

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS - 26.10.2026

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Director,
Department of Employment and Training.

TamilNadu Highlights

Special Officers to Administer Rural Local Bodies in All 37 Districts of Tamil Nadu till April 2027

Context

- The **Tamil Nadu** government has:
 - **Extended** the tenure of **special officers** in **28 districts** by **six months**, till **19 April 2027**.
 - **Appointed special officers** in **9 more districts** till the same date.
- **Order Issued By:** Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department.
- **Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994** amended accordingly.

Reasons for Delay in Elections

- The **Commissioner of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj** said elections could not be held in all **37 districts** before **19 October 2026**.
- **Merger of 46 rural local bodies** with **urban local bodies** is being finalised.
- Expanded **urban local bodies** will change boundaries of **village panchayats, panchayat unions** and **district panchayats**.
- **New Units Notified:**
 - **9 new panchayat unions**.
 - **93 new village panchayats**.
 - **Amalgamation of 1 village panchayat**.
- **Delimitation** and **reservation** exercises needed in **23 districts** before elections.

Scope of Special Officers

- Will administer **village panchayats, panchayat union councils** and **district panchayats**.
- **Excludes** the **9 new panchayat unions** and **93 new village panchayats**.

Three-Tier Panchayati Raj in Tamil Nadu

- **Village Level:** Village Panchayat – headed by **President**.
- **Block Level:** Panchayat Union Council – headed by **Chairman**.
- **District Level:** District Panchayat – headed by **Chairman**.

Constitutional Provisions

- **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992** – Part IX (Articles 243 to 243O); 11th Schedule (29 subjects).

- **Article 243E:** Panchayat term is **five years**; elections must be completed **before expiry of the term**, or **within six months of dissolution**.
- **Article 243K:** State Election Commission (SEC) conducts **panchayat elections**.
- **Article 243D:** Reservation of seats for **SCs, STs and women (at least one-third)**.
- **Article 243I:** State Finance Commission every **five years**.

Significance of Delimitation

- Ensures **fair representation** after **urban expansion**.
- Correct **reservation rotation** for **SC/ST/women**.

Do You Know?

- Tamil Nadu has **38 districts**; **Chennai** is **fully urban**, hence **37 districts** have **rural local bodies**.
- **Elections History:**
 - **28 districts:** Elections held in **December 2019**.
 - **9 newly reorganised districts:** Elections held in **October 2021**.
- Tamil Nadu State Election Commission was set up in **1994**.
- Supreme Court – **Kishansing Tomar v. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (2006)**: SECs must hold local body elections **on time**; **delimitation or reservation** cannot be a reason for **indefinite delay**.
- **Women's reservation** in Tamil Nadu local bodies is **50% (since 2016)**.
- **National Panchayati Raj Day: 24 April (73rd Amendment)** came into force on **24 April 1993**.

SPECIAL OFFICERS IN RURAL LOCAL BODIES | TAMIL NADU

DEADLINE: 19 APRIL 2027

COVERAGE: All **37** districts with Rural Local Bodies.

REASON FOR SPECIAL OFFICERS
➤ Merger of **46** Rural Local Bodies with Urban Bodies ➔ Pending Delimitation

NEW UNITS
9 Panchayat Unions **93** Village Panchayats

CONSTITUTION & PROVISIONS

73rd Amendment Act, 1992

11th SCHEDULE: 29 SUBJECTS

PART IX

ARTICLE 243E: Five-year Term

ARTICLE 243K: State Election Commission

ARTICLE 243D: Reservation

ARTICLE 243I: State Finance Commission

TN EXAM FACT: **50% WOMEN'S RESERVATION** IN TAMIL NADU LOCAL BODIES

POLITY

Topic: Polity

Kerala Re-exempts VACB Confidential Sections from RTI Act

Context

- The **Kerala** government issued a **gazette notification** re-exempting the **T1 and T2 confidential sections** of the **Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (VACB)** from the **RTI Act, 2005**.
- Reverses a **2022 reform** that had brought these sections under **RTI**.
- **Legal Basis: Section 24(4)** of the **RTI Act**.
- **Reason Cited:** Handling of **top-secret documents** and **high-security personnel files**.

About the RTI Act, 2005

- Gives effect to the **fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression** – **Article 19(1)(a)** (**right to know** is part of it).
- Lets citizens **request, inspect and obtain** government information within **fixed time limits**.
- Promotes **transparency, accountability** and **open governance**.

Key Sections of the RTI Act

- **Section 3:** Every citizen has the **right to information** from **public authorities**.
- **Section 4: Proactive (suo motu) disclosure** of organisation, functions, budgets, norms.
- **Section 7:** Reply within **30 days**; within **48 hours** if it concerns **life or personal liberty**.
- **Section 8: Exemptions** – **sovereignty, security, intellectual property, commercial confidence, Cabinet papers** before decision, etc.
- **Section 24:**
 - **Section 24(1):** Exempts **Central intelligence and security organisations** (listed in the **Second Schedule**).
 - **Section 24(4):** Allows **State governments** to exempt their **intelligence and security organisations** by notification.
 - **Proviso:** Information on **corruption** and **human rights violations** must still be disclosed.

Importance of the RTI Act

- **Fighting Corruption:** Exposes **misuse of funds** and **malpractice**.
 - e.g., **Tender irregularities, fake welfare beneficiaries**.
- **Bureaucratic Accountability:** Shift from **colonial secrecy (Official Secrets Act, 1923)** to **presumption of openness**.
 - e.g., Tracking delays in **pensions, land records, driving licences**.

- **Better Welfare Delivery:** Citizens audit entitlements.
 - e.g., Women checking **Fair Price Shop stock registers** under **NFSA**.
- **Social Audits:** Evidence for **civil society oversight**.
 - e.g., **Gram Sabhas** checking **MGNREGA muster rolls**.

Other Important Provisions

- **Section 6: Application procedure;** fee **₹10 (Centre)**; **BPL applicants exempt**.
- **Section 19 – Appeals:**
 - **First appeal:** Within **30 days** to a **senior officer**.
 - **Second appeal:** Within **90 days** to the **Information Commission**.
- **Section 20 – Penalty:** **₹250 per day**, up to **₹25,000** on the **PIO**.
- **Section 24 Proviso (Human Rights):** Information on **human rights violations** is given only with the approval of the **Information Commission**, within **45 days**.

Institutions

- **Central Information Commission (CIC):** **Chief Information Commissioner** + up to **10 Information Commissioners**.
- **State Information Commissions (SICs):** Similar structure at **State level**.
- **RTI (Amendment) Act, 2019:** **Centre** decides **tenure, salary and service conditions** of **Information Commissioners** (earlier fixed at **5 years** and equal to **Election Commissioners**).

Recent Developments

- **DPDP Act, 2023 – Section 44(3):** Amended **RTI Section 8(1)(j)** to exempt **all personal information**, removing the earlier **public interest override** – criticised as **weakening RTI**.
- **Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014:** Passed but **not yet operationalised**.

Key Dates

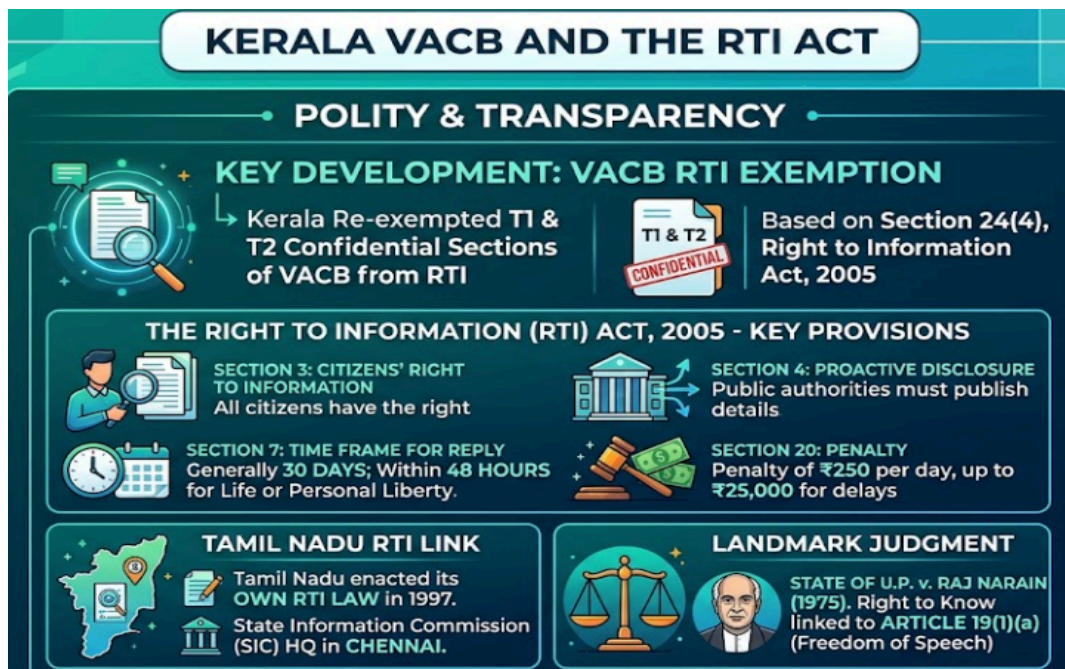
- **RTI Act passed:** **15 June 2005**.
- **Fully in force:** **12 October 2005**.
- **Origin:** Movement led by **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)**, **Rajasthan (Aruna Roy)**.

Important Judgments

- **State of U.P. v. Raj Narain (1975):** **Right to know** is part of **Article 19(1)(a)**.
- **CBSE v. Aditya Bandopadhyay (2011):** **Evaluated answer sheets** are **information** under **RTI**.
- **CPIO, Supreme Court v. Subhash Chandra Agarwal (2019):** **Office of the Chief Justice of India** is a **public authority** under **RTI**.

Do You Know?

- **Tamil Nadu** was among the **first States** to pass its own **Right to Information Act (1997)**, along with **Goa (1997)**.
- **Tamil Nadu State Information Commission** is headquartered in **Chennai**.
- **CBI** was added to the **Second Schedule (exempt list)** in **2011**.



Topic: Economy

Centre Notifies 16 New Indigenous Breeds of Livestock and Dogs

Context

- The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** notified **16 new indigenous breeds** of **livestock and dogs** across **13 States** and **1 UT**.
- Based on recommendations of the **Breed Registration Committee (BRC)**.

About Breed Registration

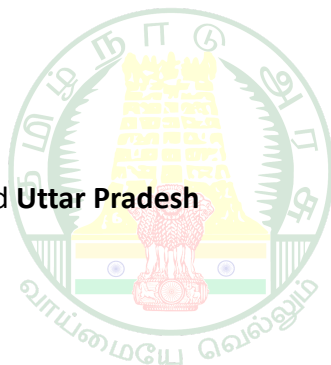
- **Scientific registration** and **gazette notification** giving a breed **national identity** and a **unique accession number**.
- **Nodal Agency:** **ICAR–National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR)**, **Karnal (Haryana)**.
- **Notifying Authority:** **Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)**.
- **Aim:** Identify, document and protect **native breeds**; promote **climate-resilient livestock** and **Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)**.

Process of Recognition

- **Field Survey:** State departments, **ICAR institutes**, universities or **NGOs** study the breed in its native tract.
- **Genetic Profiling:** Confirms **distinctness** from existing breeds.
- **BRC Evaluation:** Checks **distinctiveness, population viability, uniformity.**
- **Accession Number:** Allotted by **ICAR-NBAGR**; entered in the **National Animal Gene Bank.**
- **Gazette Notification** by **DARE.**

The 16 New Breeds

- **Cattle (4):**
 - **Koppal – Karnataka**
 - **Mahakaushali – Madhya Pradesh**
 - **Periyar (Periyar Kullam dwarf) – Kerala**
 - **Umarda – Maharashtra**
- **Buffalo (1):**
 - **Gomanchali – Goa**
- **Goat (2):**
 - **Battisi – Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh**
 - **Totapuri – Rajasthan**
- **Sheep (4):**
 - **Asomi – Assam**
 - **Kow Debar – Uttarakhand**
 - **Madgyal – Maharashtra and Karnataka**
 - **Seemanchali – Bihar**
- **Equines (2):**
 - **Braj Donkey – Uttar Pradesh**
 - **Kashmiri Horse/Pony – Jammu & Kashmir (UT)**
- **Pig (1):**
 - **Nagal Pig – Nagaland**
- **Yak (1):**
 - **Sikkimese Yak – Sikkim**
- **Dog (1):**
 - **Kombai Dog – Tamil Nadu (indigenous guard/hunting breed)**



Do You Know?

- **Kombai dogs** are traditionally associated with the **Theni–Madurai** region; known for **guarding and hunting**.
- Other **Tamil Nadu dog breeds**: **Rajapalayam, Chippiparai, Kanni**.
- **Tamil Nadu cattle breeds**: **Kangayam, Umblachery, Bargur, Pulikulam, Alambadi**.
- **Tamil Nadu sheep**: **Mecheri, Madras Red, Ramnad White, Vembur, Kilakarsal, Nilgiri**.
- **Tamil Nadu buffalo**: **Toda (Nilgiris)**.
- **Rashtriya Gokul Mission (2014)** conserves **indigenous cattle breeds**.

World Bank Launches Its First-Ever Digital Strategy

Context

- The **World Bank Group** launched its **first Digital Strategy** at the inaugural **Global AI and Digital Summit** in **Seoul, South Korea**.

About the Strategy

- A **global framework** combining **public and private finance, digital infrastructure, innovation and policy support** for **developing countries**.
- **Aim**: Bridge the **digital divide**, build **digital skills**, improve **public services**, promote **AI-driven jobs and productivity**.

Key Features

- **Affordable Connectivity**: **Broadband expansion** via **private investment and competition**; cheaper **smartphones and data**.
- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**: **Digital ID, payments, data-sharing**, plus **cybersecurity, privacy, fraud prevention**.
- **Digital Skills and Jobs**: **Literacy and workforce training**, especially for **youth**.
- **“Small AI” for Local Development**: **Affordable, task-specific AI** – **crop disease detection, healthcare help, inventory management**.
- **AI Infrastructure and Readiness Initiative**: Shared **pay-as-you-go GPU computing**, first for **Africa and Latin America**.

Significance

- **2 billion+** people **offline** in **2025**.
- **Internet Use**: **23%** in **low-income countries** vs **94%** in **high-income countries**.
- **Jobs Gap**: **1.2 billion youth** will reach working age in **10–15 years**, but only **420 million jobs** are projected in **developing economies**.

Do You Know?

- **India's DPI ("India Stack") – Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker** – is often cited as a **global model**; India pushed DPI during its **G20 Presidency (2023)**.

Topic: Science & Technology

PHP2Shell: Critical Vulnerabilities in PHP

Context

- Two **critical flaws** in **PHP** led to **emergency security updates** and precautionary **website shutdowns** worldwide.

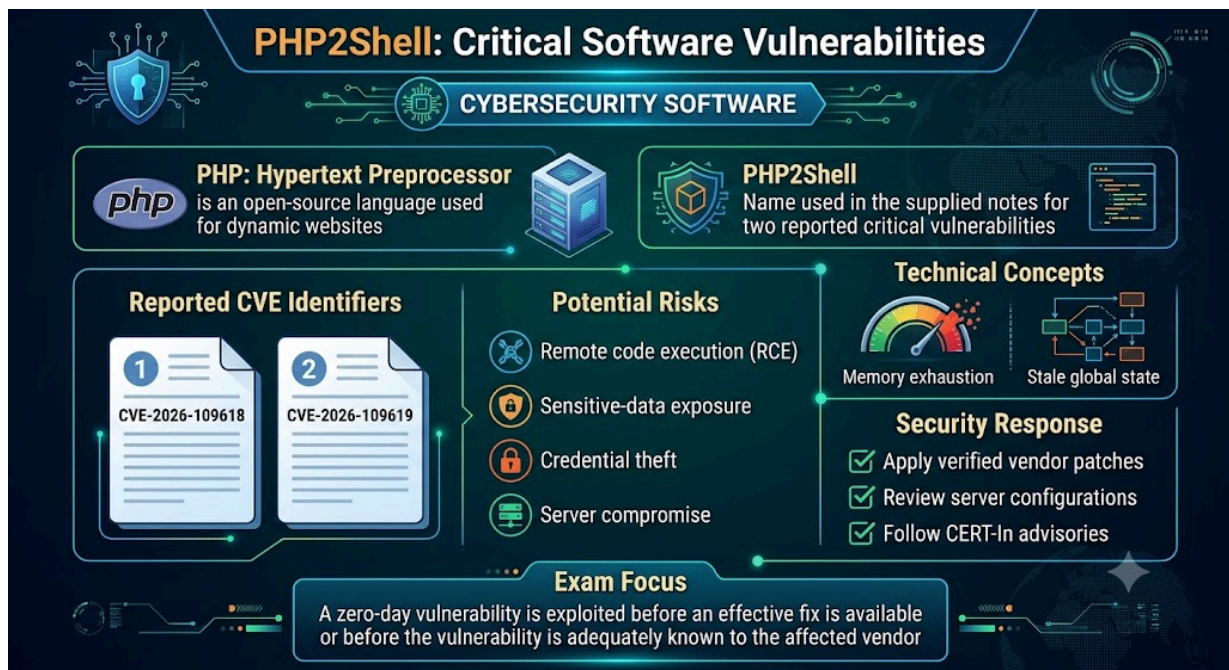
About PHP

- **PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor** – open-source programming language for **dynamic websites**.
- Handles **logins, form submissions, online purchases**.
- **Free**, maintained by **volunteers**.
- Powers **WordPress**, which runs **40%+ of websites** worldwide (blogs, government portals, news, e-commerce).

About PHP2Shell

- Name for **two critical vulnerabilities** in **PHP**.
- Allow attackers to **remotely execute malicious code** on **web servers** without logging in, or access **sensitive data in server memory**.
- May be exploitable **before a website's authentication checks** run, depending on configuration.
- **CVE IDs: CVE-2026-109618 and CVE-2026-109619** – **zero-day flaws** in the **core PHP runtime**.
- **Reach: PHP** powers **~70% of websites** with identifiable **server-side languages**.
- **AI-Assisted Discovery: Found by Wiz and Calif** researchers in **August 2026** using **AI** under the **"Patch the Planet"** initiative.
- **Timeline:**
 - **20 October: Alleged exploit leak.**
 - **21 October: Emergency patches (~200 files changed).**
- **The Two Flaws:**
 - **Out-of-Memory Execution Flaw (CVE-2026-109618): Memory exhaustion** corrupts internal structures → **code execution**.
 - **Stale Global State (CVE-2026-109619): Poor memory cleanup** between **HTTP requests** leaves **residual pointers**.

- **Why Shutdowns Happened:** Agency warnings, complex **patching** across servers, **config workarounds** not enough.
- **Warnings Issued By:** US NSA and India's CERT-In.
- **Risks:** Server takeover, credential theft, session hijacking, ransomware.
- **Lesson:** AI speeds up finding **old bugs**, shortening **patch time**.



Topic: Art & Culture

Khajuraho Temples: ASI to Restore Headless Vishnu Idol at Javari Temple

Context

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** will restore the famous **headless Vishnu idol** at **Khajuraho's Javari Temple** by re-attaching its **lost head**, recently found in an **ASI repository**.

About Khajuraho Temples

- **Medieval Hindu and Jain temples** – peak of **Nagara-style architecture**.
- Known for **soaring shikharas**, **mathematical proportions** and **intricate sculptures**.
- **Location:** **Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh**, against the **Vindhya range**.

History

- **Built By:** **Chandela dynasty**, mainly **950–1050 CE**.
- **Original Scale:** **~85 temples** over **13 sq km**; only **20–23 survive**.
- **Three Groups:** **Western, Eastern, Southern**.

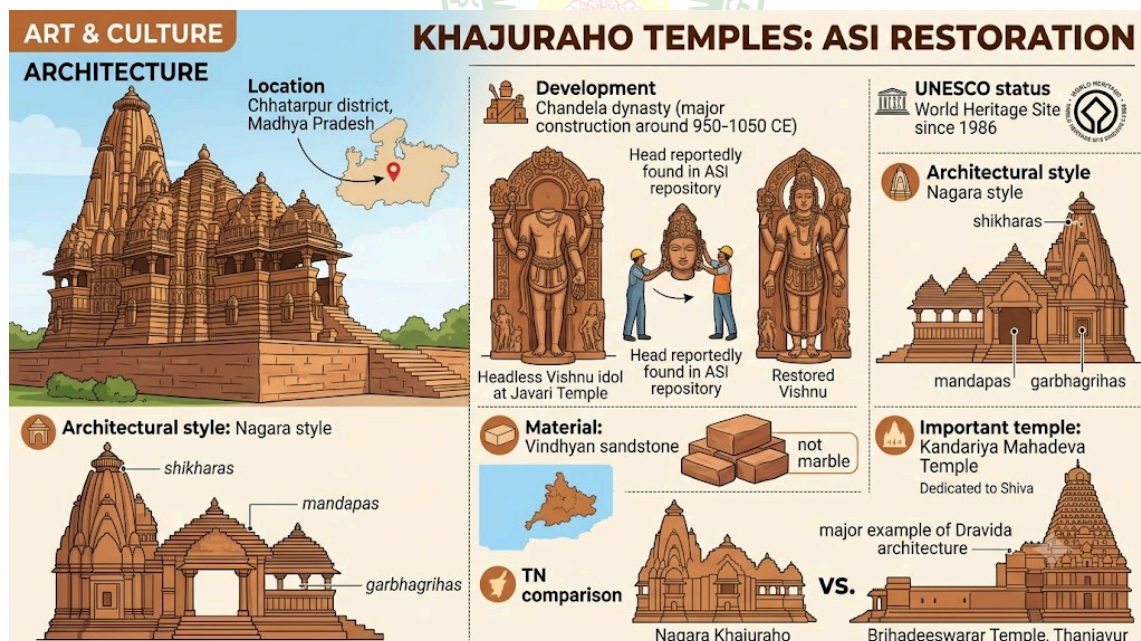
- **Decline:** Chandelas shifted to Kalinjar; Khajuraho faded by the 16th century.
- **Rediscovery:** Captain T.S. Burt (1838); later documented by Alexander Cunningham and F.C. Maisey.
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site:** 1986.

Architectural Features

- **Nagara Style:** Raised jagati (platform), mandapas, antarala, garbhagriha; interlocking sandstone blocks.
- **Panchayatana Layout:** Lakshmana and Vishvanatha temples – main shrine with four subsidiary shrines.
- **Clustered Shikharas:** Smaller urushringas around the main spire, symbolising Mount Meru – best seen at Kandariya Mahadeva Temple.
- **Material:** Fine-grained Vindhyan sandstone (not marble).
- **Sculptures:** Hindu and Jain deities, daily life, celestial beings, mithuna figures.

Significance

- UNESCO criteria (i) and (iii).
- Shows religious coexistence – Shaiva, Vaishnava, Jain temples side by side.



Do You Know?

- **Kandariya Mahadeva Temple** (dedicated to Shiva) is the largest temple at Khajuraho.
- **Khajuraho Dance Festival** is held every February.

- **Nagara (North), Dravida (South), Vesara (mixed – Deccan)** are the three main temple styles; **Tamil Nadu's Brihadeeswarar Temple (Thanjavur)** is the finest example of **Dravida style**.

Topic: Geography

Tibet: 7.0-Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Nagqu Region

Context

- A **7.0-magnitude earthquake** hit **Tibet's** high-altitude **Nagqu region**.
- At least **16 dead**, dozens injured, **300+ houses** collapsed.

About Tibet

- Vast **high plateau**; an **autonomous region of China**.
- Called the **"Roof of the World"** and the **"Third Pole"**.
- **Area: ~12,21,600 sq km**.
- **Average Elevation: Over 4,500 m**.
- **Capital: Lhasa**.
- **Borders: China, Myanmar, India, Bhutan, Nepal**.

Geological Formation

- Formed **~50 million years ago** by the **collision of the Indian and Eurasian Plates** – continuous **uplift** and **Himalayan formation**.

Key Features and Vulnerabilities

- **Water Tower of Asia:** Source of the **Indus, Sutlej, Brahmaputra, Salween, Mekong, Yangtze** – sustaining **1 billion+ people**.
- **Rain Shadow:** **Himalayas** block **monsoon winds** → **cold, dry climate**, especially in the **Qiangtang region**.
- **Hazards:** **Active faults, retreating glaciers, thawing permafrost** → **earthquakes, GLOFs, rock-ice avalanches**.
- **Qiangtang Plateau:** Average **~4,800 m**; extreme conditions hamper relief.

Implications for India

- **Landslide dams** and **glacial floods** threaten lives downstream in **India** and **Nepal**.
- Risk to **hydropower dams, border roads** and **China's water-diversion projects**.

Do You Know?

- The **Brahmaputra** is called **Yarlung Tsangpo** in **Tibet**; **China** is building the **Medog (Motuo) mega dam** on it.

- **Mansarovar Lake** and **Mount Kailash** are in **Tibet**.
- **GLOF: Glacial Lake Outburst Flood** – e.g., **South Lhonak Lake, Sikkim (2023)**.

Topic: Environment

UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2026: 1.5°C Target “Out of Reach”

Context

- The **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** released the **Emissions Gap Report 2026**.

About the Report

- Released **annually** before the **UN climate negotiations (COP)**.
- Tracks the gap between where emissions are heading under **current pledges** and where they should be for **1.5°C**.
- Assesses **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** – updated every **five years**.

About UNEP

- **Established: 1972** (after the **Stockholm Conference**).
- **Policy Organ: UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)**.
- **HQ: Nairobi, Kenya**.
- **Major Reports: Global Environment Outlook, Emissions Gap Report, Adaptation Gap Report, Frontiers Report, Actions on Air Quality, Rise of Environmental Crime.**

Key Highlights

- **Global Emissions (2025):** Around **58.4 billion tonnes CO₂e** – about the same as **2024**.
- **Sources:** Over **two-thirds** from **fossil fuels**; rest from **LULUCF, methane, nitrous oxide, F-gases**.
- **Trends (2025):**
 - **Fossil CO₂, N₂O, F-gases** – increased.
 - **Methane** – nearly **unchanged**.
- **G20 (excluding African Union):** **76%** of global emissions.
- **1.5°C Target: Completely out of reach**; best hope now is limiting warming to **1.8°C**.
- **India:** **3rd largest emitter**, but **per capita emissions** much lower than the top two (**China, USA**).

Concern

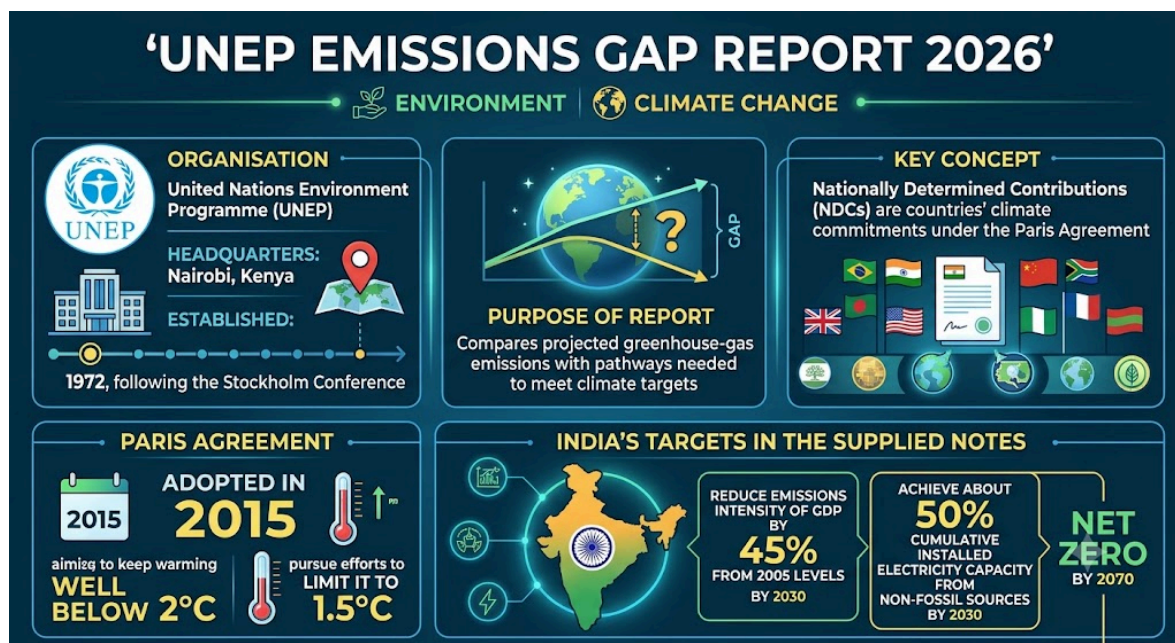
- Every fraction of a degree above **1.5°C** worsens **floods, heatwaves, wildfires**.

Recommendation – Cuts Needed (vs 2025 levels)

- 18% by 2030.
- 45% by 2035.
- 69% by 2040.

Do You Know?

- **Paris Agreement (2015):** Limit warming to **well below 2°C**, pursue **1.5°C** above **pre-industrial (1850–1900)** levels.
- **India's updated NDC (2022):** 45% cut in emission intensity of GDP by 2030 (vs 2005); 50% power capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030; Net Zero by 2070.
- **COP31 (2026)** is hosted by **Türkiye (Antalya)**.



Topic: History

Kerala's Dwindling Jewish Communities

Context

- Incidents at the **Kadavumbhagam Synagogue (Ernakulam)** and the heritage **Koder House (Fort Kochi)** renewed attention to **Kerala's declining Jewish community**.

Background

- **Jewish migration to Kerala** linked to the ancient **spice trade**.
- **Two main communities:**
 - **Malabari ("black") Jews.**

- **Paradesi ("white") Jews.**
- **Two smaller groups in Cochin:**
 - **Baghdadi Jews:** Arabic-speaking; arrived **18th–19th centuries** from **Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan**; later counted as **"white" Jews**.
 - **Meshuchrarim:** Part of the **Paradesi** community – **freed slaves** from Europe, converts and descendants.

Malabar (Cochin) Jews

- Trace history to **King Solomon's era (10th century BCE, ~3,000 years ago)**.
- First settled at **Cranganore (Kodungallur, Thrissur)** – called **"Shingly"** by the community.
- Moved to **Cochin** after the **Portuguese** arrived (**16th century**).
- **Kadavumbhagam Synagogue** – associated with **Malabari Jews**.

Paradesi Jews

- **"Foreign" Jews** from the **Iberian Peninsula (Spain, Portugal)**, **15th–16th centuries**.
- Fled persecution by **Catholic rulers**.
- Settled on the **Malabar coast** and in **Madras (Chennai)**.
- **Cochin Paradesis** – **spice trade**; **Madras Paradesis** – **Golconda diamonds** and **precious stones**.

Decline

- Steady migration to **Israel** since the **1950s (Aliyah** – Jewish immigration to Israel; **Israel founded 1948)**.
- **Queenie Hallegua**, last woman of **Kerala's Paradesi community**, died in **Kochi** in **2024**.

Do You Know?

- **Paradesi Synagogue, Mattancherry (1568)** is the **oldest active synagogue** in the **Commonwealth**.
- **Chennai's Jewish Cemetery** on **Lloyds Road** is a remnant of the **Madras Paradesi** community.

International Highlights

25th SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Key Highlights

- **Meeting:** **25th Council of Heads of Government (CHG)** of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
- **Dates:** **19–20 October 2026**.

- **Venue:** Dushanbe, Tajikistan.
- **Chaired By:** Qohir (Kokhir) Rasulzoda, Prime Minister of Tajikistan.
- **India Represented By:** Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

India's Announcement

- **India** will host the **1st SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum** by **end of 2026**; invited all members.

Key Outcomes

- **Joint Communiqué** adopted.
- **PMTEC Action Plan 2026–2030 (Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation)** implementation approved.
- Cooperation in **transport, industry** and other areas.
- **SCO Budget for 2027** approved.

About SCO

- **Founded:** 2001, Shanghai.
- **Members (10):** China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Belarus.
- **Secretariat:** Beijing.
- **RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure):** Tashkent.
- India became a **full member** in **2017**.

