



# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE



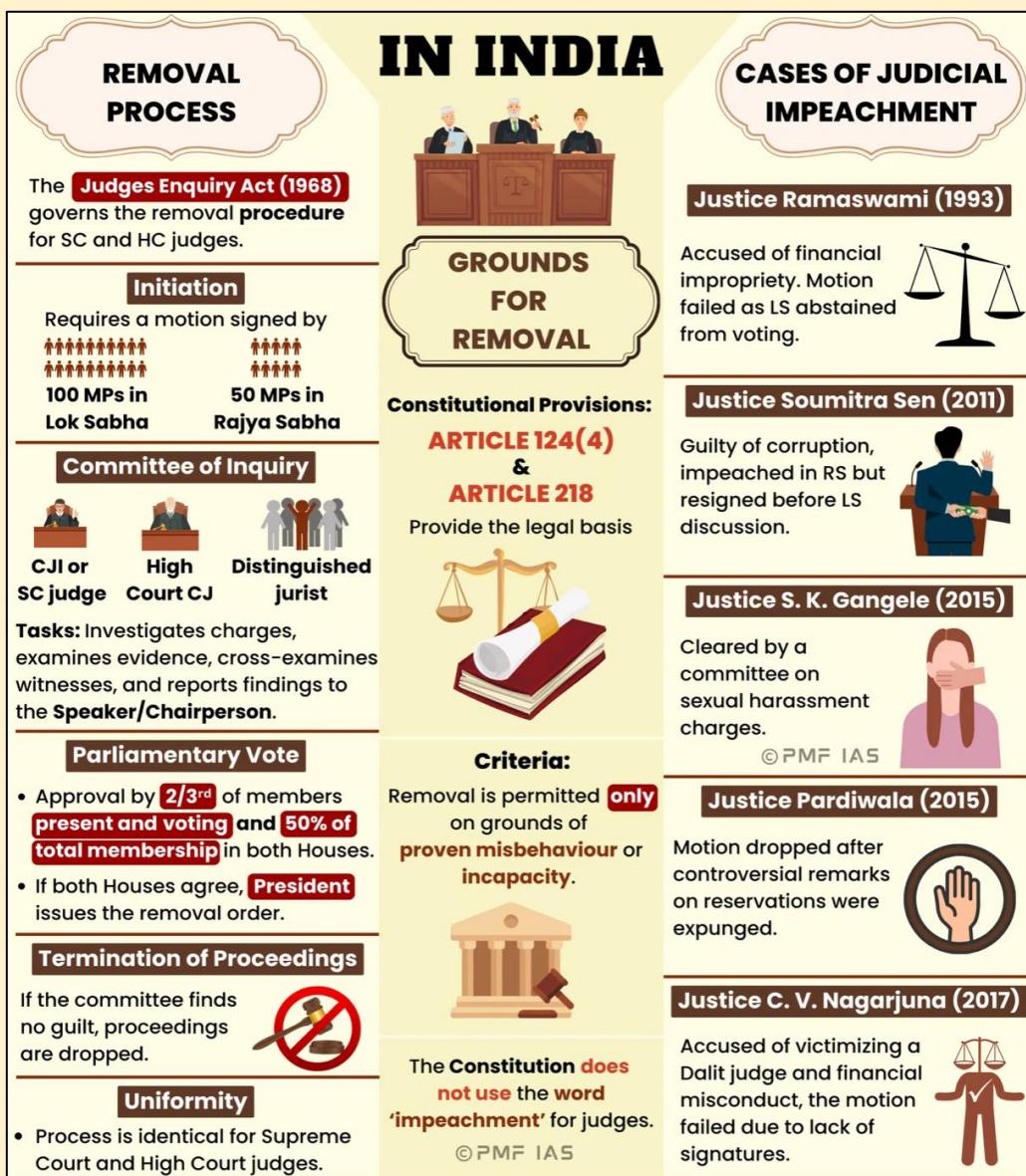
January 17 to January 23, 2026

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Monthly Current Affairs Magazine

## IMPEACHMENT OF JUDGES

In December 2025, 107 Lok Sabha MPs submitted a notice for removal of a sitting Madras High Court judge, reviving debate on the **impeachment (removal)** mechanism of judges under the Constitution. While India's removal law is among the most stringent globally, recent events highlight a **procedural vulnerability at the admission stage**.



### Core Idea / Constitutional Framework

- Judicial removal is provided under:
  - Article 124(4) & (5) – Supreme Court judges
  - Articles 217(1)(b) & 218 – High Court judges
- Grounds: “**Proved misbehaviour or incapacity**”
- Procedure regulated by:
  - **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**
  - **Judges (Inquiry) Rules**
- Removal requires:
  - **Address by each House of Parliament**
  - **Special majority:** majority of total membership + **2/3<sup>rd</sup> of members present and voting**

- Purpose: Maximum protection of judicial independence

### Where the Problem Lies?

The critical flaw is at the threshold stage:

- The Speaker (Lok Sabha) or Chairman (Rajya Sabha) has discretion to:
  - Admit or disallow a motion for judicial removal
- If the motion is not admitted, the process ends immediately
- Article 124(5) does not prescribe any grounds on which the Presiding Officer may refuse admission
- Disallowance can occur without reasons, even if:
  - The motion is signed by 100 MPs (LS) or 50 MPs (RS)

Resulting in a serious constitutional mechanism can be neutralised before inquiry begins

### Judicial Interpretation of "Misbehaviour"

Though undefined in the Constitution, courts have clarified its scope:

- K. Veeraswami v. Union of India (1991)
  - Judges are held to exceptionally high standards of integrity
- M. Krishna Swami v. Union of India (1992)
  - Misbehaviour is not mere error of judgment
  - Includes:
    - Wilful abuse of office
    - Corruption
    - Lack of integrity
    - Moral turpitude

### Why This Matters

1. **Judicial Independence vs Accountability**
  - Excessive discretion at admission stage undermines accountability
  - Yet weakening removal safeguards risks judicial intimidation
2. **Rule of Law Concerns**
  - A constitutional process becoming government-contingent
  - Creates perception of selective accountability
3. **Separation of Powers**
  - Presiding Officers act as statutory authorities, not constitutional ones
  - Their decision is open to judicial review, raising institutional friction
4. **Public Trust in Judiciary**
  - Failure to even inquire into serious allegations damages credibility

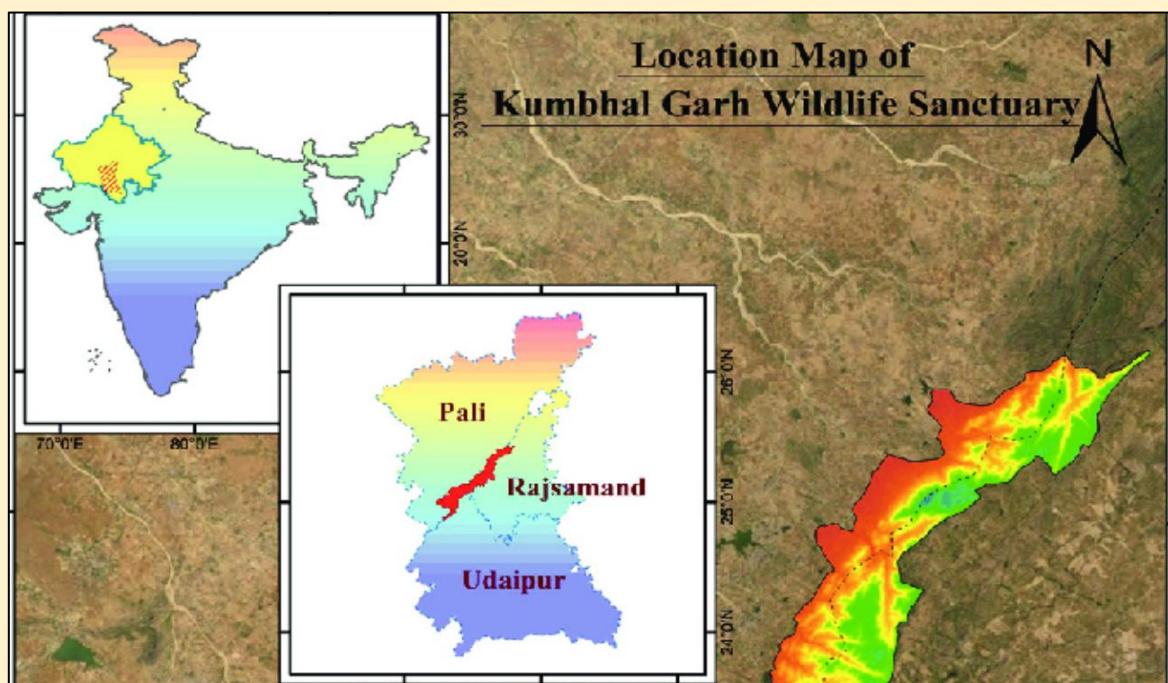
### Way Forward (Reforms Without Diluting Independence)

1. **Statutory Clarification**
  - Amend the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 to:
    - Specify objective conditions for admission/disallowance
    - Mandate written reasons for rejection
2. **Automatic Inquiry Trigger**
  - Once numerical threshold is met, mandatory constitution of inquiry committee
3. **Time-bound Preliminary Scrutiny**
  - Limited procedural scrutiny, not substantive veto, at admission stage
4. **Transparency Safeguards**
  - Public disclosure of reasons (except sensitive material)

India's judicial removal framework is substantively robust but procedurally fragile. While the Constitution rightly prioritises judicial independence, allowing a statutory gatekeeping veto to stall inquiry undermines accountability and public confidence. Reforming the admission stage – without lowering the removal threshold – is essential to preserve both judicial dignity and constitutional balance.

## KUMBHALGARH WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Centre designated 0-1 km buffer around Rajasthan's Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary in the Aravalli Range as an eco-sensitive zone to protect its fragile biodiversity.



### About Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary:

- **Location:** It is situated in the Rajsamand district of **Rajasthan**.
  - **Area:** It spreads in an area of **610.5 sq.km.** stretching across the Aravalli ranges.
- **Coverage:** It covers four hill and mountain ranges of the Aravallis – the **Kumbhalgarh Range, the Sadri Range, the Desuri Range, and the Bokhada Range**.
- **Establishment:** Once the hunting grounds of royals, this area was declared a **wildlife sanctuary in 1971**.
- **Nomenclature:** It encompasses the **historic Kumbhalgarh Fort** and is also named after the fort.
- **Landscape:** The sanctuary's landscape is varied. The **eastern part** has hills ranging from 500 to 1300 meters high, while the **western part** borders the Marwar plains.
- **Drainage:** The eastern section is the starting point for the **Banas River**, which flows into the Bay of Bengal. Meanwhile, rainwater from the western slopes forms small rivers like **Sukdi, Sumer, Mithdi, and Kot**, all of which are tributaries of the **Luni River** that eventually flow into the Arabian Sea.
- **Flora:** The flora of the sanctuary is mainly herbs. The species of **Churel, Dhok, Khair, and Salar** grow abundantly. among others.
- **Fauna:** The sanctuary provides a natural abode to many creatures like **Wolf, Leopards, Sloth bear, Hyena, jackal, Jungle cat, Sambhar, Nilgai, Chausingga** (the four horned antelope), Chinkara and Hare.

## PARBATI GIRI

The Prime Minister of India recently paid homage to freedom fighter Parbati Giri on the occasion of her birth centenary.



### About Parbati Giri:

- **Birth:** Born on **19 January 1926** to mother Srimati and father Dhananjay Giri of Samleipadar village near Bijepur of the present Bargarh district and **undivided Sambalpur district of Odisha**, she was filled with patriotism since childhood.
- **Entry into freedom struggle:** In 1938, she left home to dedicate herself fully to the freedom struggle **through the Indian National Congress**, embracing Gandhian ideals such as khadi, self-reliance, and constructive social work as a way of life.
- **Contribution in independence movement:** In 1942, she was just 16 when she was in the **forefront of agitation following Mahatma Gandhi's 'Quit India' movement**. She had also staged an **agitation at Bargarh Court** to persuade the lawyers to boycott the erstwhile court in defiance of the British.

- **Influence of Mahtama Gandhi:** She was inspired by Gandhian philosophy. She had even come in contact with Mahatma Gandhi. She had taken **tutelage at the famous Ashrams in Bari, Wardha, and Delhi Gandhi Seashram.**
- **Life after independence:** While she fought for the Independence of India, after independence she dedicated her life as a **social worker**. Parbati Giri led **famine relief operations during the 1951 Odisha famine**. She worked extensively on **prison reforms, leprosy eradication, and the welfare of the destitute and marginalized.**
- **Other names:** Also known as the **Mother Teresa of Western Odisha, and epithet as 'Banhi-kanya'** (daughter of fire), Giri was a prominent freedom fighter from Odisha.
- **Legacy:** Dearly known as **Badamaa (Big mother) to the inmates of her Ashrams**, the legendary woman from the Western Odishan district Bargarh worked for the poor and downtrodden till her death.

Recently, the government has increased the Central Silk Board's financial approval limit to ₹1 crore from ₹50 lakh by amending Rule 22 of the Central Silk Board Rules, 1955.

#### About Central Silk Board:

- **Nature:** It is a **statutory body established in 1948** by an Act of Parliament.
- **Nodal ministry:** It is working under the administrative control of **Ministry of Textiles**, Government of India.
- **Headquarters:** Its headquarters is located in **Bengaluru**.
- **Major functions:**
  - To advise the central Government on all matters relating to the development of silk industry including import and export of raw silk
  - To prepare and furnish such other reports relating to the silk industry as may be required by the Central Government from time to time.
  - To create greater opportunities for **gainful employment** and improved levels of income in sericulture through spread of scientific sericulture practices.

#### About Silk Production in India:

- **Global Standing:** India is the **2nd largest producer** of silk globally (after China) and the **largest consumer**.
  - **Variety:** India is the **only country producing all five commercial varieties**: Mulberry, Tropical Tasar, Oak Tasar, Eri, and Muga.
  - **Top Producers:** **Karnataka** leads the chart, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- **Major Schemes:**
  - **Silk Samagra:** An integrated scheme for the development of the silk industry focusing on R&D, seed organization, and quality certification.
  - **SAMARTH:** A capacity-building and training initiative in the textile sector.

## RESPONSIBLE NATIONS INDEX (RNI)

Recently, India launched the Responsible Nations Index (RNI) at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

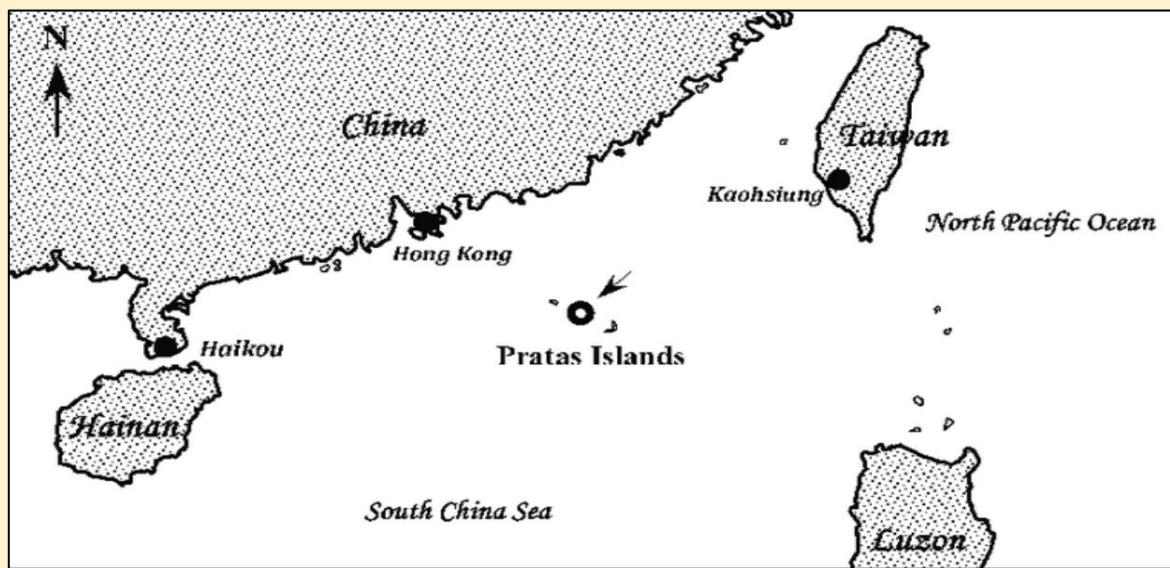


### About Responsible Nations Index:

- **Development:** It is developed by the **World Intellectual Foundation (WIF)** in collaboration with **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)**, **IIM Mumbai**, and the **Dr. Ambedkar International Centre**.
- **Uniqueness:** It is **India's first globally anchored index**.
  - **Objective:** It is designed to **assess countries on the basis of responsible governance, social well-being, environmental stewardship, and global responsibility**, moving beyond conventional power- and GDP-based measures.
  - **Coverage:** The Index covers **154 countries** and is built on transparent, globally sourced data to ensure credibility and comparability.
  - **Significance:** It seeks to promote a **global dialogue on ethics, responsibility, global food security, and sustainable leadership** in international affairs. It is also expected to contribute to a more balanced and value-based understanding of national performance on the global stage.
  - **Dimensions:** It is structured around **three core dimensions**, namely
    - **Internal responsibility:** It focuses on dignity, justice, and the well-being of citizens;
    - **Environmental responsibility:** It is covering stewardship of natural resources and climate action.
    - **External responsibility:** It measures a country's contribution to peace, cooperation, and global stability.
- **Key highlights of Responsible Nations Index 2026:**
  - **Top 3 countries:** Singapore (Rank 1), Switzerland (Rank 2), Denmark (Rank 3)
  - India is the top-ranked Asian nation. **India ranks 16th globally**, ahead of South Korea (21), Thailand (24) and Kyrgyzstan (22).
  - 9 of the top 10 countries are European, underscoring Europe's strength in institutional ethics.

## PRATAS ISLANDS

A Chinese reconnaissance drone briefly entered airspace over Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands, prompting Taiwan to label the act provocative and irresponsible.



### About Pratas Islands:

- **Nature:** The Pratas Islands are a **small group of three islands** located in the northern part of the South China Sea.
- **Location:** It lies approximately 445 km **southwest of Kaohsiung, Taiwan**, and 320 km southeast of Hong Kong.
- **Other names:** They are also known as the **Dongsha Islands**.
- **Characterisation:** These islands are characterized by a **circular atoll structure**, with Dongsha Island being the only island above sea level, while the other two are submerged.
- **Composition:** They are composed primarily of **clastic coral and reef flats** approximately 15 miles (24 kilometers) in diameter, enclosing a lagoon about 10 miles (16 kilometers) in diameter.
- **Significance:** Once discovered during the ancient Han Dynasty, Dongsha Island became an important point along **trade and fishing routes** through the Taiwan Strait, which separates Taiwan from mainland China, and the Bashi Channel between Y'Ami Island of the Philippines and Orchid Island of Taiwan.
- **Connectivity:** They are strategically important positions along the major sea route **connecting the Pacific and Indian ocean**.
- **Controversy:** The People's Republic of China **claims them**, but Taiwan **controls them** and has declared them part of the Dongsha Atoll National Park. There are no permanent residents. But Taiwanese marines are stationed there.
- **Biodiversity:** The region is notable for its rich biodiversity, **supporting a variety of flora and fauna**, including numerous fish species, coral, and migratory birds like the Chinese Egret.

## INS SUDARSHINI

The Indian Navy's Sail Training Ship INS Sudarshini will embark on the flagship voyage of Lokayan 26, a 10-month transoceanic expedition.



### About INS Sudarshini:

- **Nature:** It is an indigenously built **Sail Training Ship (STS)**.
  - **Construction:** It was built by **Goa Shipyard Limited** and based at Kochi, Kerala under the Southern Naval Command of the Indian Navy.
- **Commissioning:** It was successfully built and was commissioned in **January 2012**.
  - **Objective:** The aim of using such ships is to **make sailors sea-friendly**, as they are taught how to survive alone at sea, **understand rough weather conditions** and train themselves to become good sailors.
  - **Class:** It is a **three-masted barque** and the sister ship of INS Tarangini.
- **Propulsion:** It is capable of operating under **both sail and diesel power**.
- **Capacity:** It has a very high endurance and can be deployed at sea continuously for a **period of twenty days**.

### About Lokayan 26:

- **Nature:** It is a **10-month transoceanic expedition** covering over 22,000 nautical miles.
- **Ship used:** It will be executed by **INS Sudarshini**, an indigenously built three-masted sail training ship based at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi.
- **Global reach:** The voyage will visit **18 ports across 13 countries**.
- **Objective:** Over 200 **trainees from the Indian Navy and Coast Guard will undergo intensive sail training** to master ocean navigation and eco-friendly maritime practices.
- **Key events:** The ship is scheduled to participate in prestigious international "tall-ship" events, viz. **Escale à Sète in France** and **SAIL 250 in New York City, USA**.
- **Strategic vision:** The mission aligns with **India's MAHASAGAR initiative** (Maritime Heritage and Security and Growth for All in the Region) and the philosophy of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** ("The World is One Family").

## BOR TIGER RESERVE

- Two new safari gates at the Bor Tiger reserve were inaugurated recently in the Bangapur and Hingni ranges.



### About Bor Tiger Reserve:

- Location:** It is located in the Wardha District of **Maharashtra**.
- Establishment:** Originally notified as a wildlife sanctuary in 1970, it was officially declared India's 47th tiger reserve in **July 2014**.
- Drainage:** The reserve includes the drainage basin of the Bor Dam and is traversed by the **Bor River, a tributary of the Wardha River**.
- Area:** It covers an area of **138.12 sq.km**.
- Uniqueness:** It is the **smallest tiger reserve in India by area**.
- Significance:** It is centrally located among several other **Bengal tiger habitats**.
  - Boundaries:** Towards the northeast lies the **Pench Tiger Reserve**, towards the east is the **Nagzira Navegaon Tiger Reserve**. The **Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve** is located to the southeast, the **Melghat Tiger Reserve** stands to the west, and the **Satpura Tiger Reserve** lies to the northwest.
- Vegetation:** The area is populated by the **Dry Deciduous Forest** type.
  - Flora:** Teak, tendu, bamboo, tarot, and gokhru are some of the abundant species here.
  - Fauna:** Apart from tigers, the reserve is home to several other mammals like **leopards, sloth bears, sambar deer, Indian bison (gaur), chital, wild boars**, and more.
- Avian species:** It has recorded diversity of just under 200 avian species, with migratory waterfowl such as the tufted duck, northern shoveler, as well as the elegant fish specialist, the osprey. Commonly seen resident species include the **Indian peafowl, black-hooded oriole, and Indian paradise flycatcher**.

## SOFT MATTER

Every morning, as you use either your toothpaste or shampoo, you engage with soft matter, materials that flow like liquids under force but hold their shape at rest.



### About Soft Matter:

- **Definition:** Soft matter, or soft materials, is a **sub-field of “condensed matter”**, referring to a variety of materials that can be **easily deformed or structurally altered by thermal fluctuations** or nominal external stress.
- **Ubiquity:** They exhibit many useful and appealing properties, which account for their ubiquity in everyday life, finding use in a **diverse range of applications** in industry including, food, medical, automotive, construction, transportation, electronics, and manufacturing.
- **Scale:** One of the important characteristics of soft matter is their physical structures in the **mesoscopic scale**.
  - **Behaviour:** It is the properties and **interactions of these structures** that determine the overall behaviour of the material.
- **Weak intermolecular forces:** Unlike “hard” materials (metals, ceramics) held together by strong bonds, soft matter building blocks are **linked by weak forces**.
  - **Viscoelasticity:** These materials exhibit a **“borderline” behaviour between solids and liquids**—they can show both viscosity (liquid-like resistance) and elasticity (solid-like springiness).
  - **High sensitivity:** Small **changes in temperature or pressure** can drastically alter their physical properties.
- **Common Examples**
  - **Food items:** Curd, ice cream, butter, and ketchup.
  - **Personal care:** Shampoo, toothpaste, and soap bubbles.
  - **Biological systems:** Living cells, blood, proteins, and cell membranes.
  - **Industrial materials:** Polymers, colloids, liquid crystals, gels, and foams.

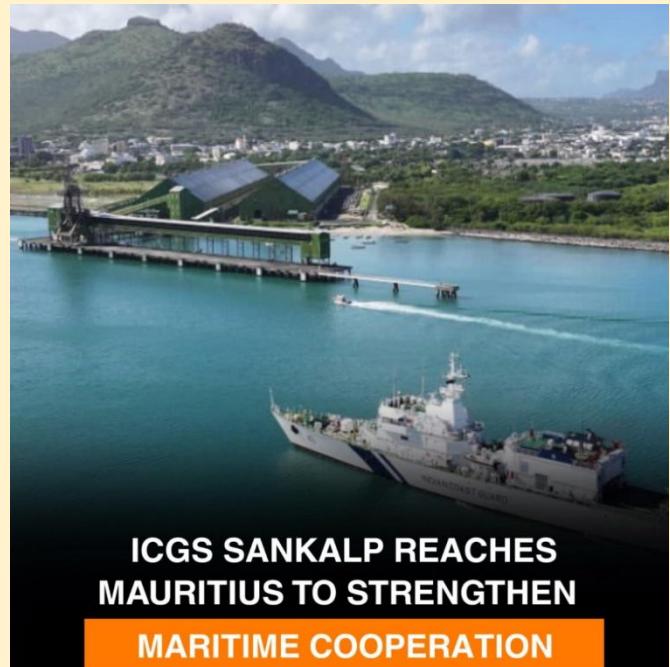
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## INDIAN COAST GUARD SHIP (ICGS) SANKALP

Recently, Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Sankalp visited Port Louis in Mauritius as part of overseas deployment in the Indian Ocean Region.



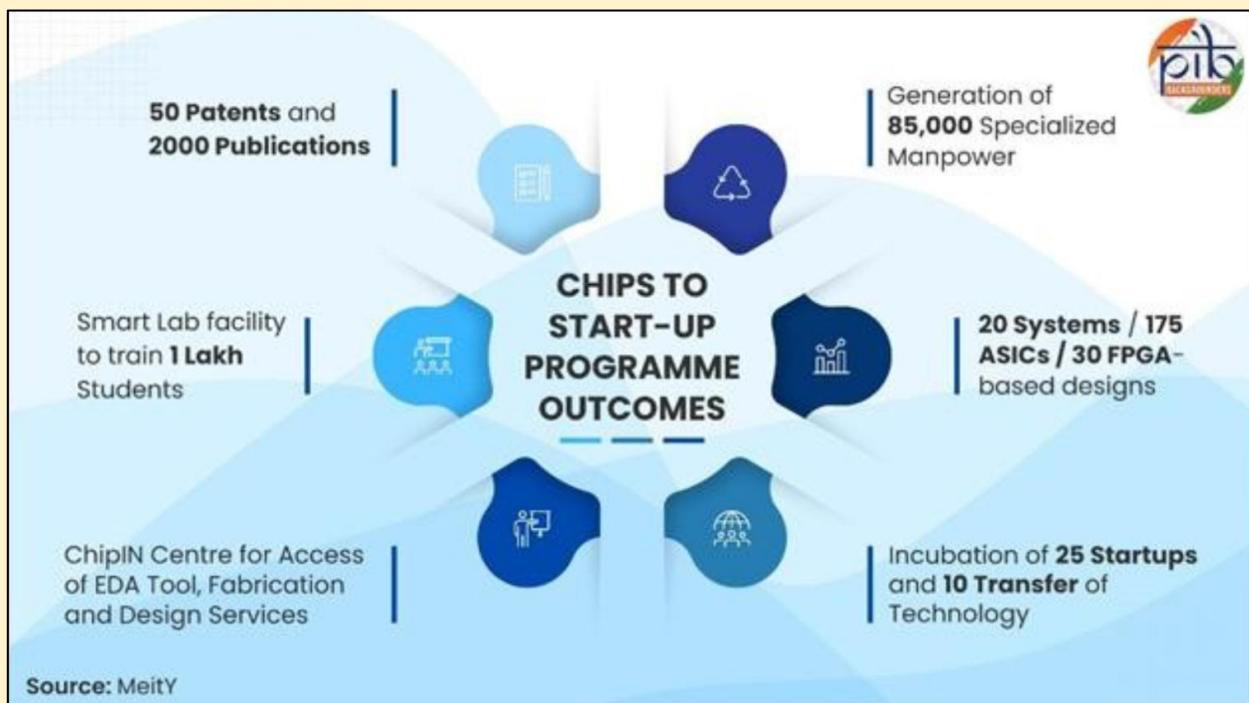
**ICGS SANKALP REACHES  
MAURITIUS TO STRENGTHEN  
MARITIME COOPERATION**

### About ICGS Sankalp:

- **Nature:** ICGS Sankalp is a **5th generation Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (AOPV)**.
- **Construction:** The vessel is indigenously built by the **Goa Shipyard Limited**.
- **Commissioning:** It was commissioned on **May 20, 2008, in Goa**.
  - **Motto:** Its motto is “**Extending the Horizon**”.
  - **Functions:** It is designed primarily for **extended maritime surveillance, exclusive economic zone (EEZ) protection, search and rescue operations, and enforcement of maritime laws within India's vast oceanic domains**.
  - **Structure:** The ship is **105-meter-long** with an endurance of 6,500 nautical miles.
- **Capacity:** It has displacement capacity of approximately **2,325 tonnes at full load**.
- **Surveillance:** It consists of **HAL Chetak rotary-wing aircraft** for enhanced aerial surveillance and SAR.
- **Armaments:** It is equipped with primary armament consisting of two 30 mm CRN-91 **twin-barrel naval guns**, designed for surface engagement and controlled by an **integrated fire control system**.
- **Navigation:** It is equipped with **state-of-the-art navigation and communication equipment**. It is also fitted with davits to deploy up to five high-speed interceptor boats.

## CHIPS TO START-UP PROGRAMME

The Chips to Start-up Programme has delivered measurable outcomes across capacity building, infrastructure access, and hands-on chip design enablement.



