

# NEWS TODAY

## 10 New Agricultural Commodities added to the e-NAM (National Agricultural Market) Platform

With the addition of **10 new commodities** (Chickpea Flour, Dried Tulsi Leaves, Dragon Fruit, etc) the number of commodities on e-NAM platform reaches **231**.

➤ This decision would also help **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)** market value-added products (e.g., Asafoetida, Roasted Chickpea Flour, etc).

### About e-NAM

➤ **e-NAM is a pan-India electronic trading portal** which networks the existing APMC Mandis creating a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

➤ **Launched: 2016.**

➤ **Implementing Agency:** Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium, under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

➤ It is **not a parallel marketing platform** but leverages the **physical infrastructure of existing APMCs**.

⊕ **Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs):** Governed by the **State APMC Acts**, enacted under the **Agricultural Produce Market Regulation Act, 1963**, which varies across states.

➤ **States to make 3 reforms** in their APMC Act to **integrate their mandis with e-NAM:** Single trading license (Unified); Single point levy of market fee; e-auction/ e-trading as a mode of price discovery.

### Advantages of e-NAM

➤ **Improves market access:** By removing information asymmetry between buyers and sellers.

➤ **Real time price discovery:** Based on actual demand and supply.

➤ **Transparency:** Auction process based on quality of produce with timely online payment.

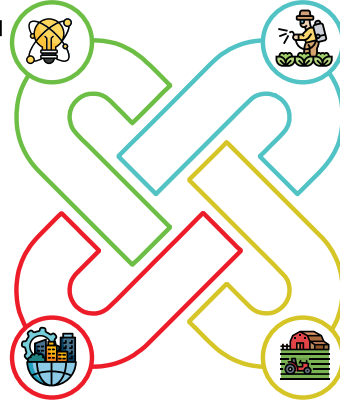
## Other Digital Marketing Initiatives in Agriculture

**MANAGE-Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship (CIA)**

Digital marketing training to agri-startups

**Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for Agriculture**

Offers market intelligence for agriculture



**Integrated Scheme for Agricultural Marketing schemes (AGMARKNET)**

A G2C e-governance portal for agricultural marketing infrastructure

**ITC e-Choupal**

Facilitates direct farmer-to-consumer channels

## Google scraps diversity-based hiring targets amidst review of its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives

Recently, companies such as **Meta, Amazon** have been scaling back DEI initiatives.

What is meant by **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives?**

➤ **DEI is an umbrella term** used to describe **policies and initiatives** that promote the **representation and participation of different groups** of individuals. E.g. Gender, Race, Sexual Orientation etc.

### Significance of DEI at Workplace

➤ **Non-discrimination:** It is a **fundamental human right** essential for quality employment and worker welfare.

➤ **Business development:** It promotes **creativity and innovation**, broadens **talent attraction and retention**, increases **employee engagement** and enhances **reputation**.

### Impact of scaling back of DEI initiatives

➤ **Promotes inherent biases:** Lack of DEI may result in **homogenization of perspectives** leading to biases. E.g. **Algorithmic Biases in AI**.

➤ **Workplace discrimination:** Employees may face **discrimination in access to opportunities, promotion** etc.

### Initiatives promoting DEI

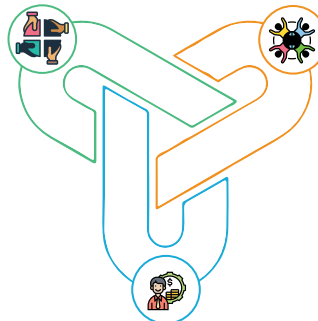
➤ **Principle 6 of 10 Principles of the UN Global Compact:** Businesses should uphold the **elimination of discrimination** in respect of **employment and occupation**.

➤ **National workplace quotas/targets** applied on gender and disability. E.g. **Austria, Germany**.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

**Inclusion**

A sense of belonging and respect for all. E.g. Involvement in Decision-making



**Diversity**

The presence and participation of individuals with varying backgrounds and perspectives, including those who have been traditionally underrepresented. E.g. Gender, race etc.

**Equity**

Equal access to opportunities and fair, just and impartial treatment. E.g. Fair compensation

## Western disturbance triggers temperature drop across North India

**Western Disturbances (WD)** are **low-pressure, non-monsoonal systems** originating in the mid-latitude region bringing Winter Rainfall (locally called **Mahawat**) in India.

➤ The word '**disturbance**' is used because air within **low pressure systems** (fronts, depressions and cyclones) tends to be **unstable**.

### About Western Disturbances (WD)

➤ **Origin:** WD forms over Mediterranean Sea region due to interactions between contrasting **air masses**.

➤ **Formation:** A **high-pressure area over Ukraine** forces **cold polar air to intrude into warmer zones**, creating instability and **triggering cyclogenesis**, which leads to the **formation of WD**.

➤ **Subtropical Westerly Jet:** WD are embedded within the **mid-latitude (Above 20° latitude) Subtropical Westerly Jet (SWJ)**, which guides their eastward movement.

⊕ **The SWJ:** It is a **massive ribbon of fast-moving, high-altitude wind current** flowing from **west to east between 20° and 40° latitude** in the **upper atmosphere**.

➤ **Moisture Sources:** As these systems travel across **West Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan**, they pick up additional moisture from the **Caspian Sea (north)** and **Persian Gulf (south)** before reaching India.

➤ **Himalayan Obstruction:** Upon reaching the Himalayas, the disturbances are obstructed, causing **rainfall in the plains (Orographic rainfall)** and **snowfall in the western Himalayas**.

## Benefits of Western Disturbances

### Drought Mitigation

Helps mitigate water scarcity in pre-monsoon (May-June)

### Crop Support

Supports rabi crops with necessary moisture

### Winter Rainfall

Provides 5-10% of annual rainfall in winter

### Glacier Replenishment

Replenishes Himalayan glaciers for river flow



## Study attributes India's Remarkable Tiger Recovery to Key Conservation Factors

Tigers, once **eradicated from over 90% of their historic range** are on their way to recovery with India holding **~75% of the global tiger population**.

➤ In **2022**, India had successfully doubled its tiger population (also known as the **TX2 goal**), thereby, achieving the **Global Tiger Recovery Program's target**, despite having some of the **highest human densities**.

### Key Findings of the Study

➤ **Tiger-occupied areas increased:** By 30% from 2006 to 2018, with colonization of over 40,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

➤ **Protected Areas:** 85% of tiger-occupied grids were within protected areas.

➤ **Human-Tiger Coexistence:** 45% of tiger habitats are shared with about 60 million people.

### Factors Behind Conservation Success

➤ **Land Sparring and Land Sharing:** A balanced approach combining protected, human-free areas and shared landscapes with local communities.

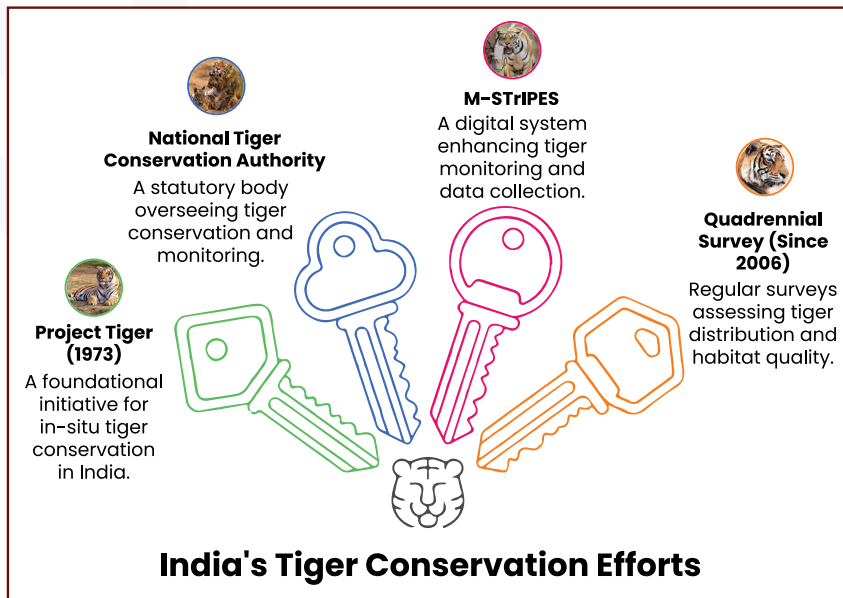
➤ **Sociopolitical Stability:** It fostered wildlife conservation, evidenced by tiger recovery in reserves post-conflict control. **E.g., Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam, Amrabad, and Similipal.**

➤ **Community Attitudes:** Not simply less human density but community tolerance to large carnivores led to Tiger recovery. **E.g.,** Recovery was seen in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

### Significance of Tiger Population Increase

➤ Tigers acting as **flagship and umbrella species**, benefits other megafauna and ecosystems.

➤ Contributes to **carbon sequestration** and **biotic resistance** to invasive species.



## USA President signs an executive order sanctioning International Criminal Court (ICC)

The order imposes **financial and visa restrictions** on individuals and their families who assist in ICC investigations of American citizens or allies such as Israel.

**International Criminal Court** (Headquarter: Hague, Netherlands)

- It is the world's first permanent **international criminal court**.
- **Founding Treaty: Rome Statute** (adopted in 1998 entered into force in 2002).
- **Type of Crimes dealt: Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity & Crime of Aggression.**
- **Membership:** 125 countries
  - ⊕ **India, Israel, the US, Russia and China are not parties** to the Rome Statute.
  - ⊕ **Recent Members: Malaysia (2019) Ukraine (2025).**
- **Management: The Assembly of States Parties** is the Court's management oversight and legislative body.
  - ⊕ It is composed of representatives of the States which have ratified or acceded to Rome Statute.
- **Official languages:** English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.

### Structural Issues in functioning of ICC

- **High dependence on state cooperation** as it lacks executive power for arrests and evidence collection.
- **Political Pressure:** It often gets caught between **power politics and human rights** and is often used by some States for **targeting opponents**.

### How International Court of Justice (ICJ) is different from ICC?

- ICJ was established in **1945** as the UN's **principal judicial organ** to resolve disputes between states.
- It has basically two roles:-
  - ⊕ Settle in accordance with international law, **legal disputes between States** submitted to it by them.
  - ⊕ **Gives advisory opinions on legal matters** referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

## India's gold investments surge 60% to Rs 1.5 lakh crore in 2024: World Gold Council Report

The report highlights that **increased investment in India and China** offset the slowdown in **Europe and the US**.

### Key highlights of the Report

- **Global demand:** It grew by **25%** whereas **investment demand** increased by **29%** (2023).
- **Global Supply:** It increased by **1%** mainly on account of mine production and recycling.
- **Outlook for 2025:** Central banks and Gold Exchange Traded Funds are likely to drive demand.
- **India:** RBI added **73 tonnes of gold to its forex reserves**, raising gold's share to a record **11%**.

### Reasons for increase in Gold demand in India

- **Symbol of wealth & status:** Gold is integral to rituals and traditions E.g. Sacred in **Hindu & Jain** traditions.
- **Investment & Security:** It is valued for portability, especially in rural areas.
- **Weddings:** **50% of annual gold demand** comes from marriage-related purchases.

### Status of Gold Resource

- **India: Largest resources in terms of gold ore (primary) are located** in Bihar (44%) followed by Rajasthan (25%), Karnataka (21%), West Bengal & Andhra Pradesh (3% each) and Jharkhand (2%). (Ministry of Mines, 2022).
- **Global:** Major holders of Gold reserves include **USA > Germany > Italy > France > China > Switzerland > India > Japan**
- **Top exporters:** **Germany > European Union > Switzerland > United States > Japan** (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2023).

### World Gold Council (WGC)

- **Founded** in 1987 by leading gold mining companies.
- **Objective:** promote gold as a strategic asset and advance a responsible, transparent, and accessible gold supply chain.
- **Membership:** 32 with operations in more than 45+ countries.
- **Headquarters:** London, UK.



## Also In News



### Marsupials

Scientists have successfully produced **1st kangaroo embryos** using **in vitro fertilisation (IVF)** technology which is expected to help protect marsupial species.

#### About Marsupials

- Marsupials are a group of **mammals** with over **330 species**.
- **Examples:** Koalas, Bandicoots, Wombats, Wallabies, Possums etc.
- They are considered a crucial **evidence of Continental Drift Theory**.
  - ⊕ **Earlier they lived in North America** and then migrated to South America, Antarctica, and Australia due to continental drift.
- They generally have a **pouch that is used for housing and nourishing the baby** which is **born pre-mature** due to their **short-lived placenta**.
  - ⊕ **Not all marsupials have pouches.**
- **Distribution:** Around **2/3rd live in Australia** whereas **1/3rd live in South America**.



### La Niña

**January 2025** was the warmest **January on record** despite the development of **La Niña**.

#### About La Niña

- **La Niña (Little Girl in Spanish)** is a climate pattern which is **opposite to El Niño**.
- In La Niña, the **Tropical Pacific Trade Winds become very strong** resulting in abnormal accumulation of **cold water in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean**.
- **La Nina impact on Indian Climate**
  - ⊕ **Normal to above-normal rainfall** during **southwest monsoon** throughout India.
  - ⊕ **Below-normal temperatures** during winters.



### Crustaceans

Recently, a new water flea species (a crustacean) of genus **Bryospilus (Indobryospilus) bharaticus** has been found in Korigad Fort near Pune.

#### About Crustaceans

- These are mostly aquatic arthropods with gills for respiration.
- **Examples:** Crabs, shrimps, lobsters, crayfish, woodlice etc.
- **Body Segmentation:** It is divided into head, thorax, and abdomen.
- **Habitats:** Primarily aquatic, with some semiterrestrial and terrestrial species.
- **Ecological Role:** Plays Key role in marine food webs linking phytoplankton to fish and whales and also aids in nutrient recycling.
- ⊕ **For e.g:** Diatoms-Crustaceans-Herrings.



### Shatavari

The Ministry of AYUSH has launched a campaign titled "Shatavari – For Better Health" to increase awareness about Shatavari's health benefits.

#### About Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus)

- Shatavari, meaning "curer of a hundred diseases".
- It is a medicinal woody climber growing to 1-2 m in height.
- **Uses:** Dried roots, leaves are used as a drug in Ayurvedic medicine.
- **Habitat:** Low altitudes in shade and in tropical climates.
- ⊕ It is spread across Asia, Australia and Africa.
- **Health Benefits:** Improves female reproductive health, hormonal balance, ulcer healing effect, promotes vitality and longevity, imparts immunity, treating nervous disorders etc.



### Quipu Superstructure

Astronomers identified the largest known structure in the universe, named **Quipu**.

#### About Quipu Superstructure

- This superstructure has mass of 200 quadrillion solar masses and stretches over 1.3 billion light-years.
- **Superstructures:** Extremely large structures containing groups of galaxy clusters and superclusters.

#### Effects of Superstructures:

- **Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB):** Superstructures cause fluctuations in the CMB (relic radiation from Big Bang).
- **Hubble Constant:** Superstructures distort accurate measurements of the Universe's expansion rate.
- **Distort sky images due to gravitational lensing (GL).**
- ⊕ GL occurs when a massive object, like a superstructure, bends light from background sources.



### Pinaka Multiple Rocket Launch System (MRLS)

**Defence Ministry** signed contracts worth ₹10,147 crore for ammunition procurement for the **Pinaka MRLS**

#### Pinaka MRLS

- **Developed by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Type:** Pinaka is a "multi-barrel rocket launcher"; Launches 12 rockets in 44 seconds.
- **Capability:** Offers extended-range precision strikes for artillery operations.
- **Range:** Pinaka Mk-II rocket has 60 km range.
- **Significance:** Modernises Artillery Rocket Regiments, enhancing long-range strike capability and battlefield effectiveness.
- **Export:** Armenia became the first export customer for the Pinaka.



### United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

Israel follows U.S. in withdrawing from UNHRC, citing bias against Israel.

#### About UNHRC

- **Intergovernmental body** of the United Nations for human rights discussions.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Mandate:** Promote universal respect for human rights & address violations.
- **Established:** 2006, replacing the Commission on Human Rights (1946-2006).
- **Composition:** 47 Member States, elected by the UN General Assembly for 3-year terms. Geographical representation ensures balanced distribution.
- **Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Reports:** Assess the human rights records of all UN member states.



### Atacama Desert

Light pollution threatens the world's largest telescope in Atacama Desert.

#### About Atacama Desert (Northern Chile, South America).

- It is located between the **Andes Mountains** and **Pacific Ocean**.
- **Features:** It includes salt pans, alluvial fans, dunes, and volcanic cones.
- **Climate & Environment:** It is one of the driest places on Earth.
- **Reason for Aridity:** It is caused by **Humboldt Current** (cold ocean current) flowing off the Pacific Coast.
- **Importance:** It supports astronomical observations due to clear skies.

### Place in News



### Greece (Capital: Athens)

Spate of Earthquakes have recently occurred in Greece's island of Santorini.

#### Political Features

- **Location:** southernmost of the countries of the **Balkan Peninsula**.
- **Bordering Nations:** Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey.
- **Bordering water bodies:** The Aegean Sea (East), Mediterranean Sea (South), and Ionian Sea (West).

#### Geographical Features

- **Mountains:** Pindos Mountains (central mountain range forming the core of mainland Greece).
- **Highest Point:** Mount Olympus.
- **Climate:** Mediterranean climate.
- **Other Features:**
  - ⊕ **Isthmus of Corinth** (Connects the Pelopónnisos to mainland Greece), **Thermopyles** (A narrow coastal pass in central Greece) etc.
  - ⊕ **Crete:** The largest Greek island.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI