

May - 18

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Indian scientist Kuljeet Kaur Marhas became the first Indian woman to be elected Fellow of The Meteoritical Society for 2026 in the field of meteoritics and planetary science.
- ❖ The foundation stone for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme facility was laid at Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh.
 - The facility, developed by the Aeronautical Development Agency under the DRDO, will support the development and flight testing of India's indigenous fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft.
- ❖ Rajasthan inaugurated its first Semiconductor Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP)/Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility at Bhiwadi, Alwar district, Rajasthan.
 - Rajasthan introduced its Semiconductor Policy in March 2026 to promote chip manufacturing and the electronics industries.
- ❖ India's first hydrogen-powered shuttle bus service started in the Central Vista area of New Delhi.
 - Hydrogen fuel cell buses produce electricity using hydrogen and oxygen, and emit only water vapour as tailpipe emissions.
- ❖ Pune, Maharashtra, will establish India's first Low Emission Zone (LEZ) to reduce vehicular pollution and improve air quality.
- ❖ National Endangered Species Day is observed on 15 May 2026, the third Friday of May, to spread awareness about endangered wildlife and biodiversity conservation.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Celebrating America's Wildlife Comeback Stories. Championing the Endangered Species Act."

TAMIL NADU NEWS

Tamil Nadu Cabinet Portfolios 2026

- ❖ The new Cabinet portfolio allocation of Tamil Nadu was announced on 16 May 2026.
- ❖ C. Joseph Vijay will handle the Home, Police, Municipal Administration, Women Welfare, and Youth Welfare departments.
- ❖ K. A. Sengottaiyan was given the Finance portfolio, while N. Anand will manage Rural Development and Water Resources.

- ❖ Aadhav Arjuna will oversee the Public Works Department (PWD), Highways, Minor Ports, and Sports Development.
- ❖ S. Keerthana was appointed as Industries Minister, and K. G. Arunraj will handle Health and Family Welfare.

Tamil Nadu portfolios

C Joseph Vijay (CM): Home, public, general administration, special programme implementation, women and youth welfare, municipal administration, urban and water supply

<p>K A Sengottaiyan: Finance, pensions and pension allowances</p> <p>Aadhav Arjuna: Public works and sports development</p> <p>K G Arunraj: Health, medical, education and family welfare</p> <p>N Anand: Rural development and water resources</p>	<p>P Venkataraman: Food and civil supplies</p> <p>CTR Nirmal Kumar: Energy, resources and law</p> <p>Rajmohan: School education, Tamil development, information and publicity</p> <p>TK Prabhu: Natural resources</p> <p>S Keerthana: Industries, investment promotion</p>
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Chola-era Anaimangalam Plates

● The Netherlands will return the historic 11th-century **Anaimangalam Chola Copper Plates** to India during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit.

ABOUT THE COPPER PLATES

- A set of **21** copper plates inscribed in Tamil.
- Records Emperor **Rajaraja Chola I's** (r. 985–1014 CE) land grant.
- The grant was to the **Chudamani Vihara**, a Buddhist monastery at **Nagapattinam**.

WHERE IT HAS BEEN

The plates have been preserved at **Leiden University, Netherlands**, for over a century.

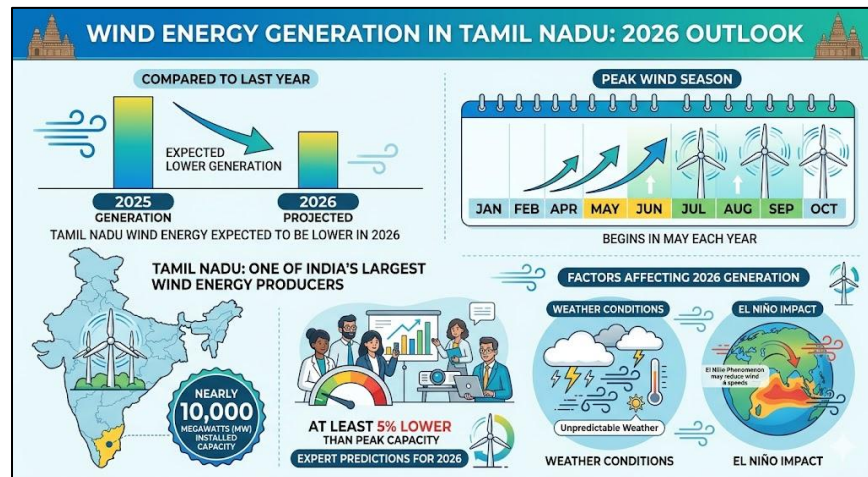
Historical records suggest the plates left India around **300 years ago**.

- ❖ The Chola-era Anaimangalam copper plates were returned to India by Leiden University in the Netherlands.
- ❖ The 21 copper plates belong to the Chola period and contain inscriptions in Sanskrit and Tamil.

- ❖ The plates carry the royal seal of Rajendra Chola I and provide details about the Chola and Srivijaya empires.
- ❖ The inscriptions mention the donation of 26 villages for a Buddhist vihara at Nagapattinam.
- ❖ The plates had been kept at Leiden University in the Netherlands since 1862 and will now be handed over to the Archaeological Survey of India for preservation and display.

Wind Energy Generation in Tamil Nadu 2026

- ❖ Wind energy generation in Tamil Nadu is expected to be lower in 2026 compared to last year.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is one of the largest wind energy producing states in India with nearly 10,000 megawatts (MW) installed capacity.
- ❖ The peak wind season in the State usually begins in May every year.
- ❖ Experts said wind power generation in 2026 may be at least 5% lower than the State's peak generation capacity.
- ❖ Factors such as weather conditions and the impact of El Niño may affect wind energy generation this year.



NATIONAL NEWS

Committee on Empowerment of Women

- ❖ The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women was reconstituted for 2026–27 by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.
- ❖ Daggubati Purandeswari was appointed as the Chairperson of the committee.

- ❖ The committee was first constituted on 29 April 1997 during the 11th Lok Sabha.
- ❖ It is a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) with 18 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 members from the Rajya Sabha.
- ❖ The committee reviews women's welfare policies, gender equality measures, and reports of the National Commission for Women (NCW).

COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

A Parliamentary body committed to advancing women's rights, gender equality and women's welfare in India.

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CHAIRPERSON

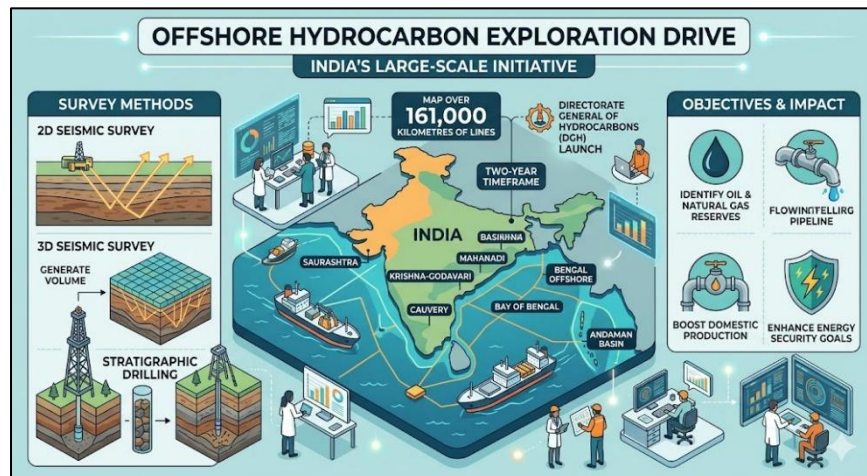
Daggubati Purandeswari

Chairperson,
Committee on
Empowerment
of Women

WOMEN'S WELFARE
 GENDER EQUALITY
 POLICY REVIEW
 REPORTS OF NCW

Empowering women. Strengthening democracy.

Offshore Hydrocarbon Exploration Drive



- ❖ The Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) launched one of India's largest offshore hydrocarbon exploration programmes.
- ❖ The project aims to map over 161,000 kilometres of lines in the Bay of Bengal and nearby basins over two years.

- ❖ The survey will cover offshore basins such as Krishna-Godavari, Mahanadi, Cauvery, Saurashtra, Bengal Offshore, and Andaman Basin.
- ❖ The exploration uses 2D and 3D seismic surveys and stratigraphic drilling to identify oil and natural gas reserves.
- ❖ The initiative supports India's domestic oil and gas production and energy security goals.

Supreme Court on Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India expanded maternity leave benefits for adoptive mothers in the case Hamsaanandini Nanduri vs Union of India.
- ❖ The Court struck down Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020, which allowed maternity leave only if the adopted child was below three months of age.
- ❖ Adoptive mothers are now entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave irrespective of the child's age at the time of adoption.
- ❖ The judgment stated that the restriction violated Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 21 (Right to Life and Dignity) of the Constitution.
- ❖ The Code on Social Security, 2020, is one of the four labour codes that combine laws related to social security, maternity benefits, provident fund, and gratuity.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Trump-Xi Talks in Beijing

- ❖ United States President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping held high-level talks in Beijing.

- ❖ The discussions focused on trade, tariffs, Artificial Intelligence (AI), semiconductors, and business cooperation.
- ❖ The United States claimed that China may purchase Boeing aircraft and American agricultural products.
- ❖ No major agreements or detailed trade deals were officially confirmed after the talks.
- ❖ Technology cooperation and semiconductor supply chains were key areas discussed during the summit.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome



- ❖ An international panel has renamed Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) as Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS) to better reflect its biological complexity.
- ❖ The earlier term PCOS was considered misleading, as many patients do not have actual ovarian cysts, which are actually immature follicles.
- ❖ The new term PMOS highlights multiple hormone systems, including insulin, androgen, luteinising hormone (LH), and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH).
- ❖ It also places metabolic dysfunction at the centre, linking the condition with insulin resistance, diabetes, obesity, fatty liver disease, and cardiovascular risks.
- ❖ Studies indicate that insulin resistance is present in nearly 70–80% of affected women, including those with normal body weight (“lean PMOS”).

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

India's First Satellite-Tagged Turtle



- ❖ India's first satellite-tagged Ganges Soft-shell Turtle was released in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve on Endangered Species Day 2026.
- ❖ The project aims to study the turtle's seasonal movement, breeding habitats, and home range in the Brahmaputra River basin.
- ❖ The project was carried out by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) with support from the Assam Forest Department and the National Geographic Society.
- ❖ The Ganges Soft-shell Turtle is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972.
- ❖ The species is listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List and included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

REPORTS AND INDICES

Henley Passport Index 2026

- ❖ Henley & Partners Passport Index 2026 ranked India's passport at 78th position globally.
- ❖ The ranking is based on visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 199 global destinations using International Air Transport Association (IATA) data.
- ❖ India's passport provides access to 56 destinations either visa-free, visa-on-arrival, or through e-visa facilities.
- ❖ India's ranking fell from 75th (earlier 2026 update) to 78th in 2026, though it has improved compared to 85th (2025) and 90th (2021).
- ❖ The top-ranked passports in 2026 are Singapore (1st), Japan (2nd), and South Korea (3rd).

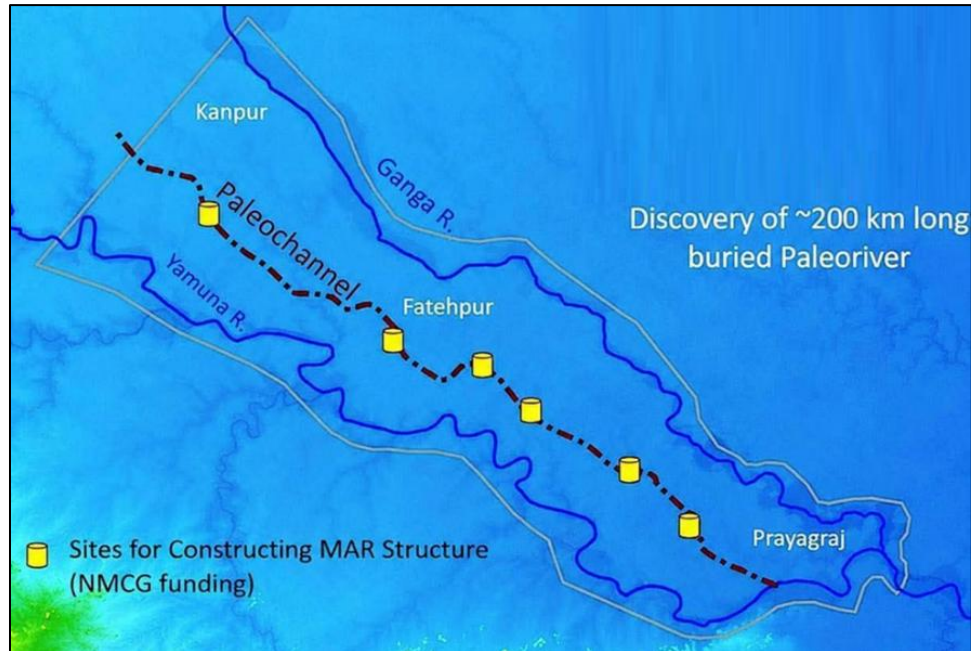


STATE NEWS

Palaeo-channel Discovery - Uttar Pradesh

- ❖ Scientists discovered a massive ancient underground river palaeo-channel beneath the Prayagraj–Kanpur stretch in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The study was carried out by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- ❖ The palaeo-channel lies 10–15 metres below the surface and extends nearly 200 kilometres.
- ❖ Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) surveys and deep drilling confirmed ancient riverbed sandy deposits in the region.

- ❖ Palaeo-channels are old inactive river channels that are important for groundwater storage and mineral exploration.



Annappurna Bhandar Scheme

Annappurna Bhandar	Lakshmir Bhandar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A welfare scheme under which the new BJP govt will transfer ₹3,000 a month to the bank accounts of women in Bengal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Started by TMC govt in 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Eligibility The applicant must be a woman from Bengal, her bank account should be linked to her Aadhaar card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beneficiaries Over 2 crore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Application Can be done both online and offline. The form has to be filled with personal details, bank account number and IFSC code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Criteria The applicant must be a woman resident of Bengal, aged between 25 and 60 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Her household must be enrolled under Swasthya Sathi

- ❖ The West Bengal government launched the Annappurna Bhandar Scheme on 14 May 2026 to strengthen women-centric welfare measures in the state.
- ❖ The scheme will be implemented from 1 June 2026 across West Bengal.

- ❖ Under the scheme, eligible women beneficiaries will receive ₹3,000 per month through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) into their bank accounts.
- ❖ The scheme also includes free travel for women in state-run buses as part of social welfare support.
- ❖ The objective is to improve women's economic independence and strengthen social security systems in the state.

Sikkim Statehood Day 2026 - May 16



- ❖ Sikkim celebrated its 51st Statehood Day recently.
- ❖ Sikkim became the 22nd state of India after the 36th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1975.
- ❖ Before joining India, Sikkim was ruled by the Chogyal monarchy under the Namgyal dynasty.
- ❖ A public referendum held in 1975 supported the merger of Sikkim with India and ended the monarchy system.
- ❖ Sikkim is known for its rich culture, Buddhist monasteries, and as India's first fully organic state.