### About Chips to Start-Up Programme:

- **Nodal ministry:** It is an umbrella capacity-building initiative launched by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** in 2022.
- **Objective:** It aims to **catalyse the incubation of 25 start-ups** and enable 10 technology transfers.
- **Funding and tenure:** The total outlay of the scheme is **Rs. 250 crore over five years**.
- **Institutional framework:** The **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** is the nodal implementing agency.
- **Focus areas:**
  - It targets the development of 85,000 **industry-ready professionals** across undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels.
  - It seeks to provide access to **SMART lab facilities**, train one lakh students, generate 50 patents, and support at least 2,000 focused research publications.
  - It supports innovation, enhances **employability**, and enables academic institutions to play a more active role in India's semiconductor value chain.
- **Programme approach:**
  - The C2S Programme adopts a comprehensive approach, **providing students with hands-on experience** in chip design, fabrication, and testing.
  - It is achieved through **regular training sessions** in collaboration with industry partners, combined with mentorship and practical support.
  - Students gain **access to advanced chip design tools**, fabrication facilities, and testing resources, including state-of-the-art EDA software and semiconductor foundries.
  - These opportunities also include **implementing R&D projects** under the C2S Programme to develop working prototypes of Application-Specific Integrated Circuit (ASICs), Systems-on-Chip (SoCs), and Intellectual Property (IP) Core designs.

## BAGURUMBA DANCE

Recently, the Prime Minister of India witnessed a performance of the traditional Bagurumba dance of the Bodo community in Assam.

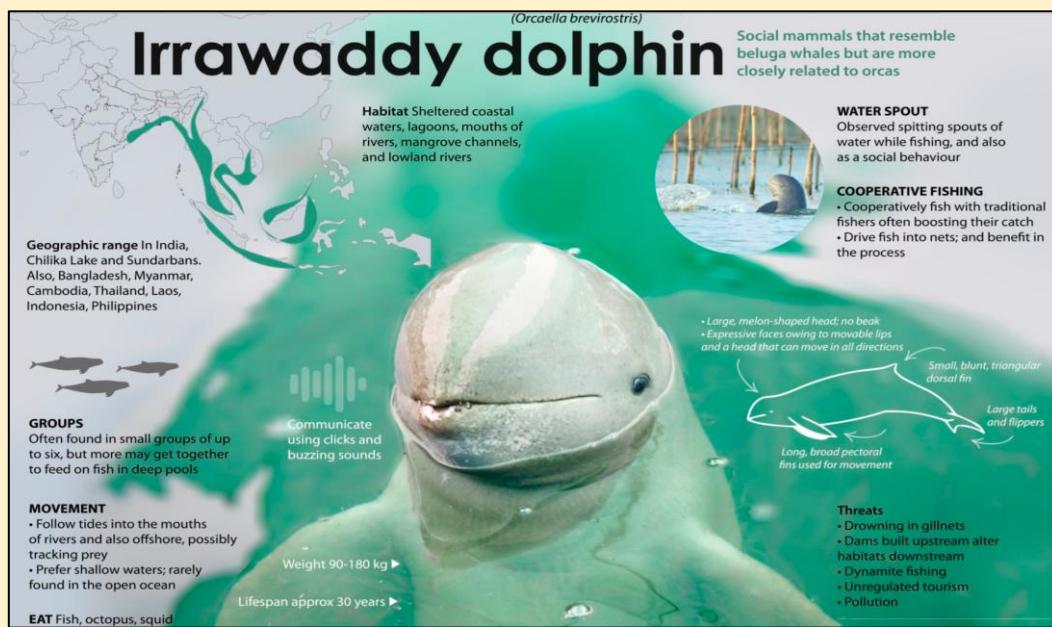


### About Bagurumba Dance:

- **Nature:** It is one of the **folk dances** of the Bodo community, deeply inspired by nature.
- **Location:** It is performed by indigenous **Bodo Tribe of Assam and Northeast India**.
  - **Other names:** It is often called the “**Butterfly Dance**” because its gentle, flowing hand movements mimic the fluttering of butterflies.
  - **Significance:** It represents **peace, fertility, joy and collective harmony**, and is closely associated with **festivals such as Bwisagu**, the Bodo New Year, and Domasi.
  - **Formation of geometric shapes:** Performances are usually organised in groups, forming **circles or lines** that enhance its visual elegance.
  - **Performance:** It is traditionally performed **only by women** of the Bodo community, with the musical instruments being played by their male counterparts.
  - **Dance attire:** The dancers dress in handwoven, bright red, yellow, and green **dokhna, jwmgra, and aronai**, dancing to the beautiful beats of the handmade percussion instruments.
- **Musical instruments used:** The musical instruments include the **traditional kham** (a drum made of wood and goatskin), including **sifung** (a bamboo flute), and other wooden instruments like **jota, gongwna and tharkha**.

## IRRAWADDY DOLPHIN

The Union Environment Ministry launched the second nationwide dolphin estimation under Project Dolphin, including the Irrawaddy dolphin for the first time.

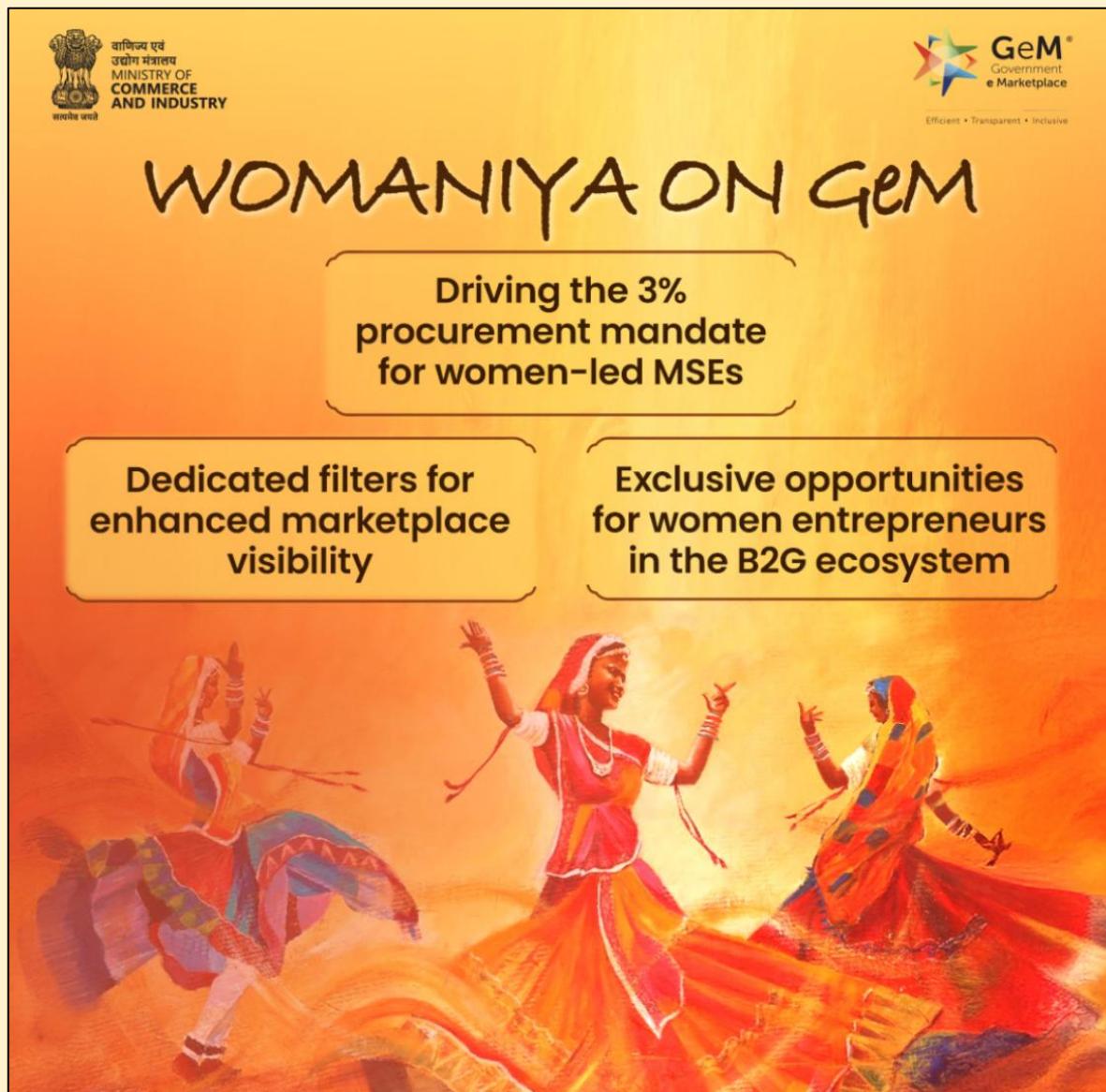


### About Irrawaddy Dolphin:

- **Nature:** It is a **eutrophic species** of oceanic dolphin found in discontinuous subpopulations near sea coasts and in estuaries and rivers in parts of the Bay of Bengal and Southeast Asia.
- **Scientific Name:** Its scientific name is **Orcaella brevirostris**.
  - **Habitat:** Irrawaddy dolphins prefer **coastal areas, particularly muddy, brackish waters** at river mouths and deltas, and do not appear to venture far offshore.
  - **Global distribution:** It is found in three rivers in **South and Southeast Asia**- the Irrawaddy (Myanmar), the Mahakam (Kalimantan, Indonesia), and the Mekong (Cambodia).
- **Distribution in India:** They occur mainly in **Chilika Lake (Odisha)**; but they are also reported in the **Sundarbans region**.
- **Uniqueness:** It has an instantly recognisable, **charismatic rounded face** and head with no beak; they look like baby belugas, only with a dorsal fin. They have expressive faces thanks to their **moveable lips and have creases around their necks** as they are able to move their heads in all directions.
- **Appearance:** They are **grey all over but lighter on the belly**. The dorsal fin is small; their flippers are long and large, with curved leading edges and rounded tips, and their tails are also large.
- **Teeth:** Irrawaddy dolphins have **narrow, pointed, peg-like teeth** about 1 cm in length in both the upper and lower jaws.
- **Ecology:** It is considered an **edge species** as it thrives in ecotones (transition zones between marine and freshwater ecosystems).
- **Cooperative Fishing:** In **Myanmar**, they are famous for “cooperative fishing” where they help local fishermen herd fish into nets.
- **Spy-hopping:** They often **rise vertically out of the water** to observe their surroundings
- **Conservation status:** It is classified as '**Endangered**' under the IUCN Red List.

## WOMANIYA INITIATIVE

Recently, the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) marked seven years of the Womaniya initiative.



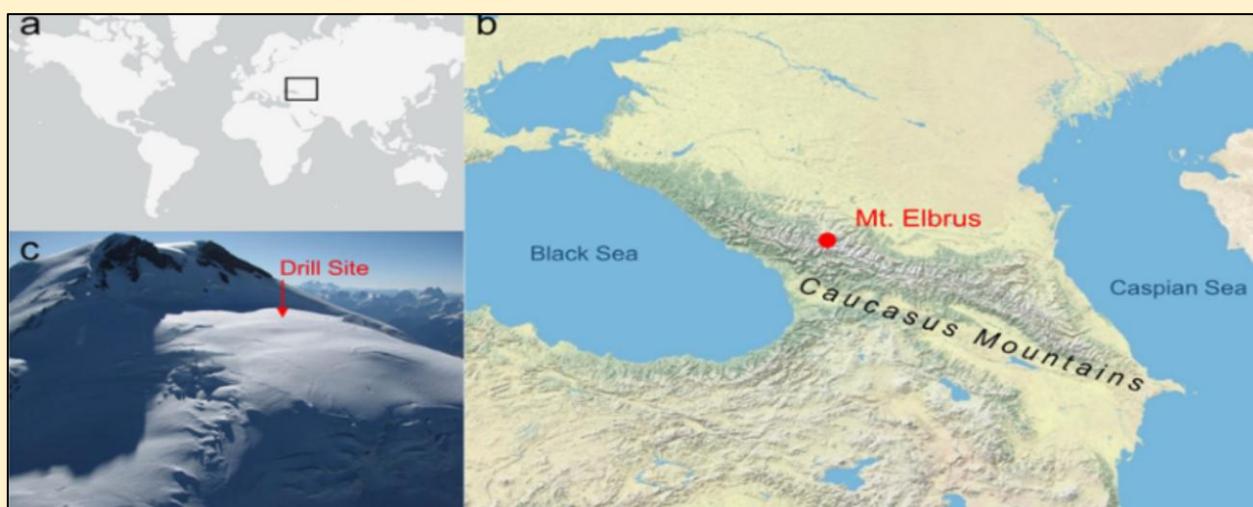
### About Womaniya Initiative:

- **Launch:** It was launched on 14 January **2019**.
- **Nature:** It is a flagship programme aimed at strengthening the **participation of women-led Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs)** in public procurement.
- **Objective:** The initiative seeks to develop women entrepreneurship to achieve **gender-inclusive economic growth**.
- **Market access:** It allows women to **sell products like handicrafts, handlooms, jute, and home décor directly to various government ministries and departments** without intermediaries.
- **Milestone:** In January 2026, the initiative **celebrated seven years**, reporting that women-led MSEs have fulfilled orders worth over ₹80,000 crore on the GeM Portal.
- **Procurement targets:** It helps fulfil the mandatory government norm requiring **at least 3% of total annual procurement by central ministries/PSUs** to be from women-owned enterprises.

- **GeM & UN Women Partnership:** A recent MoU between GeM and UN Women India aims to enhance gender-responsive procurement and align with **Sustainable Development Goal 5** (Gender Equality).
- **Digital inclusivity:** The platform currently hosts **over 2 lakh registered women-led MSEs**, accounting for roughly 4.7% of the total order value on GeM.
- **Significance:** It addresses the “triple challenge” of access to markets, finance, and value addition. It also aligns with national missions like Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India by integrating local value chains.

## MOUNT ELBRUS

Recently, an artificially-triggered avalanche was filmed cascading down Russia's highest mountain, Mount Elbrus.



### About Mt Elbrus:

- **Location:** It is located in southwest **Russia** and is part of the Caucasus Mountains.
- **Formation:** It is believed that the Caucasus Mountains were formed due to the **northward collision of the Arabian Plate with the Eurasian Plate**. Geological studies have revealed that Mount Elbrus was formed over 2.5 million years ago and the volcano had been most active during the Holocene Epoch.
- **Elevation:** It has an elevation of **18,510 feet** (5,642 meters). It makes up part of the Prielbrusye National Park. It is the highest point in Russia as well as the highest point in all of Europe.
- **Uniqueness:** It is **one of the Seven Summits of the world**, which are the tallest mountains on each of the seven continents.
- **Volcano:** Mount Elbrus is an **inactive volcano** that consists of two principal summits, both of which are dormant volcanic domes.
- **Climate:** The climate of Elbrus is generally cold. Even during summer, nighttime temperatures are **around -8°C (18°F)**.
- **Major glaciers:** These include **Bolshoi Azaou and Irik Glacier**.
- **Major rivers:** Many Russian rivers like the **Baksan, Malka, and Kuban** rivers originate from Bolshoi Azaou and Irik Glacier glaciers.

## JAMMA BANE LANDS

The Karnataka government has amended its land revenue law to modernise an age-old system of land records (Jamma Bane) in the scenic Coorg region.



### About Jamma Bane Lands:

- **Location:** Jamma Bane refers to a unique hereditary land tenure system found exclusively in the **Kodagu (Coorg) district of Karnataka**.
  - **Distinctiveness:** The word Jamma means **hereditary**. It is distinctly different from other classes of land holdings in the state.
- **History:** These Jamma lands were originally granted by **erstwhile kings of Coorg and the British** – between 1600 and 1800 – to local communities **in return for military service**.
  - **Types of lands:** These lands comprise **both wetlands**, used for paddy cultivation, and **forested highlands**, which have transformed into the now-famous coffee estates of Coorg.
  - **Ownership:** The Jamma Bane land ownership was historically recorded in the name of the original grantee (the Pattedar). **Even after generations, records often remained in the ancestor's name**, leading to modern legal hurdles.
- **Relevant Acts:** The Coorg Land Revenue and Regulations Act, 1899 was in place to govern land ownership in the region till the introduction of the **Karnataka Land Revenue Act, 1964**.
- **Recent legal developments:**
- **Modernisation Act:** In January 2025, the Karnataka government passed the **Karnataka Land Revenue (Second Amendment) Act, 2025**.
  - **Purpose:** The amendment aims to modernise land records, **allowing current joint family members to be officially recognised as owners**. This simplifies bank loan approvals, land sales, and inheritance processes.
- **Judicial rulings:**
- The ownership rights of the people of Kodagu over the Jamma Bane lands in the region was recognised by a full bench of the Karnataka HC in 1993 in **Chekker Poovaiah vs State of Karnataka**.
  - **In 2024, the Karnataka HC upheld** the Karnataka Land Revenue (Third Amendment) Act, 2011 which gave full ownership rights over Jamma Bane lands in Kodagu to Kodava families.

## VOYAGER 1

Nearly 50 years after launch in 2026, Voyager 1 will mark yet another first by reaching a distance where Earth is a full day away at the speed of light.

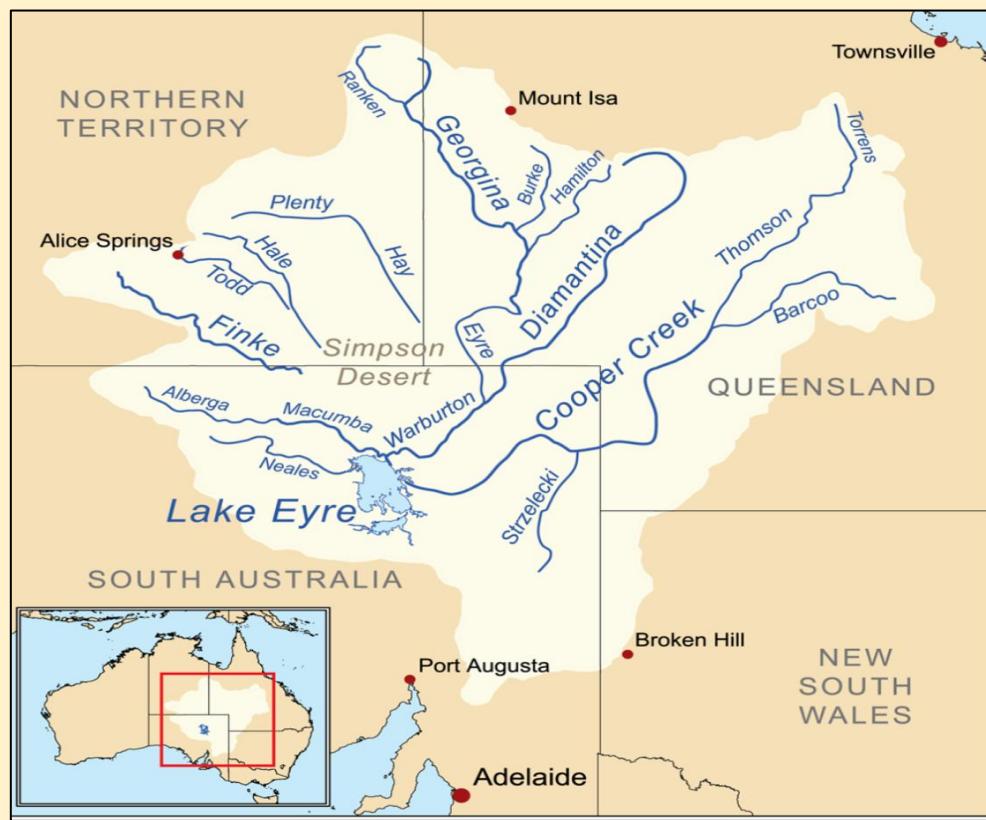


### About Voyager 1:

- **Launching agency:** It is a space probe launched by **NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)** in 1977.
- **Objective:** It aims to explore the **outer planets** in our solar system, specifically **Jupiter** and **Saturn**.
  - **Milestone:** In August 2012, it became the **first human-made object to enter interstellar space after crossing the heliopause** – the boundary where the Sun's solar wind meets the interstellar medium.
  - **Uniqueness:** It is the first spacecraft to travel beyond the solar system and reach interstellar space. It is currently the **most distant human-made object from Earth, located over 15 billion miles away**. Signals take approximately 22.5 hours one-way to reach the probe.
  - **Instruments:** The instruments of Voyager 1 included **Cosmic Ray Subsystem, Plasma Wave Subsystem, Infrared Interferometer Spectrometer and Radiometer (IRIS)** etc.
- **Significant Discoveries:**
- **Jupiter:** Discovered active volcanoes on the moon Io and identified a thin ring around the planet along with two **new moons, Thebe and Metis**.
- **Saturn:** Identified five new moons and the **G-ring**.
  - **Golden Record:** Carries a 12-inch gold-plated copper disk containing sounds and images **representing life and culture on Earth** as a message to extraterrestrial life.

## FINKE RIVER

The Finke River, known to the Arrernte people as Larapinta, is believed to be the world's oldest river system, even older than the dinosaurs.



### About Finke River:

- **Location:** It is a major but intermittent river of central **Australia**.
- **Course:** It starts in the **MacDonnell Ranges** in the Northern Territory. It forms where two smaller creeks, Davenport and Ormiston, meet. It **flows for about 600 kilometers** (370 miles) towards the Simpson Desert in South Australia.
- **Uniqueness:** It is often called “**the oldest river in the world**.”
- **Origin:** A combination of geological records, weathering profiles, and radionuclide measurements in the surrounding sediments and rocks has enabled scientists to date this river system to the **Devonian (419 million to 359 million) or Carboniferous (359 million to 299 million) period**.
- **Antecedent River:** It is believed to be an antecedent river, meaning its course predates the uplift of the MacDonnell Ranges. As the mountains rose, the **river maintained its path by cutting through them, creating deep gorges like Palm Valley**.
  - **Unique biodiversity:** Palm Valley along the river is home to the **Red Cabbage Palm**, a relic species from a much wetter prehistoric climate.
  - **Appearance:** Most of the time, the Finke River **looks like a series of waterholes**. But after heavy rains, it can turn into a powerful, fast-flowing river. During big floods, its water can even reach the Macumba River and eventually Lake Eyre.
- **Cultural significance:** Known as Larapinta by the Indigenous Arrernte people, it holds **deep spiritual value in Aboriginal “Dreaming” stories**.

## NPS VATSALYA SCHEME

Recently, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has issued the NPS Vatsalya Scheme Guidelines 2025.



