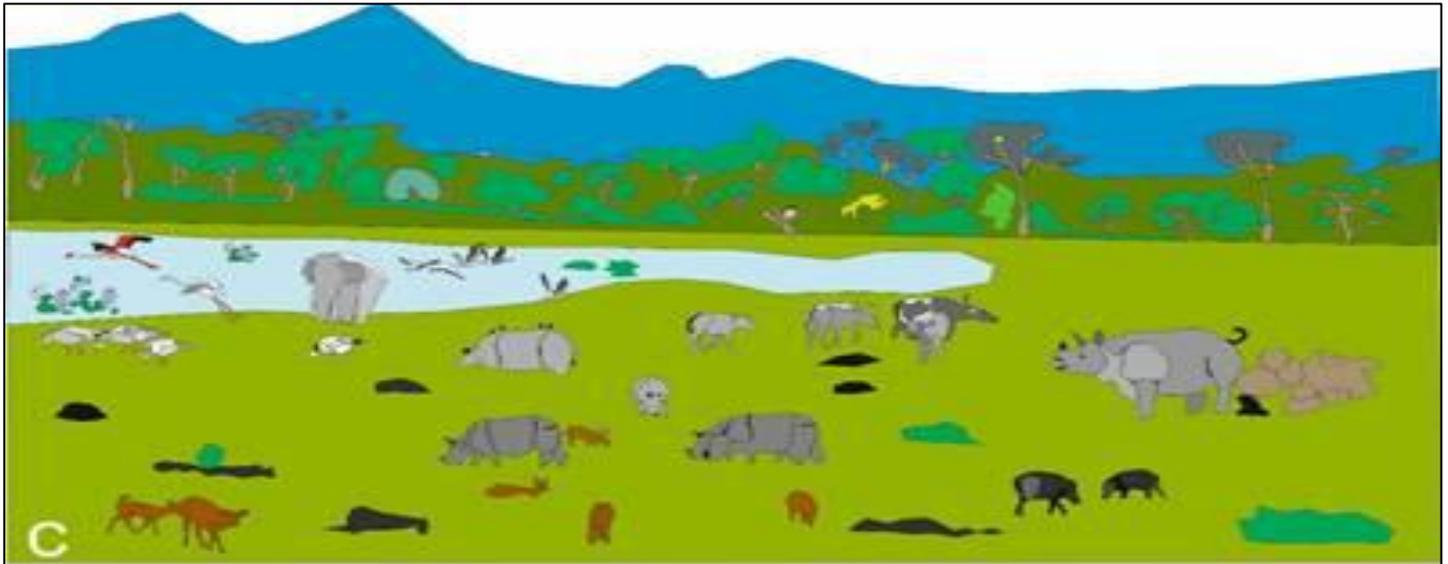
The Study:

- The researchers extracted a sedimentary core slightly over one meter long from the Sohola swampy area of Kaziranga National Park. Layer by layer, this soil acts like a natural archive, preserving microscopic traces of the past.
- These traces include pollen grains from plants and spores from fungi that thrive on animal dung.



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Findings of the study published in the journal 'Catena' (Elsevier):

- **The Evolutionary History of Kaziranga National Park:** Fossil evidence reveals that Kaziranga's current landscape is distinctly different from its past and records the regional extinction of large herbivores, including the Indian rhinoceros, in northwestern India during the Late Holocene, particularly due to the Little Ice Age and increasing human activities.
- **The Last Major Habitat of the One-Horned Indian Rhinoceros:** This species was once widely distributed across the Indian subcontinent, but its distribution has significantly reduced since the Holocene period. Over the last approximately 3300 years, northeastern India remained comparatively climatically stable and experienced less human pressure, while habitat degradation, climate deterioration, and overhunting in the northwestern regions forced the rhinos to migrate eastward, eventually concentrating in Kaziranga.

Other details:

- Natural disasters such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, and landslides, along with rapid urbanization, industrialization, and deforestation, are contributing to global ecological degradation and accelerating the rate of biodiversity loss.
- Northeast India, which is part of the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, is home to many endangered species facing the threat of extinction.
- Late Quaternary megafauna extinctions remain a major global concern, with their causes still debated; today, approximately 60% of large herbivores worldwide are threatened, and Southeast Asia harbors the highest number of "at-risk species".
- Kaziranga National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a major center for large herbivores – particularly the one-horned Indian rhinoceros.



Economic Developments



State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2025-26 Report



Why in News?

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the 'State Finances: A Study of the Budgets of 2025-26 report.



Key Points:

RBI's State Finances: A study of Budgets of 2025-26:

1. Demographic Diversity in States:

- Younger states need to spend more on education, skill development, and job creation.
- Middle-aged states should focus on infrastructure, urban reforms, and women's workforce participation.
- Older states should prepare for the rising costs of healthcare, pensions, and social welfare.

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2. **Increase in Fiscal Deficit:** The gross fiscal deficit of states increased to 3.3% in FY 2024-25.
 - Reason: Reduction in grants received from the Centre.
3. **State-Level Reforms for Revenue Growth:** States' own tax base is highly concentrated, with State GST, sales tax, excise duty, and stamp duty accounting for 90% of total tax collections.
4. **Revenue Expenditure:**
 - **Capital Investment:** Capital expenditure is consistently increasing (3.2% of GDP in 2025-26) supported by the Central Government's special assistance scheme for capital investment to states.
 - **Social Expenditure:** In FY 2025-26, the major driver of revenue expenditure is social sector spending (8.2% of GDP).
5. **Debt and Borrowings:** The consolidated debt of states declined from a peak of 31% in March 2021 to 28.1% of GDP in March 2024, but it is budgeted to increase to 29.2% by March 2026.
6. **Research Expenditure:** States' expenditure on research and development is low (0.2 to 0.3% of GDP).
 - The expenditure on medical and agricultural research is high.

CHAKRA-Centre of Excellence

Why in News?

- State Bank of India (SBI) has launched a dedicated Centre of Excellence, 'CHAKRA', to support the financing of 8 emerging sectors (sunrise sectors).



Key Points:

- Introduction:** This knowledge-based institutional platform, created by SBI, is a strategic initiative by the country's largest lender to ensure capital flow to next-generation industries.
- Objective:** This initiative aims to encourage capital expenditure of over ₹100 lakh crore in future-oriented industries by 2030 and strengthen India's climate finance and green transition framework.
- Vision:** It will provide information through white papers, project evaluations, reports, and shared platform roundtables.

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Features:

- A. Focused on 8 Emerging Sectors (Sunrise Sectors) Aligned with the Viksit Bharat Vision 2047.**

Category	Details
Green Energy	Renewable Energy, Green Hydrogen & Ammonia, and Decarbonization
Technology & Infrastructure	Semiconductors, Data Center Infrastructure, and Smart Infrastructure
Future Mobility	Electric Mobility and Advanced Cell Chemistry (ACC) / Battery Storage

- B. Risk Management:** Unlike traditional think tanks, CHAKRA is designed as a 'practical implementation center' that will develop risk models.
- C. Global Partnerships:** SBI has signed MoUs with 21 domestic and global financial institutions, including Japan's MUFG and SMBC, for joint project evaluation and co-financing.
- D. MSMEs:** The CHAKRA Centre of Excellence has been extended to and collaborates with MSMEs.

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Public Administration



Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988



Why in News?

- A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivered a split verdict on the constitutional validity of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.



Key Points:

Split Verdict:

- **Justice K. V. Viswanathan (upheld the provision with conditions):** Prior sanction is necessary to protect honest officers from frivolous complaints that harass them; its validity is conditional – the sanction must be based on the binding opinion of an independent authority (Centre: Lokpal & State: Lokayukta), not the government itself.
- **Justice B. V. Nagarathna (declared it unconstitutional):** She declared Section 17A unconstitutional, calling it "old wine in a new bottle." According to her, it violates Article 14 (equality before the law).

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Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988:

Introduction and Enactment:

- This is India's principal anti-corruption law, enacted based on the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee (1962-64).
- **Enforced:** On September 9, 1988
- It includes government employees, judges, and any person discharging public duties within its broad definition of a public servant and criminalizes offenses such as bribery, undue advantage, and criminal misconduct.

Section 17A:

- **Origin:** Added to the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 by an amendment in 2018.
- **Objective:** This section was enacted to create a 'safe zone' for decision-making by protecting officers from investigation for decisions taken in good faith, thereby preventing the 'tendency to play safe' in the bureaucracy.
- **Provision:** Under Section 17A, investigating agencies (CBI) are required to obtain prior sanction from the concerned government authority before initiating an investigation into the official acts of a public servant.

