

July - 21

## TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Indian women's hockey forward Deepika has won the Poligras Magic Skill Award 2024-25 for her spectacular solo goal against the world No. 1 Netherlands in the FIH Hockey Pro League.
  - Deepika's winning goal has come in February 2025 during the Bhubaneswar (Odisha) chapter of the Pro League.

## NATIONAL NEWS

### Right to Rehabilitation - Supreme Court

#### Key verdict in land acquisition cases

##### ON SCOPE OF ARTICLE 21

- The Constitution guarantees fair compensation for such acquisition, but not rehabilitation beyond what is provided in law or specific policies
- The deprivation of land for a public purpose, when carried out in accordance with the law, does not violate the right to life and livelihood under Article 21

##### SLAMS POPULIST GOVT SCHEMES

Appeasement-driven rehabilitation schemes often end up complicating the acquisition process and result in prolonged litigation

##### IDENTIFIES KEY BENEFICIARIES

Even in circumstances where rehabilitation is contemplated, it should be limited to those whose lives are "intrinsically connected to the land"



##### CASE IN FOCUS

The case before the court involved a batch of landowners in Haryana whose properties were acquired in the 1990s. They claimed residential plots under a 1992 rehab policy

- ❖ The Supreme Court held that the Constitution guarantees fair compensation for such acquisition, but not rehabilitation beyond what is provided in law or specific policies.
- ❖ It was a significant verdict on the scope of Article 21 (right to life and livelihood) in land acquisition cases.

- ❖ The court also clarified that the state is not under a legal obligation to provide alternative land or housing to outsiders unless such rehabilitation is expressly provided under a policy.
- ❖ When the land is acquired for any public purpose, the person whose land is taken away is entitled to appropriate compensation in accordance with the settled principles of law.
- ❖ The name of the case was Estate Officer Haryana Urban Development Authority Vs Nirmala Devi.
- ❖ Citing earlier judgments, including State of Madhya Pradesh Vs Narmada Bachao Andolan (2011) and Amarjit Singh Vs State of Punjab (2010), the bench asserted that rehabilitation is not a constitutionally guaranteed right.

### Swachh Survekshan 2024-25



- ❖ The Swachh Survekshan Awards 2024-25 were presented by President Droupadi Murmu.
- ❖ It was organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in the national capital of Delhi.
- ❖ The president has described the theme “Waste is Best” as central to promoting circularity in urban development.
- ❖ This year, the awards were presented across four categories, including the Super Swachh League Cities and the top three cleanest cities in five different population categories.



- ❖ This year's Swachh Survekshan also has introduced a simplified and inclusive assessment framework, enabling smaller cities to compete on equal footing with larger counterparts under the principle of "One City, One Award."
- ❖ Super Swachh League is also a newly introduced category under the Swachh Survekshan framework of the Swachh Bharat Mission Urban (SBM-U).
- ❖ The Super Swachh League includes only those cities that have very consistently demonstrated top performance in past Swachh Survekshan editions.
- ❖ Indore has once again retained its title as India's cleanest city for the eighth consecutive year.
- ❖ Surat secured the second position, while Navi Mumbai ranked at third.
- ❖ Vijayawada followed closely, securing the fourth position.
- ❖ Ahmedabad, Bhopal, and Lucknow were declared the new generation of top clean cities.
- ❖ Prayagraj was honoured as the Best Ganga Town.
- ❖ Visakhapatnam, Jabalpur, and Gorakhpur received recognition as the Best Safai Mitra Surakshit Shehars for prioritising the safety, dignity, and the welfare of the sanitation workers.
- ❖ A special award was conferred upon the Government of Uttar Pradesh, the Prayagraj Mela Adhikari, and the Municipal Corporation of Prayagraj for very successfully managing urban waste during the Mahakumbh.
- ❖ In the category of cities with a population between 3 and 10 lakhs, Noida emerged as the cleanest city, followed by Chandigarh and Mysore.
- ❖ Ahmedabad received first position in the category of cities with a population of over 10 lakhs.
- ❖ Mysuru has performed well in the clean city rankings, within the population range of 3 lakh to 10 lakh, and made it to the 'Super Swachh League' (SSL).
- ❖ Other cities within the population range of 3 lakh to 10 lakh (as per the 2011 census) that are included under the SSL cities are Chandigarh, Noida, Ujjain, Gandhinagar, and Guntur.

### **Akash Prime Air Defence System - Ladakh**

- ❖ Indian Army has successfully tested Akash Prime Air Defence System at 15,000 ft (above 4,500 metres) in Ladakh.
- ❖ It marked a major advancement in high-altitude air defence.
- ❖ It strengthens India's defence posture along critical border regions like the LAC and LoC.

- ❖ This Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) system boasts an enhanced precision, mobility, and all-weather performance.
- ❖ It is the upgraded version of the Akash missile system.
- ❖ According to the Defence Ministry, the Akash Prime system has been developed through collaboration between
  - The Indian Army's Air Defence units,
  - The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO),
  - Defence public sector undertakings like Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and
  - Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

**AKASH PRIME: HIGH-ALTITUDE TRIUMPH**  
(Ladakh, July 16, 2025)

**Key Advantages:**

- **HIGH-ALTITUDE READY:**  
Proven in thin air & extreme cold at 15,000+ ft in Ladakh.  
Reliable air defense for northern borders.
- **PINPOINT ACCURACY:**  
Scored 2 Direct Hits on fast-moving targets.  
Validates indigenous active RF seeker
- **STRATEGIC DETERRENCE:**  
Bolsters India's air defense network, particularly against aerial threats in mountainous terrain



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

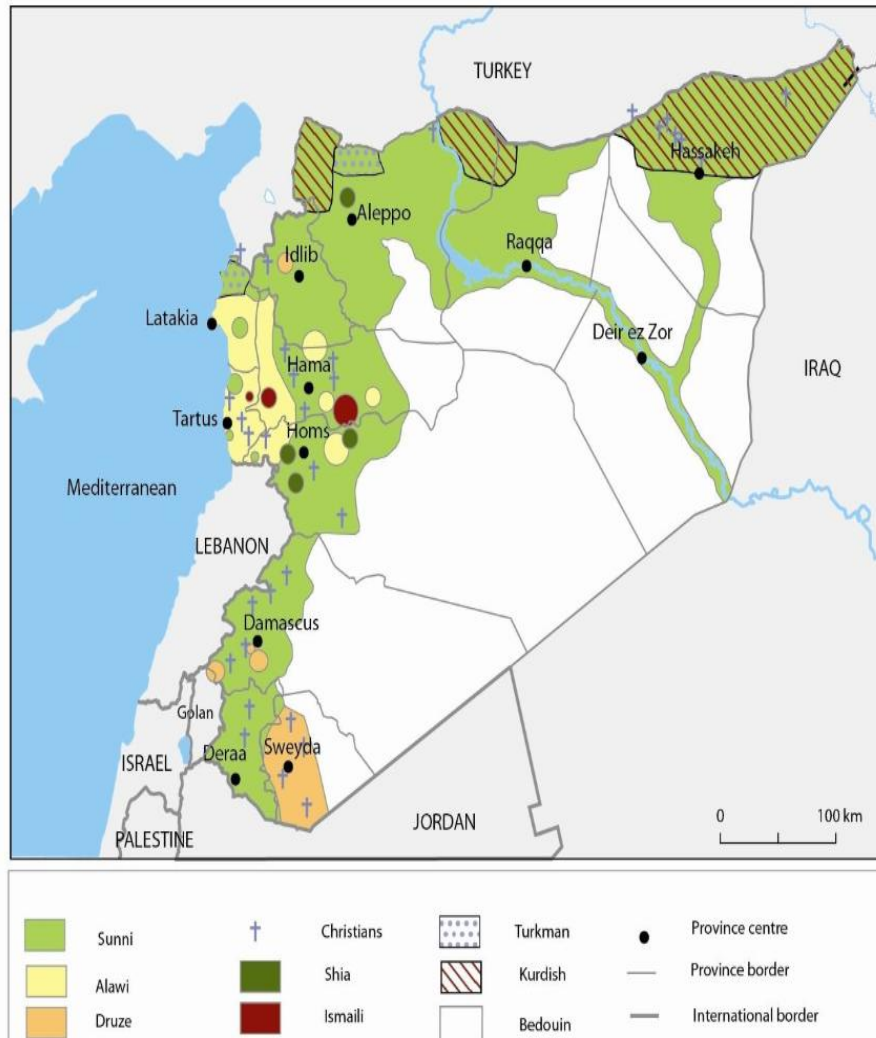
### **Druze conflict in Syria**

- ❖ Renewed clashes broke out overnight between Druze armed groups and members of Sunni Bedouin clans in southern Syria.
- ❖ The Syrian government forces had largely pulled out of the Druze-majority southern province of Sweida.
- ❖ It was after days of clashes with militias linked to the Druze religious minority.
- ❖ The Druze form a substantial community in Israel as well as in Syria and are seen in Israel as a loyal minority, often serving in the military.
- ❖ The Druze religious sect began as a 10th-century offshoot of Ismailism, a branch of Shiite Islam.



- ❖ Most of the other Druze live in Lebanon and Israel, including in the Golan Heights in Syria.
- ❖ Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Middle East War and annexed it in 1981.

Sectarian Distribution in Syria

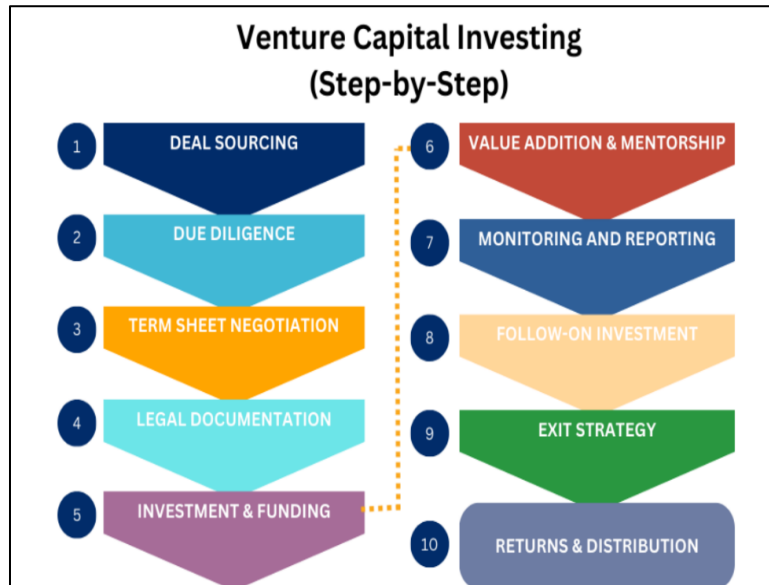


## ECONOMY NEWS

### VCF Settlement Scheme 2025

- ❖ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced the VCF Settlement Scheme 2025.

- ❖ It is aimed at facilitating the resolution of violations related to the winding-up of Venture Capital Funds (VCFs) that have migrated to the Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) regime.
- ❖ In May 2012, SEBI notified the AIF Regulations, which replaced the older VCF Regulations.

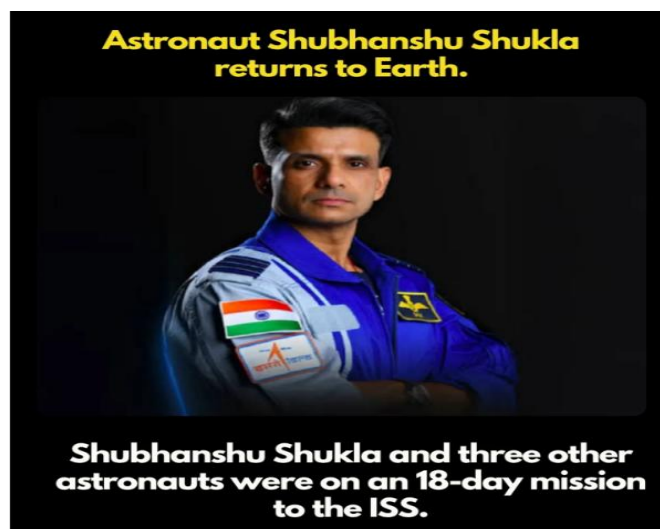


## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

### Shubhanshu Shukla's return - ISS Experiments 2025

- ❖ Indian astronaut Group Captain and the Indian Air Force Officer Shubhanshu Shukla returned to Earth on 15th July from the International Space Station.
- ❖ He has returned after spending 18 days on the International Space Station and orbiting around the Earth 288 times.
- ❖ He was part of the Axiom-4 mission, an international human spaceflight mission organised by Axiom Space, a private space company based in the United States.
- ❖ Shubhanshu Shukla became the first Indian pilot of a commercial orbital space mission and the first Indian to reach the ISS via a private U.S. mission.
- ❖ It also marked one of the first fully private crewed missions to the ISS, combining NASA's infrastructure with commercial spaceflight.
- ❖ The SpaceX Dragon capsule splashed down in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego, California, USA.
- ❖ It has carried four astronauts into space along with Shukla: Peggy Whitson from America as commander of the mission, Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland, and Tibor Kapu of Hungary.

- ❖ The crew travelled to the ISS on a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft using the Falcon 9 rocket.
- ❖ During his time in space, Shukla conducted and completed all seven microgravity experiments and other scheduled scientific tasks.
- ❖ These also included research on the Indian strain of Tardigrades, Myogenesis, Sprouting of methi and moong seeds, Cyanobacteria, Microalgae, Crop seeds, and the Voyager Display.
- ❖ Among the most crucial of Shukla's experiments was the study of space micro algae to examine their ability to generate food, oxygen, and biofuels.
- ❖ The resilience of microalgae in microgravity is considered the key to sustaining human life during extended space missions.
- ❖ Tardigrades, also known as "water bears", are robust aquatic animals that have been around for roughly 600 million years, 400 million years before dinosaurs walked the planet.
- ❖ The primary objective of the experiment was to identify the genes that are highly responsible for making these animals resilient.

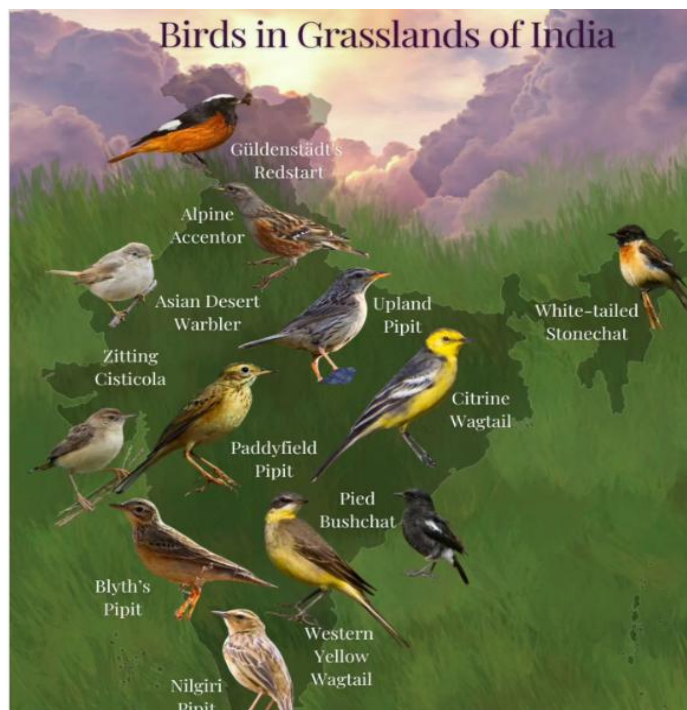


## ENVIRONMENT NEWS

### Grassland Birds Census – Kaziranga

- ❖ The first-ever grassland birds census was conducted in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) in Assam.
- ❖ It recorded 43 grassland species across Kaziranga's three wildlife divisions.
- ❖ They included the critically endangered Bengal florican, the endangered Finn's weaver, and the swamp grass babbler.

- ❖ Among the remaining 40 species, six were in the vulnerable category — the black-breasted parrotbill, marsh babbler, swamp francolin, Jerdon's babbler, slender-billed babbler, and bristled grassbird.
- ❖ A highlight of this survey is that the Finn's weaver, locally known as tukura chorai, is breeding successfully.
- ❖ This remarkable bird, a master nest-builder atop trees, is a very vital indicator of grassland health.
- ❖ The 1,174 sq. km Kaziranga is a mix of grasslands, forestlands, and wetlands.
- ❖ Maharashtra, Gujarat, and West Bengal are among the richest in terms of grassland bird diversity in India.

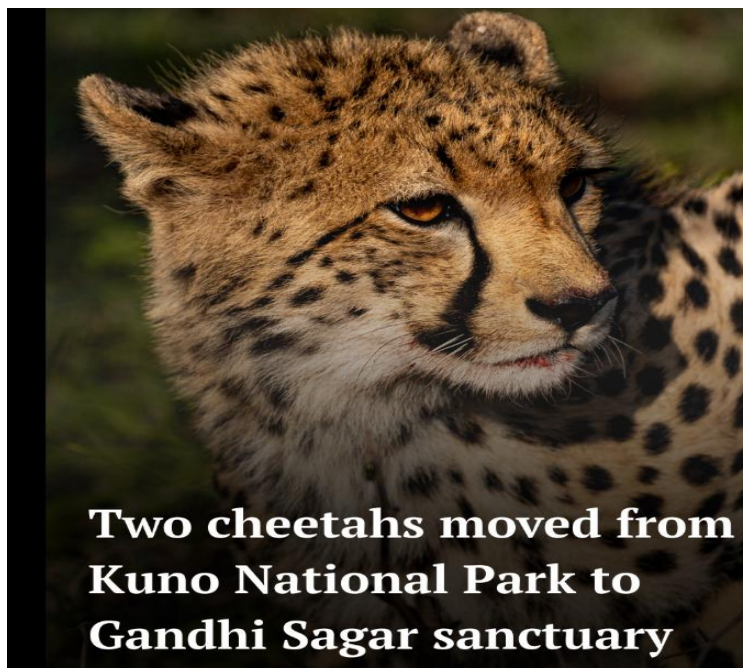


### **Translocation of cheetahs**

- ❖ Cheetahs have been relocated to the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary of Madhya Pradesh from Kuno National Park (MP).
- ❖ The Banni Grasslands in Gujarat are the largest such expanse in the Indian subcontinent.
- ❖ And it is one of the 10 sites selected for cheetah rehabilitation in the country.
- ❖ It is now fully prepared to host the big cats.
- ❖ This is a unique salt-tolerant grassland ecosystem and Asia's very largest tropical grassland.



- ❖ It was inhabited by the pastoral communities, such as the Maldharis, Rabaris, Mutwas, and Meghwals.
- ❖ The natural habitat preferences of cheetahs in Africa also include grasslands, savannahs and scrublands.
- ❖ Vantara, a Jamnagar-based rescue, conservation and rehabilitation facility of the Reliance Foundation, has reintroduced spotted deer into the Banni Grasslands.
- ❖ As part of the reintroduction effort, 20 African cheetahs were brought to Kuno National Park: eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023.
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park was the first site in India to host cheetahs translocated from Africa.



- ❖ Other potential sites listed in the action plan for the cheetah introduction
  - Guru Ghasidas National Park in Chhattisgarh;
  - Dubri Wildlife Sanctuary, Sanjay National Park, Bagdara Wildlife Sanctuary, Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve in MP;
  - Desert National Park and Shahgarh grasslands in Rajasthan and
  - Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary in UP.
- ❖ The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is the nodal agency for this.
- ❖ NTCA is a statutory body under the MoEFCCC constituted under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006.

- ❖ Cheetah is the world's fastest Mammal and the only large carnivore to be extinct in India (1952).
- ❖ It is found only in the arid regions of eastern Iran in Asia and Africa.
- ❖ Unlike other big cats (lions, tigers, leopards, and jaguars), cheetahs don't roar.

## REPORTS AND INDICES

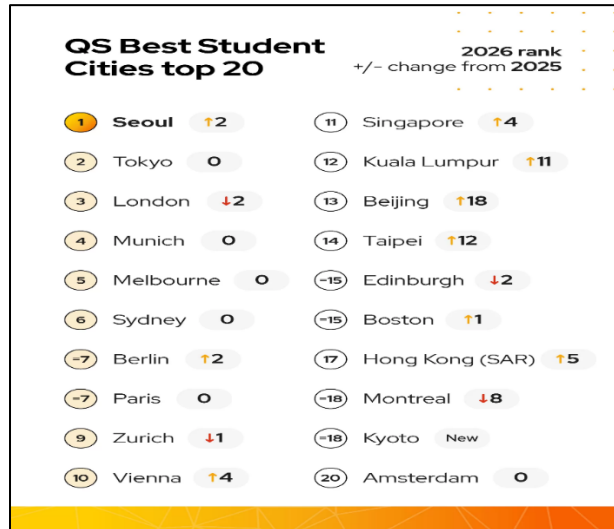
### OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2025/2034



- ❖ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have released the 21st edition of the report.
- ❖ By 2034, only 40 per cent of the world's cereal production will be consumed very directly by humans.
- ❖ A growing share of 27 per cent will be diverted to biofuel and industrial uses.
- ❖ Biofuel demand is projected to grow at 0.9% annually, led by India, Brazil and Indonesia.

- ❖ Cotton's Global use was increased, and India is set to overtake China as the top producer.

### World's Most Affordable Student City in QS 2026



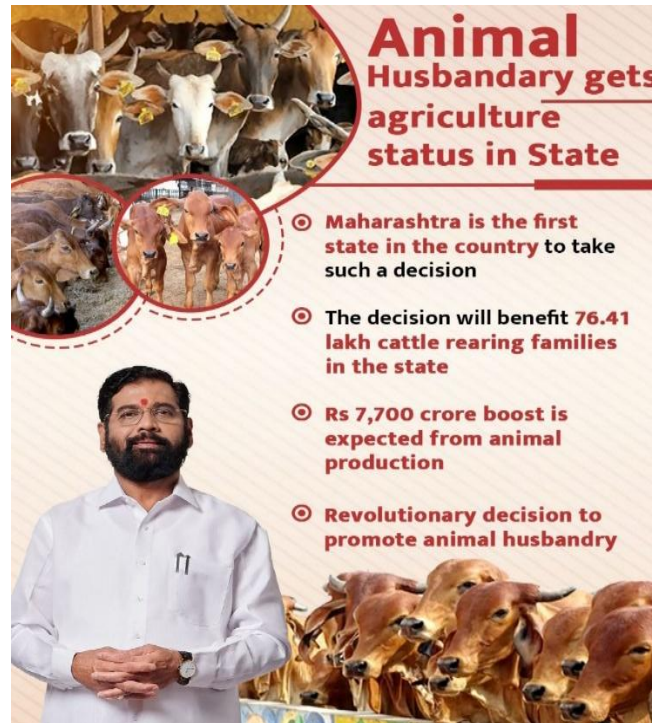
- ❖ It was published annually by Quacquarelli Symonds.
- ❖ The QS has considered the various factors such as safety, pollution, cost of living, desirability and employer activity while preparing the index.
- ❖ Seoul, Tokyo and London are the top three cities in the ranking.
- ❖ Seoul is the world's best student city and ended London's six-year run at the top.
- ❖ It saw four major Indian cities—Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai—make strong upward progress.
- ❖ Delhi emerged as the world's most affordable student city, ranking first globally in this indicator.
- ❖ Chennai climbed to 128th, up from 140 last year.
- ❖ A key factor behind India's improved rankings is the relatively low cost of the education and living in its cities, especially when compared to the very popular destinations like the USA, UK, or Australia.
- ❖ Beyond affordability, Indian cities are also showing stronger employer activity.

## STATES' NEWS

### Agricultural Status of Livestock and Poultry Farming

- ❖ Maharashtra is the first state in the country to grant the agricultural status to livestock farming.

- ❖ As per the decision, livestock-based activities will now be treated on par with agriculture.
- ❖ It allows farmers access to electricity, local body tax, loan subsidies, and solar subsidy under agricultural terms.
- ❖ India's agricultural policies have traditionally focused on the crop production—grains, pulses, fruits, and vegetables.
- ❖ But livestock farming has been treated as a separate or “allied” activity.



### India's First Tribal Genome Sequencing Project



- ❖ Gujarat has become the first Indian State to launch genome sequencing initiative focused exclusively on tribal communities.



- ❖ The initiative will sequence the genomes of 2,000 individuals from the tribal communities across 17 districts in the State.
- ❖ The project, titled “Creation of Reference Genome Database for Tribal Population in Gujarat”, is being implemented by the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC).
- ❖ The initiative will focus on the early detection and targeted treatment of genetic disorders such as sickle cell anaemia, thalassaemia, and certain hereditary cancers.
- ❖ The genetic data collected will also be used to identify markers related to natural immunity and support the development of personalised healthcare solutions.

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

### **Kalinga Ratna Award 2024**



- ❖ President Droupadi Murmu presented the Kalinga Ratna Award-2024 to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan at Cuttack, Odisha.
- ❖ The award ceremony was held during the 600th birth anniversary celebrations of Adikabi Sarala Das, a revered 15th-century Odia poet.
- ❖ Sarala Das is often referred to as the Adikabi (first poet) of Odia literature.
- ❖ Sarala Das is credited with composing the Odia Mahabharata.

### **2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave**

- ❖ India has hosted the 2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.



- ❖ The theme of the Conclave was "Navigating the Future: Blue Economy, Innovation and Sustainable Partnerships".
- ❖ The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) inaugurated this.
- ❖ The member nations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand participated in it.
- ❖ The BIMSTEC means the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- ❖ It is a regional cooperation organization formed in 1997 with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration.
- ❖ It unites South and Southeast Asian nations bordering the Bay of Bengal.



## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

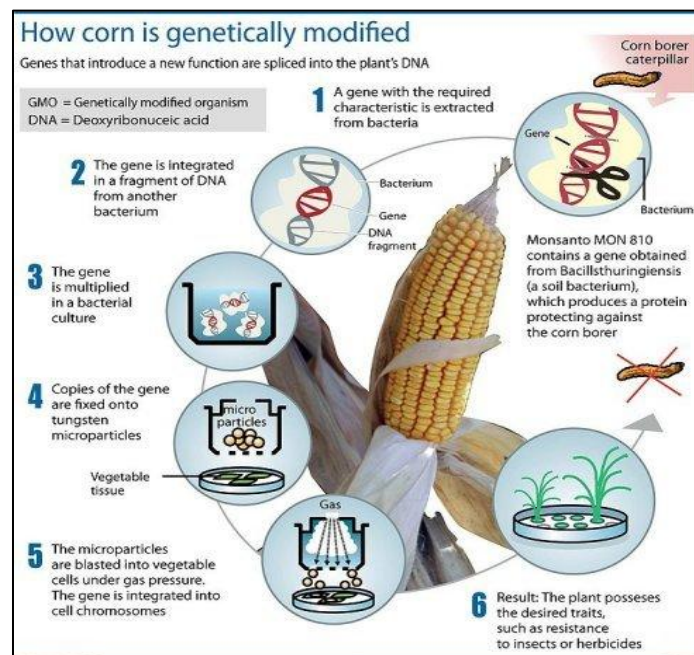
### India's lightest active rigid-frame wheelchair

- ❖ IIT Madras unveils new 8.5-kg wheelchair that enables independence.
- ❖ The institute says its latest innovation, YD One, is India's lightest active rigid-frame wheelchair.
- ❖ The device has a single frame made of aerospace-grade material.

- ❖ Most wheelchairs in the market were heavy and hospital grade, which were unfit for community use.



## GM Maize Field Trials 2025



- ❖ The field trials of two kinds of genetically modified (GM) maize are expected to begin in the ongoing kharif (summer) season at Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana.



- ❖ The Genetically Modified (GM) maize is with herbicide tolerance (HT) and insect resistance (BT).
- ❖ Developed by Bayer, this maize variant is under biosafety trial phase BRL-I and BRL-II.
- ❖ The trials will study weed-control efficacy in herbicide-tolerant maize hybrids with the application of the Glyphosate-K salt, and the very efficacy of insect-protected maize hybrids against targeted lepidopteran pests.
- ❖ In 2018, the Punjab government banned the sale of glyphosate, an herbicide used extensively in the State to control a wide variety of weeds in almost all crops.
- ❖ It was a day after the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) gave the nod for the trials, after receiving consent from the Punjab government.
- ❖ The GEAC functions in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and is the country's top regulator for the GM crops sector.
- ❖ GEAC is the statutory committee framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

