

SHORTNEWS:

1. INDIA'S FIRST-EVER POTASH MINING

NEWS: India successfully **auctioned 10 of 15 critical mineral blocks in Tranche V**, including graphite, phosphorite, Rare Earth Elements (REE), vanadium, and for the **first time, potash and halite**.

- Mining will begin in **Rajasthan**, after due process, at **Jhandawali–Satipura & Jorkian–Satipura–Khunja Amalgamated Potash & Halite Blocks**.

About Potash

- **Potash** refers to various **mined and manufactured salts** that **contain potassium** in **water-soluble form**, mainly **potassium chloride (KCl)**.
 - Potash is a **vital source of Potassium (K)**, essential for plant growth
- **Ores of Potash:** The principal ore is **Sylvinite**.
- **Uses:**
 - **Agriculture:** It is used as a **Fertilizer** to improve crop yield, enhance drought resistance, and strengthen plant growth.
 - **Industrial:** Used in **manufacturing glass, soaps, and chemicals**.
- **Form Of Usage:** Directly as **Muriate of Potash (MOP)**
 - In **combination with Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P)** in **NPK fertilizers**.
 - The ideal nutrient ratio for optimal plant growth is 4:2:1 (N:P: K).
- **Potash reserves in India:** Rajasthan (contributes 89% to the total resources), Punjab Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Potash reserves across the world:** Canada, Belarus, Russia, China, USA , Germany and Chile.
- **Import Dependency:** India imports **100% of its Potash needs**, totaling around 40 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of MOP annually.
- **Other Government Initiatives:** Department of Fertiliser has included **PDM (Potash derived from Molasses)** in the **Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme (NBS)** scheme to support **indigenous sources of Potash**.

About Halite

- Halite is the **natural form of sodium chloride (NaCl)**, commonly known as **rock salt**.
- **Uses:** Table salt production, Water softening, de-icing, and chemical manufacturing, Meat and food preservation etc.

2. INDUSTRIAL GROWTH SLOWS TO 8-MONTH LOW

NEWS: According to the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for April 2025** released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**, the **growth in industrial**

activity slowed to an **eight-month low of 2.7% in April 2025.**

Key Points

- **Reasons:** The slowdown was attributed to **weak performance across mining and quarrying, electricity, primary goods, infrastructure and construction, and consumer non-durables.**
- **Sectors Witnessed Growth:** The **manufacturing sector, Consumer durables and Capital goods sector surged.**

About Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** measures the **volume of production** in various industrial sectors of the Indian economy.
- **Current Base Year: 2011-12**
- **Weightage of Different Sectors:**
- Manufacturing (809 items): 77.63% weight
- Mining (29 items): 14.37% weight
- Electricity (1 item): 7.99% weight

About Eight Core Sectors

- These are **key infrastructure sectors** and collectively hold a **40.27% weight in the IIP.**
- The eight core sector industries in **decreasing order of their weightage: Refinery Products > Electricity > Steel > Coal > Crude Oil > Natural Gas > Cement > Fertilizers.**

Significance Of IIP

- **Economic Barometer:** Reflects **short-term changes** in industrial activity and overall economic health.
- **Policy Tool:** Aids government and Reserve Bank Of India (RBI) in **framing fiscal and monetary policies.**
- **Sectoral Performance:** Highlights **growth patterns across industry segments.**

Nurdles

Context: Nurdles (Tiny plastic pellets) were found on **beaches in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala** after the **sinking of the container vessel MSC ELSA3.**

About Nurdles

- **Nurdles** are **small plastic resin pellets (1–5 mm)** used as **raw material** for making plastic products.
 - They are **primary microplastics**, typically **round or oval in shape**, and usually **white or translucent.**
- **Composition:** Made from **plastics like LDPE (Low-Density Polyethylene), HDPE (High-Density Polyethylene), Polypropylene (PP), and Polystyrene (PS).**
- **Industrial Uses:** Used in making plastic bags, films, containers, pipes, household items, automotive parts, electronics, medical equipment, etc.

- **Transportation Risk:** Shipped globally in bulk, often lost during handling, transport, or accidents.
- **Environmental Hazards:** Not biodegradable, breaks down into micro/nanoplastics, mistaken for food by sea creatures, absorbs toxins, enters the food chain, pollutes beaches and marine ecosystems
- **Cleanup Challenges:** Hard to remove once washed ashore, require manual collection, nets, booms, and sifting equipment.
 - **Often not classified as hazardous under existing laws.**

3. THE EMBLEMS AND NAMES (PREVENTION OF IMPROPER USE) ACT, 1950

NEWS: A petition was filed to protect Hindutva ideologue VD Savarkar's name under the *Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950*.

The plea aimed to prevent misunderstandings about Savarkar's legacy.

Supreme Court's Verdict

- The Bench refused to entertain the petition, stating that **no legal ground** was found to intervene.

What is the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950?

- It is a legislation enacted by the **Parliament of India**.
- **Objective:** Prohibit misuse of certain emblems and names for commercial and professional purposes.
- It applies to citizens of **India outside India**.
- **Restricted symbols:** National Flag of India, Government seals, Buildings like Rashtrapati Bhavan, Names of national figures, such as Mahatma Gandhi, international organisations like: United Nations (UN) and **World Health Organization (WHO)**.
- **Fine for Misuse:** If someone misuses any protected symbol or name, they can be fined up to ₹500.
- **Role of the Government**
 - The Central Government has the authority to add or remove names/symbols from the **protected list**.
 - **Official Notifications:** Any changes or rules under the Act are published in the Official Gazette.
 - Everyone—**individuals and businesses**—must follow these rules.
 - No legal action for any offense punishable under this Act can be initiated without prior approval from the Central Government or an authorised officer designated by the Central Government through a general or specific order.

4. ZANGEZUR CORRIDOR

NEWS: Armenia and Azerbaijan are currently negotiating a peace treaty which also includes establishing the **Zangezur Corridor** between the two neighbours.

About the Zangezur Corridor

- The Zangezur Corridor refers to a **proposed transport route** that would **connect Azerbaijan** to its **exclave Nakhchivan** through southern Armenia.
- It lies in the **Zangezur region of Armenia**, which **borders Iran to the south and Azerbaijan to the east**.
- **Historical Background:** The idea of a corridor gained traction after the **2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war** and was mentioned in the trilateral ceasefire agreement (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia).
- **Strategic Significance:** The corridor would **allow direct land access from Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan** without passing through Iran.
- The corridor could **increase Turkey and Azerbaijan's influence in the South Caucasus**.
- **India's Concerns:** The Zangezur Corridor could **weaken Armenia's sovereignty**, an important strategic partner for India.
- India also views the corridor as a threat to the **North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, which involves India, Iran, Russia, and Armenia.

Iran's Position: Iran opposes the corridor as it would **cut off its border with Armenia**, undermining its influence and trade routes in the Caucasus and further Europe.

5. BOW ECHO

NEWS: Recently, a powerful storm hit Delhi, showing a **strange crescent or bow shape** on the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) radar.

This shape is **technically called a "bow echo"**, which looks like an archer's bow.

What is a Bow Echo?

- A **bow echo** is a **line of thunderstorms**, also known as a **squall line**, that looks like a **bow or arch** on weather radar.
- It can be part of a **larger storm system**.
- It often produces damaging winds, known as **derechos**.
- The term "**bow echo**" was introduced **in the 1970s by Ted Fujita**, a Japanese-American meteorologist.
 - He also developed the **Fujita Scale** to **measure tornado strength**.

Characteristics

- Bow echoes can be **20 to 100 km long**.
- They usually last for **3 to 6 hours**.
- marked by **intense convective activity**.
- Winds **associated with bow echoes** can reach up to **100 kmph or more**, capable of causing damage to structures and trees.

How Does a Bow Echo Form?

- **Rain-cooled air falls** to the ground and spreads out.
- This creates a **gust front**, which separates cool air from warm-moist air.
- The warm-moist air rises, leading to **new thunderstorms**.
 - These storms create **more rain-cooled air**, strengthening the gust front.

As the process repeats, winds on the backside of the storm bend it into a **bow shape**.