

Union Government Announced Annual Licensing Policy for Opium Cultivation for 2025-26

The licensing policy is announced annually under the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Rules, 1985**, framed under the **NDPS Act, 1985**.

About Opium

- Opium poppy plant is the **source of opium gum** which contains **several indispensable alkaloids** (naturally occurring organic nitrogen-containing compounds) such as morphine, codeine and thebaine.
- ⊕ **Morphine is commonly used analgesic** (pain relieving medicine) while **codeine is used in manufacture of cough syrups**.
- It is also grown as a **source of edible seed and seed oil**.
- India is the **only country authorised by the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)** to produce **gum opium**.
- ⊕ 11 other countries cultivate opium poppy, but **do not extract gum**.

Opium Cultivation in India

- NDPS Act empowers the Central Government** to permit and regulate cultivation of opium poppy for medical and scientific purposes.
- Under NDPS, central government **notifies the tracts where opium cultivation can be licensed** as well as the general conditions for issuance of license every year.
- ⊕ Opium cultivation is permitted in notified tracts in the **states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh**.
- Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN), Gwalior** (under Ministry of Finance) **issues licenses** to the farmers to cultivate opium poppy.
- ⊕ The cultivators are required to **tender their entire opium produced to the CBN** and price is decided by the Government.



Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate (MoEFCC) Grants Approval for Translocation of Eight Tigers

Approval has been given in accordance with **Section 12 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

- Under the Act, Prior permission for translocation is required from the **Central Government for Schedule I animals** and from the **State Government for any other wild animal**.
- The MoEFCC retains the **right to revoke the permit** if there are safety issues or any mishaps.
- Eight tigers (three males and five females) will be translocated from **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and Pench Tiger Reserve to the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve**.
- It is aimed at reviving the **tiger population in the northern Western Ghats**.
- The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** has approved the translocation earlier.

Benefits of Translocation

- Ecological Balance:** Restores predator-prey dynamics in underpopulated reserves.
- Human-animal Conflict Mitigation:** Reduces human-tiger conflicts in overcrowded reserves.
- Rewilding Landscapes:** Revives areas where **tigers** were locally extinct.

Concerns Associated with Translocation: Protests from local communities, Territorial disputes with existing Tigers, Poor forest management such as prey augmentation, etc.

About Sahyadri Tiger Reserve

- Notified:** In 2010 by amalgamating the **Chandoli National Park** and **Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- Location:** Sahyadri Ranges of Western Ghats in **Maharashtra**.
- ⊕ **Northern most tiger habitat** in western ghats.
- Reservoirs:** "**Shivsagar**" reservoir of Koyana River and "**Vasant Sagar**" reservoir of Warana River.
- Flora:** Anjani, Jambhul, Pisa, etc.
- Fauna:** Wild dog, Leopard, Gaur, Sambar, Four Horned Antelope, Mouse Deer, Giant Squirrel, Indian long-billed Vulture, endemic Hornbills, Indian River Tern.

PM Launched the Gyan Bharatam Portal for Preserving Manuscripts

It will help in digitizing India's manuscript heritage, making them easier to access and helping preserve cultural knowledge.

➤ In the Union Budget 2025-26, Gyan Bharatam Mission was announced for the survey, documentation, and conservation of India's manuscript heritage.

About Manuscript

➤ It is a handwritten composition on paper, bark, cloth, metal, palm leaf or any other material dating back at least seventy-five years that has significant scientific, historical or aesthetic value.

➤ Lithographs: (A technique involving drawing on a stone and then transferring the image to paper) and printed volumes are not manuscripts.

➤ India possesses 'memory of the world' with an estimated 10 million manuscripts in 80 ancient scripts like Brahmi, Kushan, Gaudi, Lepcha, and Maithili.

⊕ Of these, ~75% are in Sanskrit and 25% are in regional languages.

➤ Significance:

⊕ Provide evidence of human activities.

⊕ Show devotion of ancestors to knowledge, science & learning despite centuries of destruction.

⊕ Provides knowledge on different aspects of society like cultural, political, economic, etc. Example- Kautilya's Arthashastra.

Other Initiatives for Manuscript Conservation

➤ National Manuscripts Mission (NMM): Launched In 2003, by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to locate and preserve manuscripts.

➤ National Library of India, Kolkata: It has about 3600 rare and historically important manuscripts.

➤ Asiatic Society of Bengal: Founded in 1784, by Sir William Jones, undertakes digitization of ancient manuscripts.

SEBI Board meeting approved various measures for ease of doing business in securities market

SEBI board meeting relaxed key regulations and introduced SWAGAT-FI framework for improving investment friendly environment and reduce regulatory complexity.

Decisions at SEBI Board Meeting

➤ SWAGAT-FI Framework: SEBI approved the introduction of the Single Window Automatic & Generalised Access for Trusted Foreign Investors (SWAGAT-FI) framework for FPIs and Foreign Venture Capital Investors (FVCIs).

⊕ While FPIs invest in listed securities (like equity, bonds, derivatives, etc.) on public markets, FVCI invests in venture capital funds.

➤ India Market Access Platform: Launched as a digital gateway to facilitate seamless entry and compliance for foreign investors in India's securities markets.

➤ Reclassification of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) as Equity: Enabling enhanced investment by mutual fund schemes in REITs.

⊕ REITs allow individuals to invest in large-scale, income producing real estate.

➤ Relaxed Initial Public Offering (IPO) norms for large issuers and extended timelines to meet the Minimum Public Shareholding for Issuers.

⊕ IPO refers to when a company first sells its shares to the public and is prerequisite for listing on stock exchange.

➤ Introduction of a separate category of Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)

schemes, limited exclusively to accredited investors only (AI-only schemes).

⊕ Accredited Investor is an individual or entity that meets specific income, net worth or professional qualification criteria, allowing them to invest in securities not registered with SEBI.



Supreme Court Called Upon Centre to Safeguard Homebuyers' Interests

SC made a number of suggestions to prevent the **liquidation of viable residential projects**.

- **The Right to Shelter** in India is recognised as a fundamental right under the broader ambit of the **Right to Life** guaranteed by **Article 21**.

Challenges in the Housing Sector in India

- **Shrinking Share of Affordable Housing:** Once accounting for more than half of all new launches in 2018, affordable homes now make up just **17% of supply**.
- **Stalled Projects and Systemic Issues:** Over **5 lakh units across 44 cities** have been stalled on account of financial mismanagement by real estate developers.
- **High Price of Land:** Only **0.2 per cent of the national land mass** is occupied by the top ten cities in India.
- **Lack of Uniformity in RERA Rules:** State-specific rules create challenges.

Key SC Recommendations

- The **Union government** can consider establishing a revival fund under **NARCL (National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd)** and expanding the **SWAMIH (Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing) Fund**.
- **Creation of a Corporate Body for Stalled Projects** similar to NARCL, should be created.
- To bring uniformity in **RERA (Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act) Rules** across states.
- Directed the **constitution of a committee**, to be chaired by a **Retired High Court Judge**.



Also in News



Personality Rights

Delhi High Court passed an interim order **protecting the personality rights of Actor Abhishek Bachchan** by restraining various entities from misusing his image, name, voice or other elements of his persona for monetary gains without his consent or authorization.

About Personality Rights

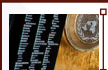
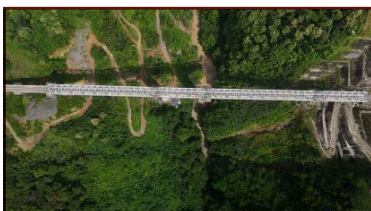
- Personality rights encompass an **individual's exclusive control over the commercial use of their identity**, including their name, image, voice, behaviour, and other unique attributes of their persona.
- In India, personality rights are **not defined by a specific statute** but are protected through common law, **Article 21 (Right to Privacy)**, and various **Intellectual property laws**.



Bairabi-Sairang Link

Prime Minister inaugurated **Bairabi-Sairang broad gauge railway line**, which connects Mizoram's capital Aizawl to Indian Railways network for first time.

- Rail connectivity will ensure **timely and reliable supply of food grains, fertilizers, and other essential commodities**, thereby enhancing overall logistical efficiency and regional accessibility.
- It will also **improve access to hospitals, universities, and markets**, thereby strengthening educational, cultural, and economic ties across the region.



New York Declaration

India has **voted in favour** of UN General Assembly resolution that endorses the '**New York Declaration**' on the peaceful settlement of the **Palestine issue and implementation of the two-state solution**.

About New York Declaration

- Declaration calls for **immediate ceasefire in Gaza** and establishment of an independent, sovereign and economically viable **Palestinian State**.
- It involves **disarmament of Hamas** and its exclusion from governance in Gaza, normalization between **Israel and Arab countries** and collective security guarantees.



m-Kisan

m-Kisan reached nearly **3.8 crore farmers across 13 states**.

About m-Kisan

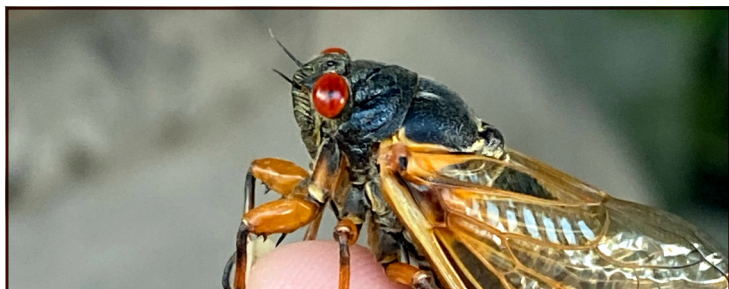
- It is a **SMS Portal** that enables all **Central and State government organizations in agriculture and allied sectors to give information/services/advisories to farmers** in their language, preference of agricultural practices and location.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW).



Cicadas

Cicadas have returned back in Kerala's Silent Valley National Park.
About Cicadas (Hemiptera: Cicadoidea)

- These are a **conspicuous group of insects**, mostly occurring in **warm and temperate biomes**.
- **All cicada species** have a life cycle that consists of three stages (**egg, nymph, and adult**).
- Adult female cicadas usually **lay their eggs** in woody plant tissues.
- They have an **exceptionally loud song**, produced in most species by the rapid buckling and unbuckling of **drum-like tymbals**.

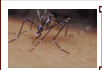


Indian Coast Guard

India participates in **4th Coast Guard Global Summit in Rome**; bids to host next edition in 2027.

About Indian Coast Guard

- **Establishment:** In 1977.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Defence.
- **Mission:**
 - ⊕ To **protect our ocean and offshore wealth** including oil, fish and minerals.
 - ⊕ To **assist mariners in distress and safeguard** life and property at sea.
 - ⊕ To **enforce maritime laws with respect to sea**, poaching, smuggling and narcotics.
 - ⊕ To **preserve marine environment and ecology** and protect rare species.
 - ⊕ To **collect scientific data and back-up** the navy during war.
- **Motto:** "VAYAM RAKSHAMAH" - WE PROTECT.



Aedes-Borne Viral Diseases (ABVD)

Recent studies highlight **outdoor fumigation (fogging)** has limited effect in controlling **Aedes-Borne Viral Diseases (ABVD)** while personal protection and community mobilisation are best ways.

About ABVD

- ABVD are **infections transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes**, namely **Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus**.
- ⊕ Unlike most other mosquitoes, Aedes mosquitoes are **active and bite only during the daytime**, with peak activity during the early morning and in the evening before dusk.
- These include **dengue, zika, chikungunya and yellow fever virus**.

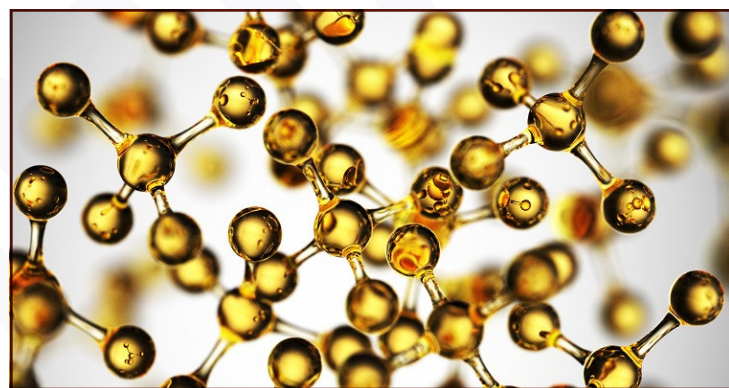


Gold Nanoparticles

Scientists from **S N Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences**, find a way to control aggregation of Gold Nanoparticles.

Gold nanoparticles (AuNPs)

- AuNPs are **nanoparticles of gold**, typically **1–100 nm** in size.
- **Characterized by: Photothermal properties**, chemical and physical stability, low toxicity, and ease of surface modification.
- **Significance:**
 - ⊕ Useful in **biosensors, imaging, diagnostics, and drug delivery**, but uncontrolled aggregation reduces reliability.
 - ⊕ Contributes to **fundamental nanoscience and light-matter interaction studies**.



Place in News



Russia (Capital: Moscow)

A powerful earthquake struck **Kamchatka Peninsula** (which lies between **Bering Sea and Pacific Ocean in East and Sea of Okhotsk in West**) in Russia.

Political Features

- Located across two continents in **Asia and Europe**, it is the **largest country in the world**.
- **Bordering Countries:** Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Norway, Poland, and Ukraine.
- **Bordering Water Bodies:** Pacific and Arctic Ocean.

Geographical Features

- **Major Mountain Ranges:** Ural, Altai.
- **Highest Peak:** Gora El'brus (Highest point in Europe).
- **Major Rivers:** Yenisey-Angara, Amur, Irtysh, Lena.
- **Major Lakes:** Baikal, Ladoga, Onega, Caspian Sea, etc.
- **Siberia**, occupying **three-quarters of Russia**, is dominated by **Taiga forests**.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI