

7. Short News

1. All-India Tiger Estimation (Aite)–2026

In January 2026, the All-India Tiger Estimation (AITE)–2026 field survey commenced in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu, following National Tiger Conservation Authority protocols.

About All-India Tiger Estimation (AITE) – The All-India Tiger Estimation is the world's largest wildlife monitoring exercise, conducted every four years to assess tiger populations, prey base, co-predators, and habitat quality across India.

Conducted By– It is jointly conducted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), with active participation of State Forest Departments.

Coverage– The exercise covers all tiger reserves, tiger-bearing forest divisions, and selected private estates with carnivore presence across the country.

Periodicity– AITE is conducted once every four years. The 6th cycle (AITE–2026) is underway, with the final report expected by 2027.

Methodology used for Tiger Census

1. M-STriPES App– Monitoring System for Tiger–Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-STriPES) is a GPS-based digital monitoring of tiger signs and patrol data.
2. Camera Traps– Photographic capture for individual tiger identification.
3. Sign Surveys– Tracking pugmarks, scats, and scrape marks.
4. Line Transects– Estimation of prey species density.
5. Genetic Sampling– DNA analysis from scats and hair samples.

Current Status of Tiger in India

Total Number of Tigers– As per the latest AITE (2022) report, the average wild tiger population in India is 3,682 (ranging from 3,167 to 3,925), accounting for roughly 75% of the world's total tiger population.

1. State with Maximum Tigers– Madhya Pradesh (785 tigers)
2. Tiger Reserve with Maximum Tigers– Jim Corbett National Park (Uttarakhand) (260 tigers)

Total Tiger Reserves– As of 2025, India has 58 notified tiger reserves spread across 18 states.

1. The latest addition is the Madhav Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh (MP)
2. MP has the maximum number of TR in India, with nine TR giving its title as the "Tiger State".

Conservation Success– The tiger population has shown a remarkable annual growth rate of approximately 6% since First AITE (2006). This shows the success of the government's flagship conservation initiative, Project Tiger, launched in 1973.

Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) – Declared a tiger reserve in 2007, Anamalai Tiger Reserve is a major biodiversity hotspot in the Southern Western Ghats.

Location– Situated in the Anamalai Hills of Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts, Tamil Nadu, south of the Palakkad Gap, and adjoining Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (Kerala).

Vegetation– It supports wet evergreen, semi-evergreen, moist and dry deciduous, shola forests, montane grasslands, savannahs, and marshy grasslands.

Animals Protected– Key species include Tiger, Asiatic Elephant, Leopard, Sambar, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer, Gaur, and Jungle Cat. It also has numerous endemic species like the Nilgiri Tahr and Nilgiri Langur.

2. Indusfood 2026

Indusfood 2026, India's flagship global food and beverage (F&B) sourcing exhibition, is being held in Greater Noida (from 8th to 10th January 2026).

About Indusfood

Organised by- The Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI).

Indusfood is recognized as Asia's premier F&B trade show, bringing together Indian producers, global buyers, policymakers, and institutions.

Government Backing- The exhibition will be inaugurated by the Union Minister of Food Processing Industries.

International Participation- Over 120 countries are expected to participate.

Major Initiatives and Highlights

India-UAE Food Corridor- Launched in collaboration with the Abu Dhabi Food Hub to strengthen food security, logistics integration, and bilateral trade.

APEDA's Bharati Initiative- A Shark Tank-style platform showcasing innovative agri-food start-ups, linking them directly with global buyers. This initiative aims to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in India's agri-food sector.

Bharat Mart by DP World- It focus on export infrastructure, logistics efficiency, and policy dialogue to enhance India's export competitiveness.

World Culinary Heritage Conference- It brings together chefs, policymakers, and industry leaders to discuss heritage preservation and innovation in culinary arts.

Skill Development- The India International Centre for Culinary Leadership (IICCL) will train 150 chefs under the *Ambassador of Indian Cuisine* programme offering Level-1 'Ambassador of Indian Cuisine' certification.

'India on a Platter' Gala Dinner- This will bring together ministers, ambassadors, global buyers, and international delegations, reinforcing India's role in the global food and beverage industry. It is hosted by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

3. SAMPANN Portal

Recently, the Controller General of Communication Accounts expanded SAMPANN Portal coverage and integrated pension documents with DigiLocker for Department of Telecommunications pensioners.

About SAMPANN Portal

SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension) is an integrated, online pension processing and payment system for Department of Telecommunications pensioners. Launched on 29 December 2018. Implemented by the Controller General of Communication Accounts (CGCA) Under the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications

Key Features

Single-window pension management- Integrates pension processing, sanction, authorisation and payment on one digital platform.

Direct Benefit Transfer- Ensures timely, direct credit of pension into pensioners' bank accounts without intermediaries.

Online grievance redressal- Enables pensioners to lodge and track grievances digitally, reducing paperwork.

Real-time tracking- Allows pensioners to monitor pension status, arrears and revisions from home.

DigiLocker integration- Provides digital access to Pension Payment Orders, Gratuity Orders, commutation orders and Form 16.

Significance

Enhanced efficiency- Speeds up settlement of pension cases and improves reconciliation and auditing processes.

Transparency and accountability- Digital tracking and records reduce errors and enhance trust in pension administration.

Ease for pensioners- Eliminates physical visits and simplifies document management through paperless access.

Digital governance- Supports the Government's vision of e-governance and secure, long-term digital preservation of pension records.

4. Sudan Crisis

In January 2026, intensified fighting between Sudan's army and the Rapid Support Forces displaced thousands from South Kordofan, forcing cross-border flight.

About the Crisis in Sudan

Renewed clashes in South and West Kordofan have followed the Rapid Support Forces' expansion into oil-producing regions, including the capture of Heglig, Sudan's largest oil field. The conflict, ongoing since April 2023, has triggered mass displacement, food insecurity, and cross-border refugee movements into South Sudan, worsening an already severe humanitarian crisis.

About Sudan

Sudan is a northeastern African country, the third-largest in Africa, with its capital Khartoum located at the confluence of the Blue Nile and White Nile.

Location- It lies between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, with a coastline along the Red Sea and extending southward toward tropical regions.

Borders- Sudan shares borders with Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea.

Geography

1. Mountains- The highest point is Jabal Marrah, located in the western Darfur region.
 2. Rivers- The country is drained by the Nile River system.
 3. Relief- Sudan is dominated by vast plains and plateaus, with limited highland regions.
 4. Vegetation- Northern Sudan is largely desert and semi-arid grassland, transitioning southward into savannah and forest zones.
 5. Climate- Predominantly hot and arid, with increasing rainfall toward the southern regions.
- Sudan's strategic geography and resource-rich regions continue to shape both its economic importance and conflict dynamics.

5. Doomsday Glacier

A recent scientific study highlights accelerating fracturing in the Thwaites Glacier, indicating possible future collapse of Antarctic ice sheets.

Key Concerns Regarding the Doomsday Glacier

Accelerated ice fracturing- The annual length of fractures in the Thwaites Eastern Ice Shelf has more than doubled between 2002 and 2022, weakening structural stability. It has increased from 165.2 +/- 6.6 km in 2002 to 335.5 +/- 13.4 km in 2022,

Rising sea levels- Complete melting of the glacier could raise global sea levels by around 65 centimetres, threatening coastal regions worldwide.

Climate tipping risk- Destabilisation of the glacier may trigger irreversible changes in the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, causing cascading climate impacts.

About the Doomsday Glacier (Thwaites Glacier) - The Thwaites Glacier is one of the most rapidly changing ice-ocean systems on Earth and plays a crucial role in regulating global sea levels. The Thwaites Glacier is called the "Doomsday Glacier" because its potential, rapid collapse could significantly accelerate global sea-level rise, posing a catastrophic threat to coastal regions worldwide

Location- Situated in West Antarctica, draining ice from the West Antarctic Ice Sheet into the Amundsen Sea. Its eastern extension forms the Thwaites Eastern Ice Shelf, which floats on the ocean surface.

Key Features

Massive size and impact- Its collapse alone could significantly destabilise the entire West Antarctic Ice Sheet.

Pinning point dependence- The ice shelf is anchored to an undersea ridge that slows ice flow; weakening of this pinning point accelerates ice discharge.

Two-stage fracture pattern- Fractures first develop parallel to ice flow, followed by perpendicular cracks, leading to rapid ice shelf disintegration.

6. Pankhudi Portal

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has launched PANKHUDI, an integrated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and partnership facilitation portal

Key Features of the Portal

Single-Window Digital Platform- PANKHUDI serves as a one-stop platform for NGOs, corporates, NRIs, and government agencies involved in women and child development activities.

Streamlining Contributions- The portal enables stakeholders to register contributions, identify initiatives, submit proposals, and track the progress of their contributions through clear approval workflows.

Non-Cash Contributions- To ensure financial transparency and accountability, all contributions are accepted only through non-cash modes.

Focus on Key Areas- The portal supports initiatives in areas such as nutrition, health, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), women's safety, and empowerment.

Supporting Flagship Missions- PANKHUDI strengthens the implementation of flagship initiatives like Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 aimed at improving nutritional outcomes for women and children. The portal also supports Mission Vatsalya, focused on child welfare and protection, and Mission Shakti, which works on women's empowerment and safety.

Benefits of the Portal

Increased Efficiency and Accountability- By providing a common digital interface, the portal enhances coordination and monitoring, ensuring greater accountability for all involved in women and child development initiatives.

Infrastructure Enhancement- PANKHUDI is expected to improve services and infrastructure in over 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres, 5,000 Child Care Institutions, and 800 One Stop Centres (OSCs), ultimately improving ease of living for millions of citizens.