



**December - 18**

## **TNPSC BITS**

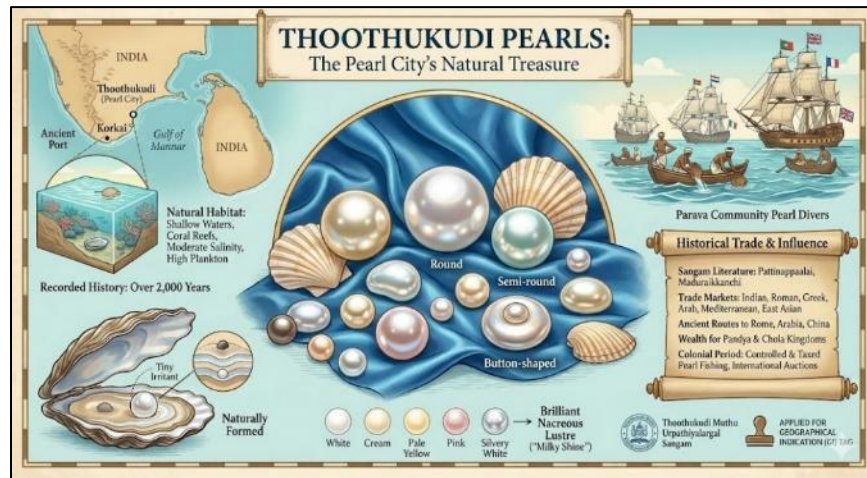
- ❖ The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved two new oral drugs for gonorrhoea: Nuzolve (zoliflodacin) and Blujepa (gepotidacin).
- ❖ India will host the first Commonwealth Kho Kho Championship in March 2026, following the first Kho Kho World Cup held in New Delhi.
- ❖ Kavita Chand from Almora, Uttarakhand successfully climbed Mount Vinson, Antarctica's highest peak at 4,892 metres.
- ❖ India won the WSF (World Squash Federation) Squash World Cup 2025 by defeating Hong Kong in the final held at Chennai, marking its first-ever World Cup title in squash.
- ❖ Senior journalist Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty was elected as the first woman president of the Press Club of India.
- ❖ Operation Thunder 2025, a worldwide law enforcement operation against wildlife and forestry crime, coordinated by INTERPOL in partnership with the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- ❖ The Bondi Beach terror attack has occurred on 15 December 2025 in Sydney, Australia, during the Hanukkah by the Sea celebration.
  - Hanukkah (Chanukah) is the Jewish eight-day, wintertime "festival of lights".
- ❖ Ponduru Khadi from Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, which was appreciated by MK Gandhi 100 years ago, got GI Tag.
- ❖ Abhigyan Kundu (17) became the first Indian batter to score a double hundred in Youth ODIs during the Under-19 Asia Cup 2025 match against Malaysia in Dubai.

## **TAMIL NADU NEWS**

### **Thoothukudi Pearls**

- ❖ The Thoothukudi Muthu Urpathiyalargal Sangam has applied for GI tag.
- ❖ Thoothukudi pearls are natural pearls from the Gulf of Mannar with a recorded history of over 2,000 years.
- ❖ Thoothukudi is known as the "Pearl City" because of its long tradition of pearl fishing.
- ❖ These pearls are naturally formed and occur in round, semi-round and button-shaped forms.

- ❖ The pearls have smooth surfaces, fine texture and colours such as white, cream, pale yellow, pink and silvery white.
- ❖ Thoothukudi pearls are known for a brilliant nacreous lustre, often described as a “milky shine”.
- ❖ Thoothukudi pearls were traded in Indian, Roman, Greek, Arab, Mediterranean and East Asian markets.
- ❖ The ancient port of Korkai near present-day Thoothukudi was an early centre of pearl trade.
- ❖ Korkai is mentioned in Sangam literature such as Pattinappaalai and Madurai Kanchi.
- ❖ During the colonial period, the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British controlled and taxed pearl fishing.
- ❖ Colonial authorities conducted pearl auctions in Thoothukudi that attracted international merchants.
- ❖ The Parava community was traditionally involved in pearl diving activities.
- ❖ Pearl trade contributed to the wealth of the Pandya and Chola kingdoms.



## NATIONAL NEWS

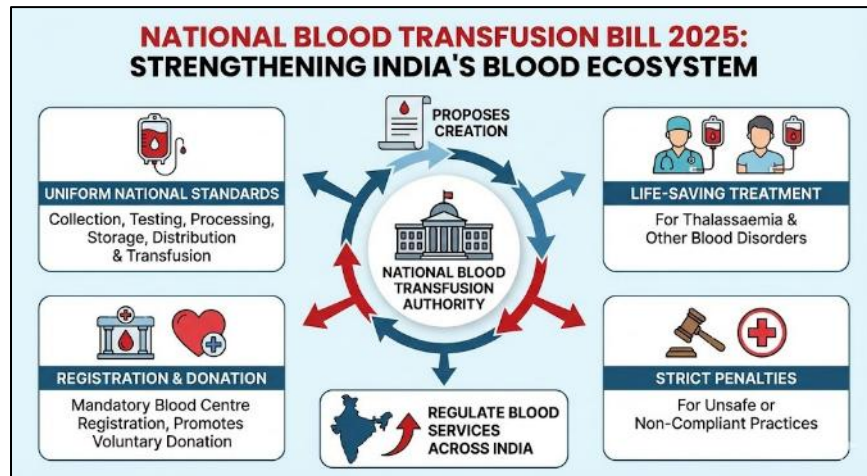
### National Lok Adalat 2025

- ❖ The 4th National Lok Adalat of 2025 successfully resolved 2.59 crore disputes across India.
- ❖ From 2022–23 to 2024–25, more than 23.5 crore cases were resolved through various Lok Adalats nationwide.
- ❖ Lok Adalats were established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

- ❖ They provide speedy & cost-effective justice through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- ❖ Lok Adalats aim to reduce case pendency, which stands at over 4.7 crore cases as per the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG).
- ❖ Lok Adalats are organised by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) as Patron-in-Chief.



### National Blood Transfusion Bill 2025



- ❖ The Bill proposes the creation of a National Blood Transfusion Authority to regulate blood services across India.
- ❖ It aims to set the uniform national standards for collection, testing, processing, storage, distribution & transfusion of blood and blood components.



- ❖ Blood transfusion is a life-saving treatment for patients with thalassaemia and other blood disorders, who need a regular and safe blood supply.
- ❖ The Bill mandates registration of all blood centres and promotes voluntary blood donation.
- ❖ It introduces strict penalties for unsafe or non-compliant blood transfusion practices.

### Higher Education Bill 2025

#### **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025**

- Subsumes UGC, AICTE and NCTE into a single apex body with 3 independent councils.
- Establishment of three independent Councils (Standards, Regulation, Accreditation)
- A technology-driven, faceless single-window regulatory system
- Enhanced autonomy for high-performing HEIs, strong focus on quality, research, innovation and youth empowerment, and alignment with NEP 2020
- Emphasis on student-centric reforms, GER expansion, grievance redressal, and global benchmarking

- ❖ The Union government introduced the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, in the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ The bill aims to reform India's higher education regulatory framework.
- ❖ The Bill proposes a single overarching regulator by subsuming the University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).
- ❖ The Bill provides for the establishment of the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan as an apex body, along with three councils:
  - Viksit Bharat Shiksha Viniyaman Parishad (Regulatory Council)
  - Viksit Bharat Shiksha Gunvatta Parishad (Accreditation Council)
  - Viksit Bharat Shiksha Manak Parishad (Standards Council)
- ❖ Institutions of National Importance like IITs, IIMs, National Institutes of Technology (NITs), and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) are explicitly included under the law.



- ❖ Sections 10 and 11 establish a Regulatory Council with powers over accreditation and compliance, while safeguarding institutional autonomy through future regulations.
- ❖ The Bill applies to central, state, private, deemed, affiliated, autonomous, technical, teacher, open, online, and foreign universities, linking statutory reform to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- ❖ Lok Sabha refer a bill to set up a 13-member body for regulating higher education institutions to a joint committee of Parliament.
- ❖ The joint committee will comprise 21 members of the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### 75 Years of India – Jordan Partnership



- ❖ India and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan established diplomatic relations in 1950, marking 75 years in 2025.
- ❖ Bilateral cooperation spans political, economic, strategic, security, and people-to-people sectors.
- ❖ Indian Prime Minister will visit Jordan as the first full bilateral visit after nearly 40 years.

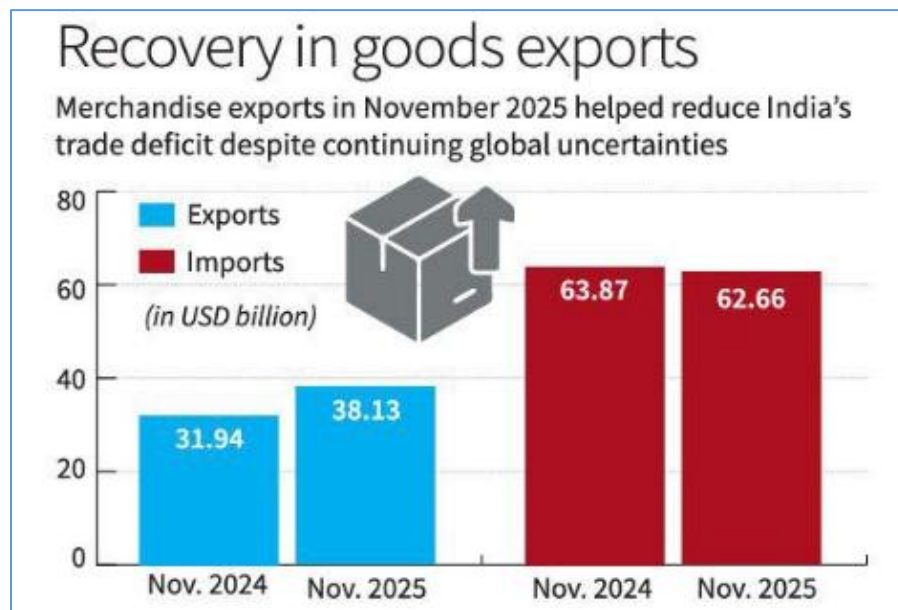


- ❖ India is Jordan's third-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade valued at about USD 2.8 billion; Jordan supplies phosphates and potash to India.
- ❖ Indian investments in Jordan include over 15 garment manufacturing companies with cumulative investments of around USD 500 million.

## ECONOMY NEWS

### Trade deficit of India – November 2025

- ❖ India's trade deficit dropped by more than 61% in November 2025 to \$6.6 billion.
- ❖ India's total exports grew 15.5% to \$74 billion in November 2025, while total imports slid 0.6% to \$80.6 billion.
- ❖ India's exports to the U.S. in November 2025 were higher than in October 2025, as well as in November last year.
- ❖ Gold imports fell nearly 60% to \$4 billion in November 2025 compared to November 2024.
- ❖ Services exports grew about 12% in November 2025 to \$38.5 billion while services imports increased 8.1% to \$18.6 billion.



### Stability and Profits in the Banking Sector

- ❖ India's banking sector recorded a 20-year low in Non-Performing Assets (NPA) and the strongest profit growth in recent years.

- ❖ Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA) fell to 2.31% by March 2025, the lowest level in 20 years.
- ❖ Net NPA declined to 0.52%, showing better recovery and risk control.
- ❖ Public Sector Banks (PSBs) reduced Gross NPA from 9.11% in 2021 to 2.58% in 2025.
- ❖ Bank profits reached record levels, with Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) earning ₹4.01 lakh crore in Financial Year (FY) 2024–25.
- ❖ Domestic deposits increased from ₹88.35 lakh crore in 2015 to ₹231.90 lakh crore in 2025.
- ❖ Capital adequacy improved, with the Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) rising to 17.36% in 2025.



## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

### India's 1st Stroke Device

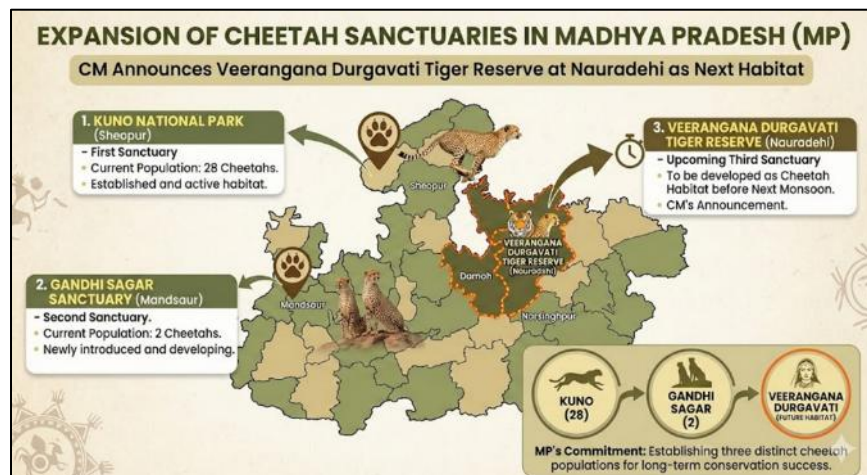
- ❖ AIIMS New Delhi conducted India's 1<sup>st</sup> clinical trial of the Supernova Stent for stroke treatment.
- ❖ Supernova Stent is a new and advanced stroke treatment device designed for India's diverse patient population.

- ❖ The device is suitable for Indian patients, as strokes in India often occur at a younger age than in Western countries.
- ❖ This is India's 1st stroke device approved based on a domestic clinical trial.
- ❖ The device will now be manufactured in India and can benefit over 17 lakh stroke patients every year.



## ENVIRONMENT NEWS

### Cheetah Sanctuary in MP



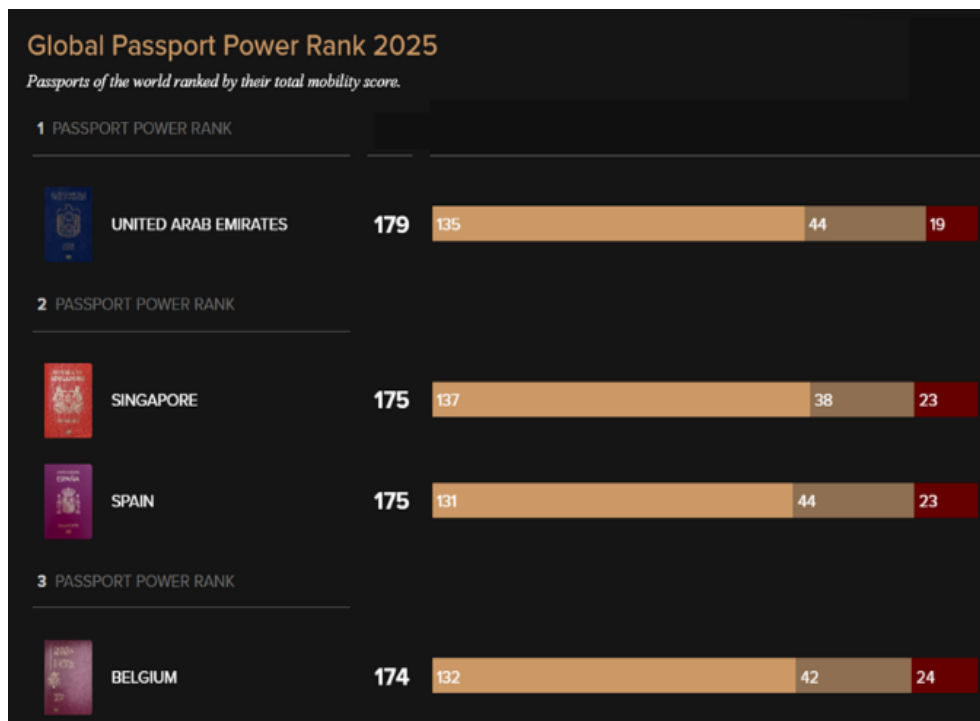
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh announced Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve at Nauradehi will be developed as a cheetah habitat before the next monsoon.



- ❖ It will be the state's third cheetah sanctuary after Kuno National Park (Sheopur) and Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary (Mandsaur).
- ❖ Kuno National Park currently hosts 28 cheetahs; Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary has 2 cheetahs.
- ❖ Eight more cheetahs are expected to be translocated from Botswana in January 2026 as part of Project Cheetah.
- ❖ India remains the only country globally to successfully rehabilitate cheetahs after the extinction of the Asiatic cheetah in the 1950s.

## REPORTS AND INDICES

### Global passport rankings 2025



- ❖ The Passport Index, published by Arton Capital, released its global passport rankings for the year 2025.
- ❖ The United Arab Emirates holds the world's strongest passport in 2025.
- ❖ Singapore and Spain are placed second in the global passport rankings.
- ❖ India is ranked 67th, showing moderate international travel access for Indian citizens.
- ❖ The United States of America ranks 9th, and the United Kingdom ranks 8th in 2025.



- ❖ Rankings are based on mobility score, which counts visa-free, visa-on-arrival, and Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) access.

## **STATES' NEWS**

### **Clean Air Projects in UP and Haryana**

- ❖ The World Bank approved projects worth 600 million US dollars to improve air quality in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Haryana.
- ❖ The projects aim to benefit about 270 million people by reducing air pollution.
- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh Clean Air Management Program (UPCAMP) has a budget of 299.66 million US dollars.
- ❖ The Haryana Clean Air Project for Sustainable Development has a budget of 300 million US dollars.
- ❖ The projects are part of the Regional Air Quality Management Program in the Indo-Gangetic Plains and Himalayan Foothills.



## **PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS**

### **Shivraj Patil's demise**

- ❖ Senior Congress leader and former Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil passed away recently.
- ❖ He served as the 10th Speaker of the Lok Sabha from 1991 to 1996.

- ❖ Patil held important Union Cabinet portfolios, including Defence, Commerce, Civil Aviation, and Tourism.
- ❖ He represented the Latur constituency in the Lok Sabha for seven consecutive terms.
- ❖ Patil also served as the Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh from 2010 to 2015.
- ❖ He was known for modernizing parliamentary practices, including broadcasting proceedings and constructing the Parliament Library.
- ❖ Patil resigned as Union Home Minister in 2008, taking moral responsibility for the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.



## **MISCELLANEOUS NEWS**

### **Bison Horn Maria dance**

- ❖ The Dandami Madia tribe performed the traditional Bison Horn Maria dance at Judiya Para in Jagdalpur, Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh.
- ❖ This dance is a symbol of the region's cultural pride and the enduring legacy of the Dandami Madia community.
- ❖ The Dandami Madia (also spelt as Maria) people have long shaped the cultural landscape of southern Chhattisgarh.

- ❖ It is Performed by both men and women and Men wears horn-shaped headgear made from bamboo, adorned with bison horns, and feathers.



### **Youngest Rhynchosaur Fossil**

- ❖ The youngest rhynchosaur ever recorded, *Macrocephalosaurus mariensis*, was described in the British Journal of Systematic Palaeontology.
- ❖ The fossil was discovered in southern Brazil.
- ❖ The specimen consists of a skull measuring <2.5 cm, making it the smallest rhynchosaur hatchling ever found.
- ❖ The fossil shows diagnostic features unique to *Macrocephalosaurus mariensis*.
- ❖ The specimen represents the 1st perinate record of the Hyperodapedontinae clade and one of the oldest archosauromorph hatchlings found in continental deposits.

