

INSTA ವಿದ್ಯಮಾನ

A Weekly Current Affairs Initiative

KAS, FDA/SDA/PDO/ GROUP C, PSI/PC, TEACHER'S EXAMS

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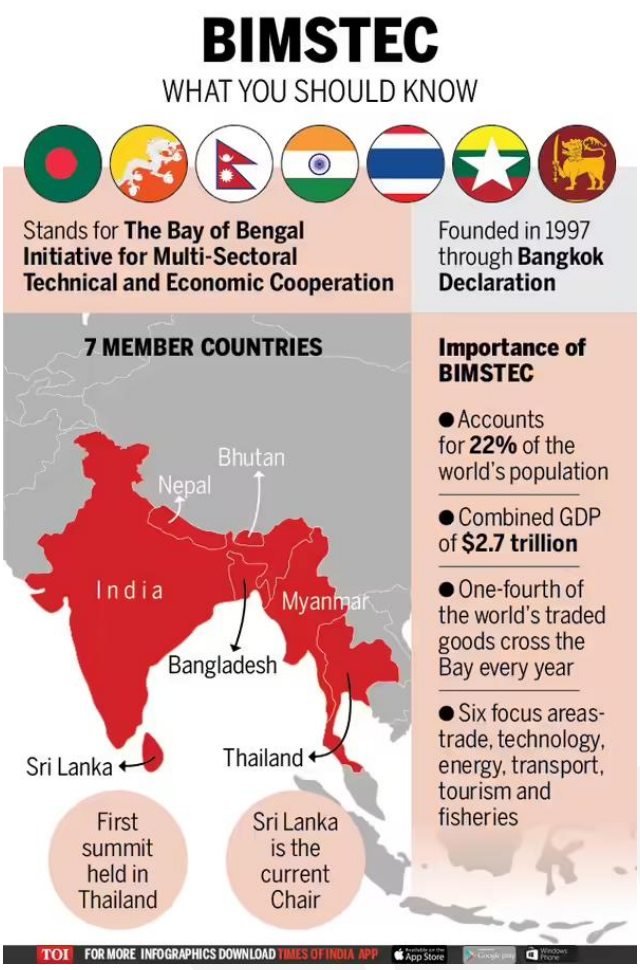
By- Nandan Sir

October 3rd Week 2026

- BIMSTEC's Delhi Declaration
- 'Nameri Wild Classroom' Initiative
- India's Coir Sector
- Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana (PMSSY)
- World Food Day 2026
- Dal Lake
- Overseas Citizens of India
- Diabetes
- India Adds Two New Ramsar Sites
- PUFFINS Telescope Mission
- INS Samarthak
- Internet Access as a Fundamental Right for Children
- 2 Years of PM Internship Scheme
- 10 Years of UDAN Scheme
- Aditya-L1 Mission Offers New Insights
- Namami Gange
- UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List – 3 New Indian Sites
- Badr Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- PM CARES for Children Scheme
- State of Biodiversity Action Report
- Green Diwali Campaign
- India's First Red List of Ecosystems (RLE)
- Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) Mission
- Namo Bharat Diwas 2026
- ASEAN–India Defence Think Tank Forum
- Varunastra Torpedoes and GSAT-7C
- Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2026
- 10 Years of Kigali Amendment
- Bharat Stage VII (BS-VII) Emission Norms
- JWALA: India's First Private-Sector Micro-Missile
- Measles
- Ramesh Chand Committee

BIMSTEC's Delhi Declaration

IR



Context

- The Delhi Declaration was adopted on 13 October 2026 during the inaugural BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting hosted by India in New Delhi

BIMSTEC

- **Full Form:** Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- **Established: 1997** through the **Bangkok Declaration**.
- **Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh**.
- **Members (7):** Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- **Founding Members:** Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- **Objectives:** Promote **regional cooperation** in economic growth, trade, connectivity, science and technology.
- **Geographical Coverage:** Countries in **South and Southeast Asia** around the Bay of Bengal.
- **Significance:** Strengthens **regional connectivity, economic integration and security cooperation** between South and Southeast Asia.

DELHI DECLARATION

- **Adopted at:** The first BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting hosted by India.
- **Key Focus:** Strengthening regional cooperation against **terrorism, terror financing, drug trafficking, human trafficking and money laundering**.

'Nameri Wild Classroom' Initiative

Environment

News

- The **Assam Forest and Climate Change Department launched the 'Nameri Wild Classroom' initiative** at Nameri Tiger Reserve **to connect students with nature through hands-on learning.**

NAMERI WILD CLASSROOM

- **Launched by:** Assam Forest and Climate Change Department at **Nameri Tiger Reserve**.
- **Objective:** Promote **environmental awareness, scientific curiosity and wildlife conservation** among schoolchildren from **Class 8 onwards**.
- **Programme: Residential 2–3 day field camps** featuring birdwatching, biodiversity studies, ecosystem learning and traditional knowledge of forest-dwelling communities.

NAMERI TIGER RESERVE

- **Location:** Sonitpur district, Assam, in the foothills of the **Eastern Himalayas**.
- **River:** Jia-Bharali (known as the **Kameng River** in Arunachal Pradesh).

India's Coir Sector

Economy



Context

- **India's coir sector is gaining importance as a sustainable, export-oriented industry** that promotes rural livelihoods, women's empowerment and value addition to agricultural waste.

COIR INDUSTRY

- **Definition:** Coir is a **natural fibre extracted from the outer husk of coconuts, used to make mats, ropes, brushes and mattresses.**
- **Global Position:** India is the **world's largest producer and exporter of coir** and coir products, accounting for around **two-thirds of global production.**
- **Employment:** Provides direct and indirect employment to over **7 lakh people**, around **80% of whom are women**.
- **Udyam Registration:** Over **21,000 coir units**, employing around 2.3 lakh people.

COIR VIKAS YOJANA (CVY)

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises **(MSME).**
- **Objective:** Sustainable development and **modernisation of the coir industry.**
- **Key Interventions:**
  - **Skill Development:** Training for artisans, especially rural women.
  - **Research and Technology:** Improved machinery and production techniques.
  - **Market Promotion:** Domestic sales, exports and trade fair participation.
  - **Financial Assistance:** Support for production infrastructure.

Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana (PMSSY)

Government Scheme

News

- **The Union Cabinet has renamed the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) as the Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana (PMSSY)**

NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (NSAP)

- **Launch: 15 August 1995.**
- **Ministry:** Ministry of **Rural Development.**
- **Nature: Centrally Sponsore**d, non-contributory social assistance programme.
- **Objective: Financial assistance to vulnerable** (BPL households, including **elderly persons, widows, persons with disabilities and families losing their primary breadwinner.**
- **Constitutional Basis: Article 41** of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP).

KEY COMPONENTS

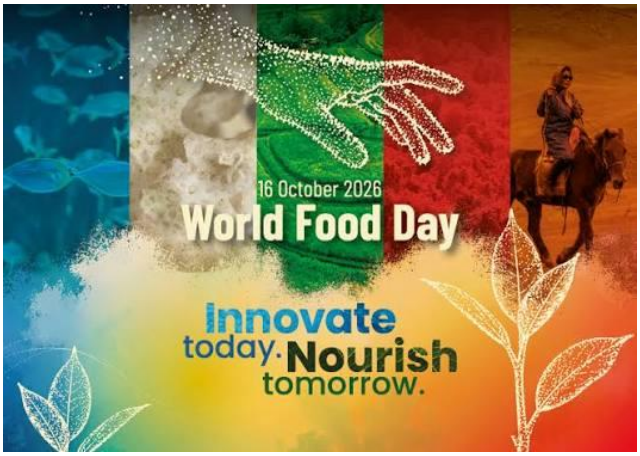
- **Old-Age Pension:** Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS).
- **Widow Pension:** Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS).
- **Disability Pension:** Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS).
- **Family Benefit:** National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) provides a one-time grant following the death of the primary breadwinner in an eligible BPL household.

DISABILITY PENSION — KEY PROVISIONS

- **Eligibility:** Benchmark **disability of 40% or more,** as stated in the supplied announcement.
- **Age Requirement:** The announcement states that the minimum age limit has been removed.
- **Monthly Assistance: ₹375 for beneficiaries aged 0–79 years and ₹625 for those aged 80 years and above,** as stated in the supplied announcement.
- **Coverage:** Approximately **3.20 crore beneficiaries**, according to the announcement.

World Food Day 2026

Economy



Context

- The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), in collaboration with the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) celebrated World Food Day 2026.**

WORLD FOOD DAY 2026

- **Observed:** 16 October; marks the founding of **FAO in 1945**.
- **Theme 2026:** "**Innovate today. Nourish tomorrow.**"
- **Objective:** Raise awareness about **hunger** and promote **global food security**.

Food Security Concerns — SOFI 2026

- **Global hunger: 7.8%** of the global population faced hunger in **2025**.
- **India's undernourishment: 142.5 million (9.8%)** in 2023–25, down from **243.9 million** in 2004–06.
- **Healthy diet cost: PPP $4.11 per person per day** in India in 2025.
- **Affordability crisis: 520.1 million Indians (35.5%)** could not afford a healthy diet.
- **Child malnutrition: Stunting — 32.9%; Wasting — 18.7%**.
- **Emerging concerns:** Rising **childhood overweight, adult obesity and women's anaemia**.

Additional Information - India's Food Security Framework

- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Subsidised foodgrains for up to **75% of the rural** and **50% of the urban population**, covering around **81 crore people**.
- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY): Free foodgrains** for eligible beneficiaries; extended until **2028**, as stated in the supplied source.
- **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS):** Foodgrain distribution to **eligible households**.
- **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC): Nationwide ration portability**, especially for migrant workers.
- **PM POSHAN:** School meal programme to improve **children's nutrition, attendance and retention**.
- **Food fortification:** Fortification of **rice, wheat flour and edible oils**.
- **Poshan Tracker:** Monitors children's growth and **nutritional status**.

- **Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0:** Integrates **Anganwadi Services, POSHAN Abhiyaan and support for adolescent girls** to combat malnutrition.

Dal Lake

Environment



Context

- The **Jammu and Kashmir High Court has banned the use of motorboats and jet skis in Dal Lake.**

Dal Lake

- **Location:** Srinagar, **Jammu and Kashmir**, in the Kashmir Valley.
- **Basins:** Includes **Gagribal, Lokut Dal, Bod Dal and Nigeen**.
- **Major Attractions: Floating gardens, shikara rides, houseboats and floating vegetable market**.
- **Economic Importance:** Supports **tourism, fishing, horticulture and local livelihoods**.
- **Ecological Importance:** Supports **aquatic biodiversity** and helps regulate the local hydrological environment.
- **Environmental Threats: Untreated sewage, solid waste, aquatic weed growth, siltation and encroachment**.

Additional Information - Important Lakes in India

Lake
State/UT
Key fact

Wular Lake
Jammu & Kashmir
One of India's largest freshwater lakes; associated with the Jhelum River.

Dal Lake
Jammu & Kashmir
Famous for houseboats, shikaras and floating gardens.

Pangong Tso
Ladakh
High-altitude, saline lake extending into Tibet (China).

Tso Moriri
Ladakh
High-altitude lake in the Changthang region; important for migratory birds.

Chilika Lake
Odisha
Brackish-water lagoon; Ramsar site and habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins.

Pulicat Lake
Andhra Pradesh–Tamil Nadu
Brackish lagoon; separated from the Bay of Bengal by Sriharikota barrier island.

Vembanad Lake
Kerala
Longest lake in India; part of the Vembanad–Kol wetland system.

Ashtamudi Lake
Kerala
Ramsar wetland known for its palm-shaped backwater system.

Sasthamkotta Lake

Kerala
Largest freshwater lake in Kerala.

Kolleru Lake
Andhra Pradesh
Freshwater lake between the Krishna and Godavari deltas; Ramsar site.

Loktak Lake
Manipur
Famous for floating masses of vegetation called phumdis; site of Keibul Lamjao National Park.

Deepor Beel
Assam
Ramsar wetland near Guwahati; important for waterbirds.

Sambhar Lake
Rajasthan
India's largest inland saline lake; important for salt production.

Lonar Lake
Maharashtra
Saline and alkaline lake formed by a meteorite impact in basaltic rock.

Nalsarovar
Gujarat
Shallow wetland and important habitat for migratory birds; Ramsar site.

Bhojtal (Upper Lake)
Madhya Pradesh
Major artificial freshwater lake in Bhopal.

Pushkar Lake
Rajasthan
Sacred lake associated with Hindu pilgrimage.

Overseas Citizens of India

Polity and Governance



Context

- **Actor Imran Khan, a US citizen and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder, has been asked by the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) to leave India,** days after he joined a protest in Mumbai.

OCI (Overseas Citizen of India)

- **Status: Foreign citizens of Indian origin.** It is not dual citizenship.
- **Eligible:** Anyone **who was an Indian citizen on/after Jan 26, 1950, or their descendants**. **Foreign spouses qualify after 2 years of marriage**.
- **Barred:** A**nyone with ties to Pakistan or Bangladesh. Foreign military personnel are also excluded.**

Privileges (What They CAN Do)

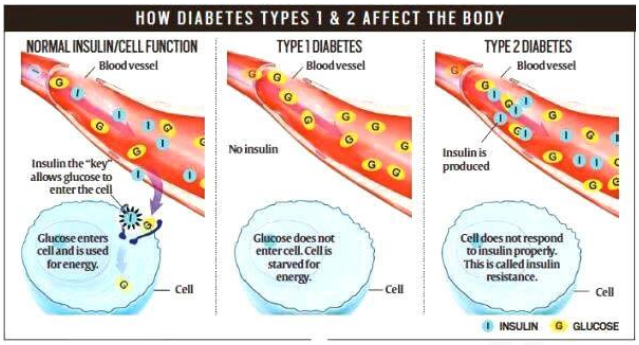
- **Lifelong Visa**: Multiple-entry, multi-purpose visa.
- **No Foreigners Regional Registration Office**: No police reporting required, regardless of stay duration.
- **NRI Parity: Same rights as NRIs in economic, financial, and educational fields.**
- **Work: Can practice as doctors, dentists, lawyers, and chartered accountants in India.**

Restrictions (What They CANNOT Do)

- **No Voting:** Cannot vote in any Indian elections.

- **No Public Office:** Barred from government jobs and constitutional posts (e.g., President, Judge).
- **No Farm Land:** Cannot buy agricultural or plantation property.Permissions Needed: Requires prior approval for journalism, research, missionary work, or visiting restricted areas.

Diabetes
Health



Context

- The ICMR-INDIAB study estimates **India now has 101 million people living with diabetes and 136 million with prediabetes.**

Definition

- **Diabetes mellitus:** A chronic metabolic disorder characterised by **high blood glucose levels** due to insufficient insulin production or ineffective insulin use.
- **Insulin:** A hormone produced by the **pancreas** that enables glucose to enter cells for energy.

Types of Diabetes

- **Type 1:** An **autoimmune disease** that destroys insulin-producing cells; requires lifelong insulin therapy.
- **Type 2:** Caused by **insulin resistance** or inadequate insulin production; associated with obesity, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and family history.
- **Gestational Diabetes:** Develops during **pregnancy**; increases the future risk of Type 2 diabetes.

World Diabetes Day

- **Observed:** 14 November annually.
- **Objective:** Raise awareness about **diabetes prevention, management and care**.

India Adds Two New Ramsar Sites
Environment



Context

- **India's Ramsar Site tally has reached 103, with Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh and Sauj Jheel in Uttar Pradesh** becoming the latest additions.

Sukhna Wetland

- **Location:** Chandigarh, at the foothills of the **Outer Himalayas**.
- **Significance:** Reservoir that regulates **sediment and water flows**; supports resident and migratory waterbirds along the **Central Asian Flyway**.
- **Important Species: Common pochard** (Vulnerable) and **Pallas's fish eagle** (Endangered).

Sauj Jheel

- **Location:** Uttar Pradesh, in the **Ganga River floodplain**.
- **Significance:** Shallow lake supporting over **30,000 waterbirds**; designated an **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)** by BirdLife International.
- **Important Species: Sarus crane** (Vulnerable) and **Greater spotted eagle** (Vulnerable).

Connect with the basics - Ramsar Convention

- A Ramsar site is a **wetland designated as one of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.**
- **Ramsar Convention -** It is one of the inter-governmental accords to preserve the wetlands of international importance.
- **It was signed on February 2, 1971 in Ramsar, Iran and came into force in 1975.**
- **India became a signatory to the Ramsar Convention in 1982**.

Montreux Record (Threatened Sites)

- **What it is**: A register of Ramsar sites facing ecological danger from pollution or human interference.Active Indian Sites:
- **Only two sites—Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur).**
- **Removed- Chilika Lake** was removed after successful recovery.

RAMSAR FACTS 2026

Important Facts

- **Total Ramsar Sites in India:** 103 (as of 22 October 2026).
- **First Ramsar Sites:** Chilika Lake (Odisha) and Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan), designated in 1981.
- **India joined:** 1 February 1982.
- **Most Ramsar Sites:** Tamil Nadu (20), followed by Uttar Pradesh (14).
- **100th Ramsar Site:** Surha Tal (Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary), Uttar Pradesh.
- **Latest Additions:** Sukhna Wetland (Chandigarh) and Sauj Jheel (Uttar Pradesh).

Important Ramsar Sites — Location and Significance

- **Chilika Lake — Odisha:** Brackish-water lagoon; Irrawaddy dolphins.
- **Keoladeo National Park — Rajasthan:** Important bird habitat.
- **Wular Lake — Jammu & Kashmir:** Freshwater lake associated with the Jhelum River.
- **Loktak Lake — Manipur:** Floating *phumdis*; Keibul Lamjao National Park.
- **Sambhar Lake — Rajasthan:** India's largest inland saline lake.
- **Vembanad–Kol Wetland — Kerala:** Extensive backwater ecosystem.
- **Kolleru Lake — Andhra Pradesh:** Freshwater lake between the Krishna and Godavari deltas.
- **Sukhna Wetland — Chandigarh:** Habitat for resident and migratory waterbirds.
- **Sauj Jheel — Uttar Pradesh:** Ganga floodplain wetland supporting large waterbird populations.

PUFFINS Telescope Mission

Science & technology



News

- **Dr. Ramya Anche**, Bengaluru-born astronomer, selected as Principal Investigator of NASA's **$20-million PUFFINS mission**.

About PUFFINS

- **Full Form:** Polarimetry in the Ultraviolet to Find Features in Interstellar Dust.
- **Type:** Small Satellite (**SmallSat**) in **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**.
- **Funding:** NASA's **Astrophysics Pioneers programme**.
- **Lead Institution:** University of Arizona's **Steward Observatory**, with support from McDonald Observatory, University of Texas.
- **Objective:** Study the **composition, structure and magnetic alignment of interstellar dust**

grains and their role in star and planet formation.

- **Technique: Ultraviolet spectropolarimetry** — measures the polarisation of ultraviolet starlight across wavelengths.
- **Focus:** Interstellar dust particles smaller than approximately **50 nanometres**.

Significance

- Improves understanding of **interstellar dust and galactic magnetic fields**.
- Helps explain the processes involved in **star and planetary system formation**.

INS Samarthak

Defence



In News

- **The Indian Navy commissioned INS Samarthak,** the lead ship of the indigenously designed Multi-Purpose Vessels (MPVs), strengthening India's naval capabilities and indigenous shipbuilding.

INS Samarthak

- **Type:** Multi-Purpose Vessel (MPV); a **107-metre auxiliary naval platform**.
- **Builder:** Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Shipyard, **Kattupalli, Tamil Nadu**.
- **Roles:**
    - Supports **fleet operations** and testing of indigenous weapons and sensors.
    - Acts as a **mothership for autonomous systems**.
    - Supports the launch, control and recovery of **UAVs, AUVs and USVs**.
    - Performs auxiliary tasks, reducing the workload and machinery wear of **frontline warships**.

INTERNET ACCESS AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT FOR CHILDREN

Polity and Governance

Context

- The **Supreme Court** recognised children's constitutional rights to **Internet access and use** while hearing matters concerning the circulation of **Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Material (CSEAM)** online.

Key Observations of the Supreme Court

- **Fundamental Right:** Internet access is linked to **Article 21** (right to life and personal liberty) and **Article 19(1)(a)** (freedom of speech and expression).
- **Children's Rights:** Children enjoy **constitutional rights irrespective of age**; their freedom of expression cannot be denied merely because they are minors.
- **Protection from Abuse:** Non-consensual, sexually exploitative and abusive material must have **no place on the Internet**.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 21:** Right to **life and personal liberty**.
- **Article 19(1)(a):** Freedom of **speech and expression**, including the right to access and communicate information.
- **Article 19(2):** Permits **reasonable restrictions** on freedom of speech and expression on specified constitutional grounds.

Important Supreme Court Judgments

- **Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020):** Freedom of speech and expression, and the freedom to carry on trade or business through

the Internet, are protected under **Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g)**.

- **Pragya Prasun v. Union of India (2025):** Recognised digital access as an intrinsic component of **Article 21**, in the context of accessibility and digital KYC for persons with disabilities.
- **Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting v. Cricket Association of Bengal (1995):** Article 19(1)(a) includes the **right to know and to receive and impart information and ideas**.

Additional Information - Australia's Social Media Minimum-Age Law

- **Legislation: Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024**.
- **Provision:** Establishes a minimum age of **16 years** for accounts on designated social media platforms.
- **Implementation:** Overseen by the **Australian eSafety Commissioner**.
- **Concerns:** Effectiveness of age-assurance methods, **privacy risks** and possible circumvention.

2 Years of PM Internship Scheme
Government Schemes

Context

- The PM Internship Scheme has completed 2 years of its implementation.

PM Internship Scheme

- **Objective:** To provide internship opportunities to youth in leading companies, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills.
- **Ministry**: Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- **Duration**: The internship lasts for 12 months.
- **Stipend**: Interns will receive a monthly stipend of ₹5,000 for the entire year.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Must be an Indian citizen.
  - Must be aged between 21-24 years.
  - Should not be employed full-time or engaged in full-time education.

10 Years of UDAN Scheme
Government Schemes

News

- **The UDAN Scheme completed ten years** and considerably expanded the regional aviation network of India by linking unserved and underserved areas.

UDAN

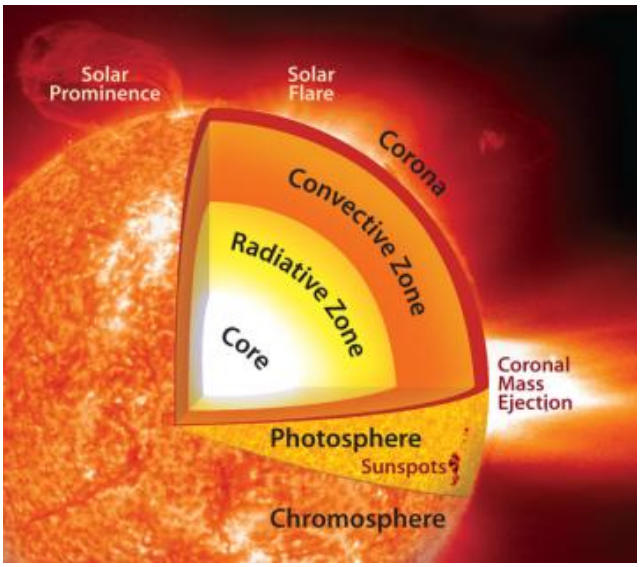
- **Full Form:** *Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik*.
- **Launch:** 2016.
- **Ministry: Ministry of Civil Aviation**.
- **Framework:** Regional Connectivity Scheme (**RCS**) under the **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP), 2016**.
- **Objective:** Provide **affordable air connectivity** to **Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities** and underserved regions.
- **First Flight: Shimla–Delhi**, April 2017.
- **Mechanism:** Airline concessions and **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** to support regional routes.

Significance

- **Inclusive Growth:** Connects smaller cities to national markets.
- **Regional Development:** Improves connectivity to the **North-East, hills and islands**.
- **Economic Growth:** Promotes **tourism, MSMEs and perishable-goods exports**.
- **Employment:** Supports **regional aircraft, MRO services and pilot training**.
- **Infrastructure:** Expands regional airports and aviation services.

Aditya-L1 Mission offers New Insights

Science & Technology



Context

- **Scientists have generated Doppler velocity images of activities taking place in the solar corona** using data from India's maiden solar mission, Aditya-L1.

Doppler Velocity

- **Doppler Effect:** Change in the observed frequency of a wave due to relative motion between the source and observer.
- **Positive Doppler Velocity:** Solar plasma moving **away from the observer**.
- **Negative Doppler Velocity:** Solar plasma moving **towards the observer**.
- **Significance:** Helps measure plasma motion and understand solar activity and space weather.

About Aditya-L1

- **Launch:** 2023.
- **Significance:** India's **first space-based solar observatory**.
- **Location: Sun–Earth L1 (Lagrange Point 1)**, approximately 1.5 million km from Earth towards the Sun.
- **Objective:** Study the Sun's **photosphere, chromosphere, corona, solar wind and magnetic activity**.

Advantages of Aditya-L1 at L1

- **Continuous Observation:** Minimises interruptions caused by Earth's occultation of the Sun.
- **Solar-Wind Study:** Enables *in-situ* measurement of solar wind and energetic particles.
- **Space Weather Monitoring:** Helps study solar flares and CMEs that can affect satellites, communication and power grids.

Namami Gange

Government Schemes



Context

- The programme adopts a **multi-technology approach to wastewater treatment**, combining infrastructure development, decentralised solutions, rehabilitation and long-term operation.

About Namami Gange

- **Launch:** 2014.
- **Nature:** Integrated Conservation Mission.
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- **Implementing Agency: National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**.
- **Objectives: Pollution abatement, conservation and rejuvenation of the River Ganga**.

Major Pillars

1. **Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure:** Construction and rehabilitation of sewage treatment plants (STPs).

2. **Riverfront Development:** Development of ghats and crematoria.
3. **River-Surface Cleaning:** Removal of floating waste.
4. **Biodiversity Conservation:** Protection of aquatic ecosystems and species.
5. **Afforestation:** Plantation along the Ganga basin.
6. **Public Awareness:** Community participation and behavioural change.
7. **Industrial Effluent Monitoring:** Monitoring and control of industrial pollution.
8. **Ganga Gram:** Promoting sanitation and cleanliness in villages along the Ganga.

Significance

- Improves **river-water quality** and sanitation.
- Reduces the discharge of **untreated sewage and industrial effluents**.
- Supports **aquatic biodiversity and ecological restoration**.
- Promotes sustainable river management through **technology and community participation**.

Additional Information - GANGA RIVER

Origin and Course

- **Origin:** Gangotri Glacier (Gaumukh), Uttarakhand; the headstream is called the **Bhagirathi**.
- **Confluence:** Bhagirathi meets the **Alaknanda at Devprayag**, forming the Ganga.
- **Length:** Approximately **2,525 km**.
- **Drainage Basin:** India and Bangladesh.
- **Outfall:** Enters the Bay of Bengal through the **Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna delta**.

Major Tributaries

- **Left-bank tributaries:** Ramganga, Gomti, Ghaghara, Gandak, Kosi and Mahananda.
- **Right-bank tributaries:** Yamuna, Son, Punpun and Damodar.

States Through Which It Flows

- **Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal**.
- In Bangladesh, its main distributary is known as the **Padma**.

Important Features

- **Largest river basin in India** by drainage area.
- The **Yamuna** is a major tributary, joining the Ganga at **Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh**.
- The **Sundarbans Delta**, formed by the Ganga–Brahmaputra river system, is among the world's largest deltas.
- Supports agriculture, drinking water, transport, fisheries and biodiversity.

Ecological Significance

- Habitat of the **Gangetic river dolphin** — India's National Aquatic Animal.
- Other important species include the **gharial** and several freshwater turtle species.
- The Ganga basin supports a large share of India's population and agricultural activity.

Major Government Initiatives

- **Namami Gange Programme (2014):** Pollution abatement, conservation and rejuvenation of the Ganga.
- **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG):** Implements the Namami Gange Programme.
- **Ganga Action Plan:** Launched in **1985** to reduce river pollution.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE TENTATIVE LIST – 3 NEW INDIAN SITES

History & Culture



Context

- Three Indian sites were added to **UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites**, taking India's tentative list to **81 sites**, as stated in the source.

About the Tentative List

- A **Tentative List** is an inventory of properties a country considers suitable for future nomination to the **UNESCO World Heritage List**.
- Inclusion on the Tentative List is a **prerequisite for nomination** to the World Heritage List.

Three Newly Added Sites

1. Baratang Karst–Mud Volcano Complex

- **Location:** Baratang Island, **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- **Features:** Limestone caves and **active mud volcanoes**.
- **Mud Volcanoes:** Release mud, water and gases rather than molten rock.

2. Andaman Subduction Volcanoes

- **Location: Barren Island and Narcondam Island**, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **Barren Island:** Home to **India's only confirmed active volcano**.
- **Narcondam Island:** Forest-covered volcanic island known for biodiversity and the **Narcondam hornbill**, endemic to the island.
- **Significance:** Illustrates volcanic processes and ecological succession.

3. Sirpur Cultural and Archaeological Landscape

- **Location: Mahasamund district, Chhattisgarh**, on the eastern bank of the **Mahanadi River**, around 78 km from Raipur.
- **Historical Name: Shripur**.
- **Historical Significance:** Developed under the **Sharabhapuriya and Panduvamshi dynasties** and associated with the ancient **Kosala region**.
- **Importance:** Archaeological remains reflect historic architecture, trade links and the coexistence of multiple religious traditions.

Badr Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

International

Context

- **Pakistan, Turkey, Qatar, and Indonesia have signed the Badr Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).**

BADR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU)

Context

- **Pakistan, Türkiye, Qatar and Indonesia** reportedly signed the Badr MoU to strengthen **military cooperation and defence capabilities**.

Key Objectives

- Promote **defence manufacturing**, joint production and domestic defence industries.
- Enhance **military training, research and technology development**.

Badr MoU vs Mecca Pact

- **Badr MoU:** Focuses on **defence-industrial cooperation**.

- **Mecca Pact:** Focuses on **collective defence**, as described in the source.

Significance for India

- May support **Pakistan's military modernisation** and defence manufacturing.
- Could affect **regional security dynamics** and technology-sharing arrangements.

PM CARES for Children Scheme
Government Schemes



- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has notified Aadhaar authentication or proof of possession of an Aadhaar number as a requirement for availing benefits under the **Special Scholarship Scheme of PM CARES for Children.**

About -

- **Launch: 2021, to support children who lost both parents, a surviving parent, legal guardian or adoptive parents due to COVID-19.**
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- **Objective:** Ensure comprehensive care, protection and well-being of affected children.

Key Features

- **Education:** Support for **school education, scholarships and continuation of higher education.**
- **Financial Assistance:** Provision of **₹10 lakh upon attaining 23 years of age.**
- **Health Coverage: Health insurance under Ayushman Bharat–PM-JAY,** as per scheme provisions.

State of Biodiversity Action Report
Environment



Context:

- **Released by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),** providing the first global stocktake of **progress towards 2030 targets and the 2050 vision.**

Key Gaps

- **Implementation:** National targets do not fully align with global targets.
- **Progress: Slow action on biodiversity-loss** drivers; gaps in marine, coastal and inland water ecosystems.
- **Finance:** Limited private funding and reduction of harmful subsidies.
- **Data:** Gaps in data, indicators and technical capacity.
- **Governance:** Poor policy coordination and stakeholder participation.

Additional Information - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- **Origin:** The Convention was **opened for signature in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Earth Summit).**
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) **entered into force on 29 December 1993.**
- The **first session of the COP was scheduled in 1994 in the Bahamas.**
- **Secretariat: Montreal, Canada.**
- **Ratification: The CBD has been ratified by 196 nations**, making it one of the most widely adopted international treaties.
- **Note - The United States is the only UN member state that has not ratified the convention.**

It has 3 main objectives;

1. The conservation of biological diversity
2. The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity
3. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

- The governing body is the **Conference of the Parties (COP), which meets every two years.**
- The **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol** on Access and Benefit-Sharing are **supplementary agreements to the CBD.**

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

- The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was **concluded at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Montreal, Canada, in 2022.**
- It features **23 targets to be met by 2030 and four global goals for 2050 to preserve biodiversity** for current and future generations.
- The **agreement is not binding on members.**

Green Diwali Campaign

Environment



Context -

- **WWF-India &** Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme **(EIACP) has launched a nationwide Green Diwali Campaign.**
- It encourages environmentally responsible Diwali celebrations **by promoting cracker-free festivities.**

Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building and Livelihood Programme (EIACP)

- EIACP is an **initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).**
- **Objective** - It focuses on environmental information dissemination, **public awareness, capacity building and the promotion of environmentally sustainable livelihoods.**
- **WWF-India** is a conservation organisation **working on biodiversity protection** and

environmental sustainability. It was established in 1969.

India's First Red List of Ecosystems (RLE)
Environment

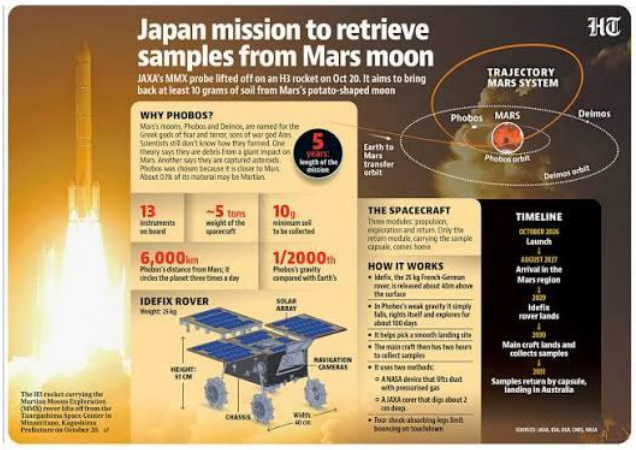
News-

- **Kerala launched India's first state-level RLE project** across all 14 districts to assess ecosystem collapse risk.

India's First Red List of Ecosystems (RLE)

- **Launched by:** Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB).
- **Coverage:** All 14 districts of Kerala.
- **Objective:** Assess the risk of ecosystem collapse.
- **Key Concern:** Southern Western Ghats riparian evergreen forests have lost 83% of their extent and qualify as Critically Endangered.

Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) Mission
Science & Technology



Context (IT):

- **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is preparing to launch its Martian Moons eXploration (MMX).**

Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) Mission

- **Agency: Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA),** with international contributions.
- **Objective:** Collect at least **10 grams of material from Phobos and return it to Earth in 2031.**
- **Timeline:** Arrival at Mars system in 2027; sample return planned for 2031.
- **Significance:** If successful, it will be the **first mission to return samples from a Martian moon.**
- **Rover:** Developed jointly by Germany's DLR and France's CNES.

Phobos and Deimos

- **Location: Two natural satellites of Mars.**
- **Discovery:** August 1877 by American astronomer **Asaph Hall**.
- **Shape: Small and irregular.**

Namo Bharat Diwas 2026
Polity



Context (PIB):

- National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) celebrated **Namo Bharat Diwas 2026 on October 17, to mark the anniversary of the launch of Namo Bharat services for the public.**

About:

- **India's Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS**) service for **fast, comfortable intercity travel.**
- **First Corridor: Delhi–Ghaziabad–Meerut, approximately 82 km.**

- **Inauguration:** First priority section (Sahibabad–Duhai Depot) inaugurated on **20 October 2023**.
- **Objectives: Reduce travel time, road congestion and vehicular emissions; promote regional development.**
- **Implementing Agency: National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC)**, incorporated in 2013 as a joint venture of the Centre and **Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh governments.**

ASEAN–India Defence Think Tank Forum

International

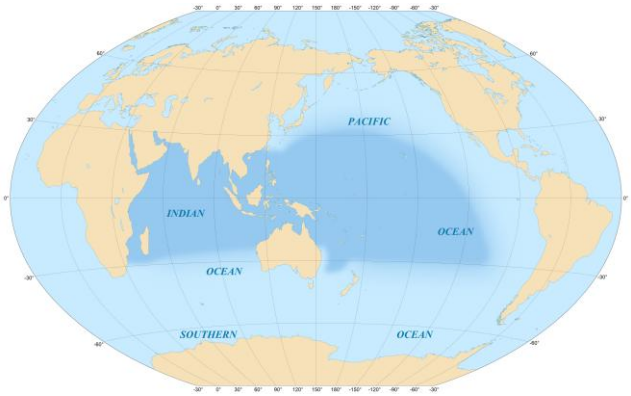
Context -

- India's Defence Minister emphasised the need for greater India–ASEAN cooperation to promote a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific, at the **1st ASEAN–India Defence Think Tank Forum, held in New Delhi.**

ASEAN–India Defence Think Tank Forum

- **Objective:** Strengthen strategic dialogue, joint research and **defence cooperation between India and ASEAN.**
- **Announcement:** By Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the 2nd ASEAN–India Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, 2025.

Indo-Pacific Region



- **Extent:** From eastern Africa across the Indian and Pacific Oceans to the Americas.
- **Significance:** Accounts for around **62% of global GDP and 50% of global maritime trade.**
- **India's Dependence:** Around **90% of India's trade by volume is maritime; approximately 80% of its oil imports are transported by sea**.
- **India's Vision**: A free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific, anchored in ASEAN centrality.

Varunastra Torpedoes and GSAT-7C

Defence



Context -

- The **Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed contracts for the acquisition of the Varunastra Heavy Weight Torpedoes and GSAT-7C communication satellite.**

Varunastra Torpedo

- **Type:** Ship-launched heavyweight anti-submarine torpedo; **95% indigenous content.**
- **Developer:** Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL), **DRDO.**
- **Warhead: 250 kg high-explosive.**
- **Range: 40–50 km; Speed: Over 40 knots.**
- **Operating Depth:** Up to **600 metres.**
- **Guidance:** Active-passive acoustic homing, wire guidance and **NavIC-enabled navigation.**

GSAT-7C

- **Type: Indigenous communication satellite for the Indian Air Force (IAF).**

- **Objective:** Provide secure, resilient and **seamless communication among IAF assets,** enhancing operational effectiveness.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2026
International

Context

- According to the latest update of the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), the **number of multidimensionally poor people increased by 51.5 million in 2025.**

Global MPI

- **Published by -** United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), University of Oxford.
- It was **introduced in 2010 to measure poverty beyond monetary income.**
- **Coverage: The index covers 108 countries,** representing approximately 78% of the global population.

Key Findings of Global MPI 2026

- **Global Poverty:** Approximately **1.2 billion people** worldwide were multidimensionally poor in 2025.
- **Child Poverty:** Nearly **half of the world's multidimensionally poor population consists of children.**
- **Rural Concentration:** More than **four-fifths of multidimensionally poor people live in rural areas.**
- **Regional Disparities:** Sub-Saharan **Africa records the highest levels of multidimensional poverty,** while South Asia faces substantial deprivations in nutrition, housing and schooling.

10 Years of Kigali Amendment
Environment

Context (IE):

- The **Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, adopted in Kigali (Rwanda) on 15 October 2016**, has completed 10 years.

Kigali Amendment

- **Adopted:** 2016, Kigali, Rwanda; entered into force on **1 January 2019**.
- **Objective: Phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) under the Montreal Protocol**.
- Note - HFCs do not deplete ozone but have high global warming potential.
- **Origin:** Micronesia and Mauritius proposed controlling HFCs in 2009.
- **Phase-down:** Reduce HFC production and consumption by **80–85% by the late 2040s**, with differentiated timelines for developed and developing countries.
- **Trade Controls:** HFC import-export licensing; trade restrictions with non-Parties scheduled from **2033**.
- **India:** Ratified the amendment in 2021; phasedown begins in 2032.

Bharat Stage VII (BS-VII) Emission Norms
Environment

Context (TH):

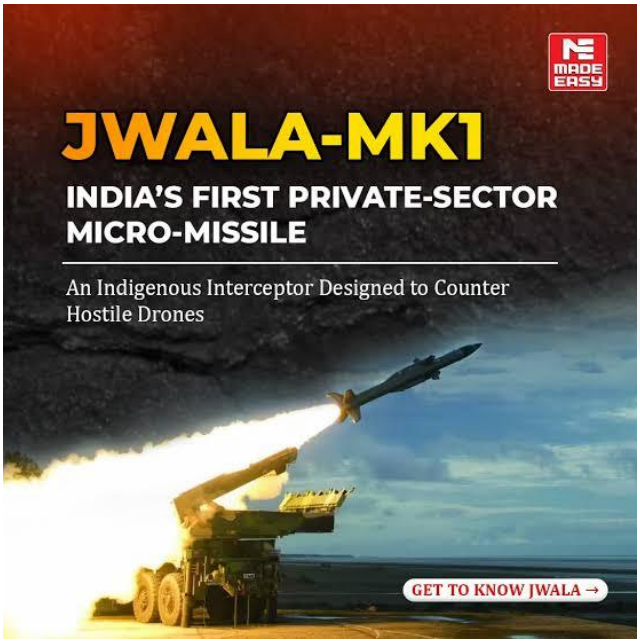
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) issued a draft notification **to introduce Bharat Stage (BS)-VII emission standards from April 1, 2029.**

About

- **Context:** MoRTH proposed new vehicle pollution rules (BS-VII) from April 2029.
- **Implementation:** Cars (2029), light commercial vehicles (2030), trucks and buses (2031).
- **Objective: Reduce air pollution caused by vehicles.**

- **EV Coverage: First Bharat Stage norms to include electric vehicles (EVs).**
- **Pollution Control:** Stricter limits on tiny particles released by vehicle exhaust, brakes and tyres.
- **Battery Durability:** EVs must maintain a **specified level of battery performance for a fixed period.**
- **Environmental Vehicle Passport (EVP):** Displays information on **fuel use, battery health and vehicle emissions.**

JWALA: India's First Private-Sector Micro-Missile
Science & technology



Context (BS):

- **India's first indigenously developed private-sector micro-missile, JWALA,** is being prepared for its maiden experimental trial.

JWALA

- **Type: Short-range surface-to-air missile** designed to destroy hostile drones.
- **Developer: IG Defence**, an Indian private defence company.
- **Range:** Approximately **2–5 km.**
- **Propulsion:** Dual-pulse solid rocket motor.
- **Warhead: High-explosive payload with proximity fuze.**
- **Integration:** Part of GRID Defend, an AI-based system connecting sensors, command systems and interceptors.

Measles
Health & Society



Context-

- **Context: 161 confirmed and 116 suspected cases reported in Kozhikode, Kerala.**

About

- **Cause: Highly contagious viral disease** caused by a virus of the **genus *Morbillivirus*.**
- **Transmission: Spreads through the air** when an infected person **coughs, sneezes or breathes.**
- **Symptoms:** High fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes and skin rash.
- **Complications: Pneumonia and encephalitis,** especially in children below 5 years.
- **Prevention:** Two doses of the **MMR vaccine** provide about 97% protection.
- **India:** Measles vaccination is included in the **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)**.

Ramesh Chand Committee
Economy

- **Context:** The Union Government constituted a committee chaired by **Professor Ramesh Chand**, former NITI Aayog Member, to examine sugarcane farmers' issues.

- **Mandate:** Review the demand for increasing **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)** for sugarcane and revising the **Minimum Selling Price (MSP)** of sugar at the ex-mill level.

Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)

- **Meaning:** Minimum price that sugar mills are legally required to pay sugarcane farmers.
- **Determination:** Fixed by the **Central Government** based on CACP recommendations, after consulting State Governments and stakeholders.
- **Legal Basis: Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966**, issued under the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955**.

Sugar Production in India

- **India became the world's top sugar producer in 2021-2022, surpassing Brazil.**
- **Location of Sugar Industry in India:** Sugar industry is broadly distributed over two major areas of production:

1. **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Punjab in the north and**
2. **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in the south.**

Sugarcane - Uses

- **It belongs to the bamboo family of plants and is indigenous to India.**
- **About two-third of the total sugarcane produced in India is consumed for making gur and khandsari and only one-third of it goes to sugar factories.**
- It also provides **raw material for manufacturing alcohol.**
- **Bagasse,** the crushed cane residue, can be more beneficially used for **manufacturing paper.**
- **Ethanol production** - It is also an efficient substitute for petroleum products and a host of other chemical products.
- **India has become the 3rd largest country in the world in ethanol production after the USA and Brazil.**

Conditions for growth

- **Crop duration: 10-15 months, and even 18 months** to mature, depending upon geographical conditions.
- **Soil: Sugarcane can tolerate any kind of soil that can retain moisture. Examples - loams, clayey, black cotton soil, brown or reddish loam and laterites.**
- It should be **rich in nitrogen, calcium and phosphorus.**
- **Climate**: Hot and Humid **(21-27 °C of temperature and 75-150 cm of rainfall).**