SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

17-11-2026

India–UAE Water Roundtable Ahead of 2026 UN Water Conference

ANI News

UAE Embassy convenes UAE-India Water Roundtable ahead of 2026 UN Water Conference

The UAE Embassy in New Delhi hosted the UAE-India Water Roundtable on Thursday to discuss water security partnerships ahead of the December...



Why in News: The UAE Embassy in New Delhi organised the UAE–India Water Roundtable ahead of the **2026 UN Water Conference**.

Key Features of the 2026 UN Water Conference

- **Date and Venue:** 8–10 December 2026, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- **Co-hosts:** Republic of Senegal and the UAE.
- **Theme:** "*Delivering the Water Action Agenda: From Commitments to Action".*
- The conference aims to accelerate **SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**, strengthen global water governance and promote measurable solutions.
- It follows the **2023 UN Water Conference** in New York, the first UN conference dedicated to water in nearly 50 years.

Six Interactive Dialogue Themes

- **Water for People:** Safe drinking water and sanitation.
- **Water for Prosperity:** Water and economic development.
- **Water for Planet:** Environmental sustainability.
- **Water for Cooperation:** International water cooperation.
- **Water for Multilateral Processes:** Strengthening multilateral engagement.
- **Investments for Water:** Mobilising financial resources for water infrastructure.

V.O. Chidambaranar Port Expansion Project

CW Construction World

Adani Ports, MEIL, Vishwa Samudra Bid for Rs. 117.33 bn VOC Port Project

16 Nov 2026 2 Min Read CW Team. Share. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Megha Engineering and Infrastructure (MEIL), and Vishwa Samudra Engineering...



Why in News: Adani Ports, Megha Engineering and Infrastructure (MEIL), and Vishwa Samudra Engineering are competing for the **₹11,733 crore Outer Harbour Infrastructure Project** at V.O. Chidambaranar Port.

Geographical and Strategic Significance

- **Location:** Thoothukudi, southern Tamil Nadu, along the **Gulf of Mannar**.
- It is an **all-weather major seaport** and artificial deep-sea harbour, located near the international **East–West Shipping Channel**.
- **Annual cargo capacity:** 81.50 million tonnes.
- Its inner harbour has **14 berths**, including three coal and oil jetties and two container jetties.
- It handles container and cruise ship traffic.

Administrative Status

- It is an autonomous body under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.

Historical Evolution

- **123 AD:** Greek geographer **Ptolemy** described Tuticorin as a flourishing maritime trade centre.
- **1868:** Declared a minor anchorage port.
- **July 1974:** Declared India's **10th Major Port**.
- **1 April 1979:** Minor and major ports were merged under the **Major Port Trusts Act, 1963**.
- **2011:** Renamed V.O. Chidambaranar Port Trust after freedom fighter **V.O. Chidambaram Pillai**.
- **31 January 2022:** Became V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority under the **Major Port Authorities Act, 2021**.

Revised Maritime Flag Rules, 2026

NDTV

Centre Revises Maritime Flag Rules For Merchant Ships, Government Vessels

Government-owned vessels, meanwhile, will fly the Blue Ensign, irrespective of whether they are registered under the Merchant Shipping Act.



Why in News: India introduced revised maritime flag rules after 65 years, replacing the notification dated **9 February 1961**.

Legal Framework and Classification

- The rules have been notified under **Section 37(1) of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025**.
- They prescribe separate flags for merchant ships, government-owned vessels and merchant vessels operating exclusively for the Ministry of Defence.
- Actions already taken under the earlier notification remain valid.

Types of Maritime Flags





1. **Red Ensign – Merchant Ships**
   - Indian merchant vessels registered under the **Merchant Shipping Act, 2025** must fly the **Red Ensign**.
   - It has a red background with the **Indian National Flag in the upper canton** (nearest to the flagstaff).
   - Its length is **1.5 times its width**, as prescribed under the Flag Code of India, 2002.
2. **Blue Ensign – Government-Owned Vessels**
   - Government-owned vessels must fly the **Blue Ensign**, irrespective of registration under the Act.
   - It carries the official badge of the owning government department, authority or organisation.
   - **Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard ships are excluded** from this provision.
   - New badges require Central Government approval through the **Director General of Maritime Administration**.
3. **Blue Ensign – Defence-Exclusive Merchant Vessels**
   - Merchant vessels receiving Ministry of Defence financial assistance and operating exclusively for it must fly the **Blue Ensign**.
   - Their badges require a warrant issued by the **Chief of the Naval Staff**.

Flag Specifications and Section 37 Powers

- The Blue Ensign has a **royal blue background**, the Indian National Flag in the upper canton and a **light golden badge** in the fly half.
- The badge must fit within a circle whose diameter cannot exceed **13/30th of the flag's width**.
- **Section 37** empowers the Central Government to prescribe national colours for different categories of Indian vessels.
- Indian vessels must hoist prescribed colours when signalled by Navy or Coast Guard vessels and while entering or leaving ports.
- Authorised Navy and Coast Guard officers, surveyors and Indian ambassadors can board vessels violating flag provisions and seize unauthorised flags.
- Foreign vessels cannot misuse Indian national colours to falsely represent themselves as Indian ships, subject to specified exceptions during hostilities.

International Coconut Community (ICC)

BusinessLine

India hosts 62nd International Coconut Community meeting in Kochi

India is hosting the 62nd Session and Ministerial Meeting of the International Coconut Community (ICC) from November 17 to 20 at Courtyard...



Why in News: India is hosting the **62nd Session and Ministerial Meeting of the International Coconut Community** in Kochi, Kerala.

Institutional Profile

- Established in **1969** under the aegis of the **UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP)**.
- It is an intergovernmental organisation of coconut-producing countries.
- **Members:** 21 countries, accounting for over **90% of global coconut production and exports of coconut products**.
- **Secretariat:** Jakarta, Indonesia.
- India is a member.

Major Functions

- Promotes global coconut production and productivity.
- Facilitates international cooperation to reduce trade barriers.
- Provides training and capacity-building for coconut-sector development.
- Harmonises quality standards for coconut products.
- Mobilises resources by connecting member countries with potential donor institutions.

Significance

- Provides a common platform for cooperation, partnerships and sustainable development of the global coconut industry.

Adi Vaani: AI-Powered Tribal Language Translator

Telegraph India

Tribal app, student ambassadors: Centre taps Eklavya pupils to promote Adi Vaani

The Centre has launched an AI-based translation platform for tribal languages called Adi Vaani and wants students of Eklavya Model...



Why in News: The **Adi Vaani platform** was launched in Mysuru to promote tribal language translation and preserve endangered indigenous languages.

Development and Technology

- It is India's first **AI-powered tribal language translator**.

- Developed by a consortium led by **IIT Delhi**, with **BITS Pilani, IIIT Hyderabad, IIIT Nava Raipur** and Tribal Research Institutes of Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Meghalaya.
- Uses AI models such as **No Language Left Behind (NLLB)** and **IndicTrans2**, adapted for low-resource tribal languages.

Major Features

- **Speech-to-Text:** Converts live speech and audio into text.
- **Text-to-Text:** Translates supported tribal languages into Hindi and English and vice versa.
- **Speech-to-Speech:** Enables voice translation, including languages such as **Santali, Mundari and Bhili**.
- **Optical Character Recognition (OCR):** Extracts text from images and scanned documents.
- **Video Subtitling:** Translates video content and public information.
- **Digital Dictionaries:** Provide vocabulary, meanings and basic learning resources.

Governance Applications

- Preserves tribal folklore, oral traditions and cultural heritage digitally.
- Facilitates communication in **healthcare, education and public service delivery**.
- Promotes digital literacy, awareness of government schemes and civic inclusion among tribal communities.

Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2027

Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)

Can today's CCPI laggards become tomorrow's climate leaders?

Countries receiving very low ratings in the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) face very different opportunities for rapidly...

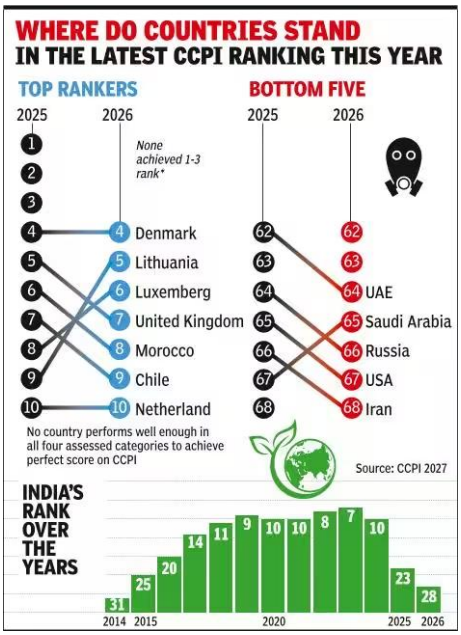


Why in News: India ranked **28th in CCPI 2027**, declining five positions from 23rd in the 2026 edition.

About the Index

- The **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)** tracks climate performance in emissions, renewable energy and climate policy.
- First published in **2005** by **Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute and Climate Action Network International**.

- Covers **64 countries and the European Union**, representing over **90% of global greenhouse gas emissions**.
- Uses **14 indicators across four categories**:
  - Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
  - Renewable Energy.
  - Energy Use.
  - Climate Policy.
- Around **500 climate and energy experts** contribute to its policy assessment.
- Evaluates alignment with the **Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature goal**.



Global Performance

- The **top three ranks remain vacant** because no country achieved the Very High category.
- **Denmark ranked 4th** with 84.05 points, remaining the highest-ranked country for the sixth consecutive year.
- **European Union:** 19th; France: 20th; Germany: 25th.
- The **UK was the only G20 country** with a High rating, while ten G20 countries received Very Low ratings.
- Lowest-ranked countries: Iran (68th), USA (67th), Russia (66th), Saudi Arabia (65th) and UAE (64th).

India's Performance

- India secured **28th rank with a Medium rating**.
- Its ranking declined from **10th in 2025 to 23rd in 2026 and 28th in 2027**.
- The index highlights the need for stronger performance in emissions reduction, renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate policy.

Other Important News of the day

Places in News	Belarus
	Why in News: India and Belarus held the **12th Inter-Governmental Commission Meeting** on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation in New Delhi. **Geographical and Political Profile** ➢ Belarus is a **landlocked country in Eastern Europe**. ➢ **Capital:** Minsk. ➢ Shares borders with:

- **Russia:** North and east.
- **Ukraine:** South.
- **Poland:** West.
- **Lithuania and Latvia:** Northwest.

Physical Geography and Climate



- Characterised by flat lowlands, low-level hills and uplands.
- Approximately **40% of its territory is forested**.
- Experiences a **cool continental climate**, moderated by Atlantic maritime influences.
- Major rivers include the **Dnieper** and **Mukhavyets**.
- Mukhavyets is a tributary of the **Bug (Buh) River**, which forms part of the Poland border and flows towards the Baltic Sea.

Natural Resources and Bilateral Relations

- Major resources include **peat, forests, petroleum, natural gas, brown coal, fertile land, limestone and iron**.
- India–Belarus cooperation covers trade, economic relations, science, technology and cultural exchange.

Environment

Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR)


The New Indian Express

Survey taken up for alternative Andhra's Srisailam route

Vehicle movement through the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR) is prohibited at night to protect wildlife.

Why in News: The Central and State governments proposed an alternative elevated corridor to facilitate night-time vehicular movement through the reserve while protecting wildlife.

Geographical Profile

- **Location:** Nallamala Hill Ranges, an offshoot of the **Eastern Ghats, Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Area:** Approximately **3,568 sq. km**, making it India's largest tiger reserve by area, with the largest Critical Tiger Habitat area.
- Named after **Nagarjuna Sagar Dam and Srisailam Dam**.
- Comprises:
  - **Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary**.
  - