

NEWS TODAY

Mission for Advancement in High-Impact Areas (MAHA) - MedTech Mission launched

MAHA-MedTech Mission has been launched by the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Gates Foundation.

- ANRF has been **established, through ANRF Act, 2023**, as an **apex body** to provide high-level strategic **direction of scientific research** as per recommendations of the National Education Policy.

About MAHA-MedTech Mission

- **Aim:** To accelerate innovation in India's medical technology sector, reduce reliance on high-cost imports, and promote equitable access to affordable and high-quality medical technologies.
- **Funding:** Provide funding support to a wide range of entities including Academic and R&D institutions, Hospitals, Startups, MSMEs, MedTech industry and collaborations between entities.
 - ⊕ **Milestone-linked funding of ₹5–25 crore per project** (and up to ₹50 crore in exceptional cases).



- **Enabling Support:** Through national initiatives such as Patent Mitra (IP protection and technology transfer), MedTech Mitra (regulatory guidance and clearances), a Clinical Trial Network (for clinical validation and evidence generation) etc.
- **Technology Areas:** Innovative medical devices and IVD (In vitro diagnostics) including High-end Frontier Technologies (Deep Tech like Imaging, Radiotherapy equipment, Robotics, minimal invasive technologies, implants, AI/ML enabled platforms & devices etc.).

India's MedTech Sector

- Recognised as a **sunrise sector**, with size estimated to be around \$14 billion and it is expected to grow to \$30 billion by 2030.
 - ⊕ India's medical devices exports have **crossed the \$4-billion mark**.
- India is the **fourth largest medical devices market** in Asia after Japan, China, and South Korea.
- **Government Policies:** PLI Scheme, Promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma MedTech Sector (PRIP) Scheme, National Medical Device Policy, Medical Device Parks etc.

Constitutional Morality, a tool to combat Social Evils

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar believed that the **disparities and inequities** in the society could be resolved based on the principle of **constitutional morality**, which is **not a natural sentiment**, but **must be cultivated**.

What is Constitutional Morality?

- **Meaning:** It is the adherence to **constitutional norms** not only in letters but also in spirit.
 - ⊕ **British Historian George Grote** explained it as the **balance between freedom and restraint**, where citizens obey constitutional authorities and also have the **freedom to criticize them**.
- It is **enshrined in the Constitution** under the Articles:
 - ⊕ **Fundamental Rights (Articles 12 to 35)**
 - ⊕ **Directive Principles of State Policy (Articles 36 to 51)**
 - ⊕ **Preamble**
 - ⊕ **Fundamental Duties (Article 51-A)**.
- **Significance:** Transforms constitutional guarantees into **tangible justice**, fostering inclusion, protecting minorities, and ensuring equality in a rapidly changing society.

How Courts have used Constitutional Morality in Bringing Social Change?

- **Women Equality:** In **Indian Young Lawyers Association vs The State Of Kerala (2018)**, Supreme Court (SC) held unconstitutional the practice of **prohibiting the entry of menstruating women** to the Sabarimala temple.
- **Protecting Privacy:** In **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2018)**, SC upheld the right to privacy as a **fundamental right** signifying constitutional morality as it protects **individual dignity, autonomy and freedom**.
- **Positive Transformation:** In **Navtej Singh Johar Case (2018)**, SC Struck down **Section 377 of IPC (criminalising homosexuality)**, upholding constitutional morality over societal morality.
 - ⊕ In **Joseph Shine v. Union of India (2018)**, SC struck down **Section 497 of IPC** decriminalizing adultery.

72 nations signed the UN Convention against Cybercrime in Hanoi, Vietnam

It is the **world's first legally binding global convention to prevent and respond to cybercrimes**, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2024.

- It will enter into force 90 days after ratification by at least 40 UN member states.

About UN Convention against Cybercrime

- **Electronic Evidence:** It is the first global framework for the collection, sharing and use of electronic evidence for all serious offences, establishing a global standard.
- **Criminalization of Cybercrimes:** First global treaty to criminalize cyber-dependent crimes and also offences related to online fraud, online child sexual abuse and exploitation material and online grooming of children.
 - ⌚ It is first in recognising **non-consensual dissemination of intimate images** as an offence.
- **Global Network:** It creates the **first global 24/7 Cooperation Network** where countries can quickly initiate cooperation.

Cybercrimes

- Cybercrime falls into **two broad categories**: Cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent.
 - ⌚ **Cyber-enabled crimes** include traditional criminal activities conducted online, such as trafficking, fraud, and incitement to violence and hate.
 - ⌚ **Cyber-dependent crimes** are those committed through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) devices, including phishing, identity theft, and the deployment of malware and ransomware.
- **Threat:** Cybercrimes **transcend geographic boundaries**, targeting systems, networks, and individuals with unprecedented speed and efficiency.
 - ⌚ Regions like **Southeast Asia** have been described as **"ground zero"** for organized cybercrime operations.



22nd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India Summit held in Malaysia

The two had elevated their ties from Strategic Partnership to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)** in 2022.

Key Highlights of the Summit

- Support for **ASEAN-India Plan of Action** to implement **ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026-2030)**.
- Adoption of the **ASEAN-India Joint Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Tourism**.
- Designating **2026** as **"ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation"**.
- Proposed establishment of a **Centre for Southeast Asian Studies** at **Nalanda University**.
- Holding **East Asia Summit Maritime Heritage Festival** at **Lothal, Gujarat**.

Significance of ASEAN for India

- **India's support to ASEAN Centrality:** It places ASEAN countries at the **forefront** of the vision of **India's Indo-Pacific strategy** and **Act East Policy**.
- **Trade:** **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA)** is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed in 2009 to boost trade ties.
 - ⌚ **Bilateral trade** between the two stands around **123 Billion USD (2024-25)**.
- **Counterbalancing China:** **ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Maritime Cooperation (2023)** echoes upholding of international law in the South China Sea.
- **Development of India's North East:** ASEAN countries lie closest to **India's Northeastern states** with connectivity projects like **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project** passing through the region.
- **Multilateralism:** ASEAN framework highlights the **importance of multilateralism**, an essential focus of Indian foreign policy.



Timor Leste joins ASEAN as the 11th member

- **About ASEAN:** Established in **1967** in **Bangkok, Thailand**, with signing of **ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)**.
- **Other 10 members:** Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

IUCN World Heritage Outlook 4 report categorises Western Ghats as being of "significant concern"

Apart from Western Ghats, two national parks in India – Assam's Manas national park and West Bengal's Sundarbans national park – have also been categorised as being of "significant concern".

➤ IUCN World Heritage Outlook assesses the **conservation prospects of all World Heritage sites** inscribed for their natural values.

⊕ The outlook categorizes sites in **four categories** - **Good, Good with some concerns, Significant Concern, and Critical.**

⊕ **Significant concern outlook** means that site's values and underlying attributes are threatened by several current and/or potential threats, requiring additional conservation measures.

About Western Ghats

➤ **Length:** About 1,600 km long, they are a chain of mountains older than the Himalayas and running parallel to India's western coast.

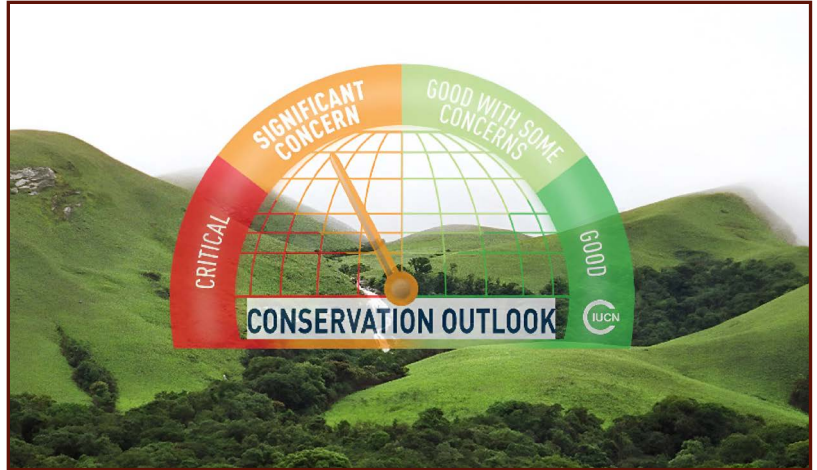
➤ **Spread across six states:** Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

➤ **Ecological Significance:** A **UNESCO world heritage site** and **one of 36 biodiversity hotspots** on Earth.

⊕ Recognized as **one of the world's eight 'hottest hotspots'** being habitat to some 325 globally threatened (listed in IUCN's Red List) species including Nilgiri Tahr.

⊕ Best representative of **non-equatorial tropical evergreen forests.**

⊕ **Influence the Indian monsoon weather pattern**, acts as **key barrier** intercepting rain-laden monsoon winds coming from southwest, and **moderates tropical climate** of the region.



Threats to Western Ghats

➤ **Infrastructure Development:** Hundreds of hydropower projects including proposed Sillahalla Pumped Storage Hydroelectric project in the Nilgiris.

➤ **Land Use Conversion:** Large part of range converted to agricultural land for tea, coffee, rubber and oil palm or cleared for livestock grazing, reservoirs and road.

➤ **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Dense population in several parts and expansion of agriculture leads to increased human-wildlife conflict.

➤ **Climate change:** Forcing species like Nilgiri flycatcher to move from warmer lowlands to cooler higher areas.

➤ **Invasive Alien Species:** Such as eucalyptus and acacia colonising natural forests.

Also In News



Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

Government announced Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025, **highest recognition for outstanding and inspiring contributions by scientists, technologists, and innovators** in diverse fields of science, technology, and technology-led innovation.

About Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

➤ Conferred under **four categories:**

⊕ **Vigyan Ratna (VR)** (lifetime achievements & contributions in any field of science and technology),

⊕ **Vigyan Shri (VS)** to recognize distinguished contributions in any field of science and technology

⊕ **Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB)** for recognizing & encouraging young scientists

⊕ **Vigyan Team (VT)** for exceptional team work in science and technology.

➤ Prof. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar (Physics) was awarded **Vigyan Ratna (VR)** Posthumously.

⊕ **He co-developed Hoyle-Narlikar theory of gravity** – an alternative to Einstein's general relativity and a counterpoint to the widely accepted Big Bang model.



National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)

National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) released funds to Biodiversity Management Committees in UP and Sikkim.

About NBA:

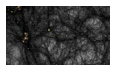
➤ **Overview:** It is a **statutory, autonomous body** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.**

➤ **Established:** In 2003 under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002.**

➤ **Headquarters:** Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

➤ **Functions:** Performs facilitative, regulatory and advisory functions on issues of conservation, sustainable use of biological resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources.

➤ **Complementary Entities:** Under the Biodiversity Act, 2002 and the Biodiversity Rules, 2004, two complementary entities – **State Biodiversity Boards** at the State level and **Biodiversity Management Committees** at the local village level – have been established to complement the NBA.



Dark Matter

Recent studies suggests that **dark matter** could explain the mysterious gamma-ray glow at the Milky Way's centre.

About Dark Matter

- **Meaning:** It is regarded as the **invisible glue** that holds the universe together, making up most of the mass in **galaxies and galaxy clusters**.
 - ⊕ **Unlike normal matter**, it does not interact with **electromagnetic force**, i.e., neither absorb, reflect or emit light, making it extremely hard to spot.
- Scientists estimate that dark matter makes up about **27% of the Universe**.
- **Significance:** It is believed to **shape the cosmos, organize galaxies and cosmic objects** on a large scale.



Karakoram and Changthang Wildlife Sanctuaries (WLS)

Proposal to redraw the boundaries of **Karakoram and Changthang sanctuaries** in Ladakh has been received by the Central government.

About Karakoram WLS

- Established in **1987**.
- **Location:** Karakoram range, Ladakh.
- **Fauna:** Snow leopard, Himalayan brown bear, Himalayan wolf, ibex (Wild goat), wild blue sheep (Bharal), etc.
- **Flora:** Alpine vegetation, medicinal plants, cold desert flora etc.

About Changthang WLS

- **Location:** Ladakhi Changthang plateau, Leh district.
- **Significance:** Home to highest altitude water lakes, namely, **Tso Moriri, Pangong Tso and Tso Kar**.
- **Fauna:** Snow Leopard, Tibetan Wild Ass, Dark-necked crane, etc.



National Song (Vande Mataram)

Prime Minister urged citizens to make the **150th year** of the **National Song** memorable by carrying forward its values for future generations.

About National Song (Vande Mataram)

- **Composition:** In Sanskrit by **Bankimchandra Chatterjee**.
 - ⊕ The song was a part of **Bankimchandra's most famous novel Anand Math (1882)**.
 - ⊕ It shares an **equal Status** with **Jana-Gana-Mana (National Anthem)**.
- **First Sung:** At the **1896 session** (Calcutta) of the **Indian National Congress** by **Rabindranath Tagore**.
- **Adopted on:** **24 January 1950** by the Constituent Assembly of India as the National Song of India.



Coffee

Prime Minister highlighted that the Indian coffee is gaining popularity globally.

About Coffee

- India is now the **seventh-largest coffee producer** globally and 70% of coffee produced is being exported, earning \$1.80 billion during 2024-25.
- **Key Coffee Growing Regions:** Karnataka (Chikmagalur, Coorg and Hassan); Tamil Nadu (Pulney, Shevaroy, Nilgiri and Annamalai); Kerala (Wayanad, Travancore and Malabar).
- **Soils:** Deep, Fertile, rich in organic matter, well- drained and slightly acidic (PH 6.0-6.5)
- **Growing Conditions:** Gentle to moderate slopes with temperature of 15-30 °C, and annual rainfall of 1000-2500 mm.
- **Types:** Robusta and Arabica.



Global Financial Stability Report (GFSR)

International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently released the **Global Finance Stability Report (GFSR)**, April 2025.

About GFSR

- **Purpose:** Provide a regular assessment of **global financial markets** and identify **potential systemic weaknesses** before they lead to crises.
- **Key Findings**
 - ⊕ **Tightened Global Financial Conditions:** Have caused significant increase in the Global financial stability risks.
 - ⊕ **Role of Major geopolitical risk events:** Especially **military conflicts**, can lead to substantial decline in stock prices and increases in **sovereign risk premiums**.
- **Other Key Reports by IMF:** World Economic Outlook, Fiscal Monitor.



Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project (HEP)

Subansiri Lower HEP undergoes **test run**.

About Subansiri Lower HEP

- **Run of River scheme** with small Pondage on **river Subansiri** (Tributary of Brahmaputra).
- **Location:** Near North Lakhimpur on the border of **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.
- **Execution By:** NHPC (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation) Limited.

Personality in News



Vaikunthbhai Mehta

Birth Anniversary of Vaikunthbhai Mehta was celebrated.

About Vaikunthbhai Mehta (1891-1964)

- Born in Bhavnagar Gujarat.
- Also called "Pioneer / Doyen / bishma-pitahmah of the Co-operative Movement in India".
- **Key Contributions:**
 - ⊕ Served the Maharashtra State Co-operative Bank **Chief Executive** for about 35 years.
 - ⊕ He was **Minister of Finance and Co-operation of the then Bombay State** and was first **Chairman of Khadi and Village Industries Commission**.
 - ⊕ Awarded **Kaiser-i-Hind medal (1916)** for his service to the co-operative movement.
 - ⊕ Most trusted **lieutenant of Gandhiji** in the Khadi (homespun cotton) movement.

