



KERALA STATE CIVIL SERVICE ACADEMY



Established under Centre for Continuing Education Kerala (CCEK)

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

MAGAZINE



June 01 to June 05, 2026

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Monthly Current Affairs Magazine

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

The International Criminal Court recently unsealed an arrest warrant against Senator Ronald Dela Rosa, accusing him, along with ex-President Rodrigo Duterte and other "co-perpetrators" of the "crime against humanity of murder".

About International Criminal Court



It is a permanent and independent criminal court established to prosecute offenders of serious crimes in the international community.

It is the only permanent international criminal tribunal.

It was created by the Rome Statute, which came into force on July 1, 2002.

Mandate: ICC investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community.

Specifically, the **ICC is intended to prosecute the following crimes:**

Genocide

Crimes against humanity

War crimes

The crime of aggression

The ICC is meant to serve as a last resort when the courts of sovereign states are unwilling to prosecute.

Therefore, the ICC is complementary to national criminal jurisdiction and does not supersede it.

Additionally, the ICC serves a different purpose than the International Court of Justice, which resolves conflicts between nations.

Members: **There are 125 member countries (China, India, Israel, Russia, and the United States are not ICC parties).**

Funding: The Court is funded by contributions from the States Parties and by voluntary contributions from Governments, international organizations, individuals, corporations, and other entities.

International Criminal Court Composition

Judges: The court has eighteen judges, each from a different member country, elected to non-renewable nine-year terms.

The Presidency:

Consists of three judges (the President and two Vice-Presidents) elected from among the judges. It represents the Court to the outside world and helps with the organization of the work of the judges.

Office of the Prosecutor (OTP):

OTP is responsible for receiving referrals and any substantiated information on crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court.

OTP examines these referrals and information, conducts investigations, and conducts prosecutions before the Court.

Registry: It provides administrative and operational support to the Chambers and the Office of the Prosecutor.

International Criminal Court Jurisdiction

The ICC is only competent to hear a case if:

The country where the offence was committed is a party to the Rome Statute; or The perpetrator's country of origin is a party to the Rome Statute.

The ICC only has jurisdiction over offences committed after the Statute's entry into force on 1 July 2002.

Various parties have the right to refer a case to the ICC:

any State Party to the Rome Statute, irrespective of any involvement in the alleged offence; the Prosecutor of the ICC; the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The UNSC may ask the ICC to defer investigation of a case for a limited period if it considers that the proceedings would constitute an obstruction to its powers.

	International Court of Justice (ICJ) La Cour Internationale de Justice (CIJ)	International Criminal Court (ICC) La Cour pénale internationale (CPI)
Year Court Established	1946	2002
UN-Relationship	Official court of the U.N., commonly referred to as the "World Court."	Independent. May receive case referrals from the UN Security Council.
Location	The Hague, The Netherlands	The Hague, The Netherlands
Types of Cases	Contentious between parties & Advisory opinions	Criminal prosecution of individuals
Subject Matter	Sovereignty, boundary, & maritime disputes, trade, natural resources, human rights, treaty violations, treaty interpretation, and more.	Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes of aggression
Funding	UN-funded.	Assessed contribution from state parties to the Rome Statute; voluntary contributions from the U.N.; voluntary contributions from governments, international organizations, individuals, corporations and other entities.

BRICS PartNIR

Under India's 2026 BRICS Chairship, the Ministry of MSMEs successfully convened the 2nd SME Working Group Meeting under the BRICS PartNIR track.



The BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR)

About The BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR):

What It Is?

- The BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR) is a structured, high-level cooperation framework designed to guide BRICS member nations through the economic and technological shifts of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0).
- It focuses on unifying industrial capabilities, digital systems, and sustainable practices across the expanded bloc.

Established In:

- PartNIR was formally established in **2021** to create an institutional mechanism within the BRICS framework.

Aim:

- The partnership aims to accelerate digital transformation, maximize industrial productivity, ensure technological independence and integrate micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) into regional and global value chains while driving a transition toward a green, circular economy.

Key Pillars and Priority Focus Areas:

The PartNIR track operates across six highly integrated priority themes, each tied to specific strategic outputs:

1. SME Digitalization and Technology Access

- **Targeted Support:** Structuring a dynamic *BRICS SME Work Plan* that updates support networks and recalculates operational strategies following the addition of new BRICS member states.
- **AI Integration:** Deploying AI and digital tools as equalizers to help small businesses automate workflows, optimize resources, and secure market intelligence.
- **Capacity Building:** Developing industry-ready manpower and setting up regional digital B2B platforms to expand market access.

2. Sovereign AI for Digital Industrialization

- **Technological Autonomy:** Mitigating the monopolistic digital infrastructure and pricing control held by large multinational corporations.
- **Foundational Models:** Co-developing foundational open-source Generative AI models tailored specifically to national languages and distinct cultural frameworks of the BRICS nations.
- **Shared Infrastructure:** Creating shared computing, data storage, and deep-learning processing facilities specifically optimized for heavy industrial applications.

3. Bioindustry and Global Supply Chains

- **Green Chemistry:** Integrating biotechnology with manufacturing to leverage local biomass for the production of green polymers, plastics, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics.
- **Biomapping:** Facilitating inter-institutional cooperation for synthetic biology and the biomapping of genetic resources to establish industrial biorefining parks.

4. Circular Economy Practices

- **Resource Optimization:** Building a coordinated framework to scale up eco-design, remanufacturing, industrial recycling, and waste reuse.
- **Decarbonization:** Actively establishing a dedicated Circular Economy Working Group to map out sustainable consumption models that accelerate green job creation.

5. Intelligent Manufacturing and Robotics

- **Precision Production:** Scaling up the adoption of IoT, robotics, and advanced automation to lower operational costs and elevate manufacturing quality across emerging markets.

UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE LAUNCHED PRECISION GUIDED MISSILE (ULPGM)-V3

The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully completed the final deliverable configuration development trials of the **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Launched Precision Guided Missile (ULPGM)-V3** at its test range near Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh.



Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Launched Precision Guided Missile (ULPGM)-V3

About Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Launched Precision Guided Missile (ULPGM)-V3:

What It Is?

- The ULPGM-V3 (also known as ULM-ER or Unmanned Launch Munition-Extended Range) is a highly sophisticated, lightweight, fire-and-forget precision-guided missile specifically engineered for drone warfare.
- It allows unmanned aerial platforms to execute high-accuracy surgical strikes against both ground armor and airborne threats without requiring direct human piloting or endangering manned aircraft.

Nodal Design Laboratory: The ULPGM missile has been developed by Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad as the nodal lab along with other DRDO laboratories

Aim:

- The primary aim of the ULPGM-V3 is to equip the Indian Armed Forces with an autonomous, low-cost, yet highly lethal standoff weapon capability.
- It seeks to neutralize high-value assets – such as hostile main battle tanks, reinforced concrete bunkers, and enemy surveillance drones – while operating in communication-denied or heavily jammed electronic warfare environments.

Key Features:

- **Physical Dimensions:** Possesses an optimized, lightweight structural design weighing **12.5 kg**, making it easily compatible with multiple tactical and high-endurance UAV platforms.
- **Extended Range Dynamic:** Features a maximum operational strike range extended up to **10 km** (with an active engagement reach of 4 km during peak day conditions and 2.5 km at night).
- **Advanced Dual-Channel Guidance:** Equipped with a high-definition, passive-homing, dual-channel **Imaging Infrared (IIR) seeker** alongside laser guidance, ensuring seamless all-weather, day-and-night tracking.
- **Pinpoint Accuracy:** Achieves a **Circular Error Probable (CEP) of just 10 cm**, meaning the missile consistently strikes within a coffee-cup-sized radius of its designated target.
- **Two-Way S-Band Datalink:** Features a robust two-way digital communication link that allows real-time target updates, mid-course flight corrections, and in-flight re-targeting.
- **Propulsion System:** Driven by a advanced dual-thrust solid propellant rocket motor that utilizes low-signature, smokeless fuel to prevent visual detection of the launch drone.

- **Modular Warhead Configurations:** Features a hot-swappable payload array designed to defeat distinct battlefield assets:
 - **Anti-Armor / EFP Version:** Explosively Formed Penetrator designed to punch through heavy main battle tank armor via top-attack mode.
 - **PCB (Penetration-Cum-Blast) Version:** A bunker-buster load capable of shattering reinforced concrete defenses.
 - **Pre-Fragmented Version:** Engineered with an optimized lethality blast zone for anti-personnel and soft-target interdiction.

Significance:

- Validates a fully indigenous drone-munition supply chain involving 30+ Indian MSMEs and startups.
- Enables Indian drones to detect and destroy enemy drones, helicopters, and loitering munitions.

AMMONIUM SULPHATE FERTILIZER

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) urged state governments to promote ammonium sulphate as an alternative to urea for paddy cultivation.



Ammonium Sulphate Fertilizer

About Ammonium Sulphate Fertilizer:

What it is?

- Ammonium sulphate is an inorganic, water-soluble chemical mineral fertilizer containing two crucial plant macronutrients: **21% Nitrogen** (in the readily available ammonium form) and **24% Sulphur** (as active sulphate). It is historically used in alkaline soils to provide immediate nourishment and to lower the soil's pH baseline.

Production:

Ammonium sulphate is manufactured through multiple chemical synthesis pathways:

- **Direct Synthesis:** Reacting gaseous ammonia directly with a concentrated solution of sulfuric acid.
- **Byproduct Recovery:** Extracted as a valuable structural byproduct during the industrial manufacture of caprolactam (a chemical used to make nylon) or recovered from coke-oven gases in large-scale steel plants.

Current India Fertilizer Imports:

- **War Disruptions:** Fertilizer imports from West Asian suppliers like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Oman, and Israel face major shipping and logistics disruptions due to the 2026 conflict.
- **Domestic Supply Gap:** India's production of urea, DAP, and NPK fertilizers remains insufficient to meet rising agricultural demand.
- **Potash Dependence:** India is fully import-dependent for Muriate of Potash (MOP), making kharif sowing vulnerable to global supply disruptions.

How Ammonium Sulphate Can Substitute Urea?

- **Domestic Production:** India already has established ammonium sulphate manufacturing capacity, reducing immediate dependence on volatile global fertilizer and energy markets.
- **Alternative Import Sources:** Unlike urea imports concentrated in West Asia, ammonium sulphate can be sourced from multiple countries, improving supply-chain flexibility during crises.
- **Lower Nitrogen Loss:** The ammonium ion binds strongly with soil particles, reducing nutrient losses through leaching, volatilization, and denitrification during rainfall.
- **Dual Nutrient Supply:** It simultaneously provides nitrogen and sulphur, helping crops achieve rapid vegetative growth and improving sulphur-deficient soils.

Limitations of Ammonium Sulphate:

- **Soil Acidity:** Continuous or excessive application increases soil acidity significantly, requiring higher lime treatment to maintain long-term soil fertility and productivity.
- **Waterlogging Toxicity:** In flooded or clay-heavy soils, sulphur may convert into hydrogen sulphide gas under anaerobic conditions, damaging rice roots severely.
- **Plant Burn Risk:** Due to its high salt concentration, overapplication can dehydrate roots and cause chemical burns, especially in sensitive crops.
- **Short Soil Life:** Being highly water-soluble, its nutrient effect lasts only about 4–6 weeks, requiring frequent split applications by farmers.
- **Lower Nitrogen Density:** With only 21% nitrogen compared to urea's 46%, farmers need larger quantities for the same nutrient requirement, increasing handling costs.

SHAHEED VEER GUNDADHUR

Union Home Minister inaugurated the Shaheed Veer Gundadhur Seva Dera Jan Suvidha Kendra in Bastar, Chhattisgarh.

About Shaheed Veer Gundadhur:

Who He Was?

- Veer Shaheed Gundadhur was a legendary tribal revolutionary leader from the Bastar region who led the historic **Bhumkal Rebellion of 1910** against the oppressive British colonial empire.
- Revered as a symbol of tribal sovereignty, identity, and resistance, his military tactics and grassroots mobilization shook the foundations of colonial administration in central India.



Early Days:

- **Origins:** Born in **Netanar village** (located in the dense forest stretches of Bastar, Chhattisgarh), he belonged to the Dhurwa tribal community.
- **Original Name:** Locally, he was known as **Baga Dhurva** during his youth.
- **Background:**
 - He grew up as an ordinary tribal youth, entirely disconnected from formal schools or the outside world.
 - Despite lacking formal education, his hunting skills, knowledge of local geography, and natural leadership earned him deep respect.
 - The title "**Gundadhur**" was notably recorded by the British to describe his formidable rebel status.

His Contribution to the Freedom Movement:

- **The Bhumkal Movement (1910):** Gundadhur laid the foundation for the historic Bhumkal (meaning earthquake or earth-rebellion) movement to protest the British exploitation of local resources, severe forest reservation policies, and colonial overreach.
- **The Secret Messenger System:** To mobilize tribal communities secretly under the nose of King Rudrapratap (who worked under British oversight), Gundadhur distributed specific local symbols from house to house as a call to rebellion:
- **Red Chillies:** Signifying urgent revolutionary action.
- **Clay Bows and Arrows:** Symbolizing preparation for armed resistance.
- **Mango Branches:** Representing solidarity to protect tribal identity.
- **Guerilla Strategy:** At just 35 years of age, Gundadhur orchestrated advanced ambush tactics, forcing British officers and local forces to flee and take refuge in forest caves. The movement effectively halted colonial governance across Bastar for weeks.

Last Days and Legacy:

- **Brutal Suppression:** British forces crushed the revolt through harsh military action, executing many tribal leaders at Jagdalpur's Golbazar Chowk.
- **Mass Sacrifice:** Around 25,000 tribal people are believed to have died during the suppression of the Bhumkal movement.
- **Uncaptured Leader:** Gundadhur was never captured and disappeared into Bastar's forests, becoming a legendary symbol of resistance.
- **Modern Recognition:** His legacy survives through tribal folklore, and Chhattisgarh annually presents the Shaheed Gundadhur Award in archery.

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE COASTAL MANAGEMENT

The National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) recently completed the documentation and ground-truthing of all but 11 of Maharashtra's 23,415 wetlands.

About National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management



It was established by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in 2011 as an autonomous institution to support the protection, conservation, rehabilitation, management, and policy advice of the coast.

Headquarters: Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Aims and Objectives:

Strive for being a world-class knowledge institution related to coastal zones, environment, resources, and processes.

To promote integrated and sustainable management of the coastal and marine areas in India for the benefit and well-being of the traditional coastal and island communities.

Advise the Union and State Governments and other associated stakeholder(s) on policy and scientific matters related to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

It undertakes studies and research in the area of Coastal Zone Management including coastal resources and environment.

The Six Research Divisions of the NCSCM are:

Geospatial Sciences, Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS),

Integrated Social Sciences & Economics,

Coastal environmental impact assessment,

Conservation of Coastal & Marine Resources,

Knowledge, Governance and Policy,

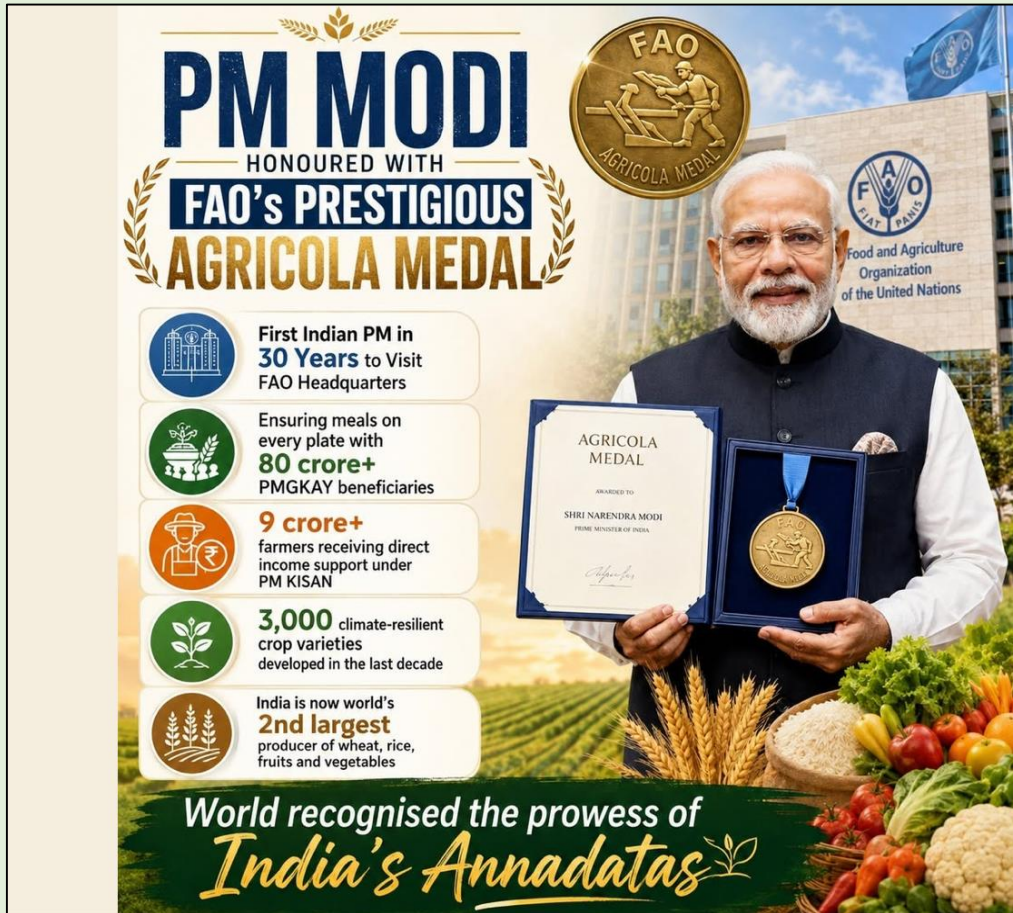
Futuristic Research and Integrated Island Management Unit.

NCSCM is partnering with leading national and international research institutions and agencies through advanced research, networking, and scientific committees. and peer-reviewed publications in international journals.

AGRICOLA MEDAL

The Prime Minister was recently conferred with the prestigious FAO Agricola Medal by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

About Agricola Medal



It is the highest honour conferred by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

It is awarded to distinguished individuals who have played an exceptional role in advancing efforts toward global food security, improved nutrition and agricultural development.

It is considered one of the highest honours granted by the Organization in recognition of outstanding leadership and tangible contributions in these fields.

Key Facts about Food and Agriculture Organization.

It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

It is the oldest permanent specialized agency of the UN. FAO was founded on October 16, 1945, when its constitution was signed in Canada's Quebec City by 34 countries.

Headquarters: Rome, Italy.

Mandate: To improve nutrition, increase agricultural productivity, raise the standard of living in rural populations, and contribute to global economic growth.

FAO's goal is to achieve food and security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food and lead active, healthy lives.

Functions:

The FAO coordinates the efforts of governments and technical agencies in programs for developing agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and land and water resources.

It is both a forum for negotiating agreements between developing and developed countries and a source of technical knowledge and information to aid development.

The FAO also collaborated with the United Nations to establish the World Food Programme (WFP) to distribute surplus food to those in need.

Members: It currently has 195 members - 194 countries and the European Union. (India is a founding member of FAO).

It is governed by the biennial FAO conference, in which each member country, as well as the EU, is represented.

The conference elects a 49-member Council, which serves as its executive organ.

Funding: FAO receives its funding from its member countries.

Reports published by the FAO: The State of the World's Forests (SOFO), The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA), The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO), The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI).

World Food Day is observed annually on October 16 to commemorate the founding of FAO in 1945.

CHOLA-ERA ANAIMANGALAM COPPER PLATES

During his diplomatic visit to the Netherlands, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Dutch PM Rob Jetten oversaw the historic repatriation of the Chola-era Anaimangalam copper plates (popularly known as the Leiden copper plates) to India.



The Chola Copper Plates

About The Chola Copper Plates:

What They Are?

- Chola copper plates are official legal, administrative, and royal charters issued by the monarchs of the Chola Empire (9th to 13th centuries CE). Strung together by a massive copper ring and sealed with the royal emblem, these bilingual inscriptions serve as enduring, unalterable state records of land grants, tax exemptions, religious endowments, and royal lineages.

Origin and Context of the Anaimangalam (Leiden) Plates:

- **The Oral Vow (985–1014 CE):** The great Chola emperor **Raja Raja Chola 1** committed a grant of land and 8,943 kalam of paddy from Anaimangalam village near Nagapattinam to a Buddhist monastery.
- **The Javanese Link:** The monastery, called the **Chulamanivarma Vihara** (or Raja Raja Cholan Perumpalli), was built by King Sri Mara Vijayotunga Varman of the **Srivijaya Kingdom (modern Java, Indonesia)** in honor of his father.
- **The Execution:** After Raja Raja I's demise, his son **Rajendra Chola 1** executed the physical charter, while subsequent additions were made by **Kulottunga Chola I** following a diplomatic appeal by two Javanese emissaries.

Key Features of Chola Copper Plates:

- **Bilingual Composition:** The charters typically open with an elaborate genealogy of the Chola kings written in **Sanskrit** (using the Grantha script), followed by the minute operational details of the land grant written in **Tamil**.
- **The Royal Seal (Insignia):** The plates are bound by a heavy bronze ring secured with an intricate royal seal. The seal depicts:
 - The **Tiger** (the dynastic emblem of the Cholas) sitting upright.
 - **Twin Fish** (the emblem of the Pandyas) and a **Bow** (the emblem of the Cheras), positioned alongside the tiger to symbolize Chola suzerainty and military victories over their rivals.
 - Sacred and royal motifs including the **Parasol (white umbrella)**, two chamaras (fly-whisks), ceremonial lamps, a swastika, and the name of the issuing king or village.
- **Structural Setup:** The Leiden collection is split into two distinct parts:
 - **The Larger Plates:** A massive set of 21 large plates containing 5 Sanskrit and 16 Tamil inscriptions issued under Rajendra Chola I.
 - **The Smaller Plates:** A supplementary set of 3 small Tamil plates issued under Kulottunga Chola I, detailing an additional grant of 4,500 kalam of paddy to the Buddhist sangha.
- **Meticulous Record-Keeping:** The Tamil sections precisely outline boundaries (often demarcated by letting a female elephant walk the perimeter), tax immunities (pariharas), water rights, and the duties of local assemblies (Sabha or Ur).

Important Historical Chola Copper Plates:

- **The Anaimangalam (Leiden) Plates:** Documenting a Saivite Chola king building and funding a Buddhist vihara for an Indonesian ally, highlighting maritime diplomacy and religious pluralism.
- **The Karandai Copper Plates:** Issued by Rajendra Chola I, consisting of a massive set of 57 plates that record the history of his military expeditions and land grants to over a thousand Brahmins.
- **The Tiruvalangadu Plates:** A set of 31 plates that provide a detailed description of Rajendra Chola I's military conquests, including his famous expedition to the Ganges river.
- **The Anbil Plates:** Issued by Sundara Chola (957-970 CE), offering invaluable genealogical details of the early Chola rulers and state officials.

PULICAT LAKE

A historic Pulicat Lake draws birders and photographers from across South India who visit the lake to see the graceful flamingo in still waters.

About Pulicat Lake



It is a vast coastal shallow, brackish water lagoon along the coast of Bay of Bengal into which streams drain.

It is the second largest brackish water lagoon in India after Chilika, sprawling across Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

This lagoon is separated from the Bay of Bengal by the Sriharikota island.

It is fed by the Aarani River at the southern tip and the Kalangi River from the northwest. The Buckingham Canal, a navigation channel, passes through the lagoon.

It was designated as a Ramsar site in 2002.

Biodiversity: It is a unique ecotone that supports rich biodiversity – from aquatic life such as mudskippers, seagrass beds, and oyster reefs to more than 200 avian species,

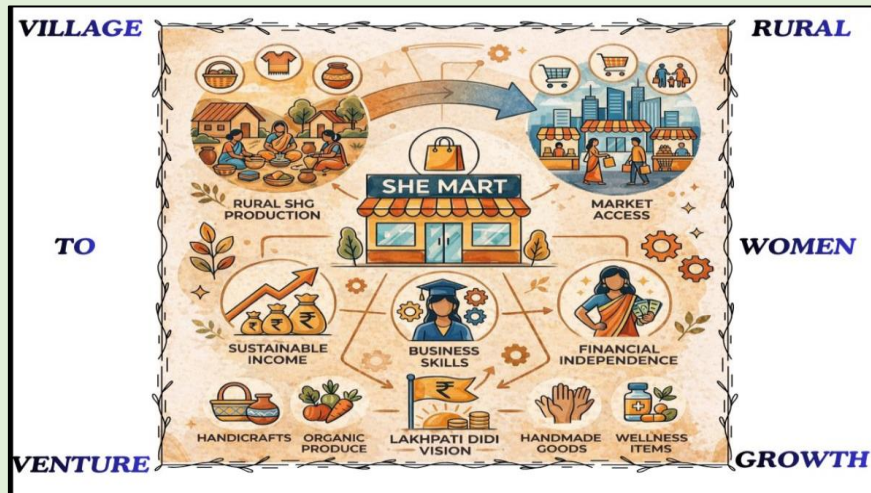
Flora: The green kingdom is represented with about 132 plant species like *Walsura piscida*; *Manilkara elengi*, *Excoecaria agalloca*, *Spinifex littoreus*, *Calamus viminalis*, etc.

Fauna: It includes migratory birds such as Flamingo, Eurasian curlews, oystercatchers, bar-tailed godwits, sand plovers, and greater flamingos.

SHE-MART INITIATIVE

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has initiated a nationwide roadmap for the creation of women-led rural marketing ecosystems through SHE-MARTs initiative.

About SHE-MART Initiative



SHE-MART (Self Help Entrepreneurs-Marketing Avenues for Rural Transformation) is a Government of India initiative to empower women entrepreneurs by creating community-owned retail outlets within cluster-level federations of self-help groups.

It is aimed at creating stronger market linkages, improving visibility of local products, strengthening SHG institutions, and enabling women entrepreneurs to expand and scale their businesses.

SHE Mart will primarily support SHG-made goods including handicrafts, textiles, food products, agricultural produce, and value-added processed products.

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Rural Development, implemented under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission.

Key Features of SHE-MART Initiative

Community-Owned Retail Outlets: Retail outlets owned and managed by local women's groups within cluster-level federations, ensuring community control and ownership.

Direct Market Access: Creating structured retail platforms for women entrepreneurs to sell products and access formal markets without intermediaries.

Economic Growth: Moving women up the economic value chain from income generation to enterprise ownership, transforming them from earners to business owners.

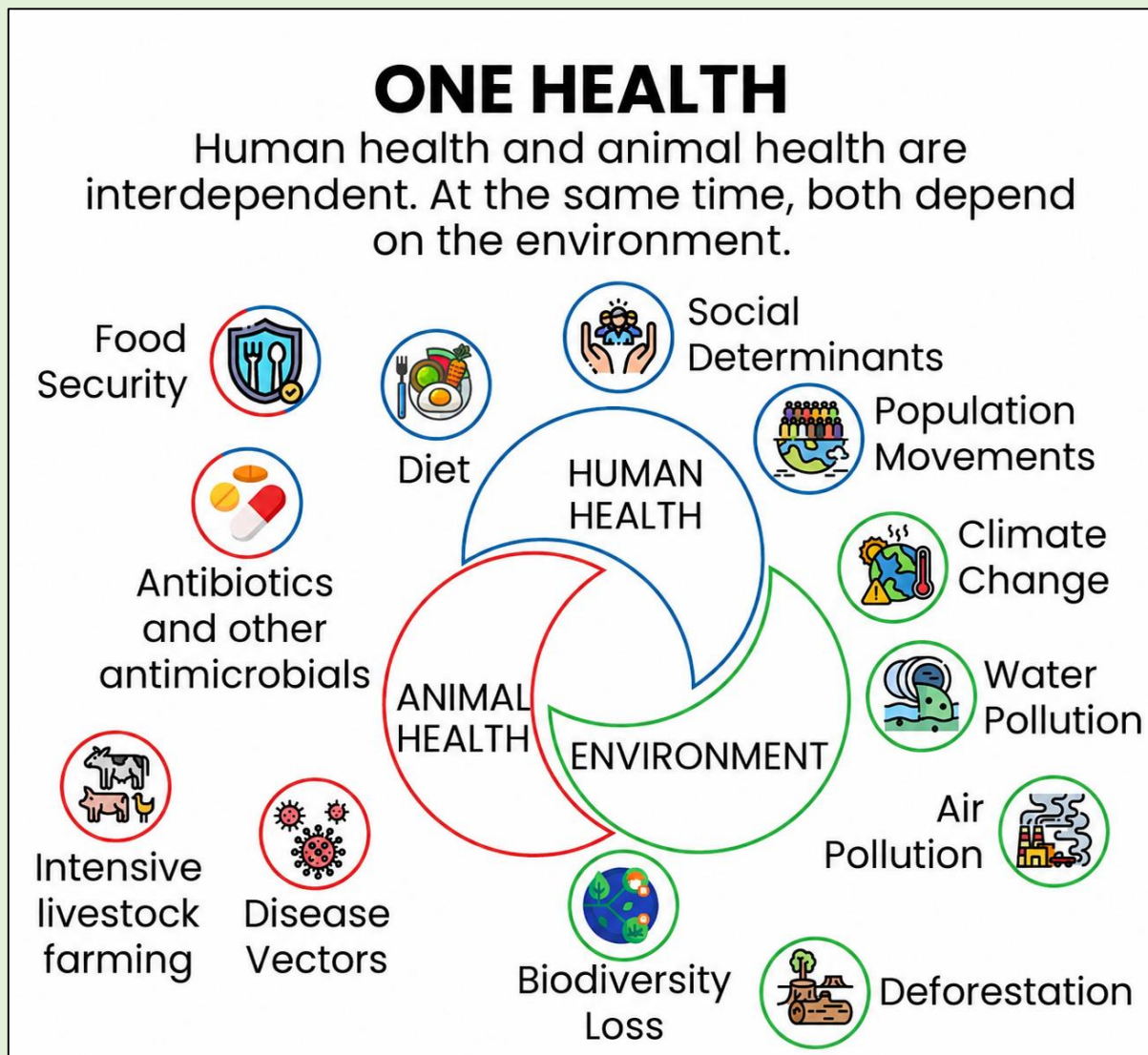
Permanent Infrastructure: Permanent retail points for SHG-made goods with value-added product support, ensuring sustainable business operations.

Empowerment: Greater control over markets, branding, and sustainable income generation, empowering women economically and socially.

NATIONAL ONE HEALTH MISSION

Recently, the Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Steering Committee on National One Health mission was held in New Delhi.

About National One Health Mission



It was launched in 2024.

It is a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach that unites human, animal, and environmental health sectors.

It recognizes the interconnectedness of these domains, aiming to optimize health outcomes and address challenges across the sectors.

It was launched to safeguard national health by unifying human, animal, and environmental surveillance systems to ensure robust pandemic preparedness and integrated disease control.

Nodal Agency: Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA).

Governance of the National One Health Mission:

It is two tiered

Executive Committee: It is chaired by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) with Principal Scientific Adviser as vice chair and Member Health, NITI Aayog is a permanent invitee. Secretaries of various stakeholder departments and two states (on rolling basis) are members. The committee provides overall policy guidance for the progress of the mission and its associated activities.

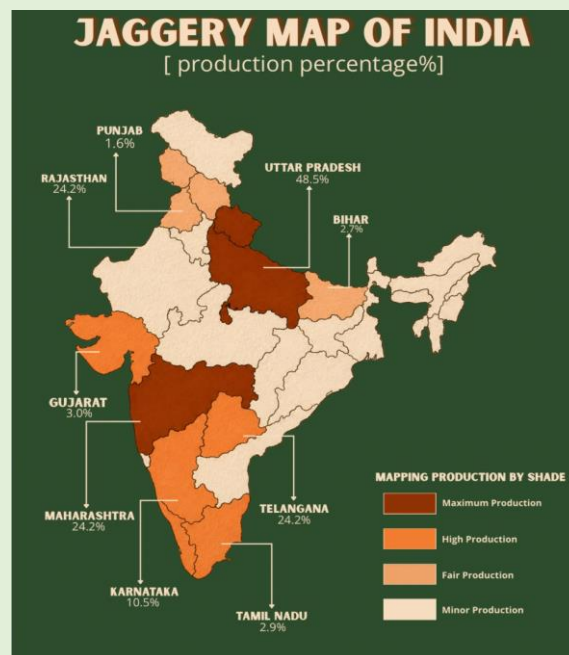
Scientific Steering Committee: It is chaired by the PSA and has Secretaries/DGs of all stakeholder departments and two states (on rolling basis) as members.

It provides overall scientific direction, oversight and guidance to the National One Health Mission..

JAGGERY PRODUCTION IN INDIA

India accounts for over 70% of global jaggery production, firmly establishing itself as the world leader in natural sweeteners.

About Jaggery



It is commonly known as gur, is a traditional, unrefined, natural sweetener.

It is produced by concentrating sugarcane juice without the use of chemicals.

It retains essential minerals and micronutrients that are typically lost during the sugar-refining process.

Jaggery is widely consumed across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Minerals: It retains minerals like calcium, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, sodium, iron, zinc, copper, and manganese.

It also contains trace amounts of vitamins, including folic acid and B-complex vitamins, as well as vitamins A, C, D, and E.

Production

Uttar Pradesh contributed 48.5 percent of total production, followed by Maharashtra (24.1 percent) and Karnataka (10.5 percent).

Benefits

It provides sustained energy.

It is beneficial to address anemia.

The presence of mineral salts and micronutrients supports overall health and strengthens immunity.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tagged Jaggery Varieties in India

Kolhapur Jaggery (Maharashtra): It is valued for its golden colour and high sucrose content.

Muzaffarnagar gur (Uttar Pradesh): It is export-oriented and made from high-quality cane.

Marayoor and Central Travancore jaggery (Keralam): These are recognized for their purity, medicinal value, traditional processing and regional distinctiveness.

RED SAND BOA

The Hyderabad zonal unit of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) recently recovered live Indian Red Sand Boa (*Eryx johnii*) from a person, who was involved in illegal trading of live snakes at Warangal.

About Red Sand Boa

COMMON MYTHS

With 172 seizures in five years, Wildlife Conservation Society-India has warned that the species is among the most traded snakes for black magic. Maharashtra tops the illegal trade with 59 cases followed by UP (33)




<p>► Belief that red sand boas are auspicious, bring fortune and wealth to their owners, as well as inducing rainfall in seasons of drought, fuelling the demand for these animals as pets</p>	<p>► Often described with names such as 'double engine' and 'double-headed snake', owing to its appearance resulting from its thick blunt tail</p>
<p>► Used in traditional medicine as remedy for myriad conditions like ageing, asthma, rheumatism, joint pain, HIV, cancer, and other ailments</p>	<p>► Reportedly used in black magic and allied occult practices</p>

The Red Sand Boa, commonly called the Indian Sand Boa, is a non-venomous snake species found throughout the dry parts of the Indian subcontinent.

Scientific Name: *Eryx johnii*

Red Sand Boa Habitat and Distribution

The species is endemic to Iran, Pakistan, and India.

These snakes prefer dry, sandy, and loose soil environments that support their fossorial lifestyle.

It is ovoviviparous and nocturnal and spends the majority of its time underground.

Red Sand Boa Appearance

It is a primarily reddish-brown and thick-set snake that grows to an average length of 75 cm.

Unlike most snakes, the tail is almost as thick as the body and gives the reptile the appearance of being "double-headed".

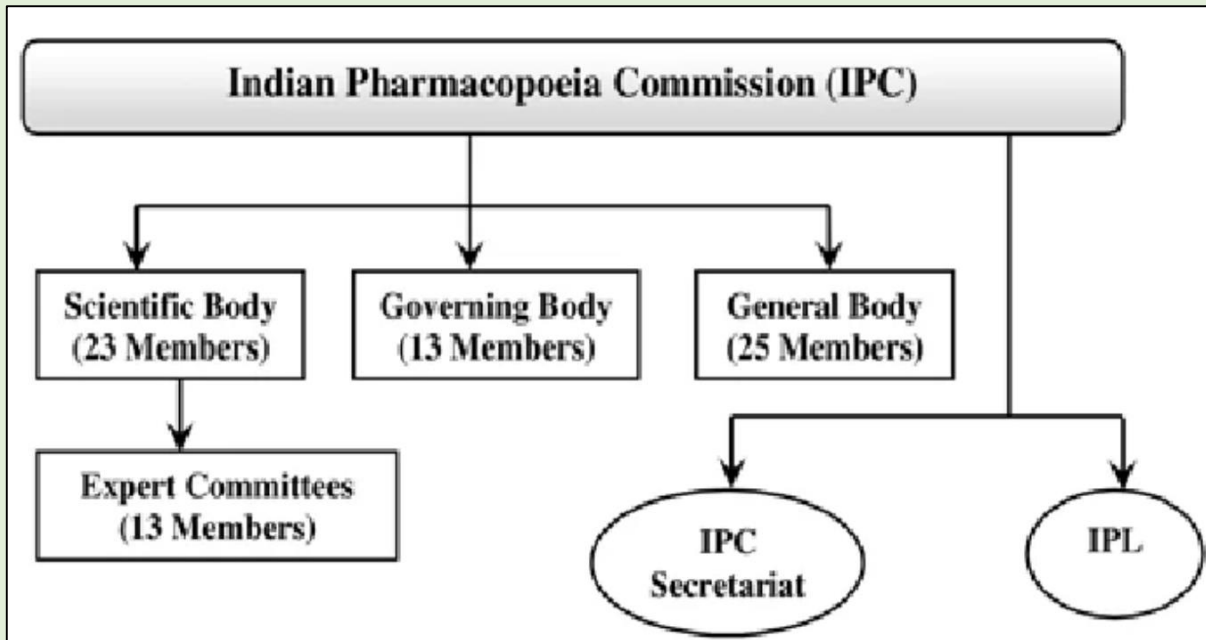
Red Sand Boa Conservation Status

It is classified as 'Near Threatened'.

INDIAN PHARMACOPOEIA COMMISSION

Recently, the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) organized a Scientific Conclave & Interactive Session on Indian Pharmacopoeia 2026 at the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Hyderabad, Telangana.

About Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission



It is an autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India.

It is created to set standards of drugs in the country.

Functions of Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission

Its basic function is to regularly update the standards of drugs commonly required for treatment of diseases prevailing in this region.

It publishes official documents for improving Quality of Medicines by way of adding new and updating existing monographs in the form of Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP).

It further promotes rational use of generic medicines by publishing National Formulary of India.

It prescribes standards for identity, purity and strength of drugs essentially required from the health care perspective of human beings and animals.

It also provides IP Reference Substances (IPRS) which act as a fingerprint for identification of an article under test and its purity as prescribed in IP.

What is Pharmacopoeia?

The Pharmacopoeias are official compendia of quality standards of the drugs being imported, manufactured for sale, stocked or exhibited for sale or distributed in India.

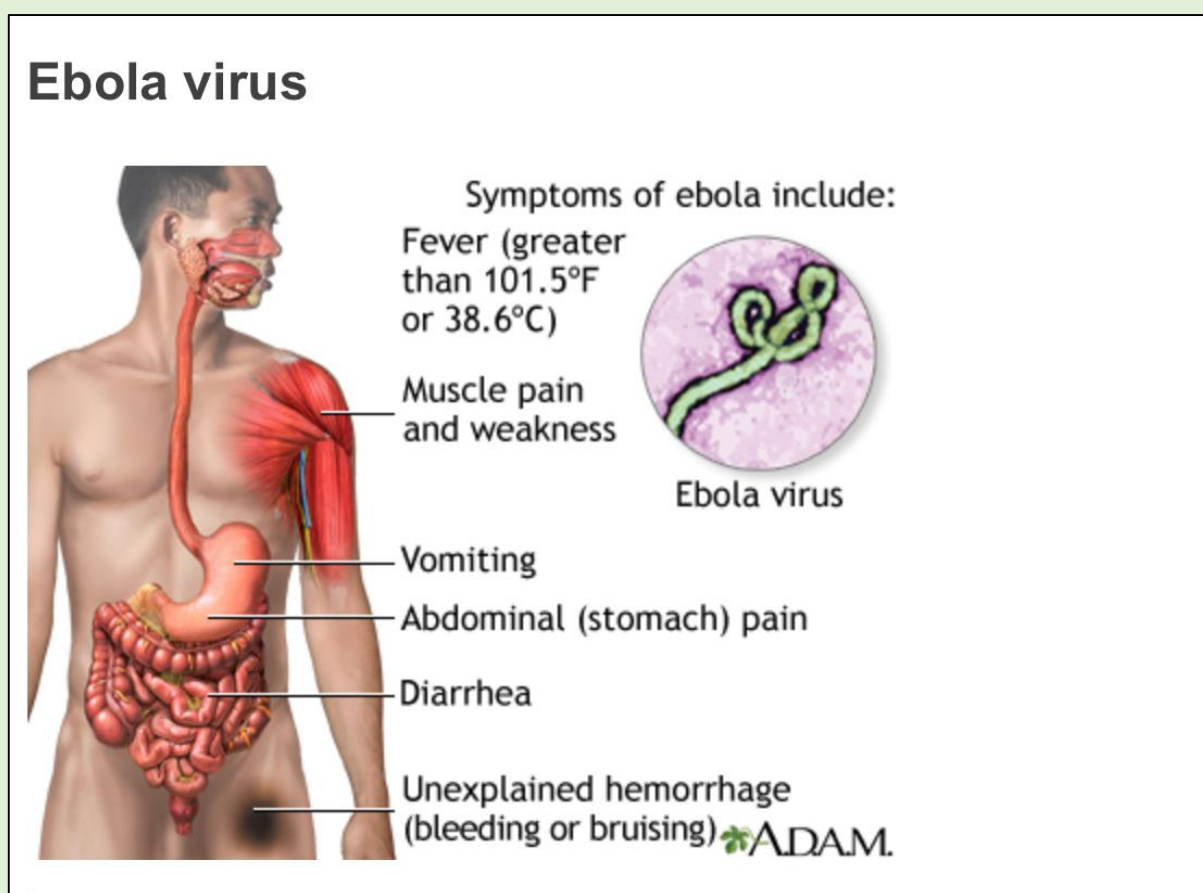
EBOLA VIRUS

A new Ebola outbreak has emerged in the Democratic Republic of Congo's eastern Ituri province, according to the country's health ministry, which has reported the death toll to be 65 so far.

About Ebola

It is a severe and often deadly viral disease caused by a group of viruses known as orthoebolaviruses (formerly ebolavirus).

It is a severe contagious disease affecting humans and non-human primates.



Ebola, first identified in 1976 in southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, primarily affects remote villages in Central and West Africa.

It is known as a hemorrhagic fever virus because it can cause problems with the clotting system of the body and lead to internal bleeding as blood leaks from small blood vessels.

Ebola Transmission

The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals (such as fruit bats, porcupines, and non-human primates).

It then spreads in the human population through direct contact with the blood, secretions, organs, or other bodily fluids of infected people and with surfaces and materials contaminated with these fluids.

Ebola cannot be transmitted by air.

Infectious period:

Infected individuals are not contagious during the incubation period and become infectious once they begin to develop symptoms.

They remain infectious as long as the virus is present in the blood.

Ebola Symptoms

Incubation period: Typically 5 to 15 days; range is 2 to 21 days.

Symptoms include fever, diarrhea, vomiting, bleeding, and often, death.

The average Ebola disease case fatality rate is around 50%. Case fatality rates have varied from 25–90% in past outbreaks.

Ebola Treatment

There is no known cure for Ebola.

There are no approved drugs or vaccines available to treat EVD, although experimental vaccines and therapeutics are being tested.

Recovery seems to depend in part on how much virus a person was initially exposed to, how early treatment is started, and on the patient's age and immune response.

Chances of survival can be improved with early supportive care.












Current therapy consists of maintenance of fluid and electrolyte balance and the administration of blood and plasma to control bleeding.

WITHHOLDING TAX

The government and the Reserve Bank of India are learnt to be considering to cut in the withholding tax rate on government bonds to attract foreign investment inflows.

About Withholding Tax

Withholding tax is withheld or deducted from certain types of income, such as wages, dividends, interest, and royalties, when they are paid to the recipient (non-resident individual).

WITHHOLDING TAX vs TDS		
Key Differences at a Glance		
Basis	 Withholding Tax	 TDS (Tax Deducted at Source)
 1. Meaning	Tax is withheld on payments made to non-residents for income earned in India.	Tax is deducted on payments made to residents for specified incomes.
 2. Payee	Non-residents (Individuals, HUFs, Companies, etc.)	Residents (Individuals, HUFs, Firms, Companies, etc.)
 3. Governing Provisions	Primarily governed by Section 195 to 196D of the Income Tax Act	Primarily governed by Section 192 to 194T of the Income Tax Act
 4. Nature of Payment	Payments to non-residents for: Interest, Royalty, Fees for Technical Services, Dividends, Rent, Salary, etc.	Payments to residents for: Salary, Interest, Commission, Rent, Professional Fees, Contractors, etc.
 5. Rate of Tax	As per Income Tax Act or applicable DTAA (Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement), whichever is lower.	As per Income Tax Act (as per applicable TDS slab/rate).
 6. Purpose	To ensure tax on income earned in India by non-residents is collected.	To collect tax in advance on income earned by residents.
 7. Who Deposits	Payer (resident deductor) deposits the tax with the Government.	Payer (deductor) deposits the tax with the Government.
 8. Credit to Payee	Available to non-resident in their income tax return in India.	Available to resident in their income tax return.
 In Short:	Withholding Tax applies to payments to Non-Residents. TDS applies to payments to Residents. Both are mechanisms to collect tax at source and are adjusted in the final tax liability.	

It is akin to a tax deducted at source and is paid by foreign investors on interest income they receive on their holding of Indian bonds.

It is also known as Retention tax.

Withholding tax is applicable in the case payments made to non-resident individuals.

According to Section 195 of the Income Tax Act, if the income is paid in India, the person responsible for payments to NRI must deduct the withholding tax at the time of payment or when the amount is credited to the NRI's account,

The amount of withholding tax in India depends on the type of income, the amount of income earned, and the tax laws of the country where the income is earned.

The tax rate is decided as prescribed in the Income Tax Act, 1961, or Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA), whichever is lower.

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