

SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

08-06-2026

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)

BW BW Businessworld

PM Modi Chairs EAC Meeting, Reviews Growth Measures Amid Global Uncertainty



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday chaired a meeting of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), where members...

Why in News

- The Prime Minister recently chaired a meeting of the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)**.

Institutional Framework

- EAC-PM** is an independent body constituted to advise the **Prime Minister of India** on economic and related issues.
- The council functions as a **specialized advisory mechanism** for addressing key macroeconomic challenges.
- Its **recommendations are advisory in nature** and are not binding on the Government.

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) is an independent body constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister. At present, there are a Chairman, 3 Full-Time Members and 11 Part-Time Members in the EAC-PM.

The composition of EAC-PM is as follows:

CHAIRMAN 1

FULL-TIME MEMBERS 3

PART-TIME MEMBERS 11

Core Mandate and Functions

- The council analyses economic and other issues referred by the Prime Minister and provides recommendations.
- It examines matters of **macroeconomic importance** and presents policy perspectives to the Prime Minister.
- The council can undertake studies **suo motu** or on references received from the Prime Minister and other sources.

- It performs additional assignments entrusted by the Prime Minister from time to time.

Organisational Structure

- The council is headed by a **Chairperson**, who enjoys the rank of a **Cabinet Minister**.
- It comprises eminent economists and experts from diverse fields.
- A team of officials and administrators supports its research and operational activities.

Governance Significance

- EAC-PM contributes to evidence-based policymaking by providing independent economic assessments.
- It promotes greater public understanding of economic issues and policy debates.
- **NITI Aayog** acts as the nodal agency for administrative, logistical, planning, and budgeting support.

Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD)



[MoU between Digital India Bhashini and Kathmandu University \(KU\) for co-creating National Digital Infrastructure for 'Voice First' Language Translation platform for Nepal](#)



The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India,...

Why in News

- **Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD)** signed an MoU with **Kathmandu University's Centre for Digital Public Infrastructure & Artificial Intelligence (DPI-AI), Nepal**.

Institutional Architecture

- DIBD functions under the **Digital India Corporation (DIC)** of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- It is India's flagship initiative for **AI-driven multilingual digital inclusion**.
- **BHASHINI** stands for **BHASHa INterface for India**.

Technology and Innovation Ecosystem

- Through the **National Hub for Language Technology (NHLT)**, it provides speech and text-based AI services across Indian languages.
- It promotes **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** solutions for governance and public service delivery.
- It supports open-source innovation, multilingual AI research, and language dataset creation.
- It facilitates startup participation and academic collaborations in language technology.

Digital Public Infrastructure Role

- The platform strengthens India's **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** ecosystem.
- It enables multilingual access to government services and public platforms.
- It enhances digital accessibility for citizens speaking diverse languages.

Key Facts

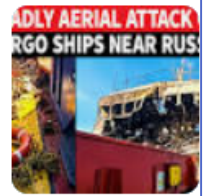
- The platform supports over **800 government websites**.
- It processes more than **15 million AI inferences daily**.
- It covers **36 Indian text languages**.
- It supports **23 Indian voice languages** and **35 international languages**.
- AI and NLP resources are available in the public domain for **MSMEs**, startups, and innovators.

Sea of Azov

TOI The Times of India

Suspected Ukrainian Drone Swarm Strikes Cargo Ships In Sea Of Azov; Azeri Crew Killed

A major drone attack in the Sea of Azov has left five merchant sailors dead after two commercial cargo vessels were struck during overnight...



Why in News

- Ukraine recently reported strikes on ships allegedly carrying illegal cargo in the **Sea of Azov**.

Strategic Location

- The Sea of Azov lies between **Ukraine** and **Russia**.
- It is connected to the **Black Sea** through the **Kerch Strait**.
- The **Crimean Peninsula** lies west of the strait, while the **Taman Peninsula** lies to the east.
- Through interconnected seas, it ultimately links to the **Atlantic Ocean**.

Hydrological Characteristics

- The **Don River** and **Kuban River** contribute more than **90%** of freshwater inflow.
- Significant freshwater input makes it one of the least saline seas in the world.
- River inflows also enrich the sea with nutrients, supporting biological productivity.



Coastal and Climatic Features

- The coastline is generally low-lying and flat.
- The region contains lagoons such as **Syvash** and sand spits including **Arabat**, **Fedotov**, and **Berdyansk**.

- It experiences a continental climate with severe winters and warm summers.
- Seasonal ice formation occurs during winter months.

Economic and Strategic Relevance

- Major ports include **Taganrog** in Russia and **Mariupol** and **Berdyansk** in Ukraine.
- The sea is strategically significant for regional trade, maritime access, and the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

KABIL Secures Five Lithium Blocks in Argentina

TH The Hindu

KABIL acquires five critical mineral blocks in Argentina

Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), a joint venture of three Central Public Sector Enterprises under the Ministry of Mines — including...



Why in News

- **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL)** secured five lithium blocks in **Catamarca Province, Argentina** for deep exploration.

Institutional Framework

- **KABIL** was established in **2019** under the **Ministry of Mines**.
- It is a joint venture of **NALCO**, **Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL)**, and **Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL)**.
- The company was created to acquire and develop overseas critical mineral assets.



INDIA'S LITHIUM EXPEDITION

- India is dependent on China for lithium imports, total imports in FY23 were roughly **\$3 bn**
- Imports incurred costs of **₹25,000 crore** in FY23
- Agreement signed with Australia for exploring two lithium and three cobalt blocks in 2022
- Started bidding on November 29 for two blocks, including a **5.9 million** block in J&K
- In talks with Bolivia, Chile, and other nations for critical mineral extraction, development

Project Characteristics

- The blocks include **Cortadera-I, Cortadera-VI, Cortadera-VII, Cortadera-VIII**, and **Cateo-2022-01810132**.
- The total area covers approximately **15,703 hectares**.
- The project is located within South America's **Lithium Triangle**.
- Environmental clearance for deep exploration was granted on **10 April 2026**.

Economic and Strategic Importance

- Lithium is a **critical mineral** for **electric vehicle batteries**, renewable energy storage, and defence technologies.
- The project strengthens India's critical mineral security.
- It supports the clean energy transition and battery manufacturing ecosystem.
- It reduces long-term dependence on imported lithium resources.

Investment and International Cooperation

- The initial agreement was signed in **January 2024** between KABIL and **CAMYEN SE**.
- CAMYEN SE is a state-owned mining enterprise of Catamarca Province.
- KABIL plans to invest around **₹200 crore (US\$24 million)**.
- Production is expected to commence around **2029**.
- This is India's **first government-led overseas lithium exploration project**.

Coal Gasification Promotion Scheme

BW BW Businessworld

Coal Ministry Invites Bids For Gasification Incentive Scheme

The Ministry of Coal has invited applications for financial assistance under its coal and lignite gasification promotion scheme,...



Why in News

- The Union Cabinet approved a ₹37,500 crore Coal Gasification Promotion Scheme to accelerate coal conversion projects.

Technology Overview

- Coal gasification converts coal into synthesis gas (syngas) through high-temperature partial oxidation.
- Syngas mainly contains carbon monoxide, hydrogen, methane, and carbon dioxide.
- It can be used to produce methanol, ammonia, synthetic natural gas (SNG), and power.

Key Features of the Scheme

- The scheme aims to gasify 100 million tonnes of coal by 2030.
- Financial support of up to 20% of plant and machinery cost is provided.
- Incentives are capped at ₹5,000 crore per project.
- Coal linkage tenure has been extended up to 30 years.

Economic Significance

- The initiative is expected to mobilise investments of about ₹4 lakh crore.
- It may generate nearly one lakh employment opportunities.
- Foreign exchange savings are estimated at around ₹3 lakh crore.
- The scheme supports import substitution of LNG, methanol, ammonia, urea, and coking coal.

Implementation Challenges and Projects

- Indian coal contains 30–45% ash content, creating technological challenges.
- Coal gasification projects require substantial water and capital investment.
- **Coal India Limited (CIL)** is developing multiple gasification projects.
- India's first **Underground Coal Gasification (UCG)** project is located at **Kasta West Coal Block, West Burdwan, West Bengal**.
- The facility is operated by **Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL)**.

Other Important News of the day

Places in News

Slovenia

Why in News

- India's External Affairs Minister congratulated Slovenia's newly appointed Foreign Minister **Tone Kajzer** and emphasized strengthening bilateral cooperation.

Geographical Location

- Located in **Central and South-Eastern Europe**.
- It shares borders with **Austria, Hungary, Italy, and Croatia**.
- It possesses a short coastline along the **Adriatic Sea**.
- The capital city is **Ljubljana**.

Physical Geography

- More than **40%** of Slovenia's territory is mountainous.



- The country incorporates parts of the **European Alps**, **Dinaric Alps**, **Pannonian Lowlands**, and the Mediterranean coastal region.
- The highest peak is **Mount Triglav**.

Climate and Drainage

- Coastal regions experience a **Mediterranean climate**.
- Eastern plateaus and valleys experience a **continental climate** with cold winters and warm summers.
- Major rivers include the **Drava** and **Sava** rivers.

Resource Profile

- Important natural resources include **lignite**, **lead**, **zinc**, forests, hydropower, and building stone.

Environment

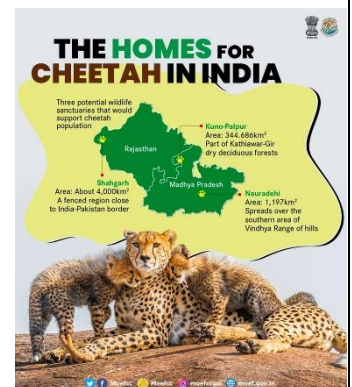
Kuno National Park

Why in News

- The elusive **Caracal**, popularly known as the **"Flying Cat"**, has been recorded in **Kuno National Park** after several decades.

Protected Area Profile

- Kuno National Park is located in **Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh**.
- It derives its name from the **Kuno River**, a tributary of the **Chambal River**.
- The park was established as Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary (1981) and upgraded to a **National Park (2018)**.



Ecological Landscape

- The park is situated near the **Vindhyan Hills**.

- Its terrain consists of plateaus, valleys, and seasonal rivers.
- Vegetation includes **tropical dry deciduous forests**, **savannah grasslands**, and **riverine forests**.

Biodiversity Significance

- Dominant flora includes **Khair (Acacia catechu)**, **Salai (Boswellia serrata)**, and **Ber (Ziziphus mauritiana)**.
- The park supports species such as the **Indian leopard**, sloth bear, **Indian wolf**, **striped hyena**, **golden jackal**, **Bengal fox**, and **dhole**.
- More than **120 bird species** have been recorded in the park.

Conservation Importance

- Kuno National Park is the focal site of the **Project Cheetah** initiative.
- It was selected under the **Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India**.
- The recent sighting of the **Caracal** highlights the park's importance for conservation of rare and threatened species.

Defence

India Ranks Fifth in Military Spending, Second in Arms Imports

Why in News

- India remained the world's **5th largest military spender in 2025** and the **2nd largest importer of major arms during 2021–25**.

ANI News

[With approx 190 warheads, India widens nuke arsenal lead over Pakistan: SIPRI report says India's military spend USD 92.1 bn in 2025](#)



India has also retained its position as the world's fifth-largest military spender and the second-largest importer of major arms during the...

Global Defence Spending Trends

- India's military expenditure reached **US\$ 92.1 billion** in 2025.
- Defence spending increased by **8.9%** compared to 2024.
- Only the **United States, China, Russia, and Germany** spent more on defence than India.
- Military expenditure includes spending on armed forces, defence ministries, and military-related activities.

Arms Import Dynamics

- India accounted for **8.2%** of **global major arms imports** during 2021–25.
- Arms imports declined by **4%** compared to the 2016–20 period.
- The decline reflects progress under **Atmanirbhar Bharat** and indigenous defence manufacturing.
- Delays in domestic production continue to affect complete import substitution.

Changing Supplier Profile

- **Russia** remained India's largest arms supplier with a **40% share**.
- Russia's share declined from **70% (2011–15)** to **51% (2016–20)** and further to **40% (2021–25)**.
- **France** emerged as the second-largest supplier with **29%** of imports.
- **Israel** accounted for 15% of India's arms imports.

Strategic Significance

- Diversification of suppliers reduces overdependence on a single source.

- Indigenous production supports defence self-reliance and strategic autonomy.
- Data is compiled by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**.
- Major arms transfers include aircraft, missiles, warships, and armoured vehicles.

Science and Technology

Grotta della Bäsura Footprint Discovery

Why in News



- **Scientists analysed prehistoric footprints and handprints dating back 14,000–14,400 years in Grotta della Bäsura, Italy.**

Archaeological Context

- Grotta della Bäsura is located in Liguria, north-western Italy.
- The footprints were left by **Epigravettian hunter-gatherers** during the **Late Upper Palaeolithic** period.
- The group consisted of two adults, one adolescent, and two young children.

Scientific Findings

- Researchers documented nearly **180 footprints and handprints**.
- Evidence showed movement through narrow cave passages by crawling.
- This represents the earliest fossil footprint evidence of **human crawling locomotion**.
- A canid is believed to have accompanied the group.

Technology and Research Methods

- The study employed 3D modelling, laser scanning, sediment analysis, geochemistry, and archaeobotany.
- These methods helped reconstruct movement patterns and cave usage.
- The findings were published in the journal eLife.

Prehistoric Life and Environment

- The group used torches made from Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) twigs.
- Experimental reconstruction indicated visibility of around 10 metres inside the cave.
- Cave bear remains indicate earlier Pleistocene-era animal occupation.
- The discovery provides insights into social behaviour, mobility, and survival strategies of prehistoric humans.

Uttar Pradesh in News

Indian Air Force Day 2026 Flypast over Varanasi

Why in News

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) is planning its first-ever Air Force Day flypast over Varanasi, featuring aerial displays above the Ganga River and Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

Event Overview

- The flypast is proposed as part of the 94th Air Force Day celebrations on 8 October 2026.
- The ceremonial parade is likely to be held at Hindon Air Force Station, Ghaziabad.



- Fighter aircraft, transport aircraft, and helicopters are expected to participate.
- The event may also include **precision parachute jumps** by trained paratroopers.

Significance

- This would be the first Air Force Day flypast over the **Ganga** and **Kashi Vishwanath Temple**.
- It highlights the IAF's operational capabilities in one of India's most important cultural and spiritual centres.
- The event strengthens public outreach and civil-military engagement.

IAF Outreach Initiative

- The IAF has recently organized flypasts in cities such as **Prayagraj, Chandigarh, Bhopal, and Guwahati**.
- The Varanasi event continues the strategy of taking Air Force Day celebrations beyond the National Capital Region.