

August - 13

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation launched 'Bank in a Box' in Mumbai, Maharashtra, to help Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) adopt modern banking technology.
 - It is an integrated technology platform offering core banking, digital payments, cloud services and regulatory compliance, enabling even small and single-branch UCBs to provide modern banking services without heavy technology investments.
- ❖ The 8th Indian Navy–United States Navy (IN-USN) Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Exercise 2026 is being held at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi, Kerala.
- ❖ Tripura made its first-ever export of mustard honey, with 1 metric tonne shipped to Dubai, facilitated by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).
- ❖ The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will commission an X-Band Doppler Weather Radar at Pulpally, Wayanad, Kerala, by December 2026.

TAMIL NADU NEWS

NEET Exemption Resolution 2026



- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution seeking exemption from the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for undergraduate medical courses.



- ❖ Health Minister K.G. Arunraj urged the Union government to amend the relevant Central laws to provide the exemption.
- ❖ The resolution sought changes to the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020, National Commission for Homoeopathy Act, 2020, and other relevant laws.
- ❖ The lone Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA, M. Bhojarajan, opposed the resolution and walked out before the voting.
- ❖ In 2021, the Assembly passed the Tamil Nadu Admission to Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill (L.A. Bill No. 43 of 2021) seeking NEET exemption.
- ❖ The 2021 Bill was reserved for the President's consideration, but presidential assent has been withheld.

State's power to provide quota to Muslim converts

- ❖ Tamil Nadu govt. defends State's power to provide quota to Muslim converts from backward classes.
- ❖ The Supreme Court agreed to pronounce judgment on a Tamil Nadu government appeal seeking confirmation of the State's power to frame and implement policy to provide reservation benefits to members of backward classes, most backward classes, Denotified communities and Scheduled Castes who convert to Islam.
- ❖ The object behind its government order of March 9, 2024 was to ensure that "persons belonging to socially and educationally backward communities are not deprived of reservation benefits solely on account of conversion to Islam and thereby create a level playing field by preserving affirmative action benefits despite change of religion".
- ❖ The Madras High Court judgment of June 25 had held that "a person who embraces Islam cannot claim the status of backward class (Muslim)".
- ❖ Justice Mishra orally observed that a 1951 judgment of the Madras High Court in G. Michael versus S. Venkateswaran, regarding a Scheduled Caste member who converted to Christianity and wanted to contest in a reserved seat, had held the fort for 75 years by upholding the constitutional validity of Paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.
- ❖ Paragraph 3 of the 1950 order stipulated that no person who professed a religion different from Hinduism (later amended to include Sikhism and Buddhism) should be deemed to get the benefits of a Scheduled Caste member.
- ❖ The State, however, contended that the 1951 judgment did not disable the State from classifying a convert who was previously socially and educationally backward as a backward Muslim under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution.

- ❖ It said the March 24 order applied to the “wholly distinct category of backward class notification, which contains no religion-based exclusion”.
- ❖ The High Court had held that a Hindu, on conversion to Islam, did not carry forward the benefits of the Hindu caste or sub-caste.
- ❖ The convert’s status in Islam was not decided by the caste he was part of prior to the conversion.
- ❖ The High Court had noted that Christian missionaries as well as Islamic preachers maintained that their religions offered social equality unlike Hinduism, which had a caste hierarchy.



NATIONAL NEWS

NCDC Amendment Bill

- ❖ The Lok Sabha passed the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) Amendment Bill, 2026.
- ❖ The Bill allows NCDC to give loans and grants directly to cooperative societies and entities working for cooperative development.
- ❖ With Central Government approval, NCDC can also participate in the share capital of cooperatives and related entities.
- ❖ NCDC was established in 1963 under the National Cooperative Development Corporation Act, 1962.

- ❖ The Bill expands the definition of foodstuffs and removes geographical restrictions on assistance for industrial goods.
- ❖ These changes aim to provide faster and more flexible financial support for the cooperative sector.



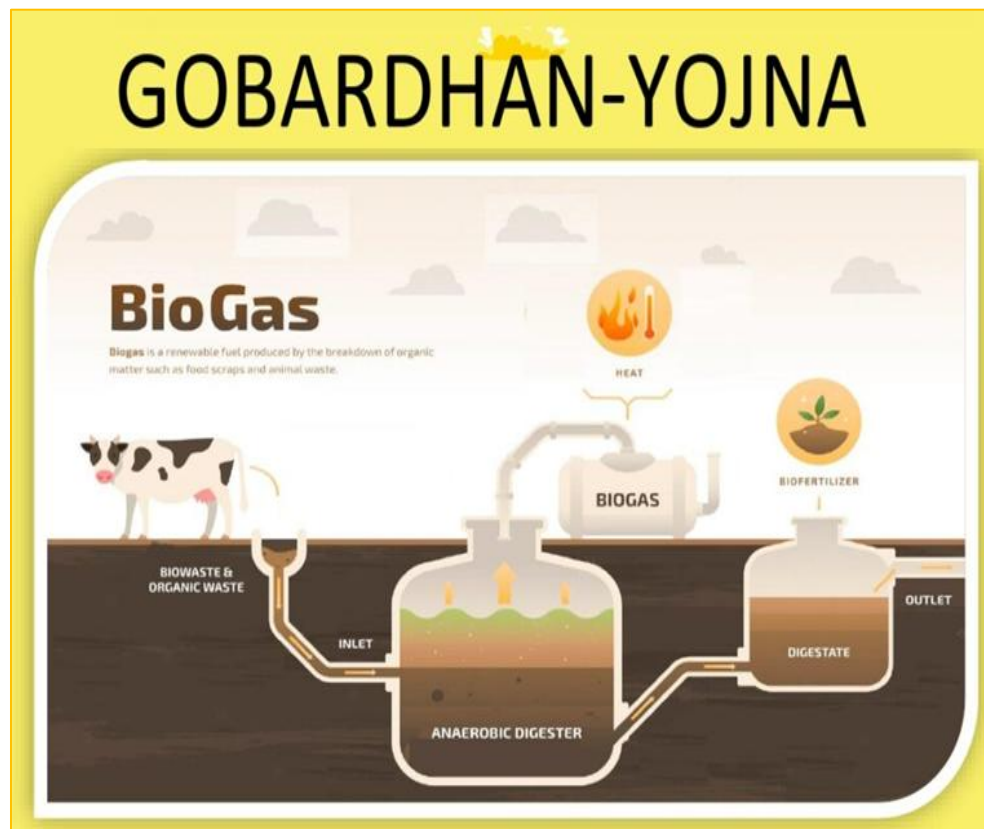
SC Verdict on PepsiCo Potato



- ❖ The Supreme Court (SC) upheld PepsiCo India's registration of the FL 2027 (FC-5) potato variety used for Lay's chips.
- ❖ The Court said the registration cannot be revoked under Section 34(h) of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Act, 2001 merely because PepsiCo sued farmers.
- ❖ Farmers can still claim protection under Section 39(1)(iv) of the Act if PepsiCo takes legal action against them.

- ❖ PepsiCo had sued at least nine Gujarat farmers in 2018–19 for alleged infringement but withdrew all cases unconditionally in May 2019.
- ❖ The dispute began after PepsiCo's 2016 registration was revoked in 2021, a decision later overturned by the Delhi High Court in 2024.

GOBARDhan scheme



- ❖ GOBARDhan means Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan.
- ❖ It is India's National Unified Scheme for Compressed Biogas.
- ❖ It is the National Circular Bioenergy Scheme, with a total outlay of Rs.23,731 crore, to be in place until 2036.
- ❖ GOBARDhan is an integral component of Solid Waste Management (SWM) under Phase II of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) for ensuring cleanliness in villages by converting cattle dung, kitchen leftovers, etc. into biogas and bio-slurry.
- ❖ It is coordinated primarily by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen).
- ❖ However, as an expanded national initiative emphasizing compressed biogas (CBG) and waste-to-wealth, it operates on a whole-of-government approach



coordinated closely with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) alongside other ministries like New and Renewable Energy and Agriculture.

- ❖ Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) Phase-II is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- ❖ The scheme aspires to increase domestic production of CBG ten-fold and mobilise large-scale private investment.
- ❖ It will transform the country's abundant agricultural residue, cattle dung, press mud, municipal organic waste and other biomass resources into clean fuel, organic manure, rural income and national economic value.
- ❖ It will establish Compressed Biogas as a major pillar of India's future energy mix.
- ❖ It seeks to increase domestic compressed biogas production nearly ten-fold through assured offtake, administered pricing, capital subsidies, pipeline infrastructure and easier access to finance.
- ❖ The scheme addresses three imperatives -- remunerative price, assured offtake and capital support -- sought by the industry.
- ❖ One of the most critical components is the development of the necessary pipeline infrastructure, which is essential for the widespread adoption of CBG, as it ensures reliable offtake and enables seamless integration with the broader gas grid.
- ❖ GOBARDhan further introduces a stable-administered price of ₹2,110 per Metric Million British Thermal Unit (MMBTU) for CBG.
- ❖ It reflects the Government's commitment to energy security, farmers and rural enterprises, waste-to-wealth, Atmanirbhar Bharat and the vision of Viksit Bharat.
- ❖ Nearly ten-fold growth in domestic CBG production, creating a new pillar of India's clean gas economy.
- ❖ Greater energy security through increased domestic production of renewable gaseous fuel and lower dependence on imported fossil fuels.
- ❖ A new wave of private investment supported by stronger project viability, stable pricing and improved access to institutional finance.
- ❖ Stronger rural livelihoods through new income opportunities for farmers, feedstock aggregators, cooperatives and rural entrepreneurs.
- ❖ Scientific waste management through productive use of agricultural residue, cattle dung, municipal organic waste and other biomass resources.
- ❖ Lower greenhouse gas emissions through replacement of fossil fuels and productive utilization of organic waste.
- ❖ A larger organic manure economy through greater production, value addition and utilization of FOM and LFOM.

- ❖ Faster and easier project implementation through one national framework, digital governance and simplified institutional arrangements.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Lake Mead Water Level

- ❖ Lake Mead, the largest reservoir in the United States, reached its lowest-ever water level at about 1,040.3 feet (317.1 m) above sea level.
- ❖ Lake Mead is formed by the Hoover Dam on the Arizona–Nevada border and is a major water source for the American Southwest.
- ❖ The low level is linked to overuse of the Colorado River, rising temperatures and prolonged drought.
- ❖ Seven U.S. states, Native American tribes and two Mexican states depend on the Colorado River Basin for water, agriculture, industry and hydropower.
- ❖ Lake Mead is approaching the 1,035-foot operational threshold, below which some Hoover Dam turbines may shut down, and power generation capacity could fall sharply.
- ❖ The Colorado River Basin is also facing low levels at Lake Powell, increasing pressure on regional water supplies.



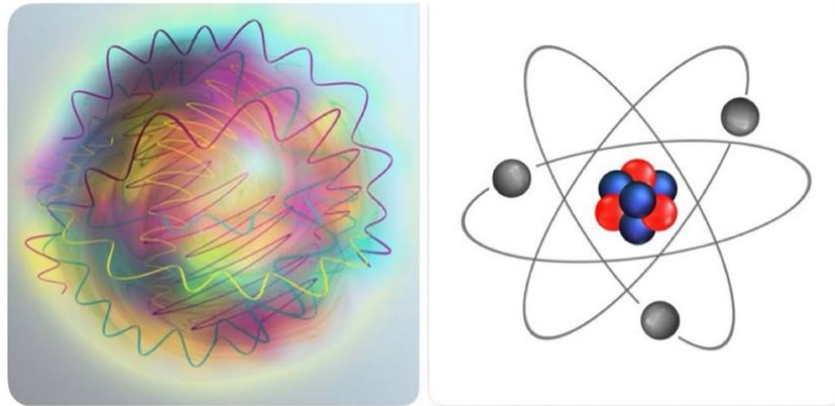
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Glueball Discovery

- ❖ Scientists using data from the BESIII experiment in Beijing found stronger evidence that $X(2370)$ may be a glueball.

- ❖ A glueball is a composite particle made only of gluons, the particles that carry the strong force.
- ❖ Quantum Chromodynamics (QCD) is the theory that describes the strong interaction and allows gluons to attract each other and form glueballs.
- ❖ Scientists first identified X(2370) as a possible glueball candidate in 2011, based on its mass and decay properties.
- ❖ The new BESIII data revealed more properties supporting the possibility that X(2370) has a dominant glueball component.
- ❖ If confirmed, it could be the first evidence of matter made only from the carriers of a fundamental force.

Chinese scientists confirm the existence of “glueballs,” a rare form of matter made almost entirely of the force that holds the building blocks of matter together.

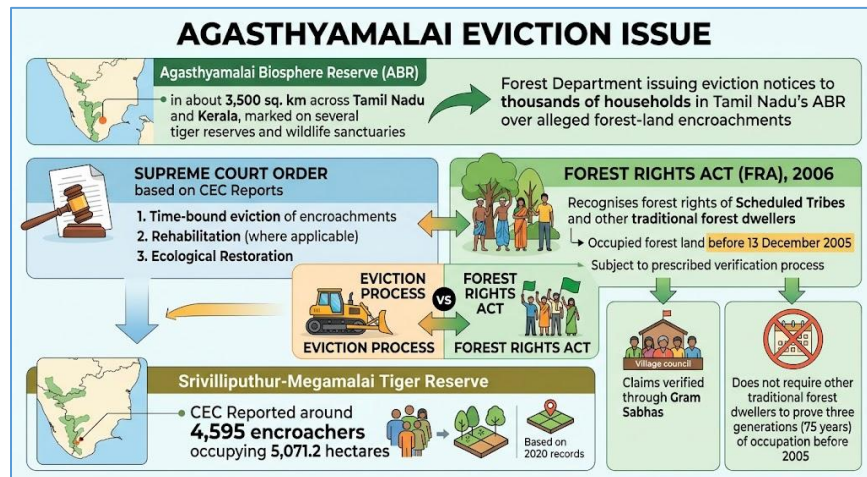


ENVIRONMENT NEWS

Agasthyamalai Eviction Issue

- ❖ The Forest Department has issued eviction notices to thousands of households in Tamil Nadu's Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR) over alleged forest-land encroachments.
- ❖ The Supreme Court, based on the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) reports, ordered time-bound eviction of encroachments, rehabilitation where applicable and ecological restoration.

- ❖ The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 recognises forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who occupied forest land before 13 December 2005, subject to the prescribed verification process.
- ❖ The FRA requires claims to be verified through Gram Sabhas and does not require other traditional forest dwellers to prove three generations (75 years) of occupation before 2005.
- ❖ The CEC reported around 4,595 encroachers occupying 5,071.2 hectares in the Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve, based on 2020 records.
- ❖ The ABR covers about 3,500 sq. km across Tamil Nadu and Kerala, including several tiger reserves and wildlife sanctuaries.



Blue Heart Lake – Ahmedabad



- ❖ A 72,600 sq. yard man-made lake, called Blue Heart, is being developed at By the Waters, a 100-acre residential estate about 35 km from Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

- ❖ The lake uses a closed-loop system involving groundwater, rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and seasonal monsoon water capture.
- ❖ Witteveen+Bos, a Dutch engineering firm, designed the lake's hydrology, with automated water movement and sensor-based monitoring planned.
- ❖ The project includes a 1.5-km lakeside promenade and 2-km kayak trail; native plants are planned to help absorb nutrients and support biodiversity.
- ❖ The lake is near Thol Lake, a Ramsar-designated wetland, so ecological monitoring is being established to assess water, biodiversity and hydrological impacts.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Biofuel Day 2026 – August 10



- ❖ The day aims to promote biofuels as renewable alternatives to fossil fuels and support cleaner transport and energy security.
- ❖ The day was first observed in India by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) in August 2015.



- ❖ It commemorates Sir Rudolf Diesel's successful use of peanut oil to run an engine on 9 August 1893.
- ❖ Biofuels are produced from biomass such as crops, agricultural waste, animal waste, algae and used cooking oil.
- ❖ Major types include bioethanol, biodiesel, bio-CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) and advanced biofuels.

