

7. Shortnews

1. Valiamala Crater

The IAU has approved naming several Martian landforms including Valiamala Crater after Kerala locations.

About Valiamala Crater

Valiamala Crater is a newly named Martian impact feature recognized by the International Astronomical Union.

Location – It is situated in the Xanthe Terra region of Mars, an area known for ancient glacial and fluvial landforms identified through IIST-led research.

Geological Features – Shows signatures of past glaciation and flowing water, indicating a dynamic ancient Martian environment. Lies near other newly named features such as Krishnan Crater, Krishnan Palus, and Periyar Vallis.

About the International Astronomical Union (IAU)

The IAU is the global authority responsible for standardizing astronomical nomenclature and advancing astronomy through international collaboration.

Headquarters – Paris, France

Establishment – Formed in 1919, it functions as a non-governmental scientific organization coordinating global astronomical research.

Members – 62 national members, representing national astronomical bodies worldwide. India joined the IAU in 1948

Key Roles of IAU

Naming Celestial Bodies – Sole authority assigning official names to planets, stars, craters, and planetary features.

Standard-Setting – Establishes global standards for data, observations, and astronomical nomenclature.

Scientific Coordination – Organizes General Assemblies and expert working groups like WGPSN and WGSN.

Education & Outreach – Promotes astronomy learning and international scientific cooperation.

2. Cyclone Ditwah

Cyclone Ditwah, which rapidly intensified over the Bay of Bengal, is expected to move towards the north Tamil Nadu coast within two days,

About Cyclone Ditwah

Formation – Cyclone Ditwah is a tropical cyclonic system that formed over the southwest Bay of Bengal.

Rapid Intensification – The cyclone strengthened from a depression to a powerful cyclonic storm within 24 hours.

Wind Speed – Along the storm's pathway, winds may reach 60–80 kmph, gusting to 90 kmph.

Movement Path – IMD forecasts that the system will move towards the southwest Bay of Bengal, nearing North Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and adjoining South Andhra Pradesh coasts

Red Alert Issued – IMD upgraded alerts from orange to red (extremely heavy rain >20 cm/24 hr) for delta and north coastal districts on November 28–29.

Origin of the Name "Ditwah"

Naming – The name 'Ditwah' was recommended by Yemen.

Significance – "Ditwah" means "lagoon", referring to the Detwah Lagoon on Socotra Island, Yemen, known for its distinctive coastal ecosystem.

3. International Idea

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar will assume the Chairship of International IDEA in December 2025.

About IIDEA

IIDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) was founded in 1995, is an inter-governmental organisation dedicated to strengthening democracy worldwide.

Objectives - To promote inclusive, accountable, and resilient democratic institutions. To support electoral integrity, constitutional design, and political participation. To provide research, data, and policy guidance to global democracies.

Membership - 35 member countries, including India as a founding member. The United States and Japan participate as Observer States.

Headquarters - Stockholm, Sweden

Role and Functions

1. Facilitates global knowledge-sharing among Election Management Bodies (EMBs).
2. Provides comparative electoral data, policy advice, and capacity-building support.
3. Conducts training, research collaborations, and technical assistance for democratic governance.
4. Works to counter disinformation, electoral violence, and challenges to voter trust through global partnerships.

Significance - India's leadership reflects global recognition of its transparent, large-scale electoral capabilities and enhances its role in shaping worldwide democratic reforms.