Other important points:

Other legal cases:

1. Vineet Narain vs. Union of India (1998):

- The Supreme Court struck down the "Single Directive" (executive order).
- It was considered a violation of Article 14 (hindering a fair investigation).

2. Dr. Subramanian Swamy vs. Director, CBI (2014):

- The Supreme Court struck down Section 6A of the DSPE Act, 1946, which mandated prior approval from the Central Government for investigating officers of the rank of Joint Secretary and above.



India-US Trade Agreement, 2026



Why in News?

- On February 2, 2026, the India-US Trade Agreement, 2026 was agreed upon between the United States and India. The US has reduced the effective tariff on Indian goods to 18%.



Key Points:

- Significance:** This agreement is a strategic step towards reducing trade tensions and establishes India as a key US ally and a counterweight to China in the Indo-Pacific region.

Main Features of the Agreement:

- Tariff Reduction:** The US has reduced reciprocal tariffs on Indian imports from 25% to 18%.
 - NOTE:** The additional 25% punitive tariff (imposed: in August 2025, reason: purchase of Russian oil) has been effectively removed, reducing the total effective tariff from 50% to 18%.

2. India's Commitments:

- **Market Access:** India is likely to reduce tariffs and non-tariff barriers imposed on the US to zero.
- **Energy/Fuel Purchases:** Under the agreement, India has agreed to significantly reduce its purchases of Russian oil.
- **'Buy American' Policy:** India has committed to the 'Buy American' policy for government and industrial procurement.

Other Important Points:

India-US Bilateral Trade Relations:

- **Total Bilateral Trade:** US\$132 billion in 2025.
- **Total Surplus:** India had a trade surplus of US\$40.82 billion with the US in 2025.
- **Imports-Exports:**

Financial Year 2025	
Imports from America	Exports to the United States
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Mineral fuels and oils■ Precious and semi-precious stones and metals■ Nuclear reactors and machinery■ Electrical equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Electrical machinery■ Precious and semi-precious stones and metals■ Pharmaceutical products■ Machinery and mechanical appliances■ Mineral fuels■ Iron and steel articles

- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** The US is the third largest investor in India, having invested a total of \$70.65 billion in FDI from 2000 to 2025.

Strategic Goals:

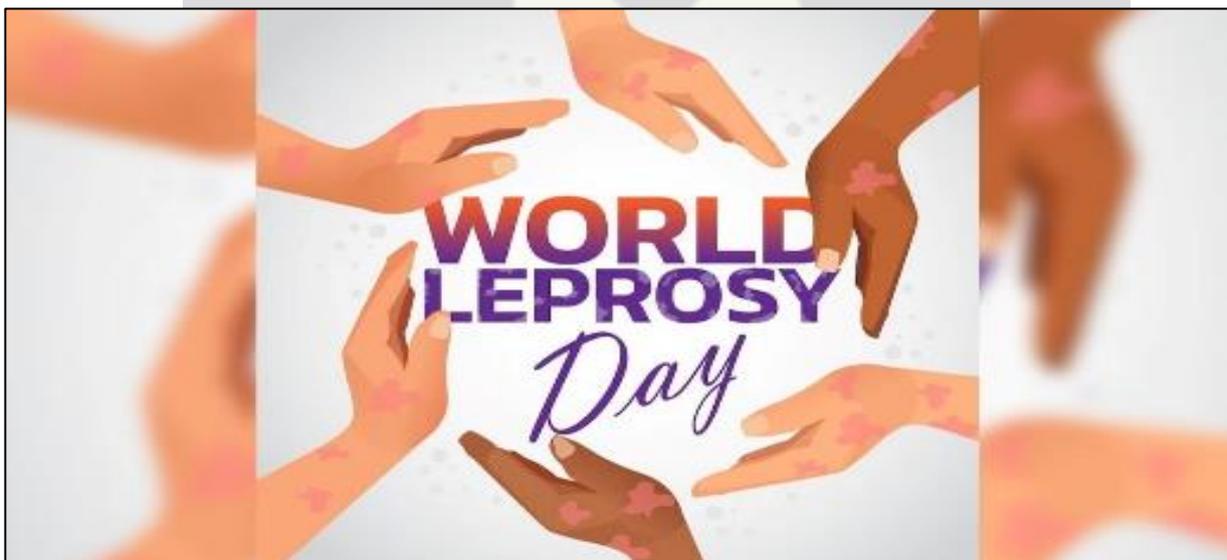
- **'Mission 500':** To increase bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030.
- **To boost US-India Compact** (to catalyze military partnership, accelerated commerce, and technology opportunities) launched in 2025.

⌚ SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY 🌡️

Leprosy

📣 Why in News?

- On National Leprosy Day (last Sunday of January), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized an Information, Education and Communication (IEC) program related to leprosy awareness and early diagnosis.



📌 Key Points:

- **Leprosy:** A chronic infectious disease.
- **Causative agent:** Mycobacterium leprae (bacteria)
- **Affected organs:** Skin and peripheral nervous system.
- **Transmission:** Spreads through droplets from untreated cases.
- **Treatment:** Multi-drug therapy (MDT).
- **Symptoms:** Loss of sensation, red patches on the skin, muscle weakness, and paralysis.
- **India's efforts:** National Leprosy Eradication Programme

National Leprosy Control Programme (1954-55)

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Changed to 1983

National Leprosy Eradication Program

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In 2005, India achieved the elimination status for leprosy elimination.

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The national prevalence rate remains at 0.57 until 2025.

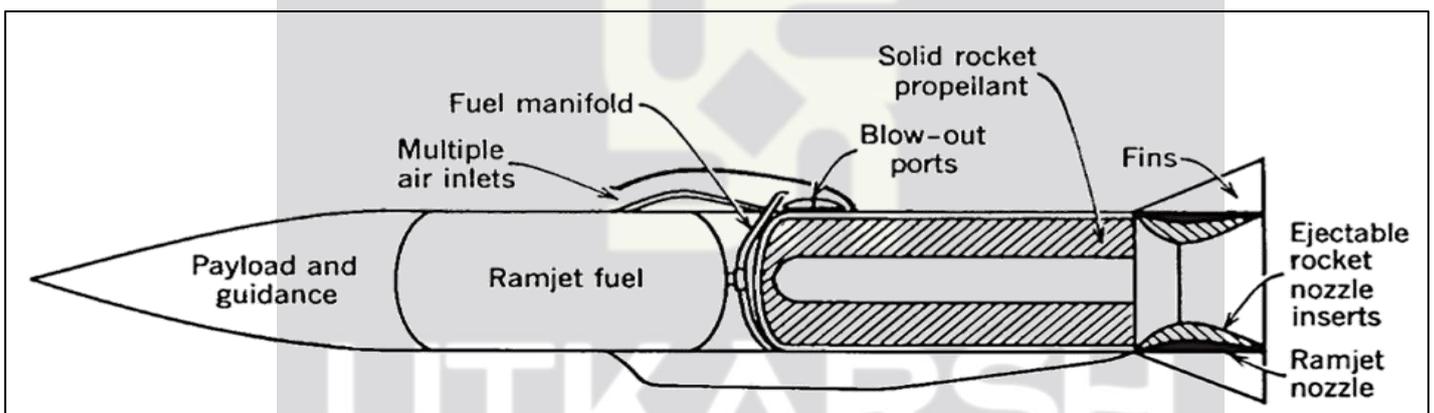
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Aligned with the "Global Leprosy Strategy (2021-2030) and the WHO Neglected Tropical Diseases Roadmap".



Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet Technology

Why in News?

- On February 3, 2026, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully demonstrated the Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.



Key Points:

- Launch monitored by:** Defence Research and Development Laboratory, High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, Research Centre Imarat, and ITR (DRDO laboratories).
- Subsystems demonstrated:** Nozzle-less booster, solid fuel ducted ramjet motor, and fuel controller.

Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) Technology:

- Introduction:** SFDR technology is a missile propulsion system based on the ramjet engine principle.
- System:** This system uses a solid-fuel-powered air-breathing ramjet engine.
- Unlike solid propellant rockets, the ramjet takes-in oxygen from the atmosphere during flight, thus making it lighter and allowing it to carry more fuel.

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- **History:** DRDO first developed the SFDR in 2017 and conducted successful tests in 2018 and 2019.

Significance:

1. The successful demonstration of this technology will help DRDO develop indigenous long-range air-to-air missiles.
2. With this achievement, India has joined the group of selected countries that possess this cutting-edge technology.
3. Missiles based on SFDR technology can reach their target at supersonic speeds.



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