

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA TO BEGIN MAPPING ITS MANUSCRIPT HERITAGE

Context

- **The Ministry of Culture** has launched a first-of-its-kind, three-month nationwide survey to map India's vast manuscript heritage.
 - ♦ The initiative is part of the **Gyan Bharatam Mission**, announced in the Union Budget 2025–26.

Gyan Bharatam Mission

- **Gyan Bharatam Mission:** It is a national mission for the survey, documentation, digitisation and dissemination of India's manuscript heritage and traditional knowledge systems, including creation of a **National Digital Repository**.
- To support the initiative, the Standing Finance Committee (SFC) has sanctioned **Rs.491.66 crore** for the period **2025-2031**.

The Five Pillars of Gyan Bharatam

Ancient manuscripts are fragile, living testaments.
Here's how we protect, preserve, and share them with the world.



Survey & Cataloguing

Mapping and recording manuscripts across India, along with implementing Standardized National Surveys for manuscript identification.



Conservation & Capacity Building

Conserving manuscripts through scientific methods for preservation while training experts to care for them.



Technology & Digitization

Digitizing and protecting manuscripts with smart, sustainable technology for the future.



Linguistics & Translation

Working with academicians & scholars to bring to decode ancient manuscripts to life through translation and transliteration.



Research, Outreach & Publication

Studying and sharing knowledge of manuscripts through publication of critically edited manuscripts.

Significance of the initiative

- **Preservation of Heritage:** Digitisation and documentation will protect fragile manuscripts from deterioration and loss.
- **Research Accessibility:** A centralised repository will enable easier access for scholars and the public.
- **Curbing Intellectual Piracy:** Proper records and metadata will help establish authenticity and prevent misuse.
- **Cultural Revival:** Greater visibility will promote India's literary and knowledge traditions.

What are Manuscripts?

- A manuscript is a handwritten composition on materials such as **palm leaf, birch bark, cloth, paper, or even metal**, dating back at least **seventy-five years** and carrying significant historical, scientific, or aesthetic value.
 - ♦ It represents India's **cultural consciousness and knowledge systems**.
- **The Gilgit Manuscripts** written between the **5th-6th centuries CE**, is the oldest surviving manuscript collection in India.
 - ♦ It is written in the **Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit language** of the **Gupta Brahmi and Post Gupta Brahmi script** of that period.
 - ♦ The manuscripts include Buddhist works that throw light on the evolution of **Sanskrit, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Mongolian, Manchu and Tibetan religion-philosophical literature**.

Other measures to conserve Manuscript Heritage

- **National Mission for Manuscripts**, established in **2003** has documented over 44.07 lakh manuscripts through its ambitious digital repository, **Kriti Sampada**.

- **Abhilekh Patal** is an initiative of the **National Archives of India** to provide online access to over a million files, including a significant collection of **manuscripts**, oriental records, and private papers.
- **Gyan-Setu**: It was launched as a national challenge to source AI-led solutions for manuscript preservation, decipherment, restoration and access.
- **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972**: It seeks to prevent the illegal export and smuggling of India's cultural heritage, including valuable manuscripts.
 - ♦ Manuscripts and records qualify as antiquities if they are at least **75 years old**.
- **UNESCO Memory of the World Programme**: It recognises and promotes preservation of documentary heritage, including rare manuscripts.

National Archives of India

- The National Archives of India was established in **1891** in **Kolkata** (Calcutta) as the **Imperial Record Department**.
- Following the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, the building of the National Archives of India was constructed in 1926 which was designed by **Sir Edwin Lutyens**.
 - ♦ The transfer of all records from Calcutta to New Delhi was completed in **1937**.
- It is also the nodal agency for the implementation of the **Public Records Act, 1993** and **Public Record Rules, 1997**.

Source: TOI

BEACONS REMOVED FROM MUMBAI MAYOR'S CAR AFTER ROW OVER PROMOTING 'VIP CULTURE'

Context

- Recent debates on VIP culture in India reveal that hierarchical mindsets continue to shape public behaviour, despite constitutional guarantees of equality.
 - ♦ Practices like VVIP convoys, red beacon and bureaucratic sycophancy reflect a deeper distortion of democratic ethos.

VIP Culture

- **VIP culture** refers to the practice where individuals **holding political office, high administrative rank**, or influence receive special privileges

and preferential treatment in public spaces and institutions.

Persistence of VIP Culture in Modern India

- Although royal privileges were abolished, VIP culture has persisted, particularly among politicians. It is a legacy of colonial bureaucracy and feudal hierarchy.
- **Examples include:**
 - ♦ Large motorcades that disrupt traffic.
 - ♦ Special treatment at airports, tolls, and public offices.
 - ♦ Security details halting roads for political visits.
- **A survey by LocalCircles found:**
 - ♦ 64% of respondents felt VIP culture had not declined in recent years.
 - ♦ 91% witnessed VIP privilege in public spaces.
 - ♦ 83% experienced it in government offices.

Abolition of Privileges (1971)

- The privileges ended with the **26th Amendment of the Constitution of India, 1971**.
- **Key outcomes:**
 - ♦ Privy purses abolished.
 - ♦ Derecognition of princely titles.
 - ♦ End of royal flags, gun salutes, and ceremonial precedence.
 - ♦ Royal vehicles required to follow standard RTO number plates.
 - ♦ Former rulers became subject to the Motor Vehicles Act like ordinary citizens.
- **Constitutional Provision: Article 18** deals with the **abolition of titles** in India and aims to ensure equality and prevent the creation of a hierarchical society based on honorific titles.

VIP Culture Undermines Democratic Principles

- **Violation of the Principle of Equality:** VIP culture contradicts the constitutional principle of equality before law and equal protection of laws under Article 14 of the Constitution of India.
 - ♦ Preferential treatment to politicians or officials creates a perception that some citizens are above the law, undermining democratic values.
- **Normalises public inconvenience:** Daily disruptions for VIP movement weaken the principle of equal citizenship.
- **Breeds sycophancy in institutions:** Excessive deference to authority undermines merit, objectivity, and administrative integrity.
- **Misuse of Public Resources:** VIP culture often involves the extensive use of government vehicles, security personnel, escorts and infrastructure.

- **Erosion of Public Trust in Institutions:** When citizens observe preferential treatment for political elites it can lead to public resentment, loss of trust in government institutions, perception of corruption or misuse of power.
- **Ethical Dimensions:** Power without humility leads to arrogance, authority without accountability causes corruption & service replaced by status causes ethical decline
- **Risk Mitigation:** Fully utilize Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Education Loans (CGFSEL) for collateral-free education loans up to 7.5 lakh, backed by 75% government guarantee via NCGTC.
- **AI Adoption:** Implement AI-driven Early Warning Signals for real-time asset monitoring and stress detection.

Government Initiatives

- **Ban on Red Beacons (“Lal Batti”) on Vehicles:** In 2017, the government ended the red light culture in the vehicles of senior ministers and government officials.
- **Regulation of Security Cover:** Security arrangements for politicians and public figures are regulated based on threat perception.
 - ◆ Security categories like Z+, Z, Y, and X are periodically reviewed.
 - ◆ The aim is to ensure security based on necessity rather than status or influence.
- **Digitalisation and Transparent Governance:** Initiatives such as online services and digital governance reduce opportunities for preferential treatment in government offices.

Measures to reduce VIP culture

- **Uniform enforcement of rules:** Penalise misuse of privileges; restrict traffic disruptions to genuine security needs.
- **Professionalisation of bureaucracy:** Strengthen training on ethics, impartiality, and institutional conduct.
- **Limit symbols of power:** Strict regulation of beacons, convoys, and other status markers.
- **Leadership by example:** Modest conduct by top officials can reshape institutional culture.

Source: TH

PAR PANEL RECOMMENDS IPO ROUTE FOR RRBS

Context

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance has recommended **launching IPOs of profitable RRBS** to mobilise market capital and strengthen corporate governance.

Key Recommendations of the Committee

- **IPO Push:** Highly profitable RRBS should launch public offerings to raise market capital, enforce superior governance, and maintain Centre-sponsor stake above 51% per the amended 1976 RRB Act.

About Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

- **Background:** RRBS were established in 1975 following the recommendations of the **Narasimham Working Group** and the enactment of the **Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976** to provide institutional credit to rural areas, especially small and marginal farmers.
- **Structural Issues:** Fragmentation, overlapping jurisdictions, and high operational costs affected efficiency over time.
- **Amalgamation Strategy (One State, One RRB):** To improve viability, the government undertook phased consolidation
 - ◆ Phase I (2006–10): 196 to 82 RRBS
 - ◆ Phase II (2013–15): 82 to 56
 - ◆ Phase III: 56 to 43
 - ◆ Phase IV: 43 to 28 (across 26 states and 2 UTs).
- **Ownership Structure:** Jointly owned by
 - ◆ Central Government: 50%
 - ◆ State Government: 15%
 - ◆ Sponsoring Bank: 35%
- **Supervision and Regulation:** Regulated by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.**
 - ◆ Supervised by the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).**
- **Treated as cooperative societies** for tax purposes under the **Income Tax Act, 1961.**

Significance of IPO route for RRBS

- Raises **market-based capital**, especially as RRBS have already posted a **₹7,720 crore net profit (FY 2025–26, first 9 months).**
- Strengthens **investor confidence**, aided by **GNPA declining to 5.4% (13-year low)** and improved asset quality.
- Enhances **governance and transparency** through SEBI listing norms and disclosure requirements.
- Supports **credit expansion in rural areas**, crucial as RRBS play a key role in **priority sector lending (agriculture, MSMEs, weaker sections).**
- Reduces **fiscal burden on the government**, shifting capital needs to markets.

Challenges / Concerns

- **Social mandate vs profitability:** Pressure to deliver returns may dilute focus on financial inclusion.
- **Inter-RRB disparities:** Not all RRBs are profitable, limiting IPO eligibility.
- Complex **tripartite ownership structure (Centre–State–Sponsor Bank)** may deter investors.
- Limited **market appetite** for small, regionally focused banks compared to larger PSBs/private banks.

Source: BS

IMPACTS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE FINANCE INDUSTRY

Context

- Though Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the financial sector by enhancing efficiency, strengthening risk management, at the same time, it raises concerns related to employment, ethics, and systemic risks.

AI in Financial Sector: Key Research Insights

- About 60% of US financial services firms have already implemented or are piloting AI solutions (PwC Survey, 2023).
- The global AI in finance market is projected to reach \$64.03 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual rate of 23.7% (Fortune Business Insights, 2024).
- According to the **World Economic Forum (2023)**:
 - ♦ 1.1 million jobs may be displaced globally;
 - ♦ 1.3 million new jobs may be created.

Positive Impacts of AI in Finance

- **Enhanced Operational Efficiency:** AI-powered systems process large volumes of financial data in real time, improving speed and accuracy in decision-making.
 - ♦ Machine learning is widely used in credit scoring, portfolio management, and algorithmic trading.
- **Improved Risk Management and Fraud Detection:** AI-driven analytics enable early detection of financial risks and anomalies.
 - ♦ AI has significantly improved audit quality and fraud detection efficiency by leveraging big data and pattern recognition, making financial systems more resilient.

- ♦ According to the **Association of Certified Fraud Examiners**, AI-based fraud detection systems reduced fraud losses by **54%**, as it can analyze millions of transactions per second.
- **Enhanced Customer Experience:** AI improves customer interaction through chatbots and virtual assistants (24/7 support), personalized product recommendations, customer satisfaction and data-driven financial advice.

Negative Impacts and Challenges

- **Job Displacement:** Automation threatens routine and repetitive roles such as data entry, basic financial analysis, and customer service.
 - ♦ A **McKinsey Global Institute (2022)** study estimates that up to **800,000 finance jobs in the US** could be automated by 2030.
- **Ethical Concerns and Bias:** AI systems may inherit biases from training data, leading to discriminatory lending practices, and algorithmic opacity (lack of transparency).
 - ♦ It raises concerns regarding fairness, accountability, and inclusivity.
- **Cybersecurity and Systemic Risks:** AI systems can be vulnerable to cyberattacks targeting algorithms, data breaches, market manipulation through automated trading.
 - ♦ The **Financial Stability Board (FSB)** emphasizes the need for strong governance to maintain market integrity and consumer trust.

Related Initiatives

- **NITI Aayog – National Strategy for AI ('AI for All')**: It identifies **financial services** as a priority sector.
 - ♦ It focuses on financial inclusion, smart lending systems, fraud detection using AI, and promotes **responsible and ethical AI adoption**.
- **RBI Initiatives:** It encourages banks to adopt **AI/ML for risk management and fraud detection**.
 - ♦ **RBI Innovation Hub** developing **AI models to detect mule accounts and digital frauds**.
 - ♦ The RBI has unveiled the **Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of Artificial Intelligence (FREE-AI)**. It aligns with **IndiaAI Mission** and provides **foundational principles ("7 Sutras") for AI adoption**.
- **Digital India & FinTech Ecosystem:** AI integrated with platforms like Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Aadhaar-based KYC, Account Aggregator (AA) framework.
 - ♦ It enables faster credit access, paperless banking, and expansion of digital payments.

Way Forward

- **Balancing Innovation with Responsibility:** AI is a double-edged sword for the financial sector.
 - ♦ It poses risks related to employment, ethics, and security, while it offers efficiency, accuracy, and improved services.
- **Need for Reskilling:** The transition requires continuous learning programs, industry-academia partnerships, government-led skill development initiatives.
 - ♦ It is crucial to ensure inclusive growth and reduce structural unemployment.
 - ♦ The **US Bureau of Labor Statistics** projects **16% growth** in jobs for financial analysts and data scientists (2024–2030).
- **Policy Recommendations:**
 - ♦ Ensure **transparent and accountable AI systems**;
 - ♦ Promote **ethical AI frameworks** to reduce bias;
 - ♦ Strengthen **cybersecurity and regulatory oversight**.

Source: TH

ELECTRIFYING INDIAN KITCHENS**Context**

- Every West Asian escalation sends a price shock into Indian households raising the question whether India must electrify its kitchens at scale.

India's Need to Shift Towards Electric Kitchens

- **High Import Dependence:** India imports a large share of its LPG and natural gas, making cooking energy dependent on global markets and vulnerable routes like the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Rising Fiscal Burden of Subsidies:** Schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana require huge government spending, which is not sustainable in the long run.
- **Affordability Issues for Households:** Unsubsidised LPG is expensive, leading many households to continue using firewood and dung despite having LPG connections.
- **Support for Climate Goals:** Electrification aligns with India's decarbonisation targets by enabling the use of renewable energy sources like solar.
- **Better Energy Security & Self-Reliance:** Electricity can be generated domestically (solar, wind), reducing dependence on imported fuels.

Significance of Electric Kitchens

- **Energy Efficiency Advantage:** Electric cooking (induction, EPCs) is far more efficient (~85%) compared to LPG (~40%), reducing overall energy consumption.

- **Cleaner and Healthier Cooking:** Eliminates indoor air pollution caused by biomass fuels, improving respiratory health, especially for women and children.
- **Declining Cost of Electricity:** Study by Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis shows electric cooking is already cheaper than unsubsidised LPG in many urban areas.
- **Integration with Rooftop Solar:** Government initiatives like PM Surya Ghar Yojana enable households to produce and consume their own energy.

Challenges

- **Grid Stress:** Increased electricity demand during peak evening hours may strain the power grid.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Many households still lack reliable electricity or sufficient load capacity.
- **Upfront Costs:** Initial investment in induction cooktops, compatible utensils, and wiring upgrades.
- **Behavioural Barriers:** In India the cooking is not one pot preparation but rather includes preparing multiple dishes simultaneously, making electric kitchen less attractive.
- **Technology Limitations:** Current induction models may not fully replicate flame-based cooking.
- **Policy & Ecosystem Gaps:** Lack of widespread smart meters, demand-response systems, and supportive tariffs.

Way Forward

- **Targeted Electrification:** Begin with urban households to make LPG available for rural areas.
- **Financial Support:** Redirect part of LPG subsidies toward one-time incentives for electric cooking appliances.
- **Grid Modernisation:** Invest in smart grids, battery storage, and demand-response systems.
- **R&D Investment:** Develop induction technologies suited for Indian cooking (multi-pot, high-heat cooking).
- **Integration with Solar:** Promote rooftop solar along with battery systems to reduce peak load and enable energy trading.

Source: TH

TROPICAL FOREST FOREVER FACILITY (TFFF): A NEW MODEL OF FOREST FINANCE**Context**

- The **COP30** held in Belém brought global attention that effective forest conservation requires not only

financial commitments but also a redistribution of decision-making power.

- ◆ Brazil introduced the **Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF)** as a new model of forest finance aimed at transforming conservation efforts.

What is the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF)?

- The TFFF is a **performance-based financial mechanism** that seeks to reward countries for **maintaining standing forests** rather than merely reducing deforestation rates.
 - ◆ Unlike traditional donor-based climate funds, the TFFF is designed to **generate financial returns** while supporting long-term forest conservation.
- The fund has already secured more than **\$5.5 billion** in initial commitments, including a significant contribution of \$3 billion from Norway.
- The framework mandates that **at least 20% of performance-based payments** are allocated to **indigenous peoples and local communities**, recognising their critical role in forest stewardship.

Rationale behind the TFFF

- Tropical forests, particularly the **Amazon Rainforest**, act as major **carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots**, making them central to achieving global climate targets under the Paris Agreement.
- However, **existing mechanisms such as REDD+ have faced criticism** for weak outcomes, inadequate funding, and limited community participation, necessitating a new model of forest finance.
- The fund attempts to **embed equity and climate justice** within global climate finance as forest conservation efforts have historically overlooked the **deep-rooted power imbalances** that marginalise indigenous and local communities.

What are the concerns with TFFF?

- **Limited Decision-Making Power:** Despite provisions for inclusion, indigenous communities **do not have formal voting rights** within the core governing bodies of the TFFF, raising concerns that participation may remain consultative rather than truly empowering.
- **The Global Forest Coalition** has **criticised the TFFF as colonialistic**, arguing that it reflects a market-driven approach that may prioritise financial returns over ecological justice.
 - ◆ It is contended that the model **does not adequately address** the structural drivers of deforestation, such as **agribusiness expansion, extractive industries, and large-scale infrastructure development**.

- **Weak Accountability Mechanisms:** Concerns persist regarding the transparency and effectiveness of fund disbursement mechanisms under the TFFF.

Other Measures for Forest Conservation

- **REDD and REDD+ Mechanism:** The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change introduced REDD to **reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation** in developing countries, which was **later expanded into REDD+** to include conservation, sustainable forest management, and enhancement of **forest carbon stocks**.
 - ◆ Adopted at COP19, the **Warsaw Framework** provides the operational architecture for implementing REDD+.
- **The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use:** It is an international commitment made in 2021 during the **COP26** in Glasgow.
 - ◆ It aims to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.
- **Bonn Challenge:** It is a global initiative aimed at restoring degraded and deforested land on a large scale. It targets the restoration of **350 million hectares of land by 2030**, contributing to both climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation.

Way Ahead

- **Strengthen Community Governance:** Indigenous and local communities should be granted formal voting rights and **meaningful representation** in governance structures.
- **Secure Land Tenure:** Legal recognition of land rights for indigenous and forest-dependent communities must be prioritised.
- **Improve Accountability:** Transparent monitoring and evaluation systems should be established to track fund utilisation and conservation outcomes.
- **Increase Financial Value:** Compensation rates should be revised to reflect the full ecological and economic value of forests, including carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

TRIBAL ARTS IN CONVERSATION

Context

- The Tribes Art Fest 2026, held at **Travancore Palace in New Delhi**, showcased India's rich tribal artistic heritage.

Major Tribal Art Forms Highlighted

- **Warli Painting:** It originates from **Maharashtra** and is practised by the **Warli tribe**. It has roots possibly dating back to the Neolithic period (2500–3000 BC). **Key features are;**
 - ♦ Use of **white pigment** made from **rice paste** on mud walls.
 - ♦ Representation through basic **geometric shapes (circles, triangles, squares)**.
 - ♦ **Themes** include agriculture, rituals, hunting, and Tarpa dance.

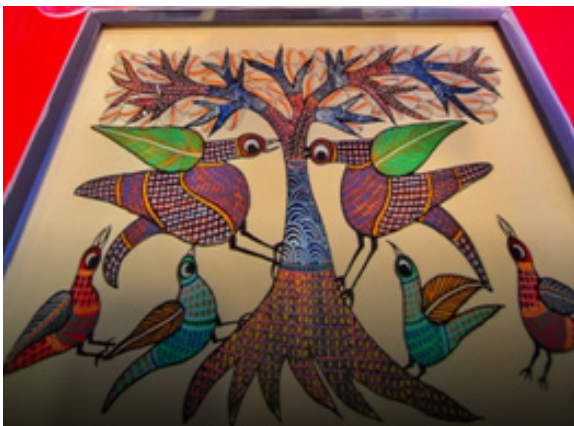


- **Bhil Painting:** It is practised by the Bhil tribe, one of India's largest indigenous groups mainly from **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan**. It is considered among the **oldest tribal art traditions**. **Key features are:**
 - ♦ **Use of thousands of coloured dots**, symbolising seeds and nature's rhythm.
 - ♦ Themes include **deities, animals, forests, and daily life**.



Source: PIB

- **Rabha and Tamang Masks:** Mask-making is central to the **Rabha tribe of Assam and North Bengal**. Masks are made using **wood, bamboo, gourd, or clay**, and painted in vibrant colours.
 - ♦ They depict **gods, spirits, animals, and mythological beings**, used in ritual dances and folk theatre.
 - ♦ Similar traditions exist among the **Tamang community** of the Himalayan region.
- **Gond Art:** Gond painting originates from central India, especially **Madhya Pradesh**. It has received a **GI tag**, ensuring legal protection and recognition. **Key features are;**
 - ♦ Use of dots and lines to create intricate patterns.
 - ♦ Themes rooted in folklore, animals, forests, and ecology.



NOR'WESTER SEASON

Context

- A severe Nor'wester struck Odisha recently.

About

- A "Nor'wester" (short for northwester) refers to a specific type of violent **pre-monsoon thunderstorm** common in parts of South Asia, especially in eastern India and Bangladesh.
- It is a sudden, short-lived but intense storm that typically occurs during **March to May**.
- It is known locally in eastern India (especially West Bengal) as "**Kalbaisakhi**".
- It is Caused by intense heating of land during summer.
 - ♦ When the hot, dry air meets the cool, moist air, it creates instability in the atmosphere.
 - ♦ The warm air rises rapidly (convection), forming towering thunderclouds (cumulonimbus).
 - ♦ This leads to heavy rain, strong winds, lightning and thunder.

Source: AIR

FUJAIRAH PORT

Context

- A targeted drone attack happened at the **Port of Fujairah** in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

About

- It is the only multi-purpose maritime facility on the east coast of the United Arab Emirates.
- Strategically located just **70 nautical miles outside the Strait of Hormuz**, the Port provides an essential economic link between Europe and Asia.

Other Ports in the News Due to Ongoing West Asia Conflict

- Ras Tanura (Saudi Arabia)
- Jebel Ali (UAE)
- Umm Qasr (Iraq)



Source: TOI

NMDC IRON ORE PRODUCTION**Context**

- **NMDC Limited** has become India's first mining company to achieve **50 million tonnes (MT)** of iron ore production in a single financial year (FY 2025–26).

About Iron Ore

- Iron ore refers to **rocks and minerals** from which metallic iron is extracted.
- Iron ore is categorized into **four main types based on iron content and quality**: **Magnetite** (best quality, >70% iron), **Hematite** (most important industrial ore, 60-70% iron), **Limonite** (lower grade, 40-60% iron), and **Siderite** (poor quality, <40% iron).

- **India is the 4th largest producer**, after Australia, Brazil, and China.
- **Odisha leads in production**, followed by Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.

About NMDC

- Established in **1958** to develop India's iron ore resources.
- India's **largest iron ore producer** and a **Navratna CPSE** under the **Ministry of Steel**.
- Production increased from **~10 MT (1978)** to **50 MT (FY26)**, reflecting sustained growth.
 - ♦ Supports India's target of 300 MT steel production capacity by 2030.

Source: PIB

GYNANDROMORPHY**Context**

- A rare case of gynandromorphy has been reported in a freshwater crab species **Vela carli** from **Silent Valley National Park** in the Western Ghats.

What is Gynandromorphy?

- Gynandromorphy refers to the **presence of both male and female characteristics in a single organism**. It occurs due to;
 - ♦ **Errors in cell division** (mitosis/meiosis).
 - ♦ **Chromosomal anomalies** during early development.
- It is different from;
 - ♦ **Hermaphroditism**: Organism has functional reproductive organs of both sexes.
 - ♦ **Intersex conditions**: Mixed sexual characteristics but not distinct male/female halves.

Silent Valley National Park

- It is located in the **Nilgiri hills, Kerala**.
- Silent Valley was declared as a **National Park in 1984** and formally inaugurated in the year **1985**.
- The **Bhavani River**, a tributary of the Kaveri River, and **Kunthipuzha River**, a tributary of Bharathapuzha river, originate in the vicinity of Silent Valley.
- The **indigenous tribal groups** that live within park boundaries include **Irulas, Kurumbas, Mudugas and Kattunaikkars**.

Source: TH

INDIA'S FIRST NATIONAL REPORT (NR1) ON NAGOYA PROTOCOL

In News

- India recently submitted its **first National Report (NR1) on Nagoya Protocol** implementation to the **CBD Secretariat**, marking a key milestone in biodiversity governance.

About

- The report, prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Authority, covers the period from November 2017 to December 2025.
- During the reporting period (2017–2025), India issued 12,830 Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) approvals, including 5,913 approvals by the National Biodiversity Authority and 6,917 approvals by State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs/UTBCs) for commercial utilisation of biological resources.

What is the Nagoya Protocol?

- Adopted on October 29, 2010, in Nagoya, Japan, and effective from October 12, 2014, it ensures **fair access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing (monetary or non-monetary)** via prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms.
- India ratified it in 2012, aligning with its **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**.

India's Framework

- India's ABS framework operates under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, supported by the Biological Diversity Rules, 2004 and the ABS Regulations, 2005, through a **three-tier institutional structure** comprising the National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards/ Union Territory Biodiversity Councils, and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at the local level.
- India issued 3,556 IRCCs globally, over 60% of the total.

Source: PIB

NOMINATIONS FOR PADMA AWARDS-2027 BEGINS

In News

- The Centre has opened nominations and recommendations for the Padma Awards 2027, one of the country's highest civilian honours.
 - The nomination process began on March 15 and will remain open until July 31, 2026.

Padma Awards

- The Padma Awards are among India's highest civilian honours instituted in 1954.
- They are presented in **three categories**: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.
 - 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service;
 - 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and
 - 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field.
- The awards recognise "work of distinction" and are given for exceptional achievements or service across a wide range of fields, including art, literature and education, sports, medicine, social work, science and engineering, public affairs, civil service, trade and industry.
 - All individuals are eligible for the awards regardless of race, occupation, position or gender.
 - However, government servants, including employees of public sector undertakings, are generally not eligible, except for doctors and scientists.
- The government is committed to transform Padma Awards into "People's Padma", encouraging citizens to nominate deserving individuals.
 - Self-nominations are also allowed.
 - The nominations must include detailed information about the nominee's distinguished achievements in their respective fields
 - nominations will be accepted only through the online Rashtriya Puraskar Portal.
- The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.
 - These Awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year.

Source :PIB

