DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS - 17.11.2026

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Director,
Department of Employment and Training.

TamilNadu Highlights

"Annan Seer" Scheme

Context

- The **Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Department** issued **guidelines** for applying to the **"Annan Seer" scheme**.

About the Scheme

- **Benefit:** An **8-gram gold coin** and **one silk saree** at the time of **marriage**.
- **For:** Eligible **women** from families with **annual income up to ₹2.5 lakh**.
- **Allocation (current year): ₹812 crore**.
- **Meaning: "Annan Seer"** = **"brother's gift"**, the customary **marriage gift from a brother**.

Eligibility

- **Bride and groom** must meet the **legal minimum age for marriage**.
- The **bride's name** must be in an **active family (ration) card**.
- **Family annual income** must not exceed **₹2.5 lakh**.

Not Eligible

- Families paying **income tax** or **professional tax**.
- Families owning a **car for personal use**.
- Families owning more than **5 acres of wetland (nanjai)** or **10 acres of dry land (punjai)**.
- Those who already got **marriage assistance** from other **departments** or **welfare boards**.
- Families using more than **3,600 units of electricity a year**.
- Families of:
  - **Elected representatives** (except **village panchayat members**).
  - **Government employees**.
  - **Pensioners**.
- Families with businesses paying **GST** on turnover above **₹50 lakh a year**.

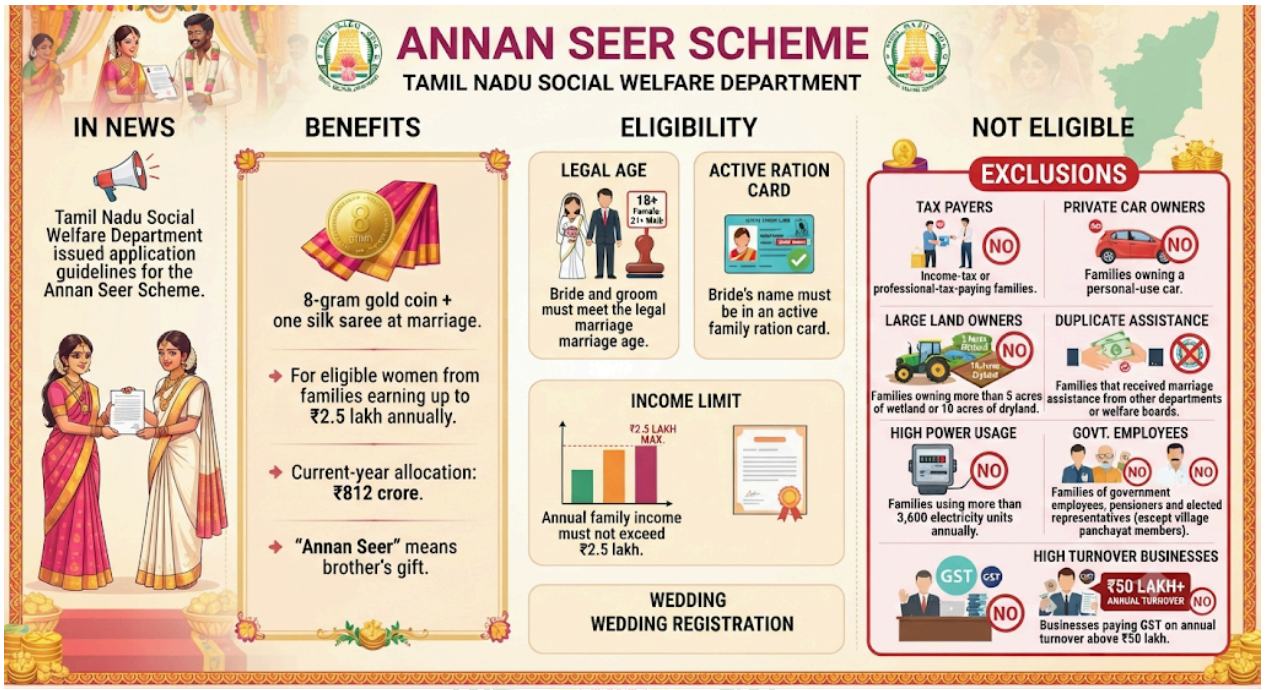
Significance

- Eases the **marriage expenses** of **poor families**.
- **Targeted benefits** through **income**, **asset** and **electricity-use filters**.
- **Digital, transparent process** with **Aadhaar verification**.
- Encourages **marriage registration** and **legal-age marriage**, helping prevent **child marriage**.

Do You Know?

- **Earlier Tamil Nadu Marriage Assistance Schemes:**

- **Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme** – gave **gold and cash**. It was later converted (**2022**) into the **Pudhumai Penn scheme** (**₹1,000 a month** for **girls in higher education**).
- **Dr. Dharmambal Ammaiyar Widow Remarriage Scheme**.
- **Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Inter-Caste Marriage Scheme**.



Cyclone Akvan

Context

- A **deep depression** in the **Bay of Bengal** intensified into **Cyclonic Storm "Akvan"** on **16 November 2026 (evening)**.
- The **Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai**, issued a **cyclone warning** for **Andhra Pradesh** and the adjoining **south Odisha coast**.

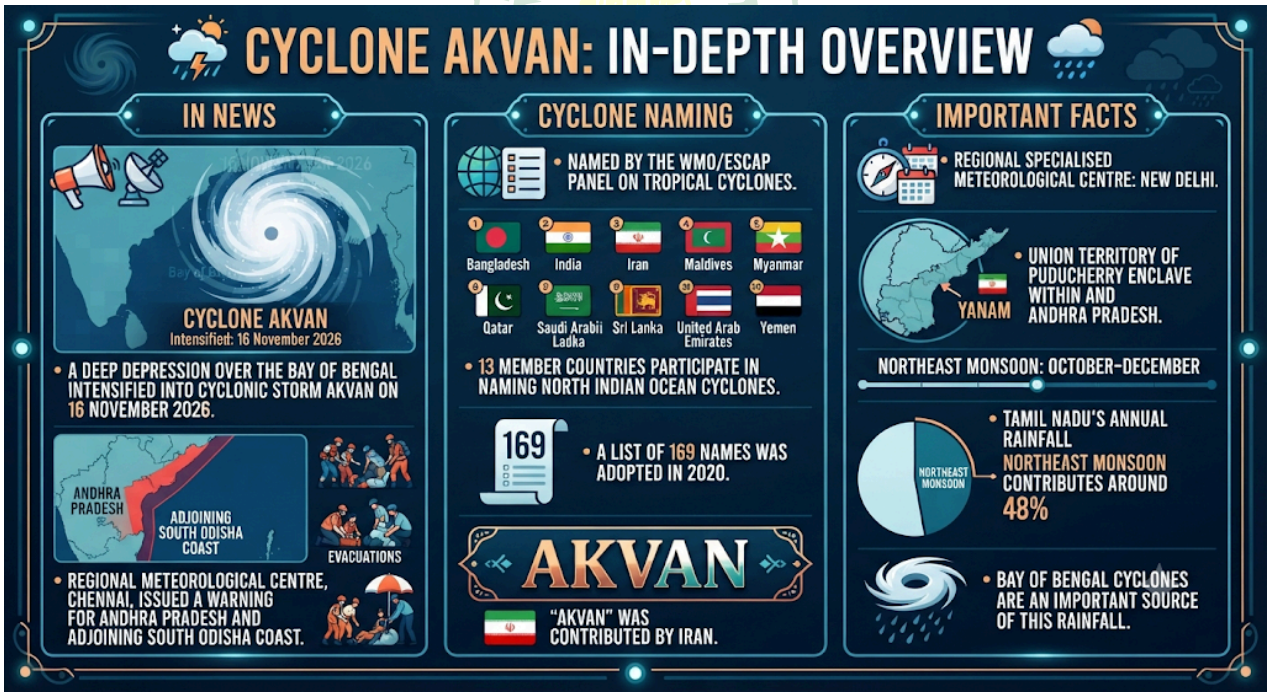
Do You Know?

- **India Meteorological Department Classification of Cyclonic Disturbances:**

Category	Wind Speed (km/h)
Depression	31–49
Deep Depression	50–61
Cyclonic Storm	62–88
Severe Cyclonic Storm	89–117

Very Severe Cyclonic Storm	118–166
Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm	167–221
Super Cyclonic Storm	**222 and above**

- **Naming of Cyclones:**
  - Done by the **WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones – 13 member countries** in the **North Indian Ocean**.
  - A list of **169 names** was adopted in **2020**.
  - Names are used **in order** and **not repeated**.
  - **"Akvan"** is believed to have been contributed by **Iran**.
- **Earlier Cyclones This Season:**
  - **Cyclone Arnab (October)**.
  - **Cyclone Murasu** (crossed between **Nellore** and **Narsapur, Andhra Pradesh**).
- **Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre, New Delhi** – issues **cyclone advisories** for the **North Indian Ocean**.
- **Yanam** – part of the **Union Territory of Puducherry**, an **enclave within Andhra Pradesh**.



- **Tamil Nadu and the Northeast Monsoon:**
  - The **northeast monsoon (October–December)** brings about **48%** of **Tamil Nadu's annual rainfall**.
  - **Bay of Bengal cyclones** are a major source of this rain.

- **Why the Bay of Bengal has more cyclones than the Arabian Sea:**
  - **Warmer sea surface**.
  - **Low-pressure systems** coming from the **Pacific**.
  - A **funnel-shaped coastline**.

Topic: Science and Technology

SpaceX's Starship – Reusable Rocket Technology

Context

- **SpaceX** launched the **15th test flight** of its **Starship rocket** from **Starbase, Texas**, on **November 13, 2026**.
- The mission aimed to demonstrate a **fully reusable rocket system** by recovering both the **upper-stage Starship** and **lower-stage Super Heavy booster**.

About Starship

- Developed by **SpaceX**, founded by **Elon Musk** in **2002**.
- A **two-stage, fully reusable launch vehicle**.
- Consists of:
  - **Starship: Upper stage** designed to carry **crew and cargo**.
  - **Super Heavy: Lower-stage booster** that provides **thrust** during launch.
- Approximately **40 storeys** high.
- Designed for transporting **humans and cargo** to **Earth orbit**, the **Moon** and **Mars**.

Key Technologies

- **Reusable Rocket Technology:** Enables rockets to **return to Earth** and be **reused**, reducing **launch costs**.
- **Chopstick Catch Mechanism:** Uses two large **mechanical arms** attached to the **launch tower** to **catch and recover** the returning booster.
- **Controlled Landing:** Enables rocket stages to **descend vertically** and **land safely**.
- **Orbital Satellite Deployment:** Facilitates the deployment of **satellites** into **Earth's orbit**.

Highlights of the 15th Test Flight

- **Starship** reached **orbit** approximately **27 minutes** after launch.
- Carried **26 Starlink satellites** for deployment.
- The **Super Heavy booster** deviated from its planned **return trajectory** and **exploded** over the **Gulf of Mexico**.
- The **upper-stage Starship** was expected to complete **14 orbits** around Earth before attempting a **return and catch landing**.

Significance

- **Reduced Launch Costs: Reusability** can significantly reduce **space transportation costs**.
- **Satellite Connectivity:** Supports the expansion of **SpaceX's Starlink internet network**.
- **Deep-Space Exploration:** Designed to support future **Moon and Mars missions**.
- **Orbital Infrastructure:** Could facilitate future deployment of **space-based AI data-processing facilities**.

Starship and NASA's Artemis Programme

- **NASA** selected **Starship** in **2021** as a **lunar lander** for its **Artemis programme**.
- **NASA** has provided approximately **$3.2 billion** towards its development.
- **SpaceX** has invested at least **$15 billion**.
- **Starship** is intended to support future **human lunar landing missions**.
- **In-orbit Propellant Transfer: Transfer of fuel** between spacecraft in **Earth's orbit**; a critical requirement for **lunar missions**.

Topic: Defence

SUPER ICE Cruise Missile (Israel)

Context

- **Israel's RAFAEL Advanced Defense Systems** unveiled **SUPER ICE**, a **fifth-generation precision cruise missile**.
- It carries a **1,000-pound warhead** and can be launched from **air, land and sea**.

About

- Joins **RAFAEL's ICE BREAKER** and **SEA BREAKER** family.
- **Range:** Longer than **ICE BREAKER's 300+ km**; the exact range is **undisclosed**.
- **Lineage:** Continues from the **POPEYE missile family**.

Key Features

- **Warhead: 1,000 lb (454 kg)**, compatible with **MK83 bomb interfaces**.
- **Three Launch Modes:**
  - **Air – F-15**, **F-16**, **F-35**.
  - **Land – mobile launchers**.
  - **Sea – warships**.
- **Navigation: Autonomous, terrain-hugging flight** to **evade radar**.
- **Guidance: Electro-optical image-matching seeker** that works even when **GPS is jammed**.
- **Common Family Architecture:** Shared **planning**, **launchers** and **logistics** lower costs.

Do You Know?

- **India and RAFAEL:**
  - India uses the **SPICE bombs** (used in **Balakot, 2019**).
  - Also the **Python** and **Derby missiles**.
- **Barak-8** was jointly developed with **Israel Aerospace Industries** and the **Defence Research and Development Organisation**.
- **BrahMos – India–Russia supersonic cruise missile**.

Topic: World History

The 1945 Yalta Conference

Context

- A reported **19 November trilateral summit** of **Trump**, **Putin** and **Xi Jinping**, on the sidelines of **APEC in Shenzhen**, has drawn comparisons to **Yalta (1945)**.

About

- A key **World War II summit**, also called the **Crimea Conference**.
- **Dates: 4–11 February 1945**.
- **Venue: Livadia Palace, Yalta, Crimea** (hosted by the **Soviet Union**).

The "Big Three"

- **United States: Franklin D. Roosevelt**.
- **United Kingdom: Winston Churchill**.
- **Soviet Union: Joseph Stalin**.

Aim

- Plan **Germany's defeat**, secure **Soviet entry against Japan**, and set up the **United Nations**.

Key Outcomes

- **Germany:** Divided into **four occupation zones** (**United States**, **United Kingdom**, **Soviet Union**, **France**), with **demilitarisation**, **denazification** and **war-crimes trials**.
- **United Nations:**
  - **Veto power** for the **five permanent members**.
  - Separate seats for **Ukraine** and **Byelorussia**.
- **War Against Japan: Stalin** agreed to join within **2–3 months** of **Germany's surrender**, gaining **Sakhalin**, the **Kurils** and rights in **Manchuria**.
- **Declaration on Liberated Europe:**
  - Promised **free elections**.
  - Recognised **Soviet influence** in **Eastern Europe**.

- Set **Poland's eastern border** at the **Curzon Line**.
- **Reparations Commission** in **Moscow**.

Significance

- **Soviet violations** in **Eastern Europe** led to the **Cold War** and the **Iron Curtain**.
- **Yalta** symbolises **great powers deciding smaller nations' fates**.

Do You Know?

- **Other World War II Conferences:**
  - **Tehran (1943)** – **first Big Three meeting**.
  - **Potsdam (July–August 1945)** – **Truman**, **Churchill/Attlee**, **Stalin**.
  - **San Francisco Conference (1945)** – drafted the **United Nations Charter**. The **United Nations** was founded on **24 October 1945**.
- **APEC 2026** – hosted by **China**.

Topic: Environment

Pact for the Mediterranean (European Union)

Context

- At **COP31, Antalya, Türkiye**, the **European Union** highlighted **climate initiatives** under its **Pact for the Mediterranean**.

About

- A **European Union framework** to deepen ties with **Southern Mediterranean countries**.
- Covers **economic integration**, **sustainable development**, **climate action** and **people-to-people links**.
- **Launched: November 2025** by the **European Commission**, marking **30 years** of the **Barcelona Process (1995)**.

Three Pillars

- **People-to-People: Education**, **youth exchanges**, **skills**, **research**, **culture**.
- **Sustainable and Integrated Economies: Clean energy**, **trade**, **investment**, **blue economy**.
- **Security, Preparedness and Migration: Stability**, **disaster preparedness**, **migration governance**.

Key Climate Initiatives

- **Partnership for Clean Transition, Sustainable Growth and Resilience:**
  - **Adaptation**.
  - **Water conservation**.
  - **Circular economy**.

  - **Biodiversity**.
- **T-MED (Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy and Clean-Tech Cooperation):**
  - Launched in **June 2026**.
  - Aims to mobilise up to **€25 billion by 2035**.
- **Blue Mediterranean Health and Wealth Initiative:**
  - **Sustainable fisheries** and **marine restoration**.
  - Through **BlueInvest** and the **Blue Mediterranean Mission**.
- **Union for the Mediterranean Climate Action Plan (2027–2028)**.
- **Youth** and **civil society participation**.

Significance

- Tackles **heat**, **droughts**, **water scarcity** and **biodiversity loss**.
- Promotes **renewables** and **cross-border power grids**.

Do You Know?

- **Union for the Mediterranean** – set up in **2008**; HQ **Barcelona**; **43 members**.
- **Mediterranean Sea** – linked to the **Atlantic** through the **Strait of Gibraltar** and to the **Red Sea** through the **Suez Canal**.
- **India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (2023)** – links **India** to **Europe** through the **Mediterranean**.

Topic: History

Lala Lajpat Rai – Punjab Kesari (Lion of Punjab)

Context



- **November 17** marks the **death anniversary** of **Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928)**, popularly known as **Punjab Kesari (Lion of Punjab)**.
- He was a prominent **freedom fighter**, **nationalist leader**, **journalist**, **author** and **social reformer**.

Role in Anti-Simon Commission Protest

- On **October 30, 1928**, he led a **peaceful protest** in **Lahore** against the **all-British Simon Commission**.
- **Protest slogan: "Simon Go Back"**.
- **British police**, under **Superintendent James A. Scott**, carried out a brutal **lathi charge**.
- **Lala Lajpat Rai** succumbed to his injuries on **November 17, 1928**.
- His death inspired revolutionaries, including **Bhagat Singh**, **Sukhdev** and **Rajguru**.

Political Contributions

- **Lal-Bal-Pal Trio:** Along with **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** and **Bipin Chandra Pal**, promoted **assertive nationalism** and the **Swadeshi Movement**.
- **Indian National Congress (INC):** Joined in **1888**; presided over the **1920 Calcutta Special Session**.
- **Non-Cooperation Movement:** Supported **Mahatma Gandhi's** programme at the **Nagpur Congress Session** in **1920**.
- **Swaraj Party:** Joined in **1926** and became its **Deputy Leader** in the **Central Legislative Assembly**.
- **Indian Home Rule League of America:** Founded in **1917** to promote India's demand for **self-government** internationally.
- Opposed the **Partition of Bengal (1905)** and the **Punjab Colonisation Bill (1907)**.

Organisations and Institutions

- **Arya Samaj:** Active member; served as editor of **Arya Gazette**.
- **Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) School, Lahore (1886):** Helped establish it with **Mahatma Hansraj**.
- **Punjab National Bank (1894):** Played an important role in initiating its establishment as a **Swadeshi banking institution**.
- **National College, Lahore:** Established to promote **nationalist education**; **Bhagat Singh** was among its students.
- **Indian Home Rule League of America (1916):** Founded in **New York** to promote India's demand for **self-government**.
- **Servants of the People Society (1921):** Founded at **Lahore** to promote **social service** and train dedicated workers for **national welfare**.
- **Hindustan Information Services Association:** Established to disseminate information about **India's freedom struggle** internationally.

Important Literary Works

- **Young India: An Interpretation and a History of the Nationalist Movement from Within (1916)**.
- **England's Debt to India (1917)**.
- **Unhappy India (1928)**.
- **The Story of My Deportation (1908)**.
- **History of Arya Samaj (1915)**.

Topic: Important Days

International Day for the Prevention of and Fight Against All Forms of Transnational Organized Crime – 15 November

- Observed by the **United Nations** every year on **15 November**.
- **Aim:** Raise awareness and strengthen **global action** against **organised crime**.
- **2026 Theme: "Follow the money. Stop organized fraud"**.

Do You Know?

- **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention)** – adopted on **15 November 2000**.
- It has **three protocols**: on **human trafficking**, **migrant smuggling** and **firearms**.
- **India** ratified it in **2011**.
- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime** – HQ **Vienna**.
- **Financial Action Task Force** – the global **anti-money laundering** body, set up in **1989**; HQ **Paris**.

National Press Day – 16 November

About

- Observed every year in **India** on **16 November**, under the **Press Council of India**.
- **Aim:** Promote **press freedom**, **ethical journalism** and **accountability**.
- **2026 Theme: "Journalism: Populist or Responsible"**.

Background

- **First Press Commission (1956):** Recommended a **statutory body** to protect **press freedom** and **standards**.
- **Press Council of India:**
  - **Established: 4 July 1966** under the **Indian Press Council Act, 1965**.
  - **Started functioning: 16 November 1966**.
  - **First Chairman: Justice J.R. Mudholkar**, a former **Supreme Court judge**, who served from **1966 to 1968**.
  - **Abolished** in **1975** (during the **Emergency**).
  - **Reconstituted** in **1979** under the **Press Council Act, 1978**, as an **autonomous, statutory, quasi-judicial body**.

Do You Know?

- **Chairman:** Traditionally a **retired Supreme Court judge**.
- **Members: 28 members** plus the **Chairman**.

- **Powers:**
  - Can **warn**, **admonish** or **censure** newspapers.
  - **Cannot penalise** them, and has **no control over electronic media**.
- **Press Freedom:** Not explicitly mentioned in the **Constitution**; it is part of **Article 19(1)(a)**.
- **World Press Freedom Day: 3 May**.

International Day for Tolerance – 16 November

- Observed by the **United Nations** on **16 November**.
- **Aim:** Promote **respect**, **acceptance** and **appreciation of diversity**; fight **intolerance** and **discrimination**.
- **Background:**
  - On **16 November 1995**, **UNESCO members** adopted the **Declaration of Principles on Tolerance**.
  - **First observed: 16 November 1996**.

Do You Know?

- **UNESCO–Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence** – awarded **every two years**, named after an **Indian diplomat**.
- **1995** was declared the **United Nations Year for Tolerance**.

International Students' Day – 17 November

- **Commemorates:** The courage of **students** who resisted **Nazi occupation** in **Czechoslovakia (1939)**.
- **Recognises: Student activism**, **educational freedom**, **multiculturalism** and **international cooperation**.
- **2026** marks the **86th observance**.

Do You Know?

- On **17 November 1939**, **Nazi forces** stormed **Czech universities**, executed **nine student leaders** and sent over **1,200 students** to **concentration camps**.
- **National Students' Day (India):** India has **no official National Students' Day**. **15 October** (**A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's birthday**) is observed as **World Students' Day** in some places.

National Epilepsy Day (India) – 17 November

- **Established by:** The **Epilepsy Foundation of India**.
- **Aim:** Raise **awareness**, encourage **early diagnosis and treatment**, and remove **social stigma**.
- **2026 Theme: "Epilepsy Across the Lifespan: Awareness, Inclusion and Better Care"** (**Indian Epilepsy Society**).

Key Facts

- **Burden:**
  - About **50 million people** worldwide.
  - About **10 million** in **India**.
- A **chronic, non-communicable neurological disorder**.
- Marked by **repeated, unprovoked seizures** caused by **sudden excessive electrical activity** in the **brain**.
- It is **not a mental illness** and is **not contagious**.
- **Symptoms:**
  - **Convulsions** and **loss of consciousness**.
  - **Staring spells**.
  - **Confusion**.
  - **Tingling**.
  - **Muscle stiffness**.
- **Treatment:** About **70%** of patients can **control seizures** with **regular medicine**.

Do You Know?

- **International Epilepsy Day** – the **second Monday of February**.
- **Purple Day** – **26 March**, for **global epilepsy awareness**.
- **World Health Assembly (2022)** adopted the **Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders (2022–2031)**.
- **Hindu Marriage Act** – **epilepsy** was removed as a **ground for divorce/annulment** through an amendment in **1999**.

Topic: Geography

The Mekedatu Project – Cauvery River

Context

- **Karnataka** reaffirmed its commitment to the **Mekedatu reservoir project**, asserting its **legal right**.
- It assured **Tamil Nadu** of its **177.25 TMC Cauvery share**.

About the Project

- Formally the **Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir and Drinking Water Project**.
- **Planned by: Karnataka**, through **Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited**.
- **Location: Mekedatu ("Goat's Leap")**, a deep **rocky gorge** near **Kanakapura**.

Background

- **Conceived: 2013**.

- **Detailed Project Report** submitted to the **Central Water Commission** in **2019**; estimated cost **₹9,000 crore**.
- **November 2025:** The **Supreme Court** dismissed **Tamil Nadu's challenge** to the report's scrutiny as **premature**. It stressed that **environmental**, **forest** and **wildlife clearances** are **mandatory before construction**.

Aim

- **4.75 TMC** of **drinking water** for **Bengaluru**.
- **400 MW** of **hydropower**.
- Regulate **Cauvery flows** to meet **Tamil Nadu's entitlement**.

Location Details

- On the **Cauvery**, downstream of **Sangama** (where the **Arkavathi** joins the **Cauvery**).
- About **4 km upstream** of the **Karnataka–Tamil Nadu border**.

Key Features

- **Concrete gravity dam**.
- **Storage:** About **67.16 TMC** (see the note at the end).
- **400 MW hydropower**.
- **Balancing reservoir** to regulate releases to **Tamil Nadu**.
- **Ecological Impact: Submergence** of over **5,000 hectares** of **forest** and **wildlife habitat**.

Implications

- **Inter-State Dispute: Tamil Nadu** fears **upstream storage** will delay **irrigation releases** to **Cauvery delta farmers**.
- **Environment:**
  - Threatens the **Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary**.
  - Affects **elephant corridors**.
  - Endangers the **hump-backed mahseer (Critically Endangered)**.

Tamil Nadu's Position

- The project violates the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal award** and the **Supreme Court's 2018 verdict**.
- No new project should come up without **lower riparian (Tamil Nadu) consent**.
- The **Tamil Nadu Assembly** has passed **resolutions opposing Mekedatu**.

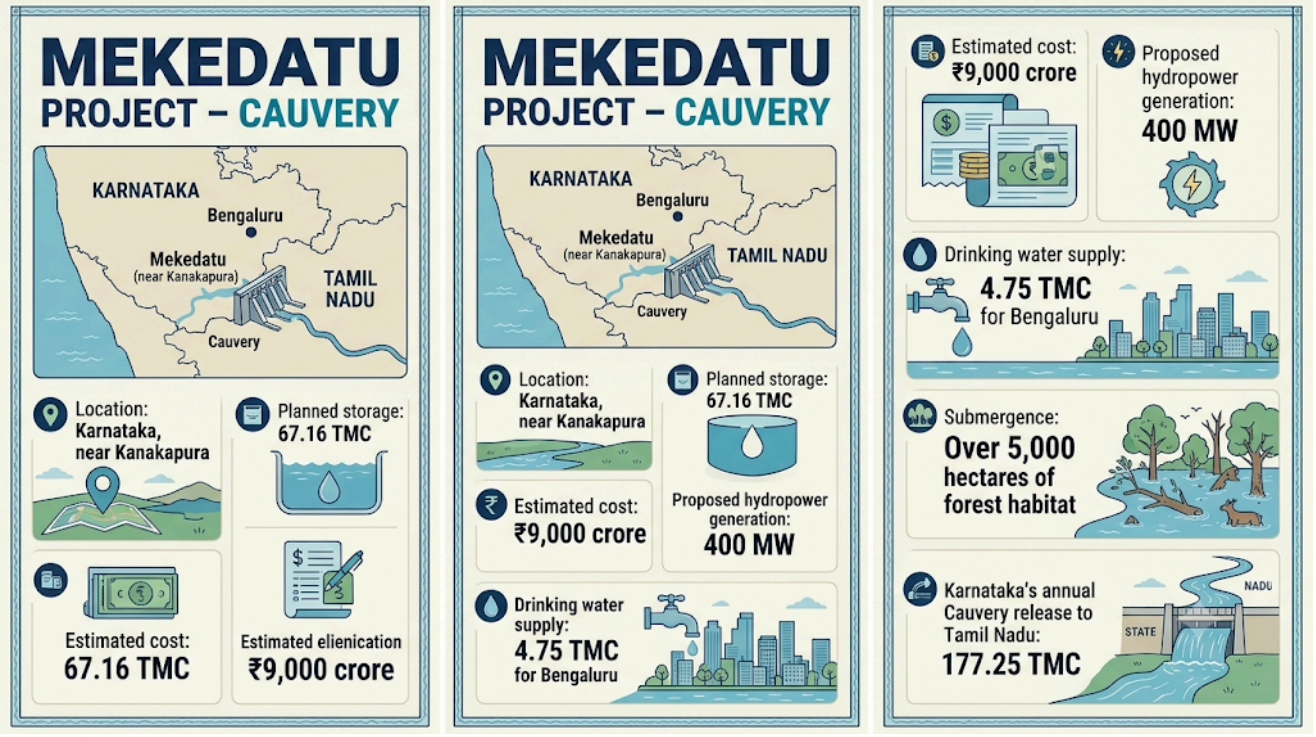
Do You Know?

- **Cauvery Water Allocation (Supreme Court, February 2018)** – total **740 TMC**:

State/Union Territory	Share (TMC)

Tamil Nadu	**404.25** (reduced from **419** under the **2007 Tribunal award**)
Karnataka	**284.75** (increased from **270**)
Kerala	**30**
Puducherry	**7**
Environmental flow / sea outflow	**14**

- **Biligundlu** – the **measuring point** at the border, where **Karnataka** must deliver **177.25 TMC a year** to **Tamil Nadu**.
- **Cauvery Water Management Authority** and **Cauvery Water Regulation Committee** – set up in **2018** under **Section 6A** of the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**.
- **Cauvery River:**
  - Rises at **Talakaveri (Kodagu, Karnataka)** (covered in **October**).
  - Flows into the **Bay of Bengal** at **Poompuhar (Tamil Nadu)**.
- **Major Dams:**
  - **Krishna Raja Sagar (Karnataka)**.
  - **Mettur Dam / Stanley Reservoir (Tamil Nadu, 1934)**.
- **Hogenakkal Falls (Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu)** – lies just **downstream** of the **Mekedatu site**.
- **Article 262** – **Parliament** may bar the **Supreme Court** from **inter-State water disputes**. The **Supreme Court** still hears appeals under **Article 136**.



International Highlights

Manila Summits 2026 – 49th ASEAN Summit, 7th Quad Leaders' Summit, 23rd ASEAN–India Summit and 21st East Asia Summit

Context

- The **49th ASEAN Summit** was held in **Manila, Philippines**, under **Philippine chairmanship**.
- **President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** called for **regional unity** amid **geopolitical tensions**, **maritime disputes** and **economic challenges**.
- On **17 November 2026**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** attended **three summits** on its sidelines:
  - **7th Quad Leaders' Summit**.
  - **23rd ASEAN–India Summit**.
  - **21st East Asia Summit**.
- **Prime Minister Modi's central message:** The world needs **"peace, stability and predictability."**

A. 49th ASEAN Summit

- **About ASEAN:**
  - **Founded: 8 August 1967**, through the **Bangkok Declaration**.
  - **Founding Members: Indonesia**, **Malaysia**, **Philippines**, **Singapore**, **Thailand**.
  - **First Summit: Bali (1976)**, which adopted the **Treaty of Amity and Cooperation**.
  - **ASEAN Charter (2007–08): Summits held twice a year** under a **rotating chair**.
  - **Timor-Leste** became the **11th member** in **October 2025**. **2026** is the **first full year** of the **11-member bloc**.
- **Members (11):**

Joined	Countries
1967	Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand
1984	Brunei
1995	Vietnam
1997	Laos, Myanmar
1999	Cambodia
2025	Timor-Leste

- **Key Features of the 49th Summit:**
  - **Theme: "Navigating Our Future, Together"**.
  - **Venue: Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City, Metro Manila**.
  - **New Flag and Emblem:** Now shows **11 paddy stalks**, under the **Cebu Protocol** amending the **Charter**.
  - **Agenda: Code of Conduct in the South China Sea**; **Myanmar crisis**; **cyber-scam syndicates**.
- **Other Outcomes:**
  - **ASEAN Declaration on AI-powered growth** for **micro, small and medium enterprises** (**affordable technology**, **digital infrastructure**, **AI literacy**).
  - **29th ASEAN–Japan Summit – Joint Statement on Realising Economic Resilience**.
- **Related Meetings:**
  - **23rd ASEAN–India Summit**.
  - **21st East Asia Summit**.
  - Meetings with the **United States**, **Canada**, **Brazil** and the **United Nations**.
- **Next Chair: Singapore (2027)**.

B. 7th Quad Leaders' Summit

- **Leaders:**
  - **India – Narendra Modi**.
  - **United States – Donald Trump**.
  - **Japan – Sanae Takaichi**.
  - **Australia – Anthony Albanese**.
- The **first in-person Quad summit** since **September 2024 (Wilmington, Delaware)**, and the **first since Trump's return**.
- **Key Outcomes:**
  - **Maritime Security: Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration** for **information sharing** and **maritime domain awareness**; **first Quad maritime exercise (2027)** with **P-8** and **P-3C** patrol aircraft; pledge for **"open, safe and resilient maritime transit corridors."**
  - **Technology: AI Accelerator** – to coordinate and fund **trusted AI** in the **Indo-Pacific** (first announced in **Atlanta**); **Cable Connectivity Framework** for **undersea cables**; **cybersecurity intelligence-sharing**.
  - **Economy:** The **first Quad Business Leaders' Forum** will be held in **Mumbai (2027)**.

- **Joint Statement:** Opposed **unilateral actions** to change the **status quo by force or coercion**; expressed grave concern over **economic coercion** and **arbitrary export restrictions**.

- **India's View:**
  - The **Quad** is a **"constructive and trusted partnership"**, a **"partner in progress, friend in crisis"**.
  - **Foreign Ministers** have met **five times** since **January 2025**.

C. 23rd ASEAN–India Summit

- **Prime Minister Modi's Messages:**
  - **India–ASEAN ties** are at the **"heart of India's Act East Policy."**
  - **Unwavering support** for **ASEAN unity and centrality**.
  - Together they are **one-fourth of humanity**, so the region should be shaped by **"cooperation, not competition."**
  - **Direct flights** connect India with **9 ASEAN countries**.
  - **Since 2014: 100+ people-to-people initiatives**; **250+ Quick Impact Projects**; **10,000+ scholarships**.
- **India's Proposals:**
  - **Free e-visas** for **ASEAN tourists**.
  - A long-term **ASEAN–India Maritime Cooperation Plan**, covering **connectivity**, **research**, **disaster management**, **Coast Guard**, **maritime domain awareness** and **seafarers' security**.
  - **Joint cyber forensics training**.
  - **Nuclear energy technical exchanges**.
  - **ASEAN–India Space Hackathon**.
  - **Critical minerals** and **mining cooperation**.
  - **ASEAN–India Youth Connect** – **youth summit**, **young parliamentarians' exchange**, **start-up hackathons**.
  - More **scholarships** at **Nalanda University**.
- **Joint Statement on Disaster Management: Early warning systems**; **satellite and weather data sharing**; **joint exercises**; **rapid humanitarian aid**.
- **Background: 2026** was the **ASEAN–India Year of Maritime Cooperation**.

D. 21st East Asia Summit and Sidelines

- **Bilateral Meetings:**
  - **Philippines – Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** (**defence**, **trade**, **investment**).
  - **Singapore – Lawrence Wong**.

  - **Thailand – Anutin Charnvirakul**.
- **Gurudwara Khalsa Diwan, Manila: Foundation stone** laid for redeveloping the **Philippines' oldest gurudwara (100+ years)**.
- **Asia Zero Emission Community (4th meeting):** India welcomed **Japan's BRIDGE Asia initiative**.
- **Japan's Proposals:**
  - An **"Asian version of the International Energy Agency"**.
  - **ASEAN access** to **Japan's crude oil storage**.

Significance

- Revives **Quad momentum** after the **2025 pause**, with **practical public goods**.
- Deepens India's **Act East Policy** and **maritime partnership** with **ASEAN**.
- **Free e-visas** and **youth programmes** boost **people-to-people ties**.
- **Maritime surveillance** and **cable security** strengthen India's role as a **net security provider**.
- Hosting in **Manila**, a **South China Sea frontline State**, signals **opposition to coercion**.
- **ASEAN's expansion** to **11 members** strengthens **regional integration**.

Challenges

- **United States unpredictability – tariffs**, **trade frictions** and a focus on **West Asia**.
- **China's opposition** to the **Quad**.
- **ASEAN's caution** about taking sides; **Myanmar crisis**; slow **South China Sea Code of Conduct**.
- **ASEAN–India Trade in Goods Agreement review** still pending; India's **trade deficit** with **ASEAN**.
- **Protests in Manila** against **Trump** and the **United States-led "Pax Silica" initiative**.

Do You Know?

- **ASEAN Secretariat: Jakarta, Indonesia**. **Secretary-General: Dr. Kao Kim Hourn**.
- **India–ASEAN Relations:**
  - **Look East Policy – 1991**.
  - **Dialogue Partner – 1992/1995**.
  - **Summit Partner – 2002**.
  - **Strategic Partnership – 2012**.
  - **Act East Policy – 2014**.
  - **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership – 2022**.
- **ASEAN–India Trade in Goods Agreement:** Signed in **2009**; currently **under review**.
- **East Asia Summit: 18 members**; India is a **founding member (2005)**.

- **Quad Summits:**
  - **2021 – Virtual** and **Washington**.
  - **2022 – Virtual** and **Tokyo**.
  - **2023 – Hiroshima**.
  - **2024 – Wilmington**.
  - **2026 – Manila (7th)**.
- **P-8I Poseidon** – India's **maritime patrol aircraft**.
- **Sanae Takaichi – Japan's first woman Prime Minister**.

