

February - 19

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The fifth Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo is hosting by the Indonesian Navy involve over 30 ships from more than 15 countries including Russia, China, India and the US.
- ❖ India and Japan will conduct the sixth edition of exercise Dharma Guardian at Mount Fuji, Japan.
- ❖ BHARAT TEX 2025, the second edition of the textiles trade fair and knowledge-sharing events, was held in New Delhi and Greater Noida.
- ❖ The office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles, organized a fashion event titled “Breathing Threads” in BHARAT TEX 2025.
- ❖ Aadi Mahotsav-2025, the flagship initiative of the Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is being held in New Delhi.
- ❖ Jacob Kiplimo of Uganda broke the world half-marathon record in Barcelona, finishing the 21.0975 km race in 56 minutes and 42 seconds.
- ❖ Olympic shooter Manu Bhaker has been named BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year for 2024 after a global public vote.
- ❖ The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) launched its Internet Governance Internship and Capacity Building Scheme to build the awareness and develop expertise in internet governance (IG) among Indian citizens.

NATIONAL

New CEC - Gyanesh Kumar

- ❖ Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar was appointed as the next chief election commissioner (26th CEC).
- ❖ He is the first CEC to be appointed under a new law on the appointment of the members of the Election Commission (EC).
- ❖ Vivek Joshi assumed charge as an Election Commissioner.
- ❖ Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act, 2023 empowers the govt to appoint CEC.
- ❖ He was appointed after a meeting of a three-member committee headed by Prime Minister.

- ❖ The selection committee consists of PM, Union home minister, and the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ A CEC or an EC retires at the age of 65 or can serve in the panel for six years.



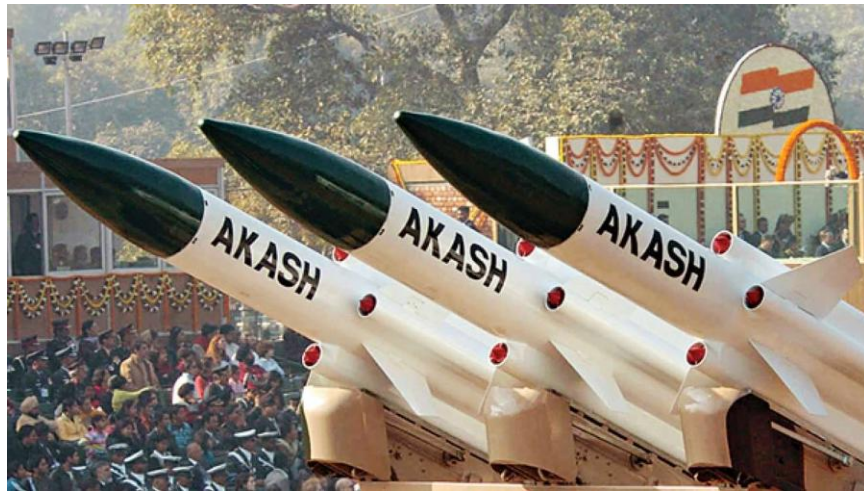
Project Waterworth



- ❖ Meta introduced its internet subsea cable Project Waterworth.
- ❖ It will cross 50,000 km in length and bring enhanced connectivity to the U.S., India, Brazil, South Africa, and other locations.
- ❖ This is becoming the longest subsea cable project in the world.

- ❖ Subsea cables projects accounting for more than 95% of intercontinental traffic across the world's oceans.
- ❖ They seamlessly enable the digital communication, the video experiences, online transactions, and more.

Akash Missile Export



- ❖ India is likely to secure a defense export contract worth over \$200 million with the Philippines for the sale of Akash short-range surface-to-air missiles.
- ❖ If finalized, this would mark India's second major weapons deal with Manila.
- ❖ The deal is expected to be larger than India's \$230 million Akash missile export to Armenia in 2023.
- ❖ This deal follows India's \$375 million sale of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines in 2022
- ❖ Akash has a range of up to 25 km and is designed to intercept aerial threats.
- ❖ The country's defence exports surged by nearly 150 per cent since 2020, reaching \$2.4 billion in Financial Year (FY) 2023-24.
- ❖ Despite this growth, India's arms exports remain lower than those of China, South Korea, and Australia.

EPFO Updates 2025

- ❖ The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has announced the several significant updates to its services and guidelines that will be implemented in 2025.
- ❖ The updated process classifies members into three groups for easier handling:

- Members with Aadhaar-based UANs (post-October 2017): Requests are processed online.
- Members with UANs validated by Aadhaar (pre-October 2017): Requests are also processed online.
- Members without Aadhaar-validated UANs or deceased members: Requests are submitted physically.
- ❖ The Pensioners will soon be able to withdraw their pensions from any bank in the country, without requiring additional verification.
- ❖ EPFO members will soon be able to withdraw their provident fund balance via ATMs.
- ❖ EPFO is considering offering its members the option to invest directly in equities, beyond ETFs.
- ❖ The latest data shows a decrease in formal job creation, with a five-month low of 1.34 million new EPFO members in October 2024.

EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) is a retirement fund organization that provides financial security to millions of employees. In **2025, EPFO has announced 5 major changes** to make its services better and more accessible.

- **Withdraw PF via ATMs:** Instant 24/7 PF withdrawal facility.
- **No Contribution Limit:** Contribute based on your full salary.
- **Faster and Transparent Process:** Upgraded IT system for quick and secure claims.
- **Invest in Equity:** Option to invest PF funds in equities.
- **Easy Pension Withdrawal:** Withdraw pension from any bank easily.

Benefits

Quick access to funds in emergencies.



Better retirement planning.

Secure and faster processes.

INTERNATIONAL

The TRUST initiative

- ❖ Under the TRUST initiative, India and US will reduce barriers to technology transfer, address export controls, and enhance high tech commerce.
- ❖ TRUST stands for 'Transforming Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology'.

- ❖ This bilateral initiative for cooperation in the recovery and processing of critical minerals, includes lithium and rare earth elements (REEs).
- ❖ The TRUST initiative's effort to create robust supply chains for pharma could focus on active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), many of which depend on critical minerals like lithium, magnesium, zinc, and selenium.
- ❖ India joined the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) in 2023.
- ❖ The MSP is a US-led collaboration of 14 countries that aims to catalyse public and private investment in critical minerals supply chains.

A big step for stronger India - U.S. tech ties

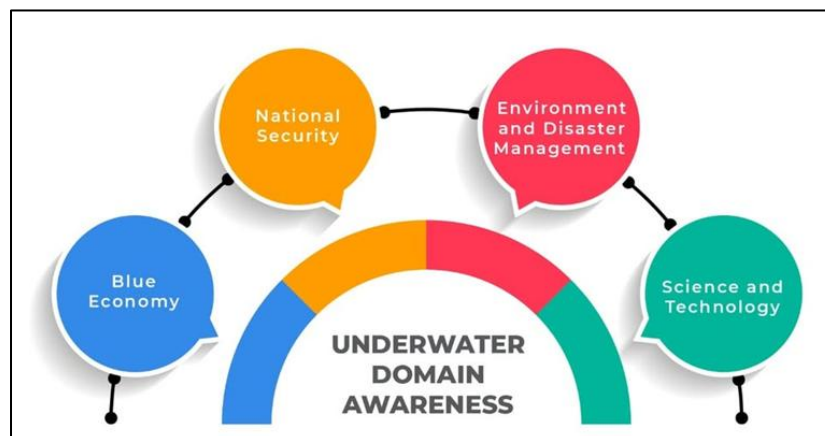
INDIA - U.S. TRUST INITIATIVE
(Transforming the Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology)

BOOSTS COLLABORATION
Govt, academia & private sector join hands

ENSURES SECURITY
Promotes verified tech & protects sensitive innovations



ASIA for Underwater Domain Awareness



- ❖ India and US kick-started a new initiative named Autonomous Systems Industry Alliance (ASIA).
- ❖ It aims to scale industry partnerships and production in the Indo-Pacific.

- ❖ The U.S. has offered a few co-production and co-development opportunities for UDA technologies, on a commercial basis.
- ❖ India is the very first country with whom the U.S. defence industry has offered to work with on these sensitive technologies.
- ❖ The Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) refers to the capability of a nation or an organization to monitor, detect, and assess activities occurring beneath the surface of water bodies like oceans and seas.
- ❖ It plays a crucial role in maritime security, resource management, environmental protection, and disaster response.

Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty 2025



- ❖ The Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Iranian counterpart, Masoud Pezeshkian, signed a broad cooperation pact.
- ❖ This comprehensive strategic partnership treaty” covers all areas -- from trade and military cooperation to science, education and culture.
- ❖ Russia’s ties with Iran have grown closer after Putin sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022.
- ❖ Russia and Iran, which had troubled relations in the past, developed cordial ties after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- ❖ Russia built Iran’s first nuclear plant that was launched in 2013 and is building two more nuclear reactors there.

ECONOMY

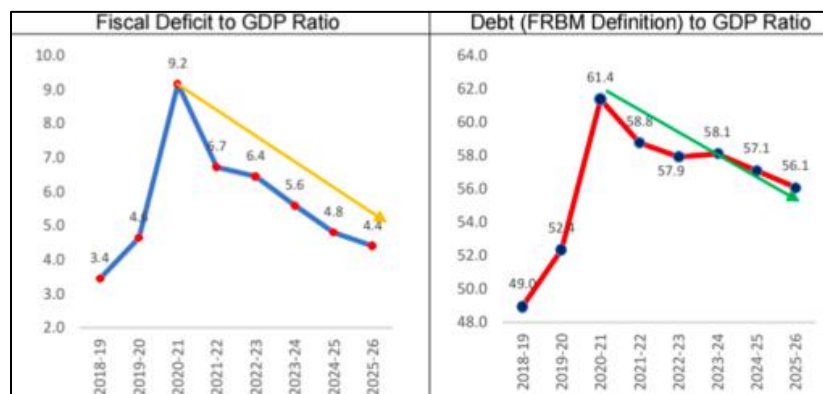
Textile Exports by 2030

- ❖ India aims for a threefold increase in its textile exports to ₹9 lakh crore by 2030.

- ❖ The target can be achieved even earlier with the vision of “Five Fs” and new \$7.5 billion worth of global opportunities in recycling of textile waste.
- ❖ The Five Fs consists of - farm, fiber, fabric, fashion, and foreign.
- ❖ India’s textile exports have now reached ₹3 lakh crore, earning the world’s sixth largest textile exporter’s tag.
- ❖ Textiles and apparel industry contributes 2.3% to country’s GDP, and 13% to industrial production and 12% to exports.



New Fiscal Approach



- ❖ Indian government has announced that it will replace the fiscal deficit target with the debt-to-GDP ratio as the primary fiscal anchor from FY 2026-27.
- ❖ It aims to ensure fiscal sustainability, enhance transparency, and provide greater flexibility in managing public finances.
- ❖ The debt-to-GDP ratio measures the share of a country's national debt in relation to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



- ❖ It serves as a reliable indicator of fiscal health, capturing both past and present borrowing trends.
- ❖ The government has set a long-term target of reducing the central government's debt-GDP ratio to 50±1% by March 31, 2031.
- ❖ The fiscal deficit target for FY 2024-25 is estimated at 4.8% of GDP, lower than the original target of 4.9%.
- ❖ For FY 2025-26, the government has projected a further reduction to 4.4% of GDP.

Entity Locker

AFTER DIGILOCKER, GOVT ANNOUNCES 'ENTITY LOCKER' FOR CORPORATES FOR PROVIDING DOCUMENT STORAGE, VERIFICATION

Entity Locker To Offer

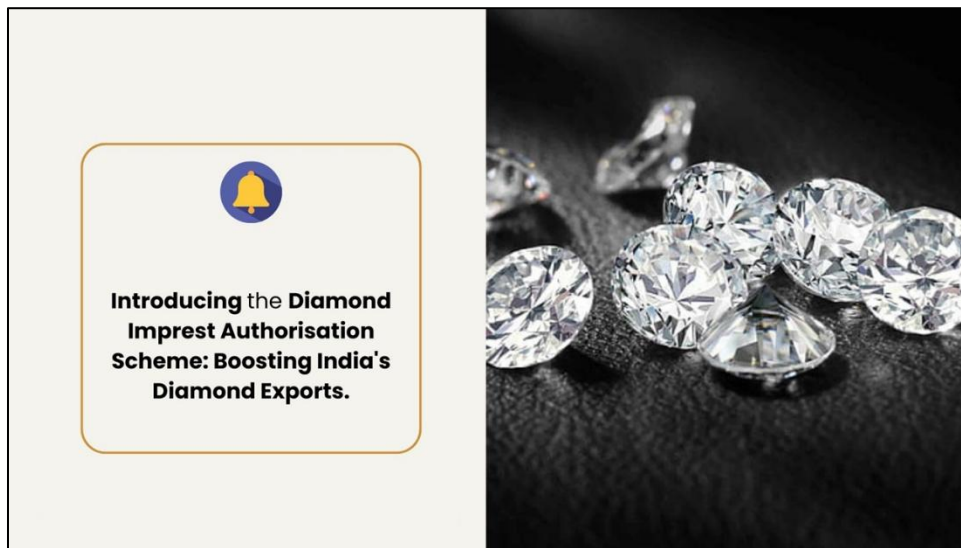
- 10GB of cloud storage for document management
- Verification with Government databases
- Aadhaar-based access
- Consent-based mechanism for sharing sensitive info
- Digital signatures for document authentication
- Entity Locker allows integration with MCA, GSTN, DGT, Other Regulatory institutions, to help in compliance

- ❖ The union government has introduced 'Entity Locker,' a new digital platform.
- ❖ It was aimed at streamlining the management and verification of business and organizational documents.
- ❖ It is developed by the National eGovernance Division (NeGD) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- ❖ This secure cloud-based platform caters to a diverse range of entities, including corporations, MSMEs, trusts, startups, and societies.
- ❖ It connects seamlessly with systems like the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN), and the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), offering instant access to essential documents.

DIA scheme

- ❖ The Department of Commerce, Government of India has launched the Diamond Imprest Authorization (DIA) Scheme.

- ❖ It was aimed at strengthening the country's foothold in the global diamond trade.
- ❖ The initiative seeks to simplify and reduce the costs associated with the importing and handling diamonds for exporters.
- ❖ Now, the Exporters can import natural cut and polished diamonds of less than ¼ carat (25 cents) without paying customs duty.
- ❖ Exporters must add at least 10 per cent value to these diamonds before exporting them.
- ❖ The scheme is open to exporters with Two Star Export House status (a recognition granted by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade) and above, with at least \$15 million in exports annually.

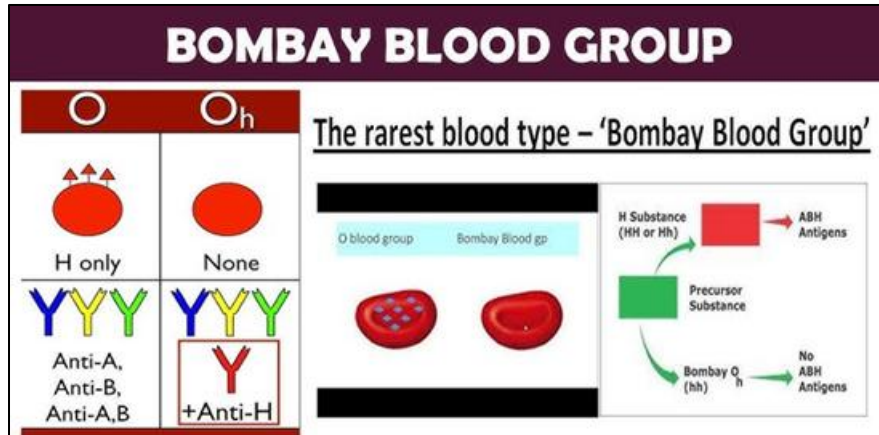


SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

First-ever cross-blood kidney transplant

- ❖ The Doctors at MIOT International in Chennai, made a cross-blood transplant in patient with rare Bombay blood group
- ❖ In 2010, team of MIOT Hospitals a used a kidney from a donor with B blood group on a recipient with O blood group, successfully.
- ❖ They have used special procedure called double filtration plasmapheresis (DFPP) developed by the Japanese.
- ❖ The Bombay, a.k.a. HH, blood group is a rare blood group first discovered in Mumbai in 1952 by Y.M. Bhende.
- ❖ The key differences between the Bombay blood group and the common ABO blood groups lie in the presence (or absence) of the H antigen.

- ❖ These people cannot receive blood transfusions from any ABO group, including type O, which has the H antigen.
- ❖ They can only receive blood from another Bombay blood group donor.
- ❖ Its prevalence is about 0.0004% (one in 4 million) of the total human population.



ENVIRONMENT

Intertidal BioBlitz



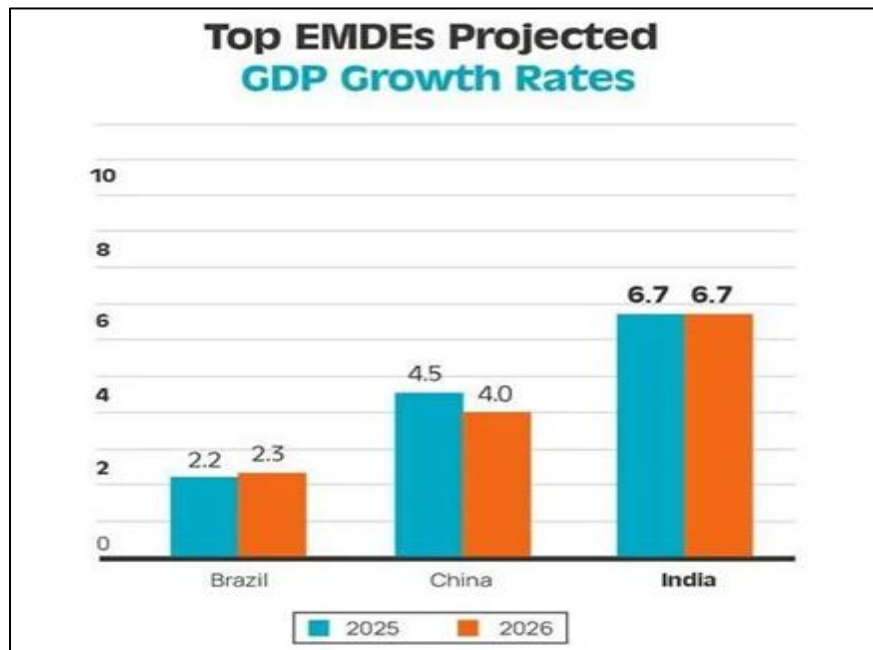
- ❖ India's first Intertidal Bioblitz uncovers hidden treasures with a stunning array of more than 500 species across coastal regions of Visakhapatnam, Mumbai, Goa and Andamans.
- ❖ The Mumbai suburban recorded 80 species and while metropolitan recorded 120 species during the bioblitz.
- ❖ The Andaman Islands uncovered more than 70 species over the course of three intertidal walks in different locations.
- ❖ The intertidal zone marks the dynamic boundary where ocean meets land.
- ❖ It is a unique area that alternates between being submerged during high tide and exposed to air when the tide retreats.

- ❖ They act as a natural buffer against coastal erosion, helping absorb wave energy and stabilize shorelines.

REPORTS AND INDICES

Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report 2025

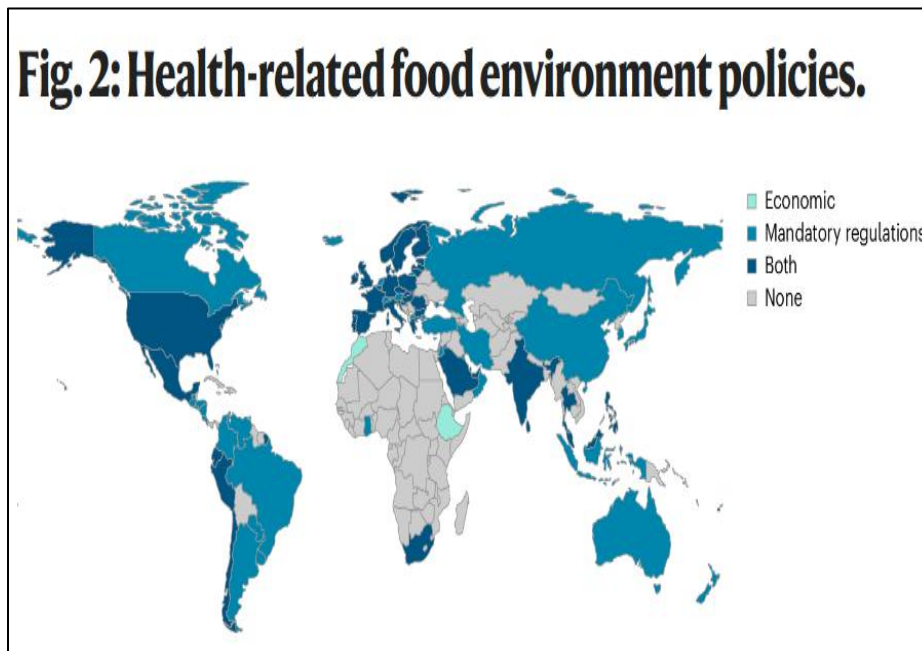
- ❖ The World Bank has released the Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report 2025.
- ❖ It is a flagship biannual publication of the World Bank Group.
- ❖ It scrutinizes trends and projections in the global economy.
- ❖ Global Economy projected to expand by 2.7% in both 2025 and 2026, the same pace as in 2024.
- ❖ Developing Economies, now are contributing about 45% of global GDP, compared to 25% at the start of the century.
- ❖ India, China, and Brazil, the three largest Emerging Markets have collectively driven approximately 60% of annual global growth since the start of the century.
- ❖ India is projected to remain the fastest-growing large economy for FY26 and FY27 (growth rate – 6.7%).



Analysis of Food Systems Transformation

- ❖ A new study, “Governance and resilience as entry points for transforming food systems in the countdown to 2030”, was published in Nature Food.

- ❖ It tracks 42 global food system indicators across five themes.
- ❖ Twenty of the 42 metrics analysed over time have improved.
- ❖ Notable achievements include significant increases in access to safe water and the availability of vegetables.
- ❖ Conservation of plant and animal genetic resources has also risen.
- ❖ Strengthening the resilience of the food systems to the climate shocks and other disruptions also improved.
- ❖ The Food price volatility is deteriorating government accountability, and reduced civil society participation and other 4 indicators show significant decline.
- ❖ 15 indicators including the ultra-processed food sales, food systems emissions, agriculture water withdrawal showed no change.

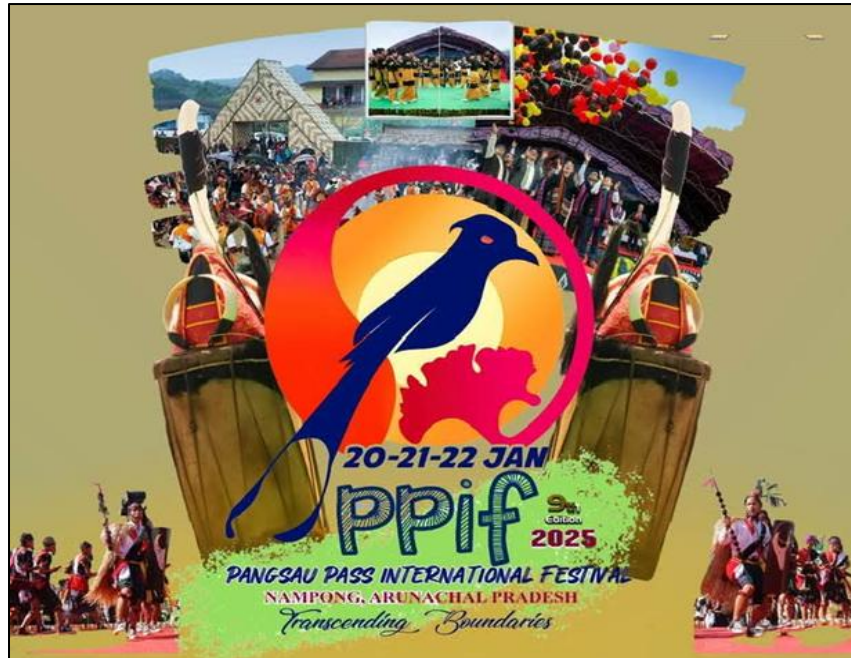


STATES

Pangsau Pass Festival 2025

- ❖ The Pangsau Pass International Festival was held in Nampong, Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The festival offers a platform for the cross border trade and cultural exchange with neighbouring country Myanmar to exhibit its culture and other products.
- ❖ Pangsau Pass or Pan Saung Pass is situated in 3,727 feet (1,136 m) altitude.
- ❖ It lies on the crest of the Patkai Hills on the India-Myanmar border.

- ❖ The pass offers easiest routes into Burma from the Assam plains.
- ❖ Pangsau Pass is considered to be “Hell gate” or “Hell Pass” due to difficult terrains in the Indo-Burma Patkai Mountain Range.



Chilika Lake Bird Census 2025



- ❖ Over 11 lakh birds of 196 different species thronged Chilika lagoon this year annual mid-winter waterfowl census 2025.
- ❖ The number of bird species congregated in the lake has increased.

- ❖ The bird count dropped by around 10,000 compared to last year when the head count was around 11.37 lakh.
- ❖ 109 migratory and 87 resident categories found roosting in Chilika this season.
- ❖ 187 species (108 migratory and 79 resident) found last year.
- ❖ In the Nalabana bird sanctuary, the bird count stood at 3.42 lakh compared 3.47 lakh last year.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Childhood Cancer Day 2025 - February 15

- ❖ The day aims to spread awareness about childhood cancers.
- ❖ Every year, more than 400,000 children and adolescents below 20, are diagnosed with cancer globally.
- ❖ In India, cancer is the 9th most common cause of death in children between 5 and 14 years of age.
- ❖ Childhood cancers (0-14 years of age) comprise 4% of all reported cancers in the ICMR-NCDIR's national cancer registry program.



MISCELLANEOUS

2025 Brand Finance IT Services Rankings

- ❖ India has secured the second position, contributing 36 per cent of the total brand value.
- ❖ India follows the US, which maintains its dominant position in IT services brand value, holding 40 per cent of the total brand value.

- ❖ The collective brand value of the top 25 IT Services brands stands at \$163 billion in 2025.
- ❖ 15 out of the top 25 brands have seen an increase in their brand values.
- ❖ Accenture's brand value soared 2 per cent to \$41.5 billion.
- ❖ It led as the world's most valuable IT services brand for the seventh year running.
- ❖ Infosys' brand value rose an impressive 15 per cent to \$16.3 billion.
- ❖ This is making it among the world's top three most valuable IT Services brands for the fourth consecutive year.
- ❖ Infosys has also achieved the fastest compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in brand value (18 per cent) over the last five years.
- ❖ HCL Tech (brand value up 17 per cent to \$8.9 billion) has emerged as the world's fastest-growing IT Services brand in 2025.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Collective brand value of top 25 IT services stands at \$163bn
- Accenture most valuable IT services brand for the 7th consecutive year
- TCS brand value up 11%; surpasses brand value of \$20bn
- Infosys achieved the fastest CAGR in brand value of 18% over past 5yrs
- HCLTech world's fastest growing IT Services brand