### About NPS Vatsalya Scheme:

- **Nature:** It is a contributory savings and **long-term financial security scheme** designed exclusively **for minors**.
- **Regulatory Body:** It is regulated and administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (**PFRDA**).
- **Eligibility:** It is open to all Indian citizens, including NRI/OCI, **below 18 years of age**.
- **Account Operation:** Account is opened in the name of the minor and is operated **by the guardian**.
  - **Contribution:** **Minimum** initial and annual contribution is **₹250** and **there is no maximum limit** on contribution. The contribution can also be gifted by relatives and friends.
  - **Pension Fund Selection:** Guardian can choose any one Pension Fund **registered with PFRDA** for this purpose.
- **Withdrawal Provisions:**
  - **Partial Withdrawal:** It is allowed after 3 years for specific purposes like education, medical treatment, or disability (up to 25% of own contributions).
  - **Exit at 18:** If the subscriber exits at 18, at least 80% of the corpus must be used to purchase an annuity, while 20% can be a lump sum (if the total corpus is  $\leq$  ₹2.5 lakh, a full lump sum is allowed).
- **Significance:**
  - **Financial Inclusion:** Expands the pension net to the younger population, ensuring "Viksit Bharat@2047" goals of a pensioned society.
  - **Intergenerational Equity:** Promotes wealth accumulation through the power of compounding over decades.
  - **Social Security:** Addresses long-term financial risks for minors, providing a cushion for retirement long before they enter the workforce.

## KAZIRANGA ELEVATED CORRIDOR PROJECT

Recently, the Prime Minister, during his Assam visit, laid the foundational stone of the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor of worth over 6,950 Crore in Kaliabor, Assam. During the Programme, two new Amrit Bharat Express trains were also flagged off.

### About the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project

Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project is a four-lane 86 km long environment-friendly highway project that will pass through the Kaziranga National Park and widen the existing NH-715 from two to four lanes. It will enhance the connectivity and people's movement while protecting the biodiversity and the environment.



**Vision:** To enhance the connectivity across upper Assam, while protecting the rich biodiversity of the region.

**Location:** The project will connect the Nagaon, Kharbi Anglong and Golaghat districts of Upper Assam.

The project will ensure uninterrupted movements of the animals, lessen the human-wildlife conflicts and will enhance the road safety.

The project will features 35km of Elevated corridor that will pass through the Kaziranga Park, 21 km of Bypass section and 30 km of further widening of the two lane highway section of NH-715 to four lanes.

## Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project Objectives

The objectives of the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project is given below:

Ensure free flow of people and wildlife, and material.

Reduce the human-wildlife conflicts.

Strengthen road safety and reduce travel and accident rates.

Improve the connectivity of the upper Assam, specifically Dibrugarh and Tinsukia.

It will support growing passenger and freight traffic.

The bypasses will decongest the towns, improve urban mobility and enhance the quality of rural and local residents.

The project will be developed on an Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode.

## Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project Significance

Protect the UNESCO world heritage site while also ensuring the development of the region.

Promote tourism with sustainable development principles and will also generate employment opportunities for the local and the youths.

It will further protect the one-horned Rhino, the flagship specie of Kaziranga National Park.

During the monsoon the park gets flooded, which force the wildlife movement through the highway leading to congestion and mostly the human-animal conflict, thus the project will ensure a safer movement for both the wildlife and the people.

### **ABOUT KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK**

Kaziranga National Park is located between the Brahmaputra River and the Karbi Hills of Assam, spread over an area of 42,996 Hectares.

In 1985, it was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

It is the home of the world's most one-horned rhinos.

It is the single largest undisturbed area in the Brahmaputra valley floodplains.

Covered with tall and dense elephant grasses and inhabitates the Gangetic River dolphin, Tigers, Eastern swamp deer, Elephant, Hoolock gibbon etc.

The River Difal, a tributary of the Brahmaputra flows through the Park.

Kaziranga is known for successful anti-poaching measures, rhino census programs, and strict protection strategies that have significantly increased wildlife populations.

Annual floods of the Brahmaputra enrich the soil, maintain wetlands, and help in seed dispersal, playing a critical role in the park's ecological balance.

The park and surrounding areas are culturally important, with indigenous communities historically relying on the landscape for sustenance and integrating traditional ecological knowledge in conservation practices.

## THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF (CDS) RELEASED THE 'MILITARY QUANTUM MISSION POLICY FRAMEWORK'

- **Vision:** It aims for jointness and integration among the Tri-Services to achieve **technological dominance** in future battlefields and **prepare for technology-centric warfare**.
- **Civil-Military Fusion:** Aligned with **National Quantum Mission (NQM)** to ensure collaboration between civilian research and military applications through **dedicated governing bodies**.
- **Core Domains:** Prioritises four critical quantum pillars:
  - Quantum Communication,
  - Quantum Computing,
  - Quantum Sensing & Metrology and
  - Quantum Materials and Devices.



### Applications of Quantum Technology in Defence

- **Secure Communications:** Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) uses the principle of entanglement to create keys that are theoretically **unhackable**.
- **Quantum Sensing & Metrology:** Quantum Radar and Imaging can detect stealth aircraft and submarines invisible to traditional radar.
- **Quantum Navigation:** Quantum sensors can enable **high-accuracy navigation** in environments where GPS is jammed.
- **Intelligence & Logistics:** Quantum algorithms can optimize **battlefield logistics**, analyze vast "SIGINT" (Signals Intelligence) datasets, and power autonomous robotic systems through **Quantum AI**.

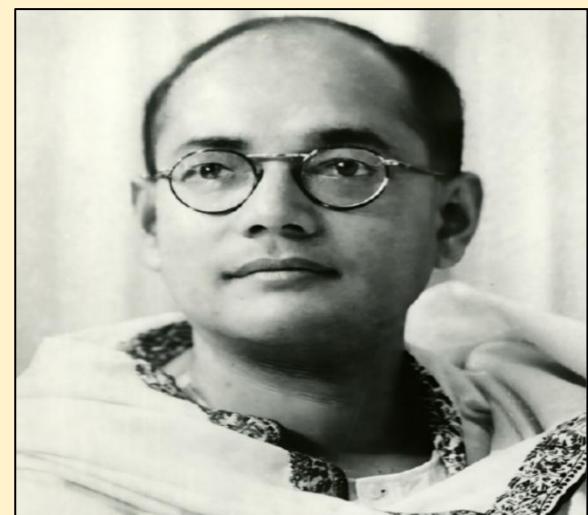
- **Quantum Materials:** Development of materials with **adaptive** properties (e.g., changing camouflage) or **extreme durability** for aerospace applications.
- **Cyber Defence:** Transitioning to **Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC)**(resisting attacks by quantum computers) to safeguard critical infrastructure against future **quantum-enabled cyberattacks**.

### About Quantum Technology

- It is the field of physics and engineering that applies the principles of **quantum mechanics** such as, **superposition and entanglement**.
  - **Quantum mechanics** explains how **extremely small** objects **simultaneously** have the characteristics of **both particles and waves**.
- **Key Principles:**
  - **Superposition:** Unlike classical bits (which are either 0 or 1), **quantum bits (qubits)** can exist in a state of **0, 1, or both simultaneously**.
  - **Entanglement:** A phenomenon where two particles become linked; **a change in the state of one instantly affects the other, regardless of distance**.

## NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE (1897-1945)

- Government celebrates Parakram Diwas (23 January) to commemorate 129th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- Indian **nationalist leader**; advocated for **complete independence** from British rule.



### Key Contributions

- President of the **Indian National Congress in 1938 and 1939** but resigned due to differences.
- He wrote for Chittaranjan Das's newspaper, **Forward**, and started a paper titled **Swaraj** to promote independence.
- He escaped British house arrest in 1941; sought international support from **Germany and Japan** during World War II.
- Led the **Indian National Army (INA or Azad Hind Fauj)** from **1943**.
- Under his leadership, the **INA** fought alongside Japanese forces against the British in the **northeast of India and Burma**.
- He established the **Provisional Government of Free India** in Imphal, Manipur to mobilize Indians for an anti-British revolt.

### Values

- **Patriotism, Courage, Leadership, Sacrifice, Determination**

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