

February - 25

## TNPSC BITS

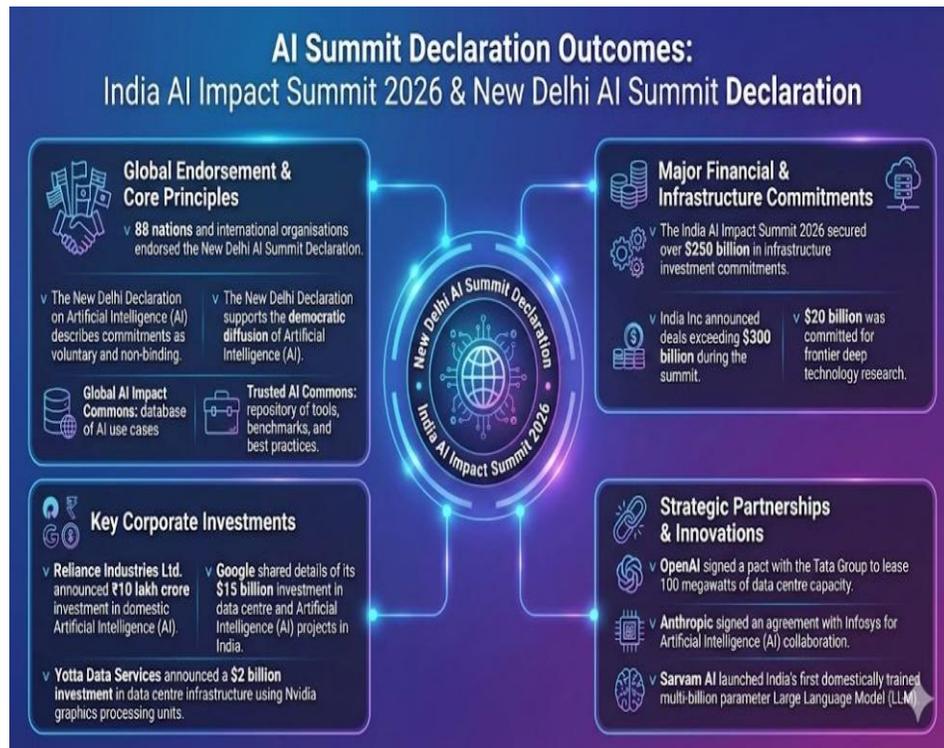
- ❖ The Indian Army conducted Exercise Vajra Ghaat at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Rajasthan to demonstrate the operational readiness of the K9 Vajra self-propelled artillery system in desert warfare conditions.
- ❖ India and France have exchanged 21 agreements and documents across defence, energy, critical minerals, technology, and innovation, upgrading their relationship to a Special Global Strategic Partnership.
- ❖ The 1,750-megawatt (MW) Demwe Lower Hydel Project in Arunachal Pradesh has received an 11-year extension of environmental clearance till 2037.
  - The project is located on the Lohit River and originally received environmental clearance in 2010.
- ❖ The 23rd edition of BioAsia 2026, an international life sciences summit, has started in Hyderabad with a focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation, drug discovery, and biologics development.
  - The theme of the summit is “TechBio Unleashed – Artificial Intelligence (AI), Automation, and Revolutionary Changes in Life Sciences.”
- ❖ The Karnataka government will launch the ‘Mobile Bidi Pustaka Hidi’ campaign to reduce screen time and promote reading among schoolchildren.
  - The campaign aims to develop a reading habit and improve concentration and academic performance among students.
- ❖ Bela Gram Panchayat from Bhandara district, Maharashtra, was showcased at Mumbai Climate Week 2026 as India’s first net-zero Panchayat.
  - Bela Gram received the Carbon Neutral Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar in 2024 for its climate efforts.
- ❖ The National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed the Uttar Pradesh government to change the Suav’s status from “drain” to “river” in official records.
  - Suav (also called Suwawan) is a tributary of the Rapti River in Balrampur district, Uttar Pradesh.

## NATIONAL NEWS

### AI Summit Declaration outcomes

- ❖ 88 nations and international organisations endorsed the New Delhi AI Summit Declaration at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

- ❖ The India AI Impact Summit 2026 secured over \$250 billion in infrastructure investment commitments.
- ❖ India Inc announced deals exceeding \$300 billion during the summit.
- ❖ The New Delhi Declaration on Artificial Intelligence (AI) describes commitments as voluntary and non-binding.
- ❖ The New Delhi Declaration supports the democratic diffusion of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and proposes the Global AI Impact Commons as a database of AI use cases, along with the Trusted AI Commons as a repository of the tools, benchmarks, and best practices.



- ❖ \$20 billion was committed for frontier deep technology research.
- ❖ Reliance Industries Ltd. announced ₹10 lakh crore investment in domestic Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- ❖ Google shared details of its \$15 billion investment in data centre and Artificial Intelligence (AI) projects in India.
- ❖ OpenAI signed a pact with the Tata Group to lease 100 megawatts of data centre capacity.
- ❖ Anthropic signed an agreement with Infosys for Artificial Intelligence (AI) collaboration.
- ❖ Yotta Data Services announced a \$2 billion investment in data centre infrastructure using Nvidia graphics processing units.

- ❖ Sarvam AI launched India's first domestically trained multi-billion parameter Large Language Model (LLM).

### **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium 2026**

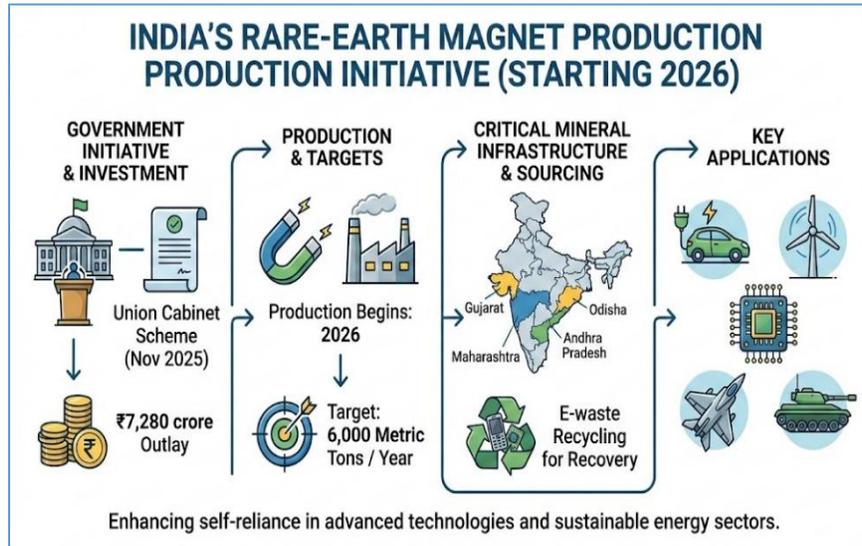
- ❖ India assumed the chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) at the 9th Conclave of Chiefs held in Visakhapatnam.
- ❖ India took over the chair from Thailand after 16 years and will lead IONS for a two-year term.
- ❖ IONS was launched by the Indian Navy in 2008 to promote maritime cooperation among navies of the Indian Ocean Region.
- ❖ The Philippines was admitted as an Observer, and Oman joined the Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).
- ❖ IONS currently has 25 member navies and 9 observer nations, and the chairmanship rotates every two years.



### **Rare-Earth Magnet Production**

- ❖ The Union Minister for Mines announced that India will begin producing rare-earth permanent magnets in 2026 and will set up critical mineral parks in four States.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved a scheme in November 2025 to manufacture 6,000 metric tons per year with a financial outlay of ₹7,280 crore.
- ❖ Rare-earth permanent magnets are used in electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, electronics, aerospace and defence sectors.

- ❖ The government will establish critical mineral processing parks in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.
- ❖ The government also plans to recover critical minerals from old mobile phones and other electronic waste through recycling.



## Bee Corridors Initiative

### What Are Bee Corridors?

Strips of flowering plants along highways designed to provide food and habitat for bees and other pollinators. They help biodiversity, improve crop pollination, and support the rural economy.

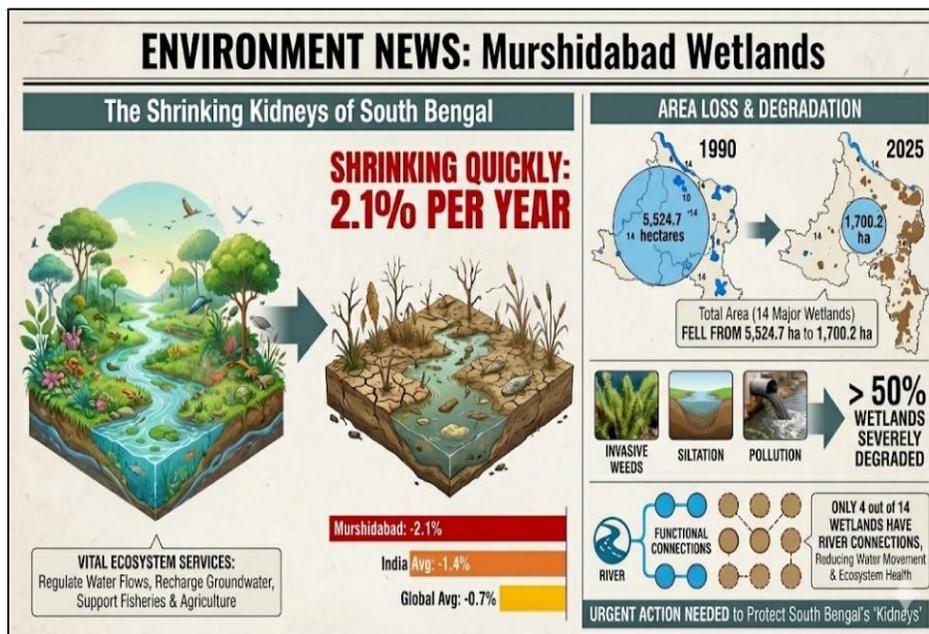


- ❖ The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has launched India's first Bee Corridors initiative along National Highways.

- ❖ The National Highways Authority of India will develop pollinator-friendly green corridors along highways.
- ❖ The project will plant native nectar-rich species such as Neem, Karanj, Mahua, Palash, Jamun and Siris.
- ❖ In 2026–27, NHAI plans to plant 40 lakh trees, with 60 per cent under the Bee Corridor initiative.
- ❖ The aim is to support pollination, increase biodiversity and promote sustainable infrastructure development.

## ENVIRONMENT NEWS

### Murshidabad Wetlands



- ❖ The wetlands in Murshidabad district, called the “kidneys of South Bengal,” are shrinking quickly at about 2.1 % per year.
- ❖ This shrinkage rate is nearly three times the global average and about 1.5 times India’s national average.
- ❖ A study found the total area of 14 major wetlands fell from 5,524.7 hectares (ha) in 1990 to 1,700.2 ha in 2025.
- ❖ The wetlands help regulate water flows, recharge groundwater, and support fisheries and agriculture.
- ❖ More than half of these wetlands are severely degraded due to invasive weeds, siltation and pollution.

- ❖ Only 4 out of 14 wetlands still have functional river connections, reducing water movement and ecosystem health.

### **Cheetah Population 2026**



- ❖ Three new cubs were born at Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, increasing India's total cheetah population to 38.
- ❖ The cubs were born to Gamini, a cheetah brought from South Africa under Project Cheetah.
- ❖ With this birth, the number of Indian-born cubs has reached 27.
- ❖ Project Cheetah started in 2022–23 with 20 cheetahs translocated from Namibia and South Africa.
- ❖ The cheetah became extinct in India in 1952 and was reintroduced after 70 years.

### **Philippine Eagle**

- ❖ The Philippine eagle is one of the largest and rarest eagles in the world and is popularly known as the “monkey-eating bird.”
- ❖ It is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN, with fewer than 500 mature individuals remaining in the wild.

- ❖ It acts as an apex predator and maintains ecological balance by feeding on monkeys, flying squirrels, civets, bats, snakes, birds, and reptiles.
- ❖ The species depends on primary dipterocarp forests in the Philippines, but its habitat is shrinking due to deforestation, logging, agriculture, and mining.
- ❖ It is the national bird of the Philippines and symbolises strength and resilience.

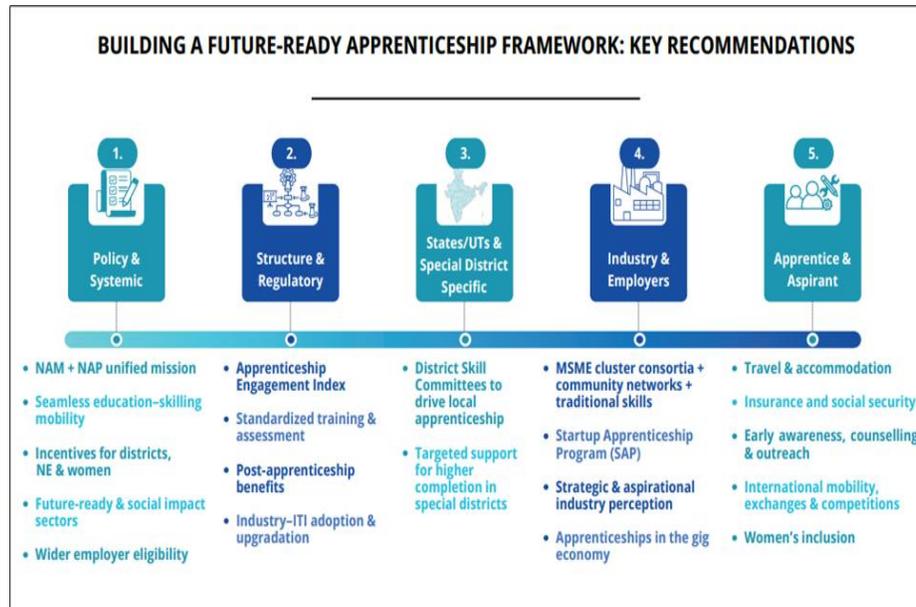


## **REPORTS AND INDICES**

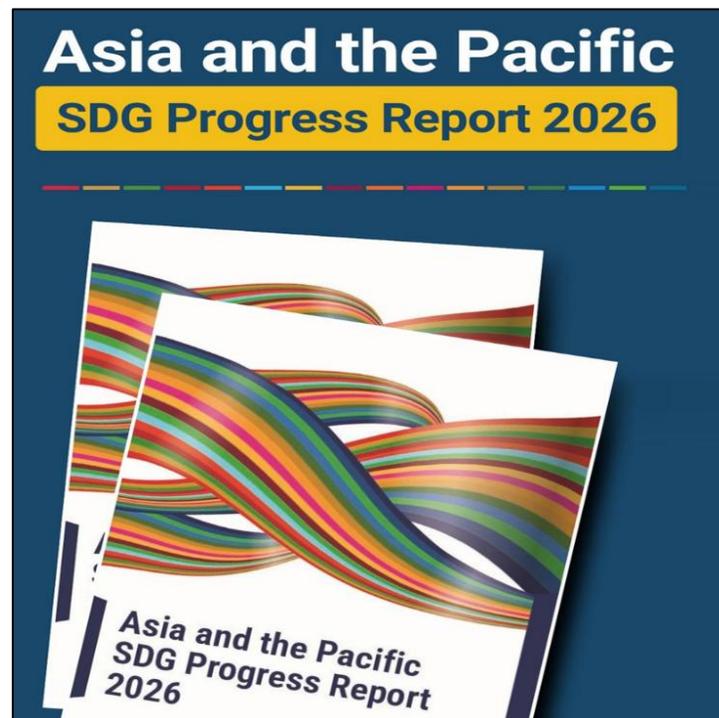
### **NITI Aayog report on Apprenticeship 2026**

- ❖ NITI Aayog released a report titled “Revitalising Apprenticeship Ecosystem: Insights, Challenges, Recommendations and Best Practices”.
- ❖ The report provides a detailed analysis of India’s apprenticeship system and identifies key challenges in implementation.
- ❖ It gives 20 action-oriented recommendations with a clear action plan, assigned responsibilities, and measurable performance indicators.
- ❖ The recommendations are grouped under five pillars: policy and systemic reforms, structural and regulatory strengthening, state and district-level interventions, industry engagement, and apprentice support mechanisms.

- ❖ It proposes a common digital platform, an Apprenticeship Engagement Index, stronger District Skill Committees, and higher participation of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through cluster-based models.



### Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2026



- ❖ The Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2026 was released by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

- ❖ The report warns that the region is likely to miss 103 out of 117 measurable Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets by 2030.
- ❖ Only 14 targets are currently on track, indicating that nearly 88% of goals are projected to be missed if present trends continue.
- ❖ The report highlights severe regression in climate action, marine conservation, and biodiversity protection, which is undermining long-term economic and social progress.
- ❖ Environmental challenges such as rising emissions, ecosystem degradation, and ocean pollution are major obstacles to achieving the 2030 Agenda.
- ❖ However, the region shows relatively strong performance in industry, innovation, and infrastructure, particularly under SDG 9.

## STATE NEWS

### Tulbul Navigation Barrage Project

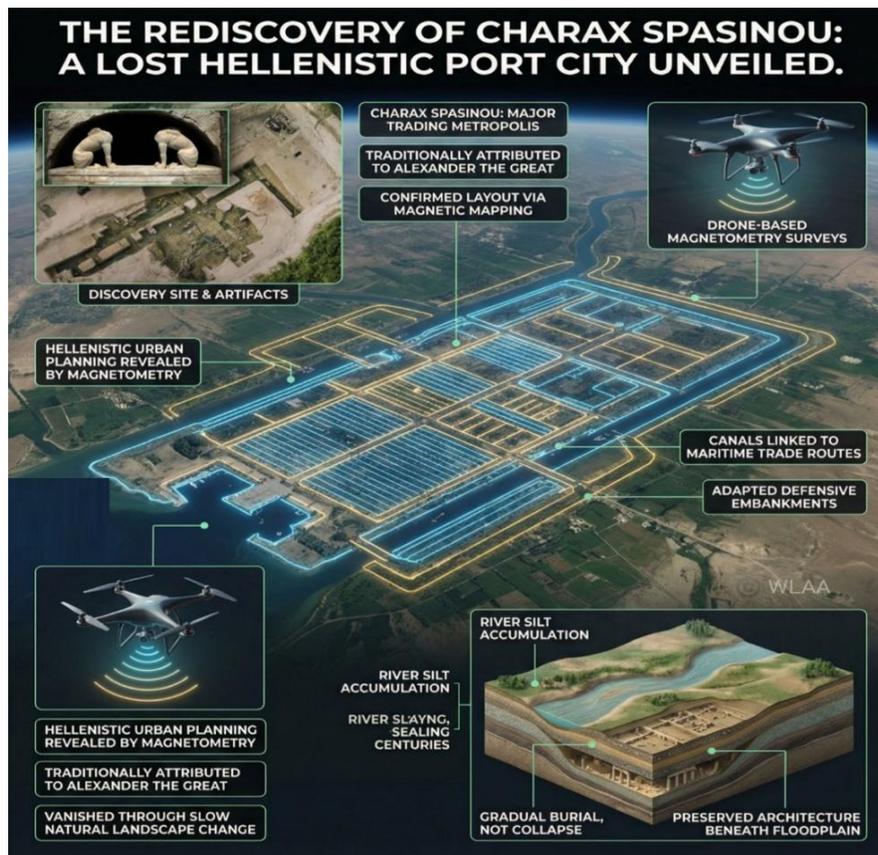


- ❖ The Jammu and Kashmir government is considering diversion of Ravi river water to the Jammu region and revival of the Tulbul Navigation Barrage Project after the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (1960).
- ❖ The Ravi River diversion plan proposes transferring water from Punjab to the Jammu region.
- ❖ The Tulbul Navigation Barrage Project, also known as the Wullar Barrage, is located at the outlet of Wular Lake in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ The project began in 1984 but was stopped due to objections under the Indus Waters Treaty (1960).

- ❖ It was designed to regulate water flow in the Jhelum River during the lean winter months.
- ❖ The project aims to improve navigation and support downstream hydropower generation.

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

### Charax Spasinou City



- ❖ Charax Spasinou was an ancient city in southern Mesopotamia, near the Tigris River in present-day Iraq, recently rediscovered using advanced archaeological technology.
- ❖ The city was founded in 324 BCE during the final years of Alexander the Great and was originally named Alexandria to secure control over key trade routes.
- ❖ It was later rebuilt and renamed Charax Spasinou, possibly under Seleucid or Characene rule, after floods and political instability damaged the original settlement.
- ❖ The city served as a major trade hub connecting riverine and overland routes, facilitating commerce between Arabia, Persia, and the Mediterranean region.



- ❖ Modern researchers used non-invasive tools such as drones and magnetometers to digitally map over 500 square kilometres, revealing buried walls and structures without large-scale excavation.
- ❖ The rediscovery highlights the importance of Hellenistic urban centres in Mesopotamia and reshapes understanding of post-Alexandrian trade and administration in the region.

