

NEWS TODAY

Indonesian President Honored as Chief Guest at India's 76th Republic Day Celebration

Indonesia was also the chief guest country on India's first Republic Day in 1950.

- Both sides signed pacts on maritime security, health, traditional medicine etc. and working on **framework agreement for defense cooperation and technology sharing projects** including surface-to-surface missiles, air defense systems, and submarine construction technology transfers.
- India also welcomed Indonesia's decision of **early joining the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**.

India- Indonesia Bilateral Ties

- **Political:** Both were part of Bandung Conference 1955 which led to **establishment of Non-Aligned Movement (1961)**.
- **Trade:** US\$29.4 billion in FY2023-24.
- **Military Exercises:** Samudra Shakti, India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol.

Significance of Indonesia for India

- **Geo-Economic:** Indonesia is India's second-largest trading partner in ASEAN, with
 - ⊕ **Key imports:** Coal, palm oil, and rubber.
 - ⊕ **India exports:** Refined petroleum, telecom equipment, and agricultural products.
- **Geopolitical:** Both are members of groups like **BRICS, G20, IORA, and East Asia Summit**.
 - ⊕ India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum vision synergize, enhancing geopolitical engagement.
- **Geostrategic:** It is strategically located between Indian and Pacific Oceans, making it important for **India's SAGAR initiative**.
 - ⊕ **Access to Sabang Port** will secure trade through Malacca strait, and aid in counterbalancing China's influence in Indo-Pacific.
- **Cultural Significance:** Indonesia's culture is shaped by Hinduism with Ramayana and Mahabharata deeply influencing its art and folklore, strengthening people-to-people ties.



International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN released 'Guidance on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures OECMs' report

Report provides critical guidance on conserving land, water, and coastal areas through OECMs.

- OECMs term was **first appeared in 2010 within Aichi Biodiversity Targets** established by CBD. At CoP-14 in 2018, CBD adopted its official definition.







About OECMs

- **Definition:** It is a geographically defined area **other than Protected Areas (PAs)**.
 - ⊕ It is **governed/ managed to achieve sustained long-term outcomes for in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services** and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values.
 - ⊕ Areas that are already established as PA or lie within PA **should not also be identified/reported as OECMs**.
- It is an important tool for **achieving Target 3 of Global Biodiversity Framework**, i.e., to conserve at least 30% of terrestrial, inland waters, and coastal and marine areas by 2030.
- It can be governed by a **government agency, private group (e.g. NGO), indigenous peoples, local communities** or in a shared arrangement.

How do OECMs differ from PAs?

- PAs are managed with **primary objective of biodiversity conservation within a given site**, like preserving habitat for endangered species.
- OECMs can be managed for **different objectives like protecting areas of cultural or historical importance** while delivering **conservation outcomes**.

Significance of OECMs

-  Conserving important ecosystems, habitats and wildlife corridors
-  Restoration of degraded agricultural, forest and pasture lands
-  Supporting the recovery of threatened species
-  Maintaining ecosystem functions and securing ecosystem services such as
 - Rejuvenation of springs and water bodies, aquifers, and improving ground water table
 - Conservation and promotion of agro-biodiversity leading to food and nutritional security
-  Enhancing resilience against threats
-  Retaining and connecting remnants of fragmented ecosystems within developed landscapes

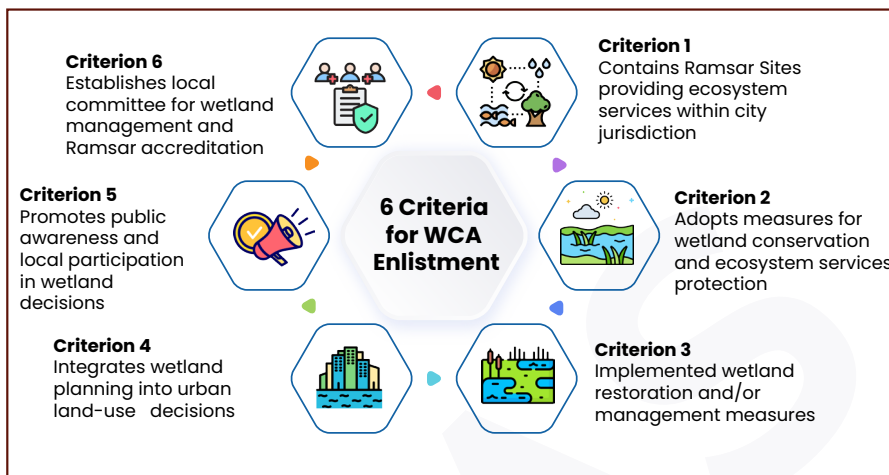
Indore and Udaipur join the list of 31 Wetland Accredited Cities in world

Indore and Udaipur have become the first two Indian cities to make it to the global list of accredited wetland cities under Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

- **Indore:** Sirpur Lake (Ramsar Site) recognised for water bird congregation and is being developed as a bird sanctuary.
- **Udaipur:** Surrounded by five major wetlands, namely, Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Rang Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, and Doodh Talai.

About Wetland City Accreditation (WCA)

- It is a voluntary Accreditation system that provides an opportunity for cities that value their natural or human-made wetlands to gain international recognition and positive publicity for their efforts.
- It was approved at Uruguay in COP12 of Ramsar Convention (2015).
- It is valid for 6 years, after which it must be renewed, providing that it continues to fill each of the 6 criteria (refer image).



Significance of WCA

- Promote conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands, as well as sustainable socio-economic benefits for local populations.
- Encourage cities near and dependent on wetlands, especially Wetlands of International Importance, to strengthen positive relationship with these valuable ecosystems.
- Help in implementation of Amrit Dharohar initiative of MoEF&CC.

Ramsar Convention

- It is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for conservation and wise-use of wetlands and their resources.
- Adopted in 1971 and came into force in 1975.
- Currently, there are 85 Ramsar sites in India.

Ministry of Finance notifies the operationalization of the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)

UPS shall be applicable to Central Government employees who are covered under the National Pension System (NPS) and who choose this option under NPS.

- It will be operational from April 1, 2025 and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) may issue regulations for its operationalization.

Salient features of the UPS

- **Assured pension:** 50% of average basic pay drawn over last 12 months prior to superannuation for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years.
 - ⊕ Pension will be proportionate for lesser service period upto a minimum 10 years of service.
- **Assured family pension:** 60% of the employee's pension immediately before their demise.
- **Assured minimum pension:** ₹10,000/month on superannuation after minimum 10 years of service.
- **Inflation indexation:** Applicable to assured pension, family pension, and minimum pension.
 - ⊕ Dearness Relief based on All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW) as in case of service employees.
- **Lump sum payment** at superannuation in addition to gratuity equivalent to 1/10th of monthly emoluments (pay + DA) for every completed six months of service.

Differences between UPS, NPS and OPS (Old Pension Scheme)

Parameters	UPS	NPS	OPS
Applicability	All Central government employees under NPS	Mandatory for Central Government employees (except the armed forces) after 2004.	Government employees (Centre and States)
Assured Pension	50% of the average basic pay of service's last 12 months.	No fixed pension; Market-linked returns.	50% of the last drawn salary.
Employee Contribution	10% of salary	10% of salary	No Contribution
Payment of Lumpsum Amount	Provided on superannuation	60% of NPS corpus can be withdrawn as lumpsum	Commutation of 40% of pension as Lumpsum

Use of Loudspeakers not an 'Essential Religious Practice': Bombay High Court (HC)

Bombay HC reiterated its judgement in **Mahesh Vijay Case (2016)** where it held that **use of loudspeakers is not an essential part of any religion.**

- Bombay HC referred to Supreme Court judgement in **Church of God Case (2000)** which held that there is **no fundamental right to use loudspeakers under Article 19(1)(a) and Article 25 of the constitution.**

About Essential Religious Practices (ERP) test

- ERP is employed by Indian Judiciary for the adjudication of **matters of freedom of religion** and determining **essentiality of that religious practice.**
- ERP test was introduced by Supreme Court in **Shri Shirur Mutt Case (1954)** which **extended freedom of religion** by including **religious practices within meaning of religion** under its ambit.
 - ⊖ It held that what constitutes the essential part of a religion is **primarily to be ascertained with reference to the doctrines of that religion itself.**

Other Supreme Court Judgements related to ERP

- **Sri Adi Visheshwara Case (1997):** Court distinguished between the religious and secular functions of the Temple.
- **Acharya Jagadisharananda Case (2004):** Court held that what determines if a practice forms an essential part of the religion is **whether the absence of the practice fundamentally alters the religion.**
- **Shayara Bano Case (2017):** Held triple talaq to be against basic tenets of religion and held that a **practice merely permitted or not prohibited by religion cannot be considered an essential or positive tenet sanctioned by religion.**



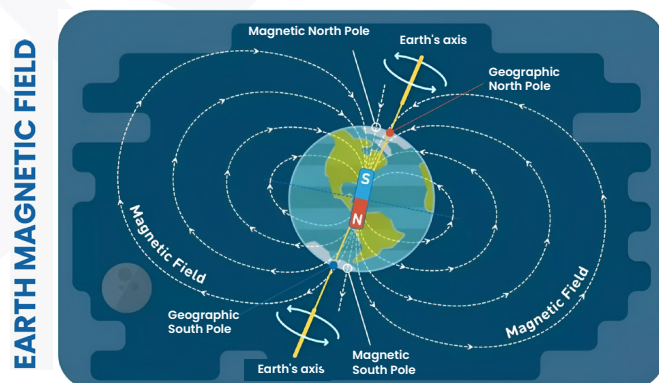
Earth's Magnetic North Pole is shifting toward Siberia, according to updated World Magnetic Model

World Magnetic Model (WMM) is the **standard model for navigation, attitude, and heading referencing systems** that use the geomagnetic field.

- New version of model is **updated every five years** to address changes in Earth's magnetic field.
- It is produced by the **United States' National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)** and the **United Kingdom's Defence Geographic Centre (DGC).**

Shift in Earth's Magnetic North Pole

- **Magnetic North** is where the **Earth's magnetic field lines enter Earth** in the North while **Geographic North** is where lines of longitude (meridians) **converge in the north.**
 - ⊖ Earth **rotates on the geographic north and south poles.**
- Since Earth's Magnetic North Pole was **first discovered in 1831 by explorer James Clark Ross**, it has gradually shifted.
 - ⊖ Over past century, its **movement from Canada towards Siberia (Russia) has accelerated** reaching a peak of 31 miles annually by 2000s but rate of movement has **slowed in last five years.**
- **Positions of Earth's Magnetic North and South Poles gradually change** due to **variations in Earth's magnetic field** over time.
 - ⊖ **Magnetic declination** – the angle between magnetic North and Geographic North – at a given location also changes over time.
- Sometimes, Magnetic Poles also undergo **Pole Reversal** i.e. swapping of magnetic north and south poles.
 - ⊖ According to **Paleomagnetic records**, Earth's magnetic poles have **reversed 183 times** in the last 83 million years.
 - ⊖ **Potential Implications:** Errors in navigation systems, impact on migratory species, risks from solar storms to satellites and power grids etc.



Also in News



Investment and External Commercial Borrowings

State Bank of India released a report on India's Investment and External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) Landscape.

Key Observations

- **Household Net Financial Savings:** Improved to **5.3% of GDP** in FY24 from 5.0% in FY23.
 - ⊖ **Savings in physical assets** increased from 12.9% of GDP in FY23 to 13.5% in FY24.
- In FY23, **government investment** reached **4.1% of GDP**, the highest since FY12.
- **Private corporate investment** rose to **11.9% of GDP** in FY23, its highest since FY16.
- **ECB Landscape:** Total outstanding ECBs stood at **\$190.4 billion** as of September 2024.
 - ⊖ ECBs are **commercial loans** raised by resident entities from non-resident lenders.



Nano Urea

As per a study, continued use of nano-urea could reduce yields of rice and wheat.

About Nano Urea

- Developed by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO), it is an innovative **agricultural input** based on nanotechnology which **provides nitrogen to plants.**
- It contains **4% nitrogen.**
- It has **small size (20-50 nm); more surface area and number of particles per unit area** than conventional urea.
- **Benefits of Nano-Urea:**
 - ⊖ **Higher nutrient use efficiency;**
 - ⊖ **Minimise environment footprint** by reducing loss of nutrients from agriculture fields in form of leaching and gaseous emissions.
 - ⊖ **Easy to store or transport;** etc.



Green Energy Open Access Rules 2022

Karnataka High Court struck down the Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) Rules, 2022.

- Court noted that **Centre had no powers to frame these specific rules** and the relevant **Commission at the State level** was authorised to **regulate open access**.

About Green Energy Open Access (GORA) Rules 2022

- Notified for **promoting generation, purchase and consumption of green energy** including the energy from waste-to-energy plants through open access.
- GORA is **allowed to any consumer** and limit of open access transaction has been reduced from 1 MW to 100 kW for green energy.



Lake Victoria

Researchers conducted a **genetic survey of cyanobacteria** in Lake Victoria's Winam Gulf.

- It is the **second largest freshwater lake** in the world after Lake Superior in the US and the **largest in Africa**.
- **Bordering countries:** Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya.

About Cyanobacteria

- Cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae, are **photosynthetic microorganisms** found in **aquatic habitats**.
- They are **important providers of nitrogen fertilizer** in rice and beans cultivation and were helpful in **generating oxygen atmosphere** during Archaean and Proterozoic Eras.
- Cyanobacteria can form **dense, toxic blooms in freshwater and marine environments**, disrupting ecosystems, and degrading water quality.



PM SHRI Scheme (PM Schools for Rising India)

As per Ministry of Education (MoE), PM SHRI Schools witness around **76% rise in student enrolment in five states** (Manipur, Tripura, Rajasthan, Meghalaya, and Madhya Pradesh).

About PM SHRI Scheme (Aligned with NEP, 2020)

- **Nodal Ministry:** MoE.
- **Type:** Centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2022.
- **Duration:** 5 Years (2022-23 to 2026-27).
- **Aim:** To develop more than **14,500 PM SHRI Schools** managed by **Central Government/State/UT Government/local bodies**.
- **Funding pattern:** **60:40** between Centre and State Governments and UTs with legislature (except J&K).
 - ⊖ **90:10** for North Eastern and Himalayan States and UT of J&K.
 - ⊖ **100%** for UTs without legislature.



Fentanyl

U.S. is considering a **10% tariff on Chinese imports** because fentanyl is being smuggled from China into U.S. through Mexico and Canada.

About Fentanyl

- It is a **powerful synthetic opioid**, approved by Food and Drug Administration for **analgesic (pain relief) and anesthesia**.
- It is **approximately 100 times more potent than morphine** and **50 times more potent than heroin** as an analgesic.
- Opioids (fentanyl, oxycodone, morphine etc.), are drugs derived from or mimicking natural substances in opium poppy.
- **All opioids work similarly.** They activate an area of nerve cells in brain and body called opioid receptors that block pain signals between brain and body.



Padma Awards

Ministry of Home Affairs has announced **Padma Awards 2025** on Republic day.

About Padma Awards

- **Instituted in 1954**, they are **one of the highest civilian Awards** of country.
- **Conferred by President** at Rashtrapati Bhawan in **three categories**, namely:
 - ⊖ **Padma Vibhushan:** For **exceptional and distinguished service**.
 - ⊖ **Padma Bhushan:** For **distinguished service of high order**.
 - ⊖ **Padma Shri:** For **distinguished service in any field**.
- **Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields** of activities, viz. art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- They are announced on **occasion of Republic Day every year**.



Etikoppaka Dolls

Etikoppaka dolls showcased at President's reception for Republic Day.

About Etikoppaka Dolls

- **Origin:** 400-year-old craft in Etikoppaka, **Andhra Pradesh**.
- Officially recognized with **Geographical Indication tag in 2017**.
- Made from **wood of Ankudu tree (Wrightia tinctoria)**, known for its **lightweight and smooth texture**.
 - ⊖ They **do not contain any heavy metal or toxic item**.
- Made purely out of **natural elements like seeds, lacquer, bark, roots and leaves**.
- Process of Etikoppaka toy making is known as **'turned wood lacquer craft'** or **'Tharini'**.

Place in news



Georgia (Capital: Tbilisi)

Georgia has been certified as **malaria-free** by World Health Organization.

Political Features

- Country in **Transcaucasia region** at intersection of **Eastern Europe and West Asia**.
- **Bordering Countries:** Russia (North and Northeast); Azerbaijan (East and Southeast); Armenia and Turkiye (South).
- **Bordering Water Bodies:** Black Sea.

Geographical Features

- **Highest Point:** Mount Shkhara (5,068 metres).
- **Mountain Ranges:** Greater Caucasus range, Lesser Caucasus range.
- **Major Rivers:** Inguri, Rioni, Mtkvari and Kodori.
- **Conflict regions:** Abkhazia, South Ossetia & Ajaria.

