



October - 23

## **TNPSC BITS**

- ❖ The Indian Army conducted Exercise Akhand Prahar-II in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, to test combat readiness and technology-enabled military operations.
- ❖ A.P. Moller-Maersk planned its first drydocking in India for its Singapore-flagged container vessel Maersk Chattogram at Larsen & Toubro's (L&T) Kattupalli Shipyard near Chennai in October 2026.
  - Drydocking involves taking a ship out of the water for inspection, maintenance and repairs.
- ❖ 14-year-old British photographer Oscar Whitfield, who lives in Zimbabwe, won the Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2026.
- ❖ Dr. Reddy's Laboratories received Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) approval for Zytorvi (toripalimab) for advanced esophageal squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC) in India.
  - Esophageal Squamous Cell Carcinoma (ESCC) is a type of esophageal cancer in which cancer develops in the squamous cells lining the esophagus.
- ❖ The International Day of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is observed annually on 17 October to celebrate the diversity of living heritage and raise awareness about the need to safeguard it.
  - The day was proclaimed by the 42nd UNESCO General Conference in November 2023.

## **TAMIL NADU NEWS**

### **Tamil Nadu Rainwater Harvesting Campaign**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has ordered a statewide rainwater harvesting (RWH) campaign to improve water conservation and groundwater recharge.
- ❖ The campaign will revive existing RWH structures and create new facilities in houses, apartments, institutions, commercial buildings and industries.
- ❖ Check dams and soak pits will be built near water-drawing points to improve groundwater recharge, while damaged systems will be repaired.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has introduced RWH as a State policy in 2002, making harvesting structures mandatory for buildings.
- ❖ 1,202 firkas (revenue subdivisions), groundwater levels were found to be comfortable in 476 firkas.



## TAMIL NADU RAINWATER HARVESTING CAMPAIGN

Improving Water Conservation & Groundwater Recharge சேகரிப்போம் மழைநீர்!

**Campaign Overview (Statewide Push)**

Tamil Nadu has ordered a statewide RWH campaign to secure its water future.



**Action Plan (Revive & Create)**



Reviving existing RWH structures and building new ones in houses, apartments, institutions, commercial buildings, and industries.

**In the Ground (Recharge & Repair)**

Building check dams & soak pits near water-drawing points to boost groundwater; repairing damaged systems.



**History & Legacy (Mandatory since 2002)**

A pioneer State—Tamil Nadu introduced RWH as a State policy in 2002, making RWH structures mandatory for all buildings.

**Groundwater Status (The Challenge & Goal)**

**1,202**  
Firkas  
(Revenue Subdivisions)



**Only 476**  
Firkas  
have comfortable groundwater levels

The campaign aims to recharge the rest!

**SAVE WATER, SECURE THE FUTURE**

## TNRERA Reconstitution in Tamil Nadu

### Phanindra Reddy Appointed TN RERA Chairperson

**Retired IAS officer K. Phanindra Reddy has been appointed Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Real Estate Regulatory Authority. Former Public Dept Secretary Reeta Harish Thakkar and retired District Judge A. Nazir Ahmed have been appointed as Members. The new panel will oversee regulation of Tamil Nadu's real estate sector, including project registration, consumer grievance redressal, and implementation of the RERA Act.**

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government reconstituted the Tamil Nadu Real Estate Regulatory Authority (TNRERA) and appointed retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer K. Phanindra Reddy as its chairperson.
- ❖ TNRERA is the state-level authority responsible for implementing the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (RERA) in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It regulates the real estate sector, protects homebuyers and promotes transparency in real estate projects and transactions.
- ❖ Retired bureaucrats Reeta Harish Thakkar and Mythili K. Rajendran, retired district judge S. Kirubaharan Mathuram and retired Public Works Department engineer-in-chief K. P. Sathyamurthy were appointed as members.



- ❖ The government had earlier superseded TNRERA for six months or until its reconstitution, whichever was earlier, during which K. Phanindra Reddy served as chairperson.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement 2026

- ❖ The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) came into force on 20 October 2026.
- ❖ New Zealand removed tariffs on 100% of Indian goods, while India began tariff concessions on selected New Zealand imports.
- ❖ India will provide concessions on 70% of its tariff lines, covering about 95% of current bilateral trade value, with duty-free access increasing from 57% to 82% of tariff lines in phases.
- ❖ New Zealand committed to facilitating \$20 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) into India over 15 years.
- ❖ The agreement aims to increase bilateral trade in goods and services to NZ\$7 billion by 2030.
- ❖ It is India's 17th operational Free Trade Agreement.

The **India-New Zealand** Free Trade Agreement (FTA) came into **force** on **October 20**, giving Indian merchandise **exports 100%** duty-free access to **New Zealand**.

It is **India's** seventh **FTA** to become **operational** in the past **five years**.

### US National Park - Chiricahua

- ❖ Chiricahua in Arizona officially became the 64th national park of the United States after President Donald Trump signed the Chiricahua National Park Act.
- ❖ Chiricahua was earlier a National Monument and had been protected for more than a century.
- ❖ The park covers about 12,025 acres in the Chiricahua Mountains, around 120 miles southeast of Tucson, Arizona.

- ❖ It became the fourth national park in Arizona and the first new U.S. national park established since 2009.
- ❖ Chiricahua is called the “Wonderland of Rocks” because of its tall and unusual rock formations.



### **CICA Summit 2026**

**INDIA CALLS FOR**

**UNITED FRONT**

**AGAINST TERRORISM**

At the 7th CICA Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan,  
India stresses regional security and respect  
for national sovereignty.

- ❖ The 7th Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, with India reiterating its commitment to inclusive and consensus-based cooperation in Asia.
- ❖ India called on CICA members to unite against all forms of terrorism and stressed respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- ❖ India said regional connectivity projects should be transparent, financially viable and inclusive.

- ❖ The Summit adopted the Baku Declaration, highlighting connectivity, digitalisation and sustainable growth as important for confidence-building and development in Asia.
- ❖ India is a founding member of CICA and considers it an important platform for dialogue, consensus-building and cooperation in Asia.

### **Ebola Bundibugyo Case - Nigeria**

- ❖ Nigeria reported its first imported Ebola Bundibugyo virus disease (BDBV) case, becoming the fifth country to report BDBV in the 2026 outbreak.
- ❖ Ebola Bundibugyo virus disease (BDBV) is a severe disease caused by Bundibugyo virus, a species of the Ebolavirus genus first identified in Uganda in 2007.
- ❖ It spreads mainly through direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person or animal and can cause fever, weakness, vomiting, diarrhoea and bleeding.
- ❖ The disease was first identified during an outbreak in Bundibugyo District, Uganda, which gave the virus its name.
- ❖ Before Nigeria, BDBV cases were reported in Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Sudan and Kenya.

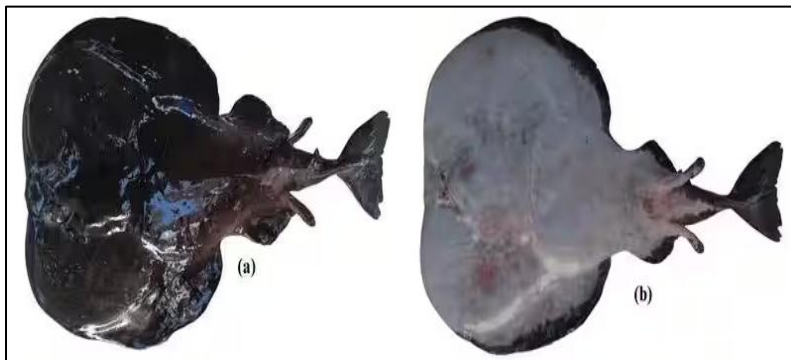


## **ENVIRONMENT NEWS**

### **Two New Marine Fish Species**

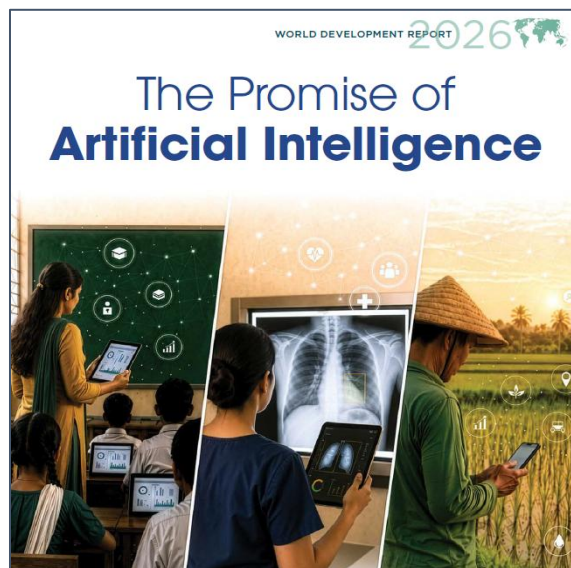
- ❖ Researchers from the Marine Biology Regional Centre of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Chennai, have discovered two new marine fish species—a sandperch and an electric ray.

- ❖ The sandperch is a bottom-dwelling fish found over sand or rubble in shallow seas and feeds on crustaceans, polychaetes and juvenile fishes.
- ❖ The electric ray was found in deeper waters of the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, with four specimens collected by researchers.
- ❖ The specimens were collected from waters off Chennai, Digha, Visakhapatnam and Kakinada at depths of 30–80 metres.
- ❖ The discovery shows that the demersal fish diversity of India's eastern continental shelf is still insufficiently explored.
- ❖ 17 species of sandperches have so far been reported from Indian waters.



## REPORTS AND INDICES

### World Development Report 2026



- ❖ The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched the World Bank Group's World Development Report (WDR) 2026: The Promise of Artificial Intelligence under the IndiaAI Mission.

- ❖ ChatGPT reached 50% of its traffic from middle-income countries within six months, showing that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is spreading faster than earlier technologies such as electricity and the internet.
- ❖ The report highlights the Three Cs of AI development: Capabilities, Concentration and Complements, covering AI's uses, concentration of advanced AI resources, and the need for infrastructure and institutions.
- ❖ Small AI uses compact, low-compute models for specific needs; examples include Wadhvani AI's Cough Against TB in India and the Rori learning platform in Ghana.
- ❖ In India, AI-based weather forecasts produced savings of up to USD 560 per small farmer in Telangana.
- ❖ The report recommends the "Adopt, Adapt and Advance" approach: first use existing AI tools, then adapt them to local needs, and selectively develop advanced AI capabilities.

## PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

### Vummidi Ethiraj Demise



- ❖ Vummidi Ethiraj, a key craftsman involved in making the historic Sengol, died in Chennai at the age of 99.
- ❖ Ethiraj was involved in crafting the gold-plated silver Sengol in 1947, which symbolised the transfer of power from British rule to independent India.

- ❖ On the night of August 14, 1947, the Sengol was presented to Jawaharlal Nehru by priests from Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The Sengol was crafted by Vummidi Jewellers, a jewellery firm with a history of over 125 years.
- ❖ On May 28, 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi ceremonially installed the Sengol in the new Parliament building.

### **Europhysics Prize 2026**

- ❖ Three scientists received the 2026 Europhysics Prize for their work establishing altermagnetism, a new class of magnetic order.
- ❖ Jairo Sinova, Libor Šmejkal and Tomas Jungwirth received the prize from the European Physical Society (EPS) Condensed Matter Division.
- ❖ Altermagnetism combines features of ferromagnetism and antiferromagnetism, with compensated magnetic moments and spin-polarised electronic bands.
- ❖ The term “altermagnetism” was proposed by Libor Šmejkal and colleagues in 2022, while the concept was developed through research at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz.
- ❖ Altermagnetism is important for spintronics, which uses electron spin along with electric charge to store and process information.



Libor Šmejkal



Jairo Sinova



Tomas Jungwirth

## **MISCELLANEOUS NEWS**

### **New UNESCO Tentative List Sites**

- ❖ Three Indian sites—Baratang’s Karst-Mud-Volcano Complex, Andaman Subduction Volcanoes and Sirpur Cultural and Archaeological Landscape—were added to the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Tentative List on 20 October 2026.
- ❖ The Baratang Complex in Andaman and Nicobar Islands has limestone caves and active mud volcanoes, including the Jalki cave area.

- ❖ The Andaman Subduction Volcanoes include Barren Island and Narcondam Island, both protected areas in the Andaman Sea.
- ❖ Sirpur in Mahasamund district, Chhattisgarh, is an ancient cultural and archaeological landscape along the Mahanadi River, with monuments dating from the 5th to 12th century CE.
- ❖ The Tentative List is a preliminary step before a site can be nominated for the UNESCO World Heritage List; India currently has 45 World Heritage Sites.

