

Sundarbans Tiger Reserve now India's second largest after expansion of area

National Board of Wildlife (NBWL), led by the Union minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, approved the West Bengal government's proposal to increase the area of **Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (STR)**.

➤ Now STR is just behind Andhra Pradesh's **Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve** in size and elevates it from the seventh to the second-largest tiger reserve within **India's 58 tiger reserves**.

Procedure to declare or alter Tiger reserve

➤ **Tiger Reserves are notified by State Governments** as per provisions of Section 38V of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** on advice of the **National Tiger Conservation Authority**.

➤ **The following steps are involved in the notification:**

- ⊕ **Proposal** is obtained from the State.
- ⊕ **In-principle approval** is communicated from the National Tiger Conservation Authority, soliciting detailed proposals under **section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- ⊕ **The National Tiger Conservation Authority recommends** the proposal to the State after due diligence.
- ⊕ **The State Government notifies** the area as a Tiger Reserve.

➤ **Process for alteration:** As per **section 38 W (1) of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**. No alteration in the boundaries of a tiger reserve shall be made except on a recommendation of the **Tiger Conservation Authority** and the approval of the **National Board for Wild Life**.

- ⊕ Such proposals are also **obtained from the State**.

About Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (STR)

- **Location:** Coastal districts of West Bengal
- **Only mangrove forest** throughout the world (besides Bangladesh) to harbour significant tiger population.
- **Borders:**
 - ⊕ Bounded on the east by the international boundary with Bangladesh **formed by the rivers Harinbanga, Raimangal and Kalindi**.
 - ⊕ On the south lies the **Bay of Bengal**.
 - ⊕ The western border is formed by the **river Matla**.
 - ⊕ Towards the north-west, the area is bound by **rivers Bidya and Gomdi**.
- The National Park area of the Tiger Reserve is a **natural World Heritage Site** and part of **Sundarban Biosphere Reserve**.

Maharashtra inks deal with IIT Madras startup(TuTr Hyperloop Pvt Ltd) to build hyperloop

Proposed **Linear Induction Motor (LIM)**-based hyperloop mobility system will connect **Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in Navi Mumbai** to the upcoming Vadhavan Port in Palghar district.

About Hyperloop Mobility System

➤ In 2013, the CEO of SpaceX, **Elon Musk**, proposed a concept of **Ultra-High-Speed Rail (UHSR)** called hyperloop and open-sourced it.

➤ It is basically a **magnetic levitation (maglev) system** where pods travel at **ultra-high speeds through low-pressure tubes**.

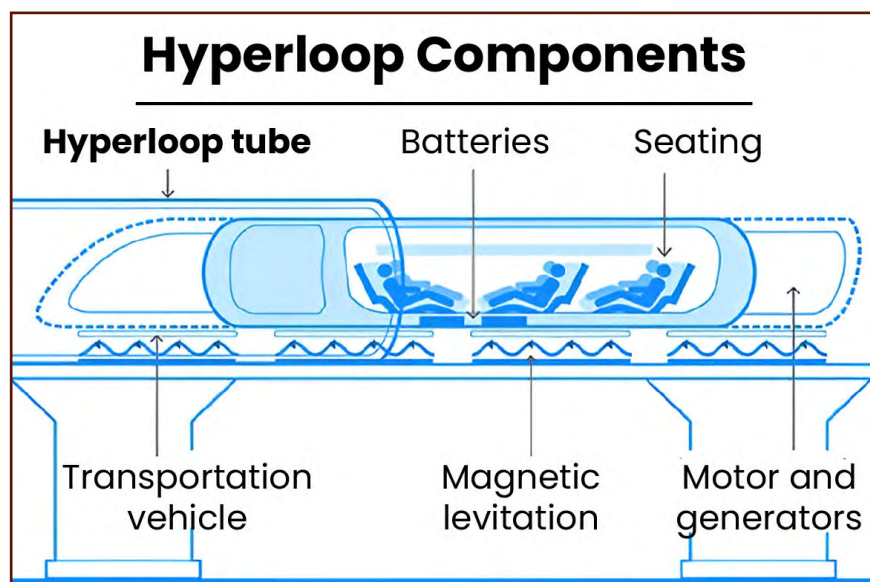
➤ Its Functioning and Key Components

- ⊕ Hyperloop functions in a **sealed tube with minimal air resistance**, utilizing **vacuums** and **magnetic levitation** for hovering.
- ⊕ **Linear Induction Motors (LIM)** propels pods silently enabling the theoretical speed of 1,200 km/h.
- ⊕ Key components include **steel tubes** (100Pa pressure), **pressurized capsules**, a **compressor** for airflow, and **air bearing suspension**.

➤ **Advantages:** Ultra-high speeds (e.g., Mumbai-Pune in 25 mins), energy efficiency (potentially carbon-free), noise reduction, and logistics redefinition (moving cargo quickly and efficiently).

➤ **Issues with technology:** Conceptual status, high costs (\$25-\$27 million/mile for technology), safety concerns (fire in pods, difficult evacuation), vacuum maintenance challenges, demanding straight-line infrastructure, requiring new regulations, etc.

Substantial financial backing, continuous research and development complemented by new regulatory frameworks are crucial for overcoming technical and safety challenges of hyperloop technology.



RBI Paper says flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework served India well amid global challenges

Recent discussion paper from RBI initiates the **second five-yearly review of India's FIT framework**.

- FIT framework was **established in May 2016** through an **amendment to RBI Act, 1934**, with a **mandate to maintain price stability** while keeping in mind the objective of growth.

Overview of India's FIT Experience (2016-2025)

- From the inception of the FIT in 2016 till about the end of 2019, inflation in India remained low and stable, **averaging around 4 per cent**.
- Inflation **breached the target** ($4 \pm 2\%$) in the 2020s **due to food and fuel shocks** amidst pandemic and Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- Inflation subsequently receded by **targeted supply-side interventions**, anti-inflationary monetary policy, and **falling international commodity prices**.

Key debates in the discussion paper

Key Discussion Points	Arguments in favour	Arguments Against
Target Benchmark – Headline Inflation or not:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Food and Fuel constitute over 50 per cent of consumption basket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Food and fuel inflation are volatile, supply-driven, and less responsive to monetary policy making core inflation a better benchmark.
Optimality of 4 per cent Inflation Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Raising the target could undermine credibility. ▶ Lowering it may not be credible given global food inflation risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lower inflation targets may impact the growth prospects in the long run, thus, need to have higher targets.
Appropriateness of Tolerance Band (± 2 per cent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provides flexibility to accommodate shock-induced fluctuations and manage growth-inflation trade-offs. ▶ India's high food share in the consumption basket further supports it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Volatility of headline inflation has declined since FIT adoption. ▶ A revised CPI series with a potentially lower food share could further reduce headline inflation volatility.
Range Targeting (i.e. 2% to 6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Offers greater flexibility for central banks to respond to economic shocks. ▶ Acknowledges inherent uncertainties in inflation forecasting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Shifting from a point target to a range could add ambiguity, undermine policy credibility, and diminish fiscal policy discipline.

Also in News



Article 311

Jammu and Kashmir government has fired two **employees** for **alleged terror links**

- The decision was taken under **Article 311 (2)(c)** of the Constitution.

About Article 311

- It deals with **dismissal, removal, or reduction in rank of persons employed in civil capacities** under the Union or State.
- **Article 311 (1):** Members of Civil service **cannot be dismissed or removed** by any authority **subordinate to the appointing authority**.
- **Article 311 (2):** No civil servant can be dismissed, removed, or demoted without an **inquiry, prior notice of charges, and a fair chance to be heard**.



Rampage Missiles

IAF to acquire more Israeli-origin Rampage missiles.

About Rampage Missiles

- Long range, air to ground precise attack missile. It can travel at supersonic speeds, making it difficult to detect.
- **Developed by:** Israel Aerospace Industries.



Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)

India will jointly manufacture advanced jet engines for India's fifth-generation fighter aircraft (AMCA) programme with French aerospace major Safran.

About Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)

- **The AMCA is a fifth-generation**, medium-weight stealth fighter jet being **developed by the DRDO** under a project valued at approximately Rs 15,000 crore.
- **Timeline:** Prototype expected by 2028-29; induction by 2034-35.
- **Features of fifth-generation fighter jet:** Stealth, Twin-engine powered Supercruise, advanced AI-enabled avionics and long-range target detection via AESA radars.



Druzhba pipeline

Ukrainian attack suspends Russian oil flows to Hungary, Slovakia.

About Druzhba (Friendship) Pipeline:

- It is one of the **biggest crude oil pipeline** networks in the world.
- **Total Length:** 5500 kms
- The Druzhba pipeline begins in Russia and transports oil through Belarus and Ukraine to Slovakia and Hungary.



Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

IPC has confirmed Famine in Gaza

- **More than half a million people** in Gaza are trapped in famine, marked by widespread **starvation, destitution and preventable death**

About IPC

- **Overview:** Standardized international tool used to measure and communicate the severity of food insecurity in a country or region.
- **Genesis: Developed in 2004** by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), managed by the **Food and Agriculture Organization** of the United Nations (FAO) in Somalia.
 - ⌚ It is an innovative 21-partner initiative – **made up of UN agencies and international NGOs.**
- **Governance:**
 - ⌚ The **IPC High Level Executive Committee** is the highest-level entity within the IPC global governance structure.
 - ⌚ The **IPC Global Steering Committee:** It is the governing body of the initiative.



Drake Passage

Magnitude 7.5 earthquake has struck drake passage near Argentina and Chile

About Drake Passage

- **Location:** Between **Cape Horn** (southernmost point of South America) and the **South Shetland Islands** (north of Antarctic Peninsula).
- **Name:** Named after **Sir Francis Drake**, the famous English navigator and circumnavigator.
- **Ocean Current:** Water majorly flows from **west to east** and forms part of the **Antarctic Circumpolar Current** (the most voluminous current).
- **Historic Trade Route:** Key passage for trade before the **Panama Canal** opened in 1914.
- **Sailing Challenge:** Known for **stormy seas and icy conditions**, making Cape Horn rounding a severe test for ships.



Great Nicobar Infrastructure Project (GNIP)

The tribal council held that forest rights of tribal people were not settled for the Nicobar project.

About GNIP

- It is a mega project to be implemented at the southern end of the Andaman and Nicobar islands i.e. **Great Nicobar Island.**
- **It involves developing:**
 - ⌚ Transshipment port
 - ⌚ International airport
 - ⌚ Township development
 - ⌚ 450 MVA gas and solar based power plant
- **Implementing Agency:** Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO)
- **Concern:**
 - ⌚ Potential impact on seismically active region of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
 - ⌚ Threat to tribes on islands e.g. Shompen, Nicobarese tribes etc.



Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

India has been elected as the Chairman of the Executive Board of AIBD at 23rd General Conference in Thailand.

About Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development

- **Genesis: Founded in 1977** under the auspices of UNESCO, AIBD is a unique regional inter-governmental organization.
- **Mandate:** To achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Members:** It currently has 92 member organizations from 45 countries.
 - ⌚ **India is a founding member** of AIBD, and **Prasar Bharati India's public service broadcaster** represents the **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting** in the organization.
- **Secretariat:** Kuala Lumpur.

Place in News



Spain (Capital: Madrid)

Massive wildfires across Spain this summer have burned about 350,000 hectares in just two weeks during an early August heatwave.

Political Features

- **Location:** Southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula
- **Boundaries:** France and Andorra (northeast), Portugal (west), Gibraltar-UK (south) and Morocco bordered by Spain's autonomous cities of Melilla and Ceuta.
- **Maritime Boundary:** Mediterranean Sea (east and southeast), Atlantic Ocean (northwest and southwest), and Bay of Biscay (north).

Geographical Features

- **Climate:** **maritime, continental, and Mediterranean in different parts.**
- **Features:** Spain is an extremely mountainous country with a large central plateau.
- **Two major mountainous areas:** Sistema Central and the Montes de Toledo.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI