

**January - 07**

## **TNPSC BITS**

- ❖ Karnataka has recorded its first sighting of the Sandalwood Leopard, a rare pale reddish-pink morph of the Indian leopard, in Vijayanagara district.
  - This is only the second recorded sighting in India, with the earlier one was sighted at Rajasthan.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu's first jallikattu event of 2026 will be held at Thatchankurichi village in Pudukottai district.

## **TAMIL NADU NEWS**

### **Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme (TAPS) analysis**

Scheme comparison			
	OPS	CPS	TAPS
Nature of scheme	Defined benefit	Defined contribution	Defined and assured benefit
Pension amount	50% of last drawn salary	Depends on corpus and annuity rates	50% of last drawn salary
Employee contribution	Nil	10%	10%
Government contribution	Fully funded by govt	Matching contribution as employees	Bears the portion needed to assure the pension amount
Changes to pension	Rises with pay commission and DA hikes	Not a monthly pension	Fixed pension (DA hikes given)

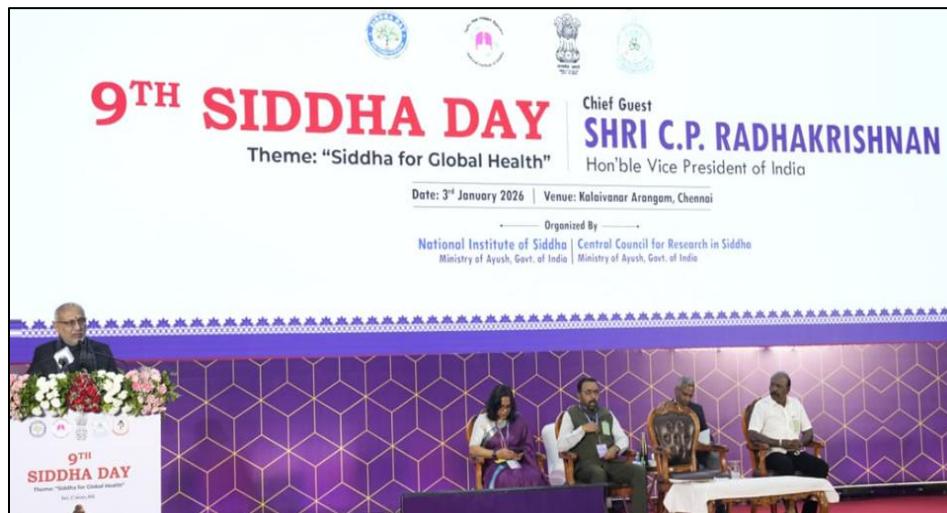
- ❖ It is virtually a replica of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).
- ❖ It is also an improved version of the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS).
- ❖ Except for the monthly individual contribution and pension revision at the time of constitution of every pay commission, the proposed pension scheme follows the broad guidelines of the OPS.
- ❖ One of the key features of the OPS is death-cum-retirement gratuity (DCRG).

- ❖ For instance, in the event of death in harness of those whose length of service is 20 years or more, gratuity not exceeding ₹25 lakh will be paid.
- ❖ This aspect has been included in the TAPS.
- ❖ As in the case of the OPS, family pension will be equivalent to 60% of the pension.
- ❖ Inflation indexation will also be made.
- ❖ Pension under the TAPS will be based on 50% of the pay drawn in the last month of service whereas it is 50% of the average of the last 12 months' basic pay under the UPS.
- ❖ On death of the pensioner under the UPS, only the legally wedded spouse is eligible to receive the family payout, whereas the family — meaning legal heirs nominated by the pensioner — will be covered in the case of the TAPS.
- ❖ While in the UPS, a minimum assured payout is made if superannuation is after 10 years or more of qualifying service.
- ❖ Under the TAPS, it will be given regardless of the length of service.
- ❖ All the existing employees under the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS), numbering approximately 6.24 lakh, are expected to migrate to the TAPS, even though they will be allowed to choose their pension scheme.
- ❖ The government has decided to invest pension funds with the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) instead of the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).
- ❖ Till now, the entire accrued amount under the CPS, which covers those who joined the government service on or after April 1, 2003, is invested in the Superannuation Fund of the LIC.
- ❖ Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) blamed the state government for not using the PFRDA to invest funds, as such a move would have yielded higher returns.
- ❖ A CAG report on State finances for 2023-24, tabled in the Assembly in October 2025, stated: "Previously, the State invested DCPS [Defined Contributory Pension Scheme or CPS] accumulations in both LIC and Treasury Bills, which yielded lower interest than the General Provident Fund rate."
- ❖ This issue was highlighted in previous SFAR [State Finances Audit Report] reports.
- ❖ Currently, the State is investing DCPS accumulations solely in LIC, with interest rates aligned with the General Provident Fund rate, currently set at 7.1%."
- ❖ Projections have been made regarding the growth rate of State Own Tax Revenue (SOTR) at least for the next 15 years.
- ❖ Despite the increase in the value of allocation every year, the proportion of pension liability will stabilise around 21% to 22% of the SOTR.

- ❖ As per the CAG report for 2023-24, the share of pensions and other retirement benefits was 22.5%, as pensions amounted to ₹37,696.81 crore and the SOTR stood at ₹1,67,279 crore.

### **Siddha Day 2026 -**

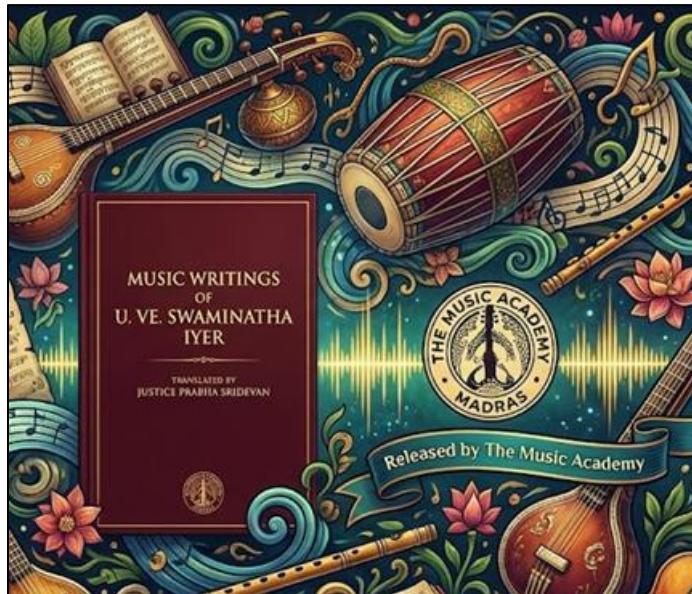
- ❖ The Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) celebrated the 9th Siddha Day.
- ❖ The event was held at Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai, with support from national and State Siddha institutions.
- ❖ Siddha Day is observed every year on 6 January to mark the birth anniversary of Sage Agathiyar.
- ❖ Sage Agathiyar is known as the father of the Siddha system of medicine.
- ❖ The 2026 theme was “Siddha for Global Health.”
- ❖ Siddha medicine originated in Tamil Nadu and is part of India’s traditional healthcare systems.



### **Music Writings of U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer**

- ❖ The English translation of the writings of U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer on musicians and music was released by The Music Academy.
- ❖ U. Ve. Swaminatha Iyer is known as Tamil Thatha (the grand old man of Tamil).
- ❖ The translation was done by Justice Prabha Sridevan.
- ❖ Justice Prabha Sridevan stated that the collection consists of 18 articles.
- ❖ The book includes three detailed writings on Ghanam Krishna Iyer, Gopalakrishna Bharathi, and Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan.

- ❖ Swaminatha Iyer himself learnt music from Gopalakrishna Bharathi, the author of Nandan Charithiram.



## NATIONAL NEWS

### National Digital Land Initiative - Land Stack



- ❖ The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) launched the 'Land Stack' as a first-of-its-kind national digital land governance initiative.
- ❖ The 'Land Stack' is an integrated, GIS-based (Geographic Information System) digital platform for land and property records.
- ❖ It was launched on a pilot basis in Chandigarh and Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ The initiative was introduced under the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP).
- ❖ Along with this, the MoRD also launched the 'Glossary of Revenue Terms' (GoRT).
- ❖ The GoRT provides standard meanings of land revenue terms in vernacular languages, Hindi, English, and Roman scripts.
- ❖ These initiatives aim to improve transparency and accessibility in land record management.

### India's Global Rank in Pharmacovigilance

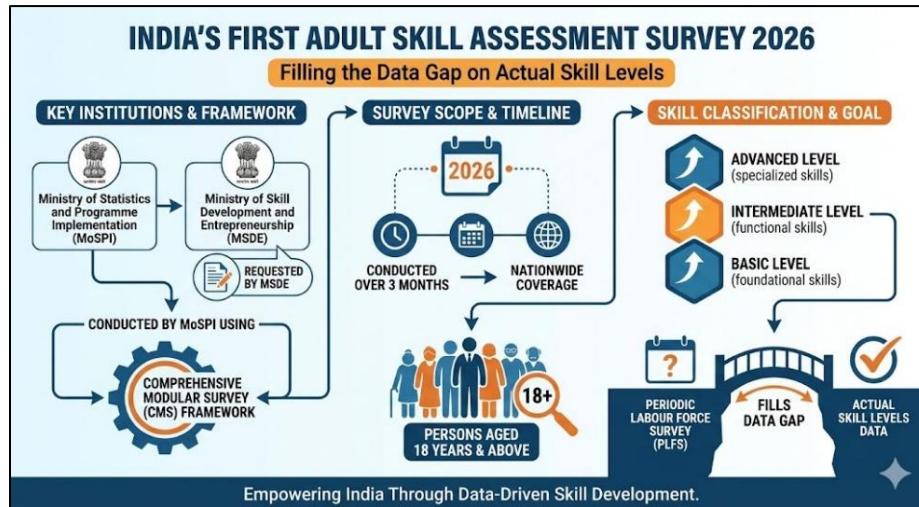
- ❖ India ranked 8th globally in contributions to pharmacovigilance (drug safety monitoring) under the WHO.
- ❖ This marks a sharp improvement from 123rd rank a decade ago.
- ❖ The achievement was announced during the release of the Indian Pharmacopoeia 2026 (10th edition) in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Indian Pharmacopoeia 2026 added 121 new monographs, taking the total to 3,340.
- ❖ Twenty blood component monographs were included for the first time, making India the first country to do so.
- ❖ The Indian Pharmacopoeia is officially recognised in 19 Global South countries.



### Adult Skill Assessment Survey 2026

- ❖ India will conduct its first nationwide Adult Skill Assessment Survey in 2026.
- ❖ The survey will be conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) using the Comprehensive Modular Survey (CMS) framework.

- ❖ It is being carried out at the request of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- ❖ The survey will cover persons aged 18 years and above and will be conducted over three months.
- ❖ Adult skills will be classified into basic, intermediate, and advanced levels.
- ❖ The survey aims to fill the data gap on actual skill levels, which is not covered by the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).



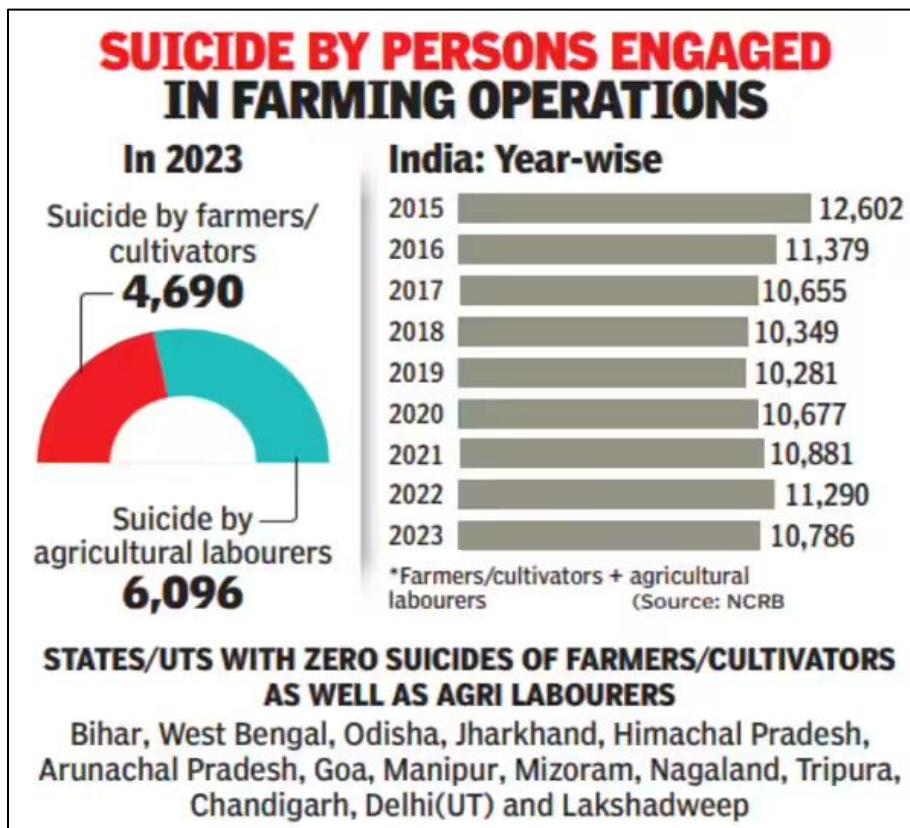
### Know Your Survey Guide



- ❖ The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has released its first reader-friendly guide titled "Know Your Survey".
- ❖ The guide has been published by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

- ❖ It explains the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) in simple and non-technical language.
- ❖ The publication describes the survey coverage, methodology, and quality assurance process.
- ❖ It also informs survey respondents about data collection procedures and confidentiality safeguards.

### Farmer Suicides in India



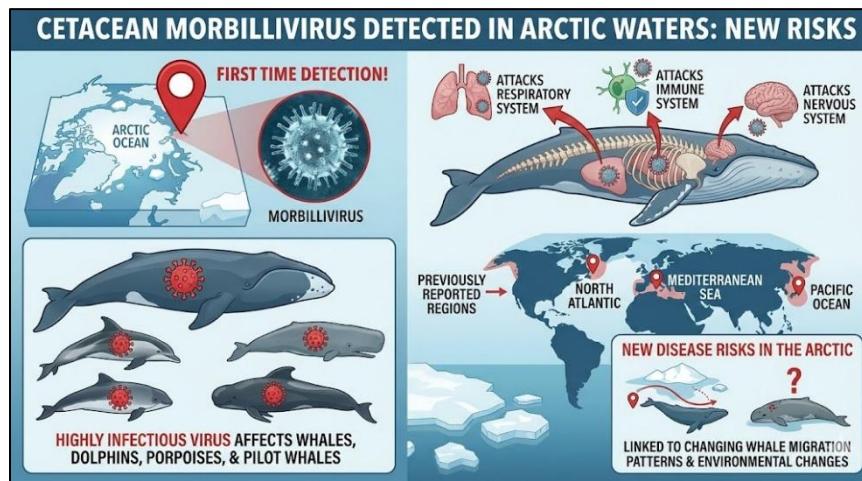
- ❖ Maharashtra and Karnataka have the highest farmer suicide rates in India, about 2.5 times the national average.
- ❖ Between 1995 and 2023, 394,206 farmers and agricultural labourers died by suicide in India.
- ❖ Southern and western India account for around 72.5% of all farmer suicides.
- ❖ The rapid spread of Bt cotton and repeated crop failures increased financial stress for farmers.
- ❖ Agricultural labourers now account for more suicides than cultivators, especially in 2023.

- ❖ The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), crop insurance, and debt relief helped reduce suicides after 2010.
- ❖ In 2023, India recorded 10,786 farmer suicides, a 75% increase compared to 2022.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

### Cetacean Morbillivirus in Arctic Waters

- ❖ Scientists have detected cetacean morbillivirus in Arctic waters for the first time.
- ❖ Cetacean morbillivirus is a highly infectious virus that affects whales, dolphins, porpoises, and pilot whales.
- ❖ The virus attacks the respiratory, immune, and nervous systems of marine mammals.
- ❖ It was earlier reported in the North Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea, and Pacific Ocean regions.
- ❖ The detection indicates new disease risks in the Arctic, linked to changing whale migration patterns.



## ENVIRONMENT NEWS

### Galaxy Frogs in Kerala

- ❖ Seven of the world's rarest galaxy frogs (*Melanobatrachus indicus*) in Kerala's Western Ghats have vanished and are presumed dead.
- ❖ These frogs are tiny amphibians found only in Kerala's Western Ghats.
- ❖ Researchers discovered the seven frogs under rotten logs in March 2020.

- ❖ Between June 2020 and April 2021, photographers disturbed their habitat, overturning logs and using high-powered flashes.
- ❖ When researchers returned in 2021–2022, all seven frogs had disappeared.
- ❖ The species is listed as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), threatened by habitat loss, landslides, and photo tourism.

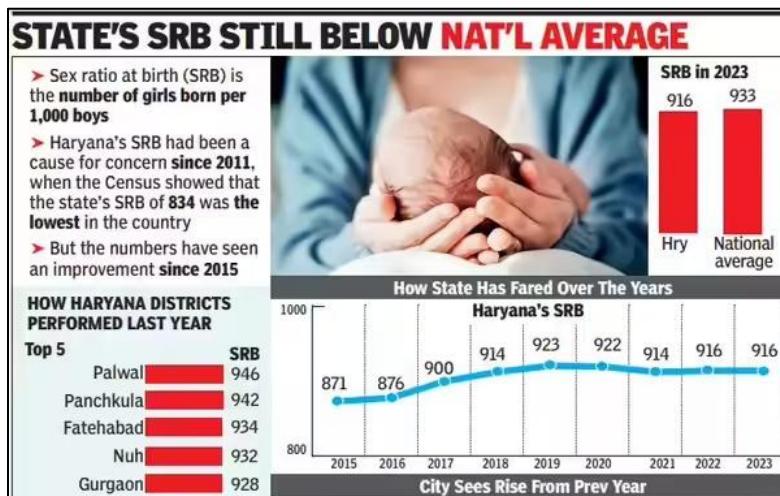
## 'Magical' galaxy frogs disappear after reports of photographers destroying their habitats

Researcher in Kerala rainforest sounds alarm after being told frogs had died after being handled by humans



## STATES' NEWS

### Sex Ratio at Birth - Haryana



- ❖ Haryana recorded a Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) of 923 in 2025, which is the highest in the last five years.

- ❖ The SRB increased from 910 in 2024 to 923 in 2025.
- ❖ A total of 5,19,691 births were registered in Haryana in 2025.
- ❖ Panchkula district recorded the highest SRB in the State at 971.
- ❖ The improvement followed strict enforcement of the PC-PNDT Act (Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act).

### **Right to Disconnect Bill 2025 - Kerala**

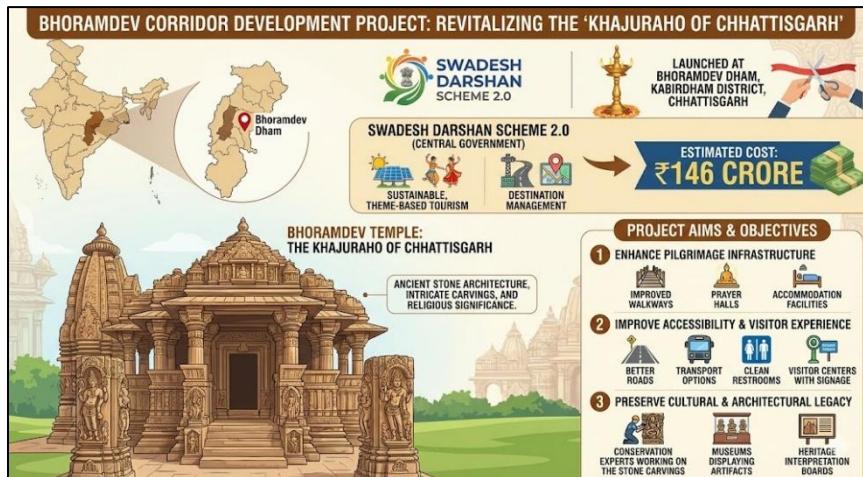
- ❖ Kerala has introduced the Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025 to protect private sector employees from work communication after office hours.
- ❖ The Bill allows employees to ignore work-related calls, emails, messages, and virtual meetings beyond official working time.
- ❖ Employees cannot be penalised or disciplined for disconnecting after work hours.
- ❖ If passed, Kerala will become the first Indian State to enact such a law.
- ❖ Similar laws already exist in countries like France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Belgium.

**KERALA BECOMES INDIA'S FIRST STATE TO  
INTRODUCE THE RIGHT TO DISCONNECT BILL,  
2025, ALLOWING PRIVATE EMPLOYEES TO  
IGNORE WORK CALLS AND EMAILS AFTER  
OFFICE HOURS – PROTECTING THEIR RIGHT TO  
WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

### **Bhoramdev Corridor Development Project**

- ❖ The Bhoramdev Corridor Development Project was launched at Bhoramdev Dham in Kabirdham district, Chhattisgarh.
- ❖ The project is being implemented under the Central Government's Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0.
- ❖ The estimated cost of the project is ₹146 crore.
- ❖ The Bhoramdev Temple, often called the "Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh," is known for its ancient stone architecture, intricate carvings, and religious significance.

- ❖ The project aims to enhance pilgrimage infrastructure, improve accessibility and visitor experience, and preserve the cultural and architectural legacy of the site.



## PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

### IFFCO Sahitya Samman 2025



- ❖ The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) conferred the IFFCO Sahitya Samman 2025 on Hindi writer Maitreyi Pushpa.

- ❖ The award recognises her contribution to Hindi literature, especially writings related to rural life.
- ❖ The IFFCO Young Literary Award 2025 was given to Ankita Jain.
- ❖ The IFFCO Sahitya Samman was instituted in 2011.
- ❖ The award includes a citation, memento, and a cash prize of ₹11 lakh.

