

## SHORTNEWS

### E1 SETTLEMENT PLAN

Israel has recently approved the controversial E1 Settlement Plan near East Jerusalem, drawing global criticism as it threatens Palestinian territorial continuity and undermines prospects for a two-state solution.

#### About E1 Settlement Plan

Refers to construction in the E1 area (East 1), a corridor of ~12 sq. km between East Jerusalem and the Ma'ale Adumim settlement in the West Bank.

**Objective** - To link Jerusalem with Ma'ale Adumim, thereby strengthening Israeli control.

**Controversy** - Would effectively cut the West Bank into northern and southern parts, making a contiguous Palestinian state unviable.

#### International Response -

**UN & EU** - Condemned the move as a violation of international law, specifically Fourth Geneva Convention

**USA** - Expressed opposition, citing concerns over peace process viability.

**Palestinian Authority** - Called it a "death blow" to the two-state solution.

#### Israel – Bordering Countries & Water Bodies

##### Bordering Countries -

**North - Lebanon**

**Northeast - Syria**

**East - Jordan** (separated largely by River Jordan)

**Southwest - Egypt**

**Palestinian Territories: West Bank (east of Israel) and Gaza Strip (southwest, bordering Egypt)**

##### Water Bodies -

**West - Mediterranean Sea** (coastline ~270 km)

**East - Dead Sea** (lowest point on Earth, ~430 m below sea level; shared with Jordan & West Bank)

**North - Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias / Kinneret)**, freshwater lake, major water source for Israel; fed by River Jordan.

**Rivers - Jordan River**, flows from Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea.

### SOUDA BAY, GREECE

Recently, INS Tamal, the latest stealth frigate, arrived at Souda Bay, Crete (Greece) during her return passage to India after commissioning in Russia.

#### About INS Tamal

**Type** - Latest stealth frigate of the Indian Navy.

A stealth frigate is a type of warship (frigate-class) that is specially designed to reduce its visibility to enemy detection systems such as radar, infrared sensors, sonar, and even visual observation.

**Commissioning** - Recently commissioned in Russia (2025).

**Role** - Blue-water operations, maritime security, defence diplomacy.

#### About Souda Bay

**Location** - Northwest Crete Island, Greece, opens into the Mediterranean Sea.

**Significance** – One of the safest natural harbours of the Mediterranean. Hosts Hellenic Navy Base & U.S. Naval Support Activity (NSA) Souda Bay. Strategic for NATO maritime operations.

## KHELO INDIA WATER GAMES DEBUT ON DAL LAKE

Dal Lake in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, hosted the first-ever Khelo India Water Games in August 2025, marking a major push to promote adventure and water sports in India.

### About the Event

**Organizer** – Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports under the Khelo India Scheme. Khelo India Scheme was launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS) to revive sports culture in India at the grassroots level and make India a sporting nation. Consolidated earlier schemes like Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan, Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme, National Sports Talent Search System etc.

**Sports Included** – Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Dragon Boat Racing, and Traditional Kashmiri Shikara Race.

**Participants** – 409 athletes (202 women) from 36 States/UTs. Madhya Pradesh (44), Haryana (37), Odisha (34), Kerala (33) sent largest contingents.

### Significance of the Initiative –

1. *Promotion of Water Sports* – First dedicated national-level water sports games in India.
2. *Boost to Tourism* – Strengthens Kashmir's profile as a global sports & tourism hub.
3. *Local Youth Engagement* – Encourages talent identification and participation from J&K.
4. *Integration with Khelo India Vision* – Aligns with the goal of creating a sporting culture and developing world-class athletes.

### About Dal Lake

**Location** – Srinagar, J&K (in the foothills of Zabarwan Range).

**Nickname** – “Jewel in the crown of Kashmir.”

**Features** – Famous for houseboats, shikaras, floating gardens, known as “Raad”.

**Significance** – Important for tourism, economy, and cultural identity of Kashmir.

## PROTOTYPE FAST BREEDER REACTOR

The government announced in Rajya Sabha that the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) being commissioned by BHAVINI is expected to achieve criticality by March 2026 and full power generation by December 2026.

### About the Fast Breeder Reactor

A nuclear reactor that uses fast neutrons to generate more fuel than it consumes. The term “breeder” refers to its ability to produce additional nuclear fuel during operation.

**Fast Neutrons** – FBRs use neutrons faster than thermal neutrons to convert Uranium-238 into Plutonium-239, a fissile fuel.

**Fuel Type** – Uses Uranium-Plutonium Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel, a blend of Uranium and Plutonium.

### Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)

**Overview** – India's first indigenous fast breeder reactor. Key component of the three-stage nuclear power program.

**Operator** – Managed by BHAVINI under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

**Location** – Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu.

### What is Criticality ?

In a nuclear reactor, criticality occurs when the neutrons produced by fission exactly balance those lost through leakage or absorption, keeping the neutron population steady. It is the point

at which a self-sustaining nuclear fission reaction begins, enabling the Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) to generate electricity.

### Three Stages of India's Nuclear Programme

Stage 1 – PHWRs with Natural Uranium – Uses natural uranium in Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs).

Stage 2 – Fast Breeder Reactors – Uses Plutonium-239 from reprocessed spent fuel of PHWRs, along with U-238 in Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel.

Stage 3 – Advanced Reactors with Uranium-233:

About Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI)

**Ownership** – BHAVINI is a government-owned company under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

**Establishment** – Founded in 2003 to advance India's nuclear energy program.

**Key Achievement** – Developed the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam.

## ARECA NUT DEVELOPMENT

A high-level meeting on areca nut development was held at Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi, under the chairmanship of Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

About Areca Nut

The arecanut palm produces the well-known chewing nut, popularly called betel nut or supari. It carries deep cultural and religious significance in India.

Climatic Conditions

**Region** – Grows mostly within 28° north and south of the equator.

**Optimum temperature** – 14°C–36°C; growth is hampered below 10°C or above 40°C

**Altitude limit** – up to 1000 m. Requires abundant, well-distributed rainfall (750–4500 mm annually).

Irrigation is essential during prolonged dry spells.

**Season** – June – December is found to be the optimum.

**Soil Requirements** – Predominantly cultivated in gravelly laterite red clay soils of Southern Kerala and Coastal Karnataka. Best suited to laterite, red loam, and alluvial soils.

**Production** – India is the world's largest producer, ~63% of global production.

**Top Producer** – Karnataka (40%). Other producing states: Kerala, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu.

**Grading of Arecanut** – Kernels are boiled, de-husked, dried, and graded. Market grades include Nuli, Hasa, Rashi, Bette, and Gorabalu.

**Varieties of Areca Nut**

**White Variety** – Produced by harvesting fully ripe nuts and sun-drying for about 2 months.

**Red Variety** – Produced from green nuts that are boiled, husked, and dried.

## DIRECT ACTION DAY

Vivek Agnihotri's film "Bengal Files" depicts the Great Calcutta Killings—the communal riots that engulfed Kolkata for four days starting on August 16, 1946, observed by the Muslim League as "Direct Action Day" to press for the creation of Pakistan.

About Direct Action Day

**Call by Muslim League** – It was declared by Muhammad Ali Jinnah to demand Pakistan and reject Congress's leadership.

**Hartal & Centre of Riots** – Marked by a nationwide strike; Calcutta, under a Muslim League ministry, became the epicentre.

**Spread of Unrest** – Deepened Hindu-Muslim divide, extending to Bombay, Noakhali, Bihar, Tipperah, and United Provinces.

**Political Consequence** – Exposed the British failure to maintain order, paving the way for the Interim Government (Sept 1946) under Jawaharlal Nehru.

