

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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### Table of Content

- Prime Minister's Visit to the UAE
- Hope India Continues to Develop Chahbahar: Iran FM
- India's Exports Rise Despite Global Headwinds
- Drug Menace and the Need for Global Cooperation
- Thunderstorms: Causes, Impacts and Policy Response
- Dam Safety Framework

### News In Short

- Kimberley Process
- Thucydides Trap
- Miyawaki Forest Plantation
- Defence Minister to Lay Foundation for AAMCA programme facility in Andhra Pradesh
- Neanderthals
- 'Abhay': AI-powered verification system
- India's First Satellite-tagged Ganges Soft-shell Turtle

## PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE UAE

### Context

- PM Modi made a landmark diplomatic stopover in UAE, first stop in his five-nation trip to the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy.

### Key Outcomes

- MoU on Strategic Collaboration between Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC).**
  - Potential ADNOC crude oil storage in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves upto 30 million barrels.
  - Potential storage of crude oil in Fujairah, UAE, to form part of the Indian strategic petroleum reserve.
  - Potential collaboration in Liquid Natural Gas and Liquid Petroleum Gas storage facilities in India.
- Strategic Collaboration Agreement between Indian Oil Limited (IOCL) Company and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) on supplies of Liquefied Petroleum gas (LPG).**
  - Explore potential opportunities in the sale and purchase of LPG, including long term supply of LPG, and entry into a long-term LPG sale and purchase agreement between ADNOC Gas Limited and IOCL.
  - The collaboration will strengthen India's long-term LPG supply security.
- Framework for the Strategic Defence Partnership:**



- MoU between Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) and Drydocks World (DDW) on setting up a Ship Repair Cluster at Vadinar, Gujarat.**
  - Cooperation includes offshore fabrication, under the Maritime Development Fund

Scheme launched by the Government of India.

- MoU between Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Drydocks World (DDW) and Centre of Excellence in Maritime & Shipbuilding (CEMS) on Skill Development in Ship Repair.**
- Term Sheet for setting up 8 Exaflop Super Computing Clusters in partnership between CDAC, India and G-42, UAE.**
  - Pave the way for collaboration between CDAC and G-42 to set up a super computing cluster as part of AI Mission India.
- Investment from UAE to India:** Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) and National Infrastructure & Investment Fund (NIIF) of India to explore investments upto US\$ 1 bn in India's infrastructure sector.

### Bilateral Ties Between India and UAE

- Political:** India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) established diplomatic relations in 1972.
  - Relationships were upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2017.
- Trade and Investment Ties:** Bilateral merchandise trade between the two countries crossed US\$100 billion for the first time, reaching US\$101.25 billion in FY 2025-26.
  - Both sides have committed to **doubling bilateral trade to US\$200 billion by 2032.**
  - The two nations signed the Bilateral Investment Treaty in **2024.**
  - From 2000 to 2025, the cumulative FDI from the UAE into India amounted to US\$25.19 billion, making **UAE the seventh-largest overseas investor in India.**
- Energy Trade:** In FY 2024-25, the UAE stood as the **fourth largest source** of crude oil, third largest source of LNG, largest supplier of LPG and second largest export destination for India's finished petroleum products.
  - Currently, the UAE is the only country participating in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve programme
- Defence cooperation:** It is steered through a Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) at the Ministry level, with the signing of Agreement on Defence Cooperation in 2003, which came into effect in 2004.
  - Extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties to combat transnational crime.

- **Space Cooperation:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the UAE Space Agency signed an MoU regarding cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes in 2016.
- **Indian Community:** Indian expatriate community of approximately 3.5 million is the largest ethnic community in UAE constituting roughly about 35% of the country's population.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** India and the UAE are currently part of several plurilateral platforms such as India-Middle East EU Economic Corridor (IMEC), I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) and UFI (UAE-France-India) Trilateral, etc.

### Challenges

- **Trade Imbalances:** India has a trade deficit with the UAE, primarily due to high oil imports from the UAE, which makes the economic relationship uneven despite growing non-oil trade.
- **Geopolitical Tensions in the Region:** Political instability in the Middle East and the Gulf region affect bilateral relations, especially with India's strategic interests in the region.
- **Labor and Migration Issues:** India is one of the largest sources of migrant labor in the UAE, and issues related to the welfare and rights of Indian workers have been a point of concern.
- **Foreign Policy of UAE:** India's relations with countries like Iran and Pakistan sometimes complicate its relations with the UAE, which maintains different strategic priorities in the region.

### Way Ahead

- The relationship between India and the UAE has **transformed from traditional trade linkages into a wide-ranging strategic partnership.**
- Today, the partnership spans energy security, trade, technology, investment, and defence cooperation.
- The outcomes of the Prime Minister's 2026 visit have **further strengthened bilateral ties.**
  - ♦ As both countries align their economic and geopolitical priorities, the partnership is expected to **play a larger role in regional stability, economic growth, and technological advancement.**

Source: PIB

## HOPE INDIA CONTINUES TO DEVELOP CHABAHAR: IRAN FM

### Context

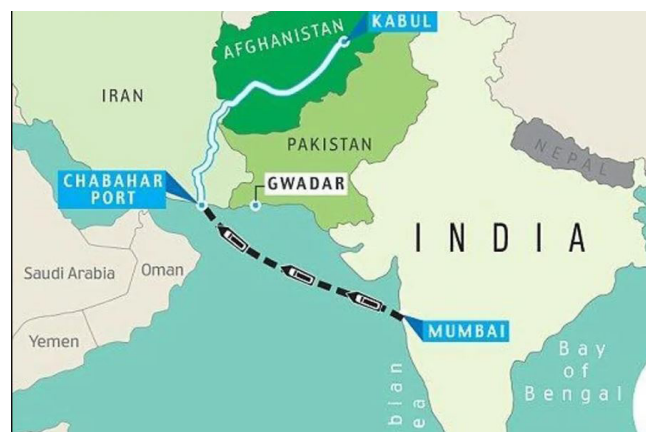
- Iranian Foreign Minister described Chabahar port a **"golden gateway"**, expressing the hope that India will continue to develop the strategic port.

### About

- **India and Iran signed an MoU in 2015** to jointly develop the **Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar.**
- **Aim:** To develop a major commercial hub helping India access the markets of Afghanistan, the Central Asian states, and Russia.
- **US Sanctions Waiver for Chabahar:** The US granted a waiver for India's involvement in Chabahar. The key aspects of the waiver include:
  - ♦ **First Waiver:** In 2018 the US exempted India from sanctions related to Chabahar, acknowledging its humanitarian and regional connectivity benefits.
  - ♦ **Renewed Waiver:** Further exemptions were granted, ensuring continued Indian operations at the Shahid Beheshti Terminal and related connectivity projects.
- **India in its Union Budget for 2026-27** had not allocated any funds for the Chabahar port project in Iran.
  - ♦ India had, over the past few years, been making an **annual outlay of ₹100 crore** to the project.

### Chabahar Port

- Iran's Chabahar port is located on the **Gulf of Oman** and is the **only oceanic port of the country.**
- It is situated in the **city of Chabahar** in **Sistan and Baluchestan Province.**



- The port gives access to the **energy-rich Persian Gulf nations'** southern coast and bypasses Pakistan.
- **Kandla port in Gujarat** is the closest port at 550 nautical miles, while the distance between Chabahar and Mumbai is 786 nautical miles.

### Significance of Chabahar Port for India

- **Geopolitical Significance:** It is strategically located at the **crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East**. It provides India with direct sea access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan.
  - ♦ The port also offers an **alternative route from the Strait of Hormuz** for cargo traffic between Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. This diversification strengthens India's strategic position in the region.
- **Gateway to INSTC:** Chabahar port will boost India's access to Iran, the key gateway to the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** that has sea, rail and road routes between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia.
- **Countering China:** Chabahar port is beneficial to India in countering Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea which China is trying to ensure by helping Pakistan develop the Gwadar port.
- **Trade Benefit:** With Chabahar port becoming functional, there will be a significant boost in the import of iron ore, sugar and rice to India.
  - ♦ The import cost of oil to India will also see a considerable decline.
- **India's Investment:** Under the 2024 agreement, India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) has committed **\$120 million** to equip the port. Additionally, India has extended a **\$250 million** credit facility for infrastructure development linked to Chabahar.

### Way Ahead

- Due to its regional importance, India's continued investment in Chabahar is essential for its long-term connectivity and economic interests in Central Asia and Afghanistan.
- The development of Chabahar port remains crucial for India's foreign policy and regional outreach, requiring careful diplomatic negotiations with both the US and Iran.

Source: IE

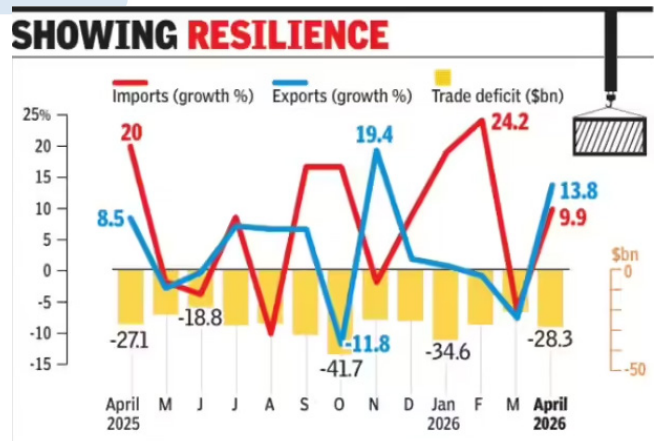
## INDIA'S EXPORTS RISE DESPITE GLOBAL HEADWINDS

### Context

- India's merchandise exports recorded strong growth in April 2026 despite geopolitical tensions in West Asia and global trade uncertainties.

### India's Trade Performance

- **Merchandise Exports:** India's merchandise exports increased by nearly **14% to \$43.6 billion**.
- **Merchandise Imports:** India's merchandise imports increased by **10% to \$71.9 billion**.
  - ♦ The merchandise trade deficit widened slightly to **\$28.4 billion from \$27.1 billion** in April 2025 due to higher import demand.
- **Services Trade:** India's services exports increased by 13.4% to **\$37.2 billion**.
  - ♦ India's **services imports declined by 1.5% to \$16.7 billion** during the same period.
  - ♦ Strong growth in services exports helped India maintain a healthy trade surplus in the services sector.
- **Overall Trade Balance:** India's overall trade deficit, including merchandise and services trade, declined by **30% to \$7.8 billion**.
  - ♦ The decline in the overall trade deficit reflected the **strong performance of India's services sector and resilient export growth**.



### Reasons for Increase in India's Exports

- **Rise in Petroleum and Commodity Prices:** Higher international petroleum prices increased the value of India's petroleum exports, particularly diesel, petrol, and aviation turbine fuel.
  - ♦ **Rising global commodity prices** contributed to the overall increase in export earnings.
- **Strong Performance of Manufacturing Sectors:** Engineering goods exports remained robust

due to strong global demand for manufactured products and machinery.

- ◆ **Electronics exports** recorded rapid growth because of expanding domestic manufacturing under **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes**.
- **Diversification of Export Markets:** Indian exporters expanded into emerging markets such as **Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Vietnam**.
  - ◆ Diversification reduced dependence on traditional export destinations and improved resilience against regional disruptions.
- **Improved Competitiveness:** Depreciation of the Indian rupee improved the price competitiveness of Indian goods in global markets.
  - ◆ **Stable supply chains and improved logistics** enabled industries to maintain export momentum despite global uncertainties.

#### Significance for India's Economy

- **Strengthening External Sector Stability:** Strong export growth supports India's foreign exchange reserves and external stability.
  - ◆ Diversification of export sectors reduces dependence on any single commodity or market.
- **Growth of Manufacturing Exports:** Rising engineering and electronics exports indicate improvements in India's manufacturing ecosystem. Export growth supports employment generation and industrial expansion.
- **Strategic Importance of Services and Trade Agreements:** Services exports continue to provide **stability to India's external trade balance**. FTAs can improve market access, reduce tariff barriers, and integrate India more deeply into global value chains.

#### Main Challenges in India's Export Sector

- **Global Economic Uncertainty:** Geopolitical tensions in West Asia and other regions disrupt trade routes, shipping networks, and supply chains.
- **Heavy dependence on imported** crude oil exposes India to global energy price shocks. Rising imports of gold and petroleum products contribute to widening trade deficits.
- **Infrastructure Constraints:** High logistics and transportation costs reduce the competitiveness of Indian exports.

- **Global Competition:** Indian exporters face intense competition from countries such as **China, Vietnam, and Bangladesh**.
  - ◆ **Protectionist trade policies** and **non-tariff barriers** imposed by developed countries restrict market access.
- **Structural Weaknesses in Manufacturing:** India's manufacturing sector faces challenges related to **scale, productivity, and technological competitiveness**.
  - ◆ **Limited diversification** into high-value and technology-intensive exports constrains long-term export potential.

#### Way Ahead

- **Diversify Export Markets:** India should expand exports to emerging markets and reduce dependence on a few traditional destinations.
- **Improve Logistics Infrastructure:** India should modernize ports, transport networks, and customs systems to reduce export costs and delays.
- **Support MSMEs and Exporters:** India should improve access to finance, technology, and export incentives for small exporters.
- **Build Resilient Supply Chains:** India should develop resilient supply chains and alternative trade routes to tackle geopolitical disruptions.

Source: [TH](#)

## DRUG MENACE AND THE NEED FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION

#### Context

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah called for a **uniform global legal framework, intelligence sharing, and coordinated international action** to combat the growing menace of drug trafficking and narco-terrorism.

#### Menace of Drug Abuse in India

- According to a **2019** report by **AIIMS** and the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**;
  - ◆ Over **16 crore** Indians consume alcohol, with **5.7 crore** requiring medical help.
  - ◆ More than **2.3 crore people** use **cannabis and opioids**.
  - ◆ About **1.08%** of 10-75 year old Indians (approximately 1.18 crore people) use sedatives (non-medical, non-prescription use).

- ♦ Inhalants are a concern, particularly among **children and adolescents**, with a higher prevalence of use (**1.17%**) compared to adults (**0.58%**).

### Reasons for drug menace in India

- **Geographical location:** India lies close to the **Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle**, major global drug-producing regions.
  - ♦ Easy cross-border smuggling in states like Punjab, Manipur, and Assam enables drug inflow.
- **Youth vulnerability:** Peer pressure, stress, unemployment, and curiosity make youth susceptible to drug use.
- **Weak enforcement:** Inadequate surveillance, corruption, and overburdened agencies hinder effective control.
- **Easy availability:** Online platforms, local peddlers, and pharmacies make drugs more accessible.
- **Social disintegration:** Broken families, isolation, and lack of community support increase addiction risks.

#### Golden Triangle

- It includes the regions of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand.
- It is Southeast Asia's main opium-producing region and one of the oldest narcotics supply routes to Europe and North America.

#### Golden Crescent

- It includes Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan.
- It is a principal global site for opium production and distribution.

### Impact of Drug Abuse

- **Economic Impact:** Drug abuse lowers productivity, increases healthcare costs, and weakens human capital.
- **Health Impact:** It causes mental disorders, spreads HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, and leads to physical deterioration.
- **Social Impact:** It disrupts families, fuels domestic violence, and results in social isolation and stigma.
- **National Security Impact:** Drug trade fosters narco-terrorism, organised crime, and youth involvement weakens national integrity.

### Steps Taken

#### Indian Initiatives:

- ♦ **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act):** It prohibits the production, possession, sale, and consumption of illicit drugs and prescribes penalties for violations.
- ♦ **Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan:** Launched in 2020, this campaign aims to create awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse and promote a drug-free India.
- ♦ **Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF):** Many states have established ANTFs to strengthen drug law enforcement at the state level.
- ♦ **DarkNet Monitoring Cell** under **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** tracks online drug sales.
- ♦ **Kashi Declaration: It is a five-year roadmap** for drug-free India, signed during the Youth Spiritual Summit in **Varanasi**.
- ♦ **India** has set a national goal of achieving a **Drug-Free India by 2047**.

#### Global Initiatives:

- ♦ **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):** The UNODC is at the forefront of the global fight against illicit drugs. The UNODC-led campaign aims to raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse.
- ♦ **International Narcotics Control Board (INCB):** The INCB monitors the global drug situation and assesses countries' compliance with international drug control treaties.

### Way Ahead

- **Strengthening Global Governance:** Countries need harmonised anti-drug laws and stronger extradition treaties. International institutions should develop common protocols for narcotics enforcement.
- **Expanding Intelligence Cooperation:** Establishment of integrated databases and real-time intelligence platforms can improve interdiction efforts.
- **Enforcement with Rehabilitation:** Alongside strict enforcement, governments should focus on;
  - ♦ Rehabilitation,
  - ♦ Awareness campaigns,
  - ♦ Mental health support, and
  - ♦ Youth engagement programmes.

### Concluding remarks

- The growing drug menace in India poses a grave threat to public health, societal well-being, and national security.
- However, sustained success will require coordinated efforts across government, civil society, and communities, with a strong emphasis on prevention, rehabilitation, and youth empowerment to build a truly *Nasha Mukta Bharat*.

Source: [TH](#)

## THUNDERSTORMS: CAUSES, IMPACTS AND POLICY RESPONSE

### Context

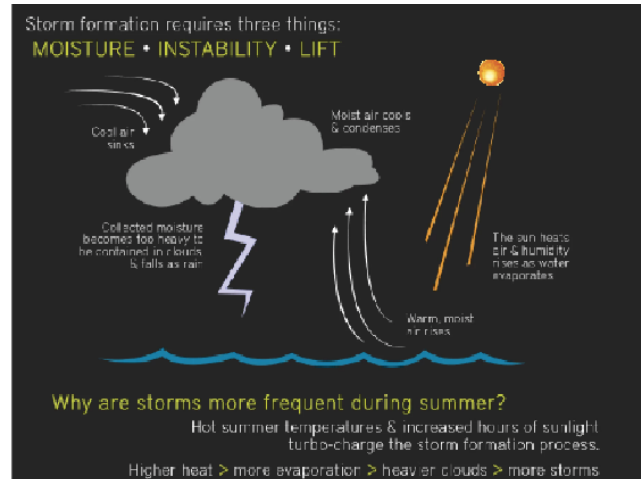
- More than 100 people lost their lives due to severe thunderstorms and dust storms that struck Uttar Pradesh during the pre-monsoon season.

### What are Thunderstorms?

- A thunderstorm is a **weather phenomenon** associated with **lightning, thunder, strong winds, heavy rainfall** and sometimes **hailstorms**.
- These events are common during April and May and are observed in many **arid and semi-arid regions** of the world.
- **Key features** include sudden development, strong gusty winds, lightning and thunder, short duration but high intensity, and associated dust storms in dry regions.
- Thunderstorms form **due to atmospheric instability** caused by differences in temperature and moisture between the lower and upper atmosphere.

### Conditions Responsible for Formation

- **Intense Surface Heating:** Northern India experiences extremely high temperatures, often above 45°C during summer. This heats the land surface rapidly.
- **Availability of Moisture:** Moisture-laden winds from the Bay of Bengal move towards northern India through southeasterly winds.
- **Cool and Dry Upper Air:** Western Disturbances bring cooler air in the upper atmosphere. When warm moist air rises and meets cooler dry air above, instability develops.
- **Convection Process:** The warm air rises rapidly, condenses into cumulonimbus clouds and releases latent heat, strengthening vertical air movement and producing thunderstorms.



### Types of Thunderstorms

- **Single-Cell Thunderstorms:** Small and short-lived; usually less destructive; and common in summer afternoons.
- **Multi-Cell Thunderstorms:** Multiple storm cells clustered together; longer duration; and produce strong winds and heavy rainfall.
- **Squall Lines:** Organized lines of thunderstorms; common in northern India during pre-monsoon months; and associated with severe wind damage.
- **Supercell Thunderstorms:** Highly organized rotating storms; rare in India; and can produce extreme winds and hail.
  - ♦ The recent Uttar Pradesh storms resembled organized multi-cell thunderstorms with severe squall-line characteristics.

Occurrence of Thunderstorms in India	
Region	Local Name
Uttar Pradesh & North India	Andhi
West Bengal & Assam	Kalbaisakhi/Nor'wester
Karnataka	Mango Showers
Kerala	Blossom Showers

### Impacts of Severe Thunderstorms

- **Loss of Human Life:** The recent storms caused over 100 deaths, mainly due to falling trees, wall collapses, lightning strikes, and flying debris.
- **Damage to Infrastructure:** High-speed winds uprooted trees and damaged electricity poles, transmission lines, houses and weak structures, hoardings and billboards.

- **Agricultural Losses:** Thunderstorms and hailstorms damage standing crops, affecting wheat, vegetables, and mango orchards. It impacts farmer incomes and rural livelihoods.
- **Disruption of Public Services:** Power outages, communication disruption, and transport interruptions.
- **Increased Disaster Vulnerability:** Rapid urbanization, weak housing structures and inadequate awareness increase vulnerability to such localized disasters.
- **Challenges in Forecasting:** Evacuation is difficult because thunderstorms are dispersed and unpredictable in movement, unlike cyclones.
  - ♦ **Localized Nature:** Thunderstorms are highly localized and evolve rapidly.
  - ♦ **Rapid Intensification:** Wind speeds can intensify within minutes.
  - ♦ **Multiple Storm Cells:** Several storms can occur simultaneously across different districts.
- ♦ **Sachet Portal (National Disaster Alerts):** NDMA has envisioned a **Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)** based **Integrated Alert System on Pan India basis**. It involves near real-time dissemination of early warning through multiple means of technology using geo-intelligence.
- ♦ **Suggested measures** are to avoid open fields during lightning, stay indoors during storms, secure loose objects and structures, and strengthen local disaster response systems.
- **Lightning Resilient India Campaign:** A multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at reducing lightning deaths, community awareness, and scientific forecasting.
- **State Disaster Response Measures:** State governments undertake compensation for victims, emergency restoration of power supply, relief and rehabilitation assistance.

#### Way Forward

- **Improve Forecast Accuracy:** Better high-resolution weather models, expansion of radar networks, and AI-based forecasting systems.
- **Strengthen Public Awareness:** Community-level preparedness can reduce casualties significantly.
- **Climate-Resilient Infrastructure:** Stronger housing structures, underground power lines where feasible, and disaster-resilient urban planning.
- **Integration with Disaster Management:** Thunderstorms should receive greater attention under local disaster management plans similar to floods and cyclones.

Source: IE

## DAM SAFETY FRAMEWORK

### In News

- Dams have greatly supported agriculture, industry, and overall socio-economic development in India over the decades.

### Status of Dams In India

- India manages one of the largest dam portfolios globally.
- It ranks **third in the world**, with 6628 specified dams, of which 6,545 are operational and 83 are under construction.
- The gross water storage capacity of these dams is about 330 billion cubic metres.

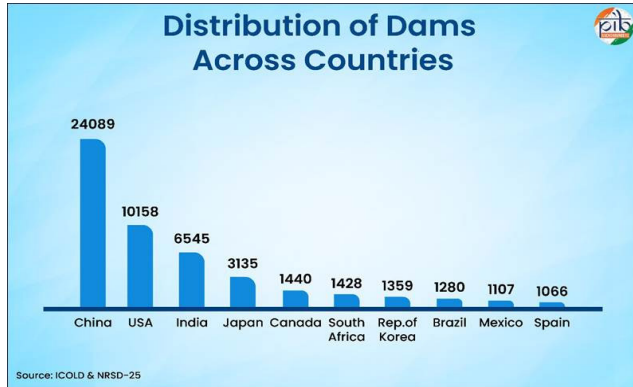
#### Do You Know?

- Thunderstorms and lightning are **not currently among the 12 nationally notified disasters** eligible for automatic financial compensation under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) or National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).
- However, states have the flexibility to utilize up to 10% of their SDRF allocation for local disasters, such as lightning and thunderstorms.
- **Nationally Notified Disasters In India:** Cyclone, Drought, Earthquake, Fire, Flood, Tsunami, Hailstorm, Landslide, Avalanche, Cloudburst, Pest attack, Frost and cold wave.

### Government Measures and Policy Support

- **IMD's Early Warning Systems:** IMD regularly issues weather bulletins, thunderstorm alerts, and nowcasts (short-term forecasts). IMD has strengthened its observation infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh with nearly 2,400 weather stations for real-time monitoring.
  - ♦ **Key initiatives** include Doppler Weather Radars, mobile weather alerts, and nowcast services.
- **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA):** NDMA has issued guidelines for lightning safety, thunderstorm preparedness, and public awareness campaigns.

- India's oldest, the Kallanai (Grand Anicut) in Tamil Nadu, has functioned for nearly 2,000 years—showcasing enduring engineering and maintenance.
- Maharashtra has the highest number of specified dams, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Odisha.



### Importance of Dams

- **Agriculture & Irrigation:** Dams are vital for India's agriculture as they provide irrigation to large farmlands, support multi-cropping, and reduce dependence on monsoon rainfall, strengthening food security.
- **Hydropower:** Dams support hydropower generation, providing renewable energy and helping maintain grid stability while meeting peak electricity demand.
- **Flood Control:** Dams help control floods by regulating river flow during monsoon and reducing downstream flood risks when managed effectively.
- **Socio-economic development:** Dams support socio-economic development by improving rural livelihoods and enabling activities like fisheries, tourism, and inland navigation in certain regions.
- **Industrial Growth:** Dams ensure water for manufacturing and economic activity.

### Challenges and Issues

- **Ageing Infrastructure:** Many older dams face risks due to structural ageing, fatigue, and outdated design standards.
- **Institutional Gaps:** Dam safety in India is affected by fragmented responsibilities across states, leading to uneven safety standards, funding gaps, and differences in technical capacity that result in inconsistent performance.
- **Social & Environmental Issues:** Climate change is increasing extreme rainfall and floods, making dam safety and reservoir management more challenging.

- Dams can also cause displacement, ecological damage, and water-sharing conflicts.

- **Sedimentation:** It reduces dam storage capacity over time and lowers the efficiency of irrigation and hydropower.
- **Safety Concerns :** Dam failure can cause severe downstream disasters, so continuous monitoring and timely repairs are essential for safety.

### Various Initiatives of the government

- **The Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP):** It is India's flagship programme to improve the safety and performance of existing dams through structural repairs, modernisation, and advanced monitoring systems.
  - It is being implemented in three phases with World Bank and other international support, reflecting a shift towards risk-based dam safety management.
- **The Dam Safety Act, 2021:** It provides a comprehensive framework for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of specified dams across the country.
  - It establishes a four-tier system (national to state level) for dam safety regulation and makes dam owners legally responsible for regular inspections, emergency planning, monitoring systems, and proper funding for maintenance.
    - A specified dam under the Act refers to a dam that is more than 15 metres in height, or between 10 and 15 metres in height if it satisfies prescribed technical criteria.
- **National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS):** It is the apex body under the Dam Safety Act, 2021, responsible for framing policies and setting national standards for dam safety.
  - It guides the overall dam safety framework to prevent dam-related disasters and ensure uniform safety norms across India.
- **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA):** It is responsible for implementing the policies, guidelines, and standards set by the National Committee on Dam Safety.
- **State-Level Institutions and Dam Owners:** The Dam Safety Act, 2021, mandates the constitution of State Committees on Dam Safety (SCDS) and the establishment of State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs).

- ◆ Dam owners must ensure inspections, emergency plans, risk assessments, funding for repairs, safety instruments, and early warning systems.
- **Capacity Building:** Centres of Excellence (CoEs) for dam safety are being set up at IIT Roorkee and IISc Bengaluru to focus on seismic hazard, risk assessment, rehabilitation, and dam safety technologies.
  - ◆ A National Centre for Earthquake Safety of Dams is also being established at MNIT Jaipur.
  - ◆ M.Tech programmes in dam safety have been started at IIT Roorkee and IISc Bengaluru since 2021–22 to build specialised expertise in this field.
- **Digital Initiatives :** Digital platforms such as DHARMA, along with instrumentation and Early Warning Systems, are strengthening real-time monitoring and data-driven dam safety management.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- India's dams are vital for water, food, and energy security, supporting irrigation, hydropower, drinking water supply, and flood control, and have driven long-term socio-economic development.
- However, many are aging and increasingly affected by sedimentation and climate variability, making safety and asset management a growing priority over expansion.
- India is responding through the Dam Safety Act, 2021, the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP), and digital monitoring tools to improve safety and governance.
  - ◆ The focus is shifting to rehabilitation, climate resilience, and technology-driven predictive maintenance for safer and more sustainable dam management.

Source :PIB

## NEWS IN SHORT

### KIMBERLEY PROCESS

#### Context

- The **Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting 2026** concluded in Mumbai.

#### About

- The Kimberley Process is a **tripartite initiative** involving governments, the international diamond

industry and civil society to prevent the trade in **conflict diamonds**.

- ◆ It operates through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS).
- **History:** KPCS established pursuant to a UN resolution, came into effect on **1 January 2003**.
- **Members:** The Kimberley Process (KP) is **open to any country that can meet its standards**.
  - ◆ Currently, it comprises **60 participants** representing 86 countries, with the EU and its **27 Member States** counted as one participant under the European Commission.
  - ◆ **India** is a founding member of the KP.
  - ◆ The members account for over **99 percent** of the global rough diamond trade.
- The **chair oversees** the implementation of the **Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)** and operations of the working groups, committees and administration that activate the KP.
- **Secretariat:** The Kimberley Process Secretariat is headquartered in **Gaborone, Botswana**.

#### What are Conflict Diamonds?

- Conflict diamonds are **rough diamonds mined in war zones** and sold to finance armed conflict, insurgencies or rebel activities against legitimate governments.
- These diamonds were linked to civil wars in parts of **Africa such as Sierra Leone, Angola and Liberia** during the 1990s.

Source: PIB

### THUCYDIDES TRAP

#### Context

- Chinese President Xi Jinping, during his meeting with US President Donald Trump, raised an important question: "Can China and the United States transcend the so-called 'Thucydides Trap' and forge a new paradigm for major-power relations?"

#### What is the 'Thucydides Trap'?

- The term "Thucydides Trap" was popularised by Harvard scholar Graham Allison after studying patterns in world history.
- He took inspiration from ancient Greek historian Thucydides, who wrote about the war between Athens and Sparta.
- Athens was rising fast in wealth, trade, and influence. Sparta was already the dominant

military power. As Athens expanded, Sparta started seeing it not as progress, but as a threat. That fear created pressure, suspicion, and eventually war.

- Allison's argument is simple: when a rising power challenges an established one, fear can grow faster than diplomacy. And fear is dangerous in international politics.

#### Relevance in the Present Global Order

- Many experts believe a similar dynamic is emerging between the United States and China today.
- For decades, the United States dominated the global order. But China's rise in trade, manufacturing, artificial intelligence, semiconductors and military expansion is rapidly changing that balance.
- What began as economic competition is now turning into strategic rivalry. And that is why world leaders keep talking about avoiding the "Thucydides Trap."

Source: TOI

## MIYAWAKI FOREST PLANTATION

#### Context

- The Delhi government's Forest Department has planned a Miyawaki plantation drive at the Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### Miyawaki Technique

- **Origin:** The Miyawaki technique, Often referred to as the '**pot plantation method**', was developed by renowned Japanese botanist **Akira Miyawaki** in the 1970s.
  - ◆ It is a revolutionary method for creating **dense forests in small urban spaces**.
- **Principle:** It involves planting trees and shrubs close to one another to accelerate their growth. **Plants grow 10 times faster** with this technique, making it a practical solution for urban areas.
- **Significance:** In urban areas, the method is known to have successfully converted barren, polluted lands into thriving green ecosystems, simultaneously managing industrial waste and curbing pollution.

#### Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary

- The Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary is located in **southern Delhi** and extends into parts of **Faridabad in Haryana**. The sanctuary covers an area of nearly **32 square kilometres**.

- The sanctuary lies along the **Southern Ridge of the Aravalli Range**, which is one of the **oldest mountain systems** in the world.
- The sanctuary was declared a protected area in **1991 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- The sanctuary is also known as the "**green lungs**" of Delhi and acts as a natural ecological barrier **against the eastward expansion of the Thar Desert**.

Source: IE

## DEFENCE MINISTER TO LAY FOUNDATION FOR AAMCA PROGRAMME FACILITY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

#### Context

- The Union Minister for Defence laid the foundation stone for the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)** project at Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh.

#### About

- The AMCA programme facility is being developed by the **Aeronautical Development Agency under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
  - ◆ It will serve as the **integration, development and flight testing hub** for India's **indigenous fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft** programme.
  - ◆ **The AMCA fighter aircraft** will feature **stealth technology, twin-engine super cruise capability and advanced avionics**.
- The project is expected to generate **around 7,500 direct jobs**, while ancillary industries linked to the project are **likely to attract investments worth nearly one lakh crore rupees**.

Source: AIR

## NEANDERTHALS

#### Context

- A new study suggests that Neanderthals carried out a sophisticated dental procedure around 59,000 years ago based on an ancient molar found in Chagyrskaya Cave in Siberia, Russia.

#### About Neanderthals

- Neanderthals are an **extinct group of ancient humans** who lived **mainly in Europe and parts of western Asia**.

- They are the **closest known relatives of modern humans** (*Homo sapiens*).
- **Scientific name:** *Homo neanderthalensis*.
- **Time period:** About 400,000 years ago to 40,000 years ago.
- **Discovery:** First fossils found in the **Neander Valley in Germany in 1856**.
- **Physical Features:**
  - ◆ Short and strongly built bodies adapted to cold climates.
  - ◆ Large brains, sometimes larger than modern humans.
  - ◆ Broad noses and prominent brow ridges.
  - ◆ Muscular limbs and strong bones.
- **Skills:**
  - ◆ Used sophisticated stone tools (Mousterian tools).
  - ◆ Controlled fire for warmth and cooking.
  - ◆ Wore animal skins for protection.
- **Neanderthals coexisted with early modern humans** for thousands of years.
  - ◆ Genetic studies show that many **present-day humans outside Africa carry about 1–2% Neanderthal DNA**.

Source: IE

## 'ABHAY': AI-POWERED VERIFICATION SYSTEM

### In News

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has launched an AI-based helpbot called "Abhay" for authentication of CBI notices.

### Background and Need

- Cyber-enabled fraud is becoming a major threat to India's criminal justice system.
- Advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence and deepfakes are making it harder for people to tell real information from fake content.
- To help citizens stay aware and protected, the CBI launched "Abhay," which can be accessed through the official CBI website.

### 'Abhay'

- It is the AI-powered chatbot-style verification mechanism for the public to verify notices issued by CBI.
- It is designed to protect the citizens from the growing menace of cyber fraud and digital arrest scams.

- It has been designed keeping in mind data confidentiality and the requirement for a public-facing authentication mechanism.

### Do you know?

- A digital arrest scam is a type of online fraud where scammers pretend to be law enforcement officials, such as CBI, income tax, or customs officers, to scare victims into paying money.
- They contact victims through phone calls and video apps like WhatsApp or Skype, falsely accusing them of crimes such as tax evasion or financial misconduct.
- The scammers may even create fake police station setups to appear genuine.
- Victims are pressured into transferring money under the pretext of investigation, clearing their name, or refundable security deposits.
  - ◆ Once the payment is made, the scammers disappear, causing financial loss and possible identity theft.

Source: TH

## INDIA'S FIRST SATELLITE-TAGGED GANGES SOFT-SHELL TURTLE

### In News

- India's first satellite-tagged Ganges soft-shell turtle was released in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam.
  - ◆ Assam is one of the world's top priority areas in freshwater turtle conservation. Of the eight soft-shell turtles reported from India, five are known from the Kaziranga landscape.

### Ganges soft-shell turtle (*Nilssonina gangetica*),

- **Characteristics:** It can be differentiated from other riverine turtles by its distinct arrowhead-shaped markings on the top of the head.
  - ◆ It feeds on fish, birds, reptiles, invertebrates, carrion, and aquatic plants.
- **Habitat and Distribution:** It mainly lives in rivers and large canals with muddy bottoms and flowing, turbid water, though it may also use ponds and lakes.
  - ◆ It is found across the northern plains of the Indian subcontinent, including the Indus, Ganga, Narmada, Mahanadi, and Brahmaputra river basins in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

- In India, the species inhabits large rivers, lakes, and reservoirs.
- **Ecological Role :** It is a major river predator and helps clean up the system by feeding on dead and decaying animal matter.
- **Threats :** It faces severe threats from illegal hunting, international trade, and habitat destruction.
- **Protection status :** It is a Schedule I animal under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
  - ♦ It is recorded as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
  - ♦ It is included in CITES Appendix I, prohibiting all forms of international commercial trade.

**Source: TH**

