

NEWS TODAY

Algeria Becomes the 9th Member of New Development Bank (NDB)

NDB has approved investments projects worth **USD 40 billion** covering key areas like clean energy and increase in membership would extend such opportunities to other countries.




About NDB (Hq: Shanghai, China)

- **Genesis:** 2015 by **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS)** countries.
- **Purpose:** It is a **Multilateral development bank** for mobilising resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in **emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs)**.
- **Members:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Bangladesh, UAE, Egypt, Algeria.
 - ⊕ The membership is open to members of the **United Nations**, including **both borrowing and non-borrowing members** (Article 2 of the NDB).
 - ⊕ **Uruguay** is listed as the **prospective member** (admitted by NDB's Board of Governors but will officially become a member after depositing its instrument of accession).
- **Capital and Shareholding:** Out of the **initial authorized capital of \$100 Billion**, all **5 founding members have an equal share** totalling \$50 Billion.
- **Voting Power:** Combined voting power of founding members to be **atleast 55%**.

Contemporary significance of Regional Financial Institutions

- **Sustainable and Inclusive Development:** E.g., As of 2024, India has around **20 ongoing projects (worth \$4.87 billion)** supported by NDB, covering transportation, water conservation, etc.
- **Bridging Infrastructure and Investment Gaps:** Mobilize **long-term financing** for infrastructure, catalyse private investment, and close funding gaps.
- **Promoting Regional Integration and Stability:** Facilitate cross-border cooperation. E.g., India being the founding member of NDB and AIIB has strengthened the **South-South cooperation**.

Other Prominent Regional Financial Institutions

Institution	Genesis	Purpose	Members
 Asian Development Bank (HQ: Manila, Philippines)	1966	Social and economic development, regional integration across Asia and the Pacific .	69 (50 from Asia-Pacific, 19 from outside the region), including India .
 Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (HQ: Beijing, China)	2016	Finances sustainable infrastructure and development projects, primarily in Asia with global reach.	110 approved (100 Full + 10 Prospective) members, (India, a full member).
 African Development Bank (HQ: Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire)	1964	Poverty reduction and socio-economic development across Africa .	54 African countries and 27 non-African countries (including India).

Supreme Court Declares Zudpi Jungles as Forest Land, Exempts Pre-1996 Structures

The judgement strikes a **balance** between the **protection of the environment** and the **right to livelihood**.

Key highlights of the Supreme Court judgement

- **Zudpi Jungle a Forest:** Zudpi jungle lands shall be treated as forest lands in line with its 1996 ruling.
 - ⊕ In **T N Godavarman Thirumulpad v UoI (1996)**, the Court had **expanded the definition of 'forest'** under the Forest (Conservation) Act or FCA, 1980, and clarified that Act **must apply to all forests irrespective of the nature of ownership or classification thereof**.
- **One-Time Exemption for Pre-1996 Allotments:** The exception was made considering **public interest** as the land also consists of government buildings, homes, schools, etc.
 - ⊕ However, the court mandated the **state to get approval under the FCA from the Centre**.
 - ⊕ **Land use cannot change**, and **transfers are allowed only by inheritance**.
- **Accountability for Post-1996 Allotments:** For allotments after 1996, the State government **must explain the reason and name the responsible officers**.
 - ⊕ The **Union will process proposals only after action is taken** against those officers under the Forest Act.
- **Unallotted Lands to Be Protected:** All fragmented land parcels (having an area of less than three hectares and not adjoining any forest area) must be **declared as Protected Forests**.
 - ⊕ **Approval under FCA is required for non-forest use**, and the land **cannot be diverted to any non-governmental entity**.

About Zudpi Jungles

- Zudpi (meaning bushes or shrubs) lands meant an **inferior type of unoccupied lands with bushy growth**.
- These lands **consist of low Murmadi soil** (arid soil with gravel and soft stones) where **tree growth was not possible**, and hence these were **dominated by shrubs and other dry vegetation**.
- According to experts, these are **extremely ecologically important areas that act as wildlife corridors**.
- Found mainly in the **Eastern Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra**.

Heavy pre-monsoon showers and associated flooding in Bengaluru raises concerns of Urban Flooding

Rising trend of urban floods in India have caused substantial loss of local infrastructure, businesses, and human lives, impacting local, subnational, and national economies.

Reasons for Rising Instances of Urban Flooding

- **Regional Topography:** E.g., Bengaluru is situated on an elevation of about 900 meters and lacks a major river to channel excess water.
- **Encroachment and Concretisation:** Bengaluru's past lake ecosystems have been filled up and curtailed.
- **Fractured Governance System:** E.g., Water in Bengaluru is managed by Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board while planning is done primarily by Bangalore Development Authority with ineffective coordination among them.
- **Incapacity of existing infrastructure:** Stormwater drainage systems designed in the past are either poorly maintained or incapable of carrying increased rain volumes. E.g., Chennai (2023), Kerala (2019).
- **Climate Change:** Increased temperatures have raised the intensity and frequency of precipitation.



Key Measures to tackle the issue of Urban Flooding

- **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)'s Guidelines on Management of Urban Flooding:** Underlines the interrelationship of environment, economy, and development.
- **Revamped Governance mechanism:** Multistakeholder and interdepartmental Disaster Management Authority headed by a professional.
- **City Level Planning:** Flood mitigation plan; Cities' Climate Action Plans, etc.
- **Global Best Practices:** Hong Kong's massive underground storage scheme called Tai Hang Stormwater Storage Tank with a capacity of 100,000 cubic metres.

National Centre of Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) celebrates 25 years

About NCPOR (Hq: Goa)

- **Genesis:** 1998, an autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- **Governing Body:** Comprises of 13 members representing a cross section of the country's leadership in Polar and Ocean Sciences.
 - ⊕ **Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences** is the ex-officio chairman.

Key Roles of NCPOR

- **Research in the Polar and Southern Ocean realms:** Plays a role in the maintenance of India's research stations in Antarctica (Maitri and Bharati), the Arctic (Himadri), and the Himalayas (Himansh).
- **Leads Deep Ocean Mission:** Flagship initiative focused on exploring deep-sea mineral resources and hydrothermal systems in the Indian Ocean.
- **Aids in the Implementation of India's Arctic Policy (2022) and Indian Antarctica Act (2022)**
 - ⊕ **Indian Antarctic Act:** Legal foundation for India's activities in the continent, provides for the Committee on Antarctic Governance and Environmental Protection (CAG-EP) to monitor international laws.
 - ⊕ **Arctic Policy:** Rests on six pillars of Science and Research; Climate and Environmental Protection; Economic and Human Development; Transportation and Connectivity; Governance and International Cooperation; National Capacity Building.

Importance of NCPOR



Monitoring Polar Ice: It constitutes 70% of the world's freshwater which on melting would affect the low-lying coastal regions



Ocean Geopolitics: Aids in Scientific and Strategic engagement with other countries.



Facilitator: Help future missions involving venturing into the Canadian Arctic, Greenland, and Central Arctic Ocean across seasons.

Two first-of its-kind facilities inaugurated at NCPOR

- **Polar Bhavan:** Includes laboratories for polar and ocean research, would serve as the home of India's first Polar and Ocean Museum.
- **Sagar Bhavan:** Includes two -30°C ice core laboratories and +4°C storage units for archiving sediment and biological samples.

Six new sites join FAO's Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)

The recent additions include:

- A traditional agroforestry system for **erva-mate plant in Brazil**.
- **Specialised farming systems in China for pearl mussels (a mollusc), white tea, and pears**
- Ancestral system preserving **vital food crops and biodiversity in Mexico**
- A distinctive farming system in the volcanic landscape of **Lanzarote island, Spain**

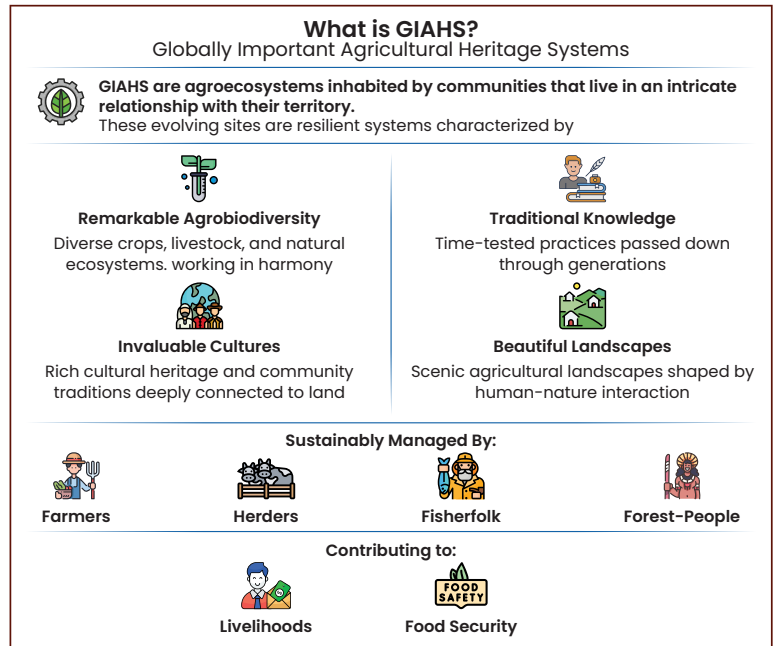
About GIAHS Programme

- **Genesis:** Launched at the **World Summit for Sustainable Development** in 2002 as a response to the **alarming global trends undermining family farmers and traditional agricultural systems**.
- **Purpose:** To protect **family farming and traditional agricultural systems from threats** such as
 - ⊕ climate change,
 - ⊕ community displacements and
 - ⊕ biodiversity loss.
- **Approach:** Using a **multistakeholder approach**, GIAHS provides
 - ⊕ technical assistance to **farming communities**
 - ⊕ **promotes** the value of traditional agricultural knowledge
 - ⊕ **stimulates markets** for farm products, agrotourism and other market opportunities.
- **Current Status:** There are **95 GIAHS sites in 28 countries**, including:
 - ⊕ **Saffron Heritage of Kashmir**
 - ⊕ **Koraput Traditional Agriculture (in Odisha)**
 - ⊕ **Kuttanad Below Sea Level Farming System (in Kerala)**

Why to Protect Family Farming and Traditional Agriculture?

- **Food Security:** Provide **diverse, nutritious food while preserving crop varieties and using resources sustainably**.
- **Income security:** Increase the **resilience of the 2.5 billion people** whose livelihoods depend on agriculture, including Indigenous People.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Conserve the enormous diversity in global communities, cultures, histories, and traditions, while offering alternatives to modern agriculture.
- **Innovation Foundation:** Provide the foundation for **contemporary and future agricultural innovations** and technologies.

Today, preserving family and traditional farming systems is more challenging than ever, with younger generations increasingly moving to cities. Recognising their critical role, the UN has also declared **2019–2028 as the UN Decade of Family Farming**.



Also In News



Chagos Archipelago

United Kingdom (UK) handed over the **sovereignty** of the **Chagos Archipelago** to **Mauritius**.

About Chagos Archipelago (British Indian Ocean Territory)

- **Location:** **Central Indian Ocean**, ~1,600 km south of the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent.
- **Comprises:** **Seven Atolls** with **Diego Garcia** being the largest.
- **History:** Britain purchased it for three million pounds in **1965**, however, Mauritius claims it was forced into the deal for its independence.
- **Biodiversity:** **Great Chagos Bank** supports **good quality reefs**.
- **Strategic:** **USA's military base on Diego Garcia**.
 - ⊕ UK to pay Mauritius **\$136 million** annually to lease back the base for at least 99 years.



Mallakhamb Martial Art

Mallakhamb is being **showcased as a demonstration (non-medal) sport** at the **first-ever Khelo India Beach Games in Diu**.

About Mallakhamb Martial Art

- **Meaning:** "Malla" means wrestler and "khamb" means pole, thus **Mallakhamb means "wrestling on a pole"**.
- **Historical Roots:** Mentioned in the **Ramayana**, ancient pottery from **Chandraketugarh** (2nd–1st century BCE), and **Chinese Buddhist travel accounts**.
 - ⊕ First direct literary reference in **Manasollasa** (12th century) penned by **Chalukya king Someshvara III**.
- **Modern Presence:** Traditionally practised in akhadas, especially in **Madhya Pradesh** and **Maharashtra**.
- **Recognition:** **Mallakhamb Federation of India was established in 1981**.
 - ⊕ Gained international attention at the **1936 Berlin Olympics** as a demonstration sport.
 - ⊕ **First Mallakhamb World Championship** held in **Mumbai in 2019**.



Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Net FDI into India **dropped by over 96%** in 2024–25 compared to the previous year.

- Fall was due to **more money being taken out by foreign companies and increased overseas investments by Indian firms.**

About Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- **Definition:** An "FDI" refers to an **investment through equity instruments by a resident outside India**, in
 - ⊕ **an unlisted Indian company, or**
 - ⊕ **in 10% or more of the post-issue paid-up equity capital**, on a fully diluted basis of a **listed Indian company.**
- **Nodal Department:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)
- **Significance:**
 - ⊕ Source of **non-debt finance** for the economic development of India.
 - ⊕ FDI brings in **capital, technology, and exposure to global managerial practices**, which helps in creating jobs and boost sectors.



Gallantry Awards

President conferred **Kirti Chakras and Shaurya Chakras** to the personnel of the

- Armed Forces,
- Central Armed Police Forces and
- State/Union Territory Police.

About Gallantry Awards

- **Wartime awards:** **Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, and Vir Chakra** which were established in **1950.**
- **Peacetime awards:** Established in **1952, Ashoka Chakra Class-I, Class-II, and Class-III**, but renamed as **Ashoka Chakra, Kirti Chakra, and Shaurya Chakra (respectively)** in **1967.**
- **Announcement is made Twice a year:** On Republic Day and Independence Day.
- **Order of Precedence:** **Param Vir Chakra, Ashok Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Vir Chakra and Shaurya Chakra.**
- They could be awarded **posthumously** also.



Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

Recently, Prime Minister inaugurated **103 redeveloped railway stations** under the **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.**

About Amrit Bharat station scheme

- **Origin:** Traced to 2021, when **Gandhinagar** became the first Railway station to undergo modernization.
- **Aim:** **Enhance and Modernize** railway stations with the ultimate goal to transform them into **vibrant city centres.**
 - ⊕ **1275 stations** are currently targeted.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Railways
- **Features:**
 - ⊕ Detailed plans for each station to make them **cleaner, more comfortable, and easier to use.**
 - ⊕ Designs of **redeveloped station buildings** is inspired by local culture, heritage and architecture. For e.g. **Modhera Sun Temple** for Ahmedabad Station.



Iron Ore Deposits in India

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has granted in-principal forest clearance for an **iron ore beneficiation plant** in **Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district.**

About Iron Ore Deposits in India

- India has **Asia's largest iron ore reserves.**
- Iron ores in India are **mainly haematite and magnetite**, which are of **high quality.**
- Most reserves are found **near coal fields in the northeastern plateau.**
- 95% of the total reserves of iron ore is located in **Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Goa, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.**



National Road Safety Board

The **Supreme Court** has directed the Centre to constitute the **National Road Safety Board** within 6 months.

About National Road Safety Board

- **Legal Framework:** Section 215B of the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.**
 - ⊕ **Section 215B** deals with the constitution of a **National Road Safety Board** by the **Central Government** consisting of a **Chairman**, and representatives from state governments along with other members.
- **Role:** To **advise the Central and State Governments** on all aspects pertaining to **road safety and traffic management** including, standards for road safety and road infrastructure, road design, etc.



Liquid Carbon

Scientists studied the structure of liquid carbon for the first time using in situ X-ray diffraction.

About Liquid carbon

- So far, **only very little was known about carbon in its liquid form** because in this state it was practically impossible to study in the lab.
 - ⊕ Under normal pressure, **carbon does not melt** but immediately **changes into a gaseous state.**
 - ⊕ It only becomes liquid at **around 4,500°C** and under **very high-pressure** conditions in which no container can survive.
- It can be found, for example, **in the interior of planets.**
- It can play an essential role in **future technologies like nuclear fusion.**



Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA)

NATO Parliamentary Assembly arrived in **Dayton (Ohio, USA)** where Dayton Peace Agreement was reached at.

About Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA)

- **Signed:** **1995 in Paris** (Peace agreement was earlier reached at **Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton**).
- **Significance:** Also known as **General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, it had put an end to the three and half year-long **Bosnian War**, in the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.
 - ⊕ Current Constitution of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** is the Annex 4 of the DPA.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI