

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS - 23.10.2026

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Director,
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TamilNadu Highlights

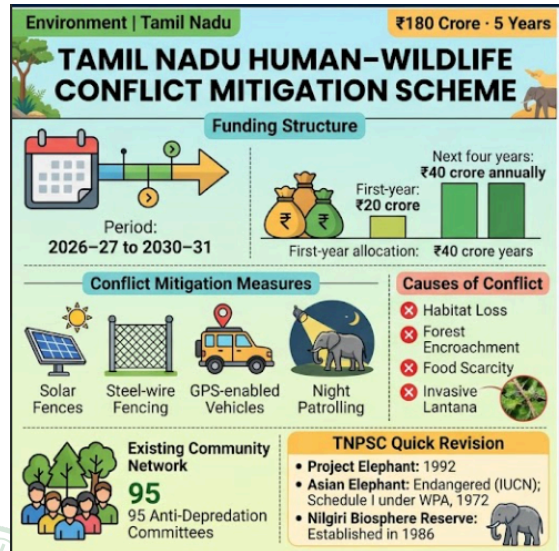
Tamil Nadu to Spend ₹180 Crore on Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation

Context

- The Tamil Nadu government will spend **₹180 crore** over **five years** on a **Comprehensive Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Scheme**.
- Announced In:** 2026–27 State Budget by N. Marie Wilson, Minister for Finance, Planning and Development.
- Proposal Sent By:** Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden.

Funding Details

- Total Outlay:** ₹180 crore.
- Period:** 2026–27 to 2030–31 (five years).
- Year-wise Allocation:**
 - 2026–27:** ₹20 crore (Government Order issued).
 - Next four years:** ₹40 crore each year.



Key Interventions Under the Scheme

- Physical Barriers:**
 - Hanging solar fences** at vulnerable locations.
 - Steel wire rope fencing** and other suitable barriers.
- Community Participation:**
 - Community-based protection** of forests.
 - Involvement of **local communities** in conflict mitigation.
- Technology and Patrolling:**
 - GPS-enabled vehicles** for conflict management, patrolling and **rapid response**.
 - Stronger **night patrolling**, security and **surveillance**.
 - Monitoring of **wildlife movement** in conflict-prone areas.

Existing Community Measures

- 95 Anti-Depredation Committees.**
- Village-level early warning systems**, including **SMS alerts**, to promote **coexistence**.

Measures Already in Use

- **Elephant-proof trenches (EPTs).**
- **Solar and steel rope fencing.**
- **Stone walls.**
- **Fodder development and water augmentation** inside forests.
- **Regular patrolling** to deter wildlife entry.
- **Technology-Based Tools:**
 - **AI-based surveillance** with **real-time alerts.**
 - **Radio-collaring** of animals.
 - **Geo-referenced tracking.**
 - **Trip-wire systems.**

Significance

- **Saves Lives:** Reduces **human deaths and injuries.**
- **Protects Livelihoods:** Prevents **crop and property damage.**
- **Wildlife Conservation:** Reduces **retaliatory killings** of animals.
- Promotes **Coexistence** through **community participation.**

Causes of Human-Wildlife Conflict

- **Habitat loss and fragmentation.**
- **Encroachment** into forests and **elephant corridors.**
- Change in **cropping patterns** near forests (attractive crops like **sugarcane, banana**).
- **Scarcity of food and water** in forests (worsened by **weak monsoons**).
- **Invasive species** like **Lantana** reducing forest fodder.

Do You Know?

- **Asian elephant:** Schedule I of the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972**; IUCN: Endangered; India's National Heritage Animal (2010).
- **Project Elephant** was launched in **1992.**
- **Elephant Reserves in Tamil Nadu:** Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Anamalai, Srivilliputhur, Agasthiyamalai.
- The **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1986)** was India's first biosphere reserve.
- **Human-wildlife conflict** was notified as a **State-specific disaster** in some States (e.g., Kerala, 2024).

Topic: Science & Technology

SBI Investigates Suspected Customer Data Leak on the Dark Web

Context

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** disclosed it is investigating a **cybersecurity incident** involving suspected exposure of **customer data** on the **Dark Web**.

About the Dark Web

- The part of the internet with **unindexed content**, accessed **anonymously** through special browsers like **The Onion Router (Tor)**.
- **Origin:** Developed by researchers at the **US Naval Research Laboratory (NRL)** to protect **American intelligence communications**.
- **Concern: Unregulated;** run by a vast network of individuals worldwide.

Layers of the Internet

- **Surface Web: Indexed** by search engines (e.g., news sites).
- **Deep Web: Not indexed** – e-mail, bank accounts, private databases.
- **Dark Web:** Hidden part of the deep web; needs special software like **Tor**.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

- Information that **identifies an individual**, alone or combined with other data.
- **Examples:** Names, contact details, addresses, **ID numbers**.

Implications of the Breach

- **Targeted Financial Fraud:** Fraudsters can impersonate **bank officials** convincingly.
- **Identity Theft and Privacy Violation:** Misuse for **phishing** and **impersonation**.
- **Loss of Public Trust** in **digital banking**.

Constitutional Provisions

- **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017):** **Right to Privacy** is a **Fundamental Right** under **Article 21**.
- **Legislative Competence:** **Privacy and data protection** fall under **Article 248** and **Entry 97, Union List (residuary powers)** – **Parliament** has exclusive power to legislate.

Legal Framework

- **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023:**
 - **Section 8(6):** Organisations must inform the **Data Protection Board of India** and affected individuals of a **breach**.
 - **DPDP Rules, 2025 – Rule 7:** How to inform affected individuals and steps they can take.

- **In Force From: 13 May 2027** – so not yet applicable to the **SBI** incident.
- **CERT-In Directions, 2022:** CERT-In is the national agency for **cyber incidents** under **Section 70B** of the IT Act, 2000.
- **RBI Cybersecurity Framework: Governance, incident reporting, risk assessment** for regulated entities.

Government Initiatives

- **Samanvaya Platform (MHA):** MIS, data repository and coordination platform for **law enforcement agencies** on **cybercrime**.
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C):** Under **MHA**; coordinates action against **cybercrime**.
- **Cyber Swachhta Kendra:** Detects and removes **malware**; spreads awareness.

Do You Know?

- **National cybercrime helpline: 1930**; reporting portal: **cybercrime.gov.in**.

Topic: Environment

Technology and Innovation under the Namami Gange Programme

Context

- The **Namami Gange Programme** uses a mix of infrastructure, diverse technologies, **decentralised solutions**, rehabilitation and long-term operation for **wastewater treatment**.

About Namami Gange Programme (NGP)

- **Launched: 2014.**
- **Type: Integrated Conservation Mission.**
- **Twin Objectives: Abatement of pollution** and **conservation and rejuvenation** of the **National River Ganga**.
- **Main Pillars:**
 - **Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure**
 - **River-Front Development**
 - **River-Surface Cleaning**
 - **Biodiversity**
 - **Afforestation**
 - **Public Awareness**
 - **Industrial Effluent Monitoring**
 - **Ganga Gram**

Need for Varied Technologies

- **Large Cities:** Centralised STPs with underground sewer networks.
- **Small Towns/Villages:** Decentralised systems where sewers are absent.
- **Hilly Areas:** Compact technologies for difficult terrain and cold.
- **Land-Constrained Areas:** Multi-storey STPs and compact plants.
- **Sustainability:** Energy-efficient tech, renewables, sludge management.

Key Sewage Treatment Technologies

- **Food Chain Reactor (FCR):**
 - Improves on **Activated Sludge Process** and **Sequential Batch Reactor** using **fixed artificial media** and **plant roots**.
 - **Activated Sludge Process:** **Microorganisms** break down organic matter into **CO₂**, water, inorganic compounds.
 - **Sequential Batch Reactor:** **Cyclic activated sludge process**; high efficiency in a single biological step.
- **Electrocoagulation and Electro-oxidation:**
 - **Non-biological**; uses **electric current** and a **metal anode** to destabilise pollutants.
 - Suited to **cold, hilly, remote** places – used at **Badrinath** and **Chamoli (Uttarakhand)**.
- **Constructed Wetlands (CWs):**
 - **Engineered systems** using **natural processes**.
 - Components – water, plants, substrate, soil, **microorganisms**.
- **NEREDA:**
 - **Biological treatment** forming compact **aerobic granules** with good settling properties.
- **Soil Biotechnology:**
 - Combines **sedimentation, infiltration** with **biochemical processes**.
 - Uses minerals, **native microflora**, **bio-indicator plants**.

Resource Recovery

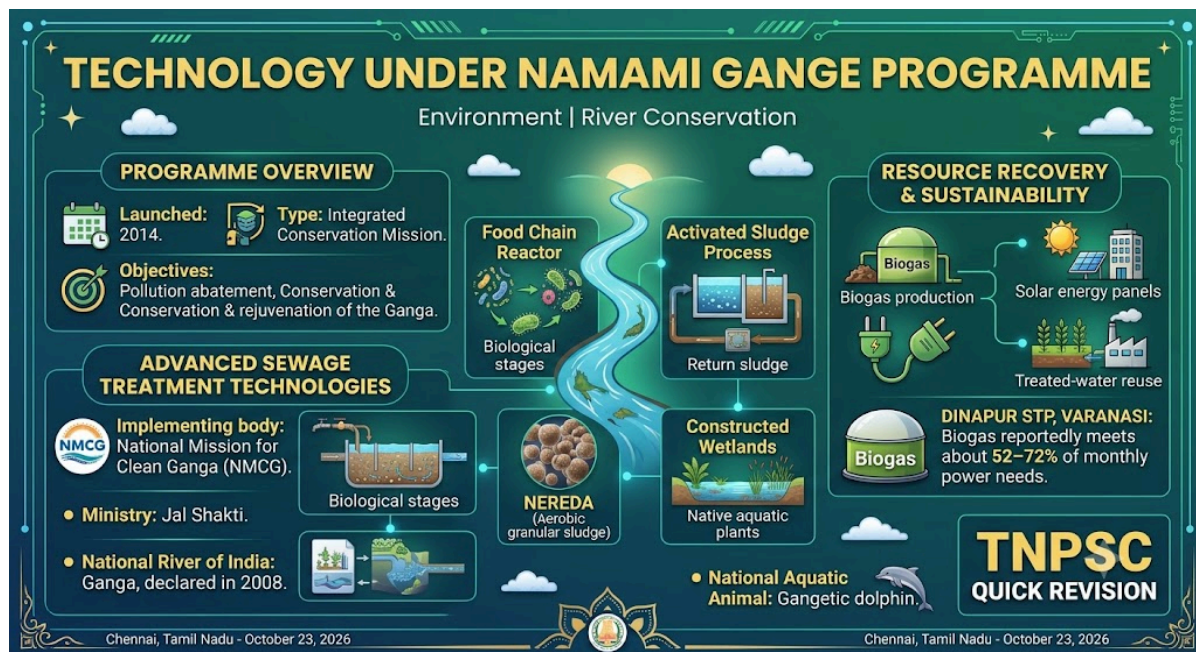
- **Biogas Generation:** **Anaerobic digestion** produces **biogas** for electricity.
 - Example: **140 MLD Dinapur STP, Varanasi** – biogas meets about **52–72%** of monthly power needs.
- **Solar Energy:** Reduces **STPs'** reliance on grid power.
- **Sludge Incineration:** Reduces volume; **ash** may be used in **bricks or concrete** (subject to standards).
- **Treated-Water Reuse:** Reduces pressure on **freshwater**.

Significance of Technology-Neutral Approach

- Location-specific solutions.
- Lower costs – avoids expensive sewers, saves land.
- Improved river health – higher dissolved oxygen.
- Energy efficiency.
- Circular economy – wastewater and sludge become resources.

Do You Know?

- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) implements NGP; it works under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Ganga was declared India's National River in 2008.
- Gangetic dolphin is India's National Aquatic Animal.



Topic: Economy

Pumped Storage Hydropower: India Expands "Water Batteries"

Context

- India is expanding **pumped storage hydropower** to support **renewable energy integration**, **grid stability** and **energy security**.

About Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs)

- Large-scale energy storage using **water and gravity** – called "**water batteries**".
- Two reservoirs at different heights:
 - **Surplus power** → water **pumped up** to the **upper reservoir**.

- **Peak demand** → water **released through turbines** to generate electricity.
- Balances **solar and wind fluctuations**, meets **peak demand**, improves **grid reliability**.

Types of PSPs

- **On-stream:** Both reservoirs on a **river, stream or nallah**.
- **Off-stream Open-loop:** One reservoir on a river; the other away from a **perennial watercourse**.
- **Off-stream Closed-loop:** Both reservoirs away from **perennial rivers** – less impact on **river ecosystems**.

India's PSP Status (August 2026)

- **Operational:** **7.43 GW** across **10 projects** (each above **25 MW**).
- **Under Construction/Implementation:** **15.87 GW** across **11 PSPs**.
- **Pipeline:** **10.40 GW** across **8 projects** concurred/appraised by the **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)**.

Global Scenario (IRENA, end-2025)

- **Global Capacity:** **159.8 GW** – the **most widely deployed large-scale storage**.
- **Top Countries:**
 - **China:** ~66 GW.
 - **Japan:** ~22 GW.
 - **USA:** ~19 GW.
 - **India:** 4th with **7.18 GW**.



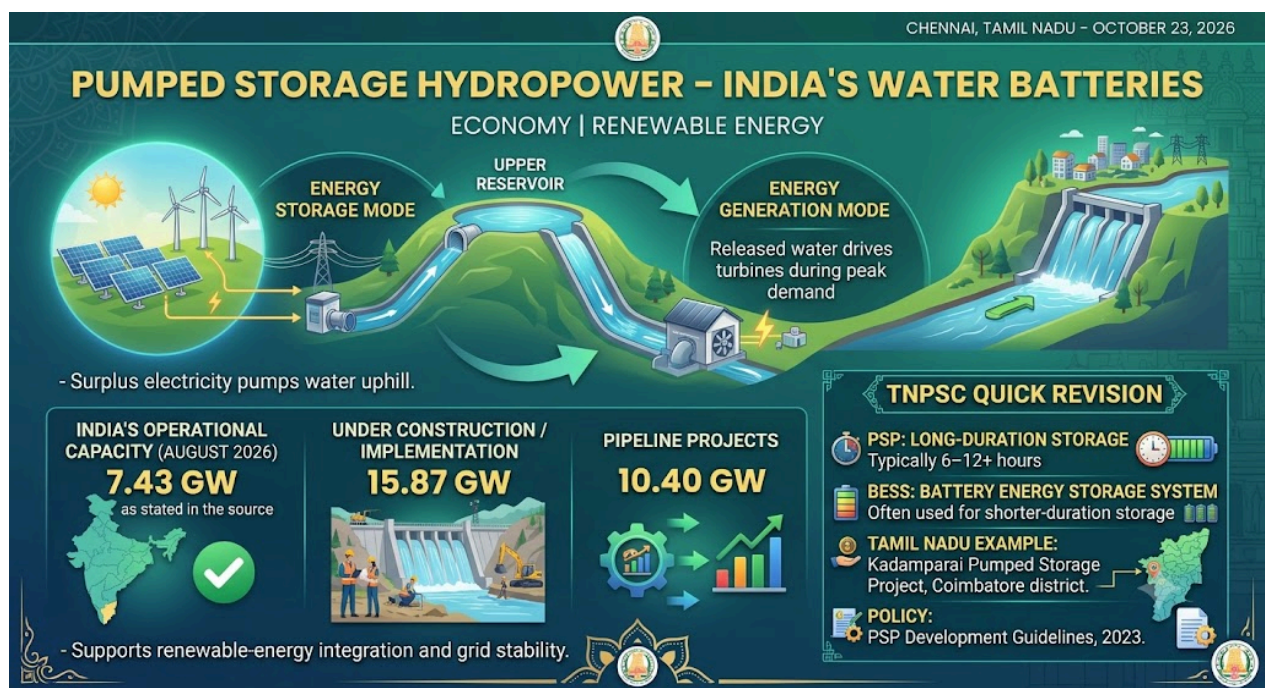
Government Initiatives

- **PSP Development Guidelines (2023)** – Ministry of Power.
- **Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding Guidelines (2025)** – for procuring **storage capacity**.
- **Transmission Charge Waiver:** **100% ISTS charge waiver** for **25 years** for PSPs awarded by **30 June 2028**.
- **Faster Approvals:** CEA's DPR concurrence time cut from **90 to 50 days**.
- **Integrated Planning** of storage and transmission.

PSPs vs Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

- **Storage Duration:**
 - **PSP:** Long-Duration Energy Storage (LDES) – **6–12+ hours**.
 - **BESS:** Short duration – **2–4 hours**.

- **Lifespan:**
 - **PSP: 40–60+ years**, near-zero degradation.
 - **BESS (Lithium-ion): 10–15 years**; needs **cell replacement**.
- **Supply Chain:**
 - **PSP: Domestic** civil engineering, steel, concrete.
 - **BESS:** Depends on imported **lithium, cobalt, nickel**.
- **Deployment:**
 - **PSP:** Needs suitable **elevation, water, terrain**.
 - **BESS: Modular**, quick, can be placed near cities.



Additional Policy Enablers

- **2023 Guidelines:** Incentivise **off-stream projects** and use of **depleted open-cast coal mines**.
- **CEA Concurrence Limits:** Raised to **₹3,000 crore**; **off-stream closed-loop** schemes fully exempt from **CEA concurrence**.
- **Environmental Clearance: Category 'B2'** appraisal for off-stream closed-loop schemes.
- **Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB):** Rules notified **February 2025**.
- **Jal Vidyut DPR Portal:** CEA online tracking; approval time cut from **90 to 50 days**.
- **Budgetary support** for enabling infrastructure (roads, bridges, ropeways).

Significance

- **Renewable Integration:** Stores surplus **solar/wind** power.

- **Grid Stability** and **peak-load management**.
- **Energy Security**.
- **Long-Duration Storage:** Complements **batteries**.

Do You Know?

- **Kadamparai Pumped Storage Project** (Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu) is one of India's operational **PSPs**.
- **Tehri PSP** (Uttarakhand) is among India's largest.

Topic: Art & Culture

Three Indian Sites Added to UNESCO Tentative List

Context

- **Three Indian sites** were added to **UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites**, taking India's tentative list to **81**.
- **Tentative List** inclusion is a **prerequisite for nomination** to the **World Heritage List**.

The Three Sites

Baratang Karst-Mud Volcano Complex

- **Location:** Southwestern Baratang Island.
- **Karst Terrain:** ~1 sq km; limestone caves with **stalactites** and **stalagmites** (speleothems).
- **Mud Volcanism ("Jalki"):** Emits cool mud, water, **methane**, **hydrogen sulphide**; driven by **over-pressured shale**, not magma.
- **Vents:** Four clusters (~2 m high) near **Jarawa Creek**; erupted again in **2025** after two decades.
- **Tectonics:** Aligned with **NE–SW faults**; formed by **subduction of the Indian Plate** beneath the **Burma microplate**.

Andaman Subduction Volcanoes – Additional Points

- **Serial site:** Narcondam and Barren Islands.
- Only **Quaternary subduction volcanoes** in the **inner arc** of the **5,000 km** **Burma–Andaman–Java subduction complex**.
- **Rock Types:**
 - **Narcondam:** **Dacite–andesite–rhyolite** (continental-transitional crust).
 - **Barren:** **Basalt** and **basaltic-andesite** (oceanic crust).
- **Barren Island:**
 - **South Asia's only active volcano**.

- 2-km-wide caldera.
- Eruptions since 1787; ash plume of 1.2 km in January 2026.
- Repeated primary ecological succession.
- Narcondam Island:
 - Dormant/extinct for ~18,000–20,000 years.
 - Endemic Narcondam hornbill (*Rhyticeros narcondami*) and Narcondam shrew (*Crocidura narcondamica*).

Sirpur Cultural & Archaeological Landscape – Additional Points

- Period: 5th–12th century CE.
- Monuments:
 - Hindu: Laxman Temple, Gandheshwar Temple (Shaiva and Vaishnava).
 - Buddhist: Anandprabhu Kuti Vihara, Swastik Vihara.
- Building Material: Stromatolite rocks (fossilised cyanobacteria) from the Raipur Limestone Group, Chhattisgarh Basin.
- Urban Complex: Rajmahal, markets, bathing ghats along the Mahanadi.
- Setting: Gond and Baiga communities; near Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary.

THREE INDIAN SITES ADDED TO UNESCO TENTATIVE LIST
ART AND CULTURE | HERITAGE

UNESCO TENTATIVE LIST
INDIA'S TENTATIVE LIST reportedly reached 81 SITES.

- **BARATANG KARST-MUD VOLCANO COMPLEX**
ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS
- **ANDAMAN SUBDUCTION VOLCANOES**
Includes Narcondam & Barren Islands
- **SIRPUR CULTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE**
CHHATTISGARH; Significant remains from the 5th–12th CENTURIES CE.

TENTATIVE LIST INCLUSION is a PREREQUISITE for nomination to the WORLD HERITAGE LIST.

TNPSC QUICK REVISION

- **BARREN ISLAND:** SOUTH ASIA'S ONLY ACTIVE VOLCANO, according to according to the source.
- **SIRPUR:** HINDU AND BUDDHIST MONUMENTS.
- **INDIA'S ONLY MIXED WORLD HERITAGE SITE** listed in the notes: KHANGCHENDZONGA NATIONAL PARK, SIKKIM.

India's World Heritage Status

- 45 UNESCO World Heritage Sites:
 - 37 cultural, 7 natural, 1 mixed.
- Latest – Sarnath (ancient Buddhist site), inscribed in July 2026.

Do You Know?

- **Tamil Nadu's World Heritage Sites:** Mahabalipuram monuments, Great Living Chola Temples (Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Darasuram), Nilgiri Mountain Railway (part of Mountain Railways of India), and the Western Ghats (shared).
- **Khangchendzonga National Park (Sikkim)** is India's only mixed site.

Topic: Economy

Core Industries Growth Accelerates to 7.9% in September 2026

Context

- India's **core sector output** grew **7.9%** in **September 2026** – the fastest in the new series – up from **5.9%** in **August**.
- Driven by **iron ore, electricity, coal** and **refinery products**.

About the Index of Core Industries (ICI)

- Measures **monthly production** of India's **major industrial sectors**.
- **Released:** Around the **20th** of the following month.
- These industries form the **backbone of industrial activity**.
- **Weight in IIP:** **32.88%** (new **2022–23** series) vs **40.27%** (**2011–12** series).

Revised ICI Series (Base Year 2022–23)

- **Released By:** **Office of Economic Adviser (OEA), DPIIT**.
- **New Base Year:** **2022–23** (replacing **2011–12**).
- **Number of Industries:** Increased to **nine** with addition of **iron ore**.
- **The Nine Core Industries:**
 - **Coal**
 - **Crude Oil**
 - **Natural Gas**
 - **Refinery Products**
 - **Fertilisers**
 - **Steel**
 - **Cement**
 - **Electricity**
 - **Iron Ore (new)**
- **Committee:** Chaired by **Praveen Mahto** (constituted **November 2025**).

Methodological Changes

- **Steel:** Gross production data replaces net production.
- **Coal:** Only raw coal; washed coal and middlings excluded to avoid double counting.
- **Weights:** Revised using the 2022–23 IIP series, normalised to 100.

Do You Know?

- In the old series, **Refinery Products** had the **highest weight** among core industries.
- **IIP** is released by **NSO, MoSPI**; **ICI** by **OEA, DPIIT**.

Topic: Sports

Asian Para Games 2026 Begin in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan

Context

- The **5th Asian Para Games** began in **Aichi-Nagoya, Japan**.

About Asian Para Games

- Also called **Para Asiad**.
- Regulated by the **Asian Paralympic Committee**.
- Held **every four years**, after the **Asian Games**, in the **same city**.
- For athletes with **physical disabilities**.

About Asian Games

- Also called **Asiad**; **biggest sporting event in Asia**, held **every 4 years**.
- **Organised By:** **Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)** – **45 countries/regions**.
- **2026 Tagline:** "**Imagine One Asia**".
- **Japan's third time hosting** – earlier **Tokyo (1958)** and **Hiroshima (1994)**.
- **India at Asian Games 2026:** **85 medals (21 Gold, 27 Silver, 37 Bronze)**, **4th place**.

Topic: Important Days

National Police Commemoration Day – 21 October

About the Day

- Observed on **21 October** every year.
- **Background:** On **21 October 1959**, Indian policemen were martyred in an **ambush by Chinese troops** at **Hot Springs, Ladakh**.
- Honours them and all **police personnel who died on duty**.

- A **memorial at Hot Springs**; police from across India **trek there** to pay homage.
- **National-level parade** held since **2012** at the **Police Memorial**.

National Police Memorial (NPM)

- **Dedicated By:** Prime Minister on **Police Commemoration Day, 2018**.
- **Location:** Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.
- **Components:** Central Sculpture, Wall of Valour, Museum.
- **Wall of Valour:** 30-foot granite sculpture with names of over **35,000** martyrs.

International Highlights

India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement Comes into Force (20 October 2026)

Context

- The **Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI)** announced that the **India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (IN–NZ FTA)** came into force on **20 October 2026**.
- **Announced By:** Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.
- **Occasion:** Virtual interaction with **Todd McClay**, New Zealand’s Minister for Trade and Investment, from New Delhi.

Key Features – Market Access

- **India’s Gains:**
 - **100% duty-free access** on all **8,284 tariff lines** in New Zealand.
 - Benefits Indian exporters of **textiles, apparel, leather, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery**, among others.
- **India’s Commitments:**
 - Liberalises **70.03%** of its **tariff lines**.
 - Covers **95% of bilateral trade value**.
 - Key **exclusions** to protect **sensitive sectors**.

Key Target

- Supports goals of the **India–New Zealand Strategic Partnership** and **Roadmap to 2030**.
- **Aim:** **Double bilateral trade** in goods and services to nearly **₹35,000 crore** over the next **four to five years**.

Customs Notification

- **Issued By:** Department of Revenue (DoR), Ministry of Finance.
- **Legal Basis:** **Section 25(1)** of the **Customs Act, 1962**.

- **Content:** Revised **Basic Customs Duty (BCD)** and **cess rates** for specified goods under the **FTA**.

Significance

- **Export Boost:** Zero-duty access for Indian goods in **New Zealand**.
- **Strategic Ties:** Strengthens India's presence in the **Oceania / Indo-Pacific** region.
- **Diversification:** Reduces dependence on traditional markets.
- **Services and Mobility:** Opportunities for Indian **professionals, students** and **IT services**.
- Supports **Viksit Bharat 2047** export goals.

Do You Know?

- **New Zealand:** Capital – **Wellington**; currency – **New Zealand Dollar**.
- **India's Recent Trade Agreements:**
 - **India–UAE CEPA (2022).**
 - **India–Australia ECTA (2022).**
 - **India–EFTA TEPA** (in force **1 October 2025**).
 - **India–UK CETA** (signed **July 2025**).
- **India–Canada CEPA** negotiations aim to conclude by **December 2026**.
- India has traditionally kept **dairy** out of **FTA concessions** to protect its **8 crore dairy farmers**.

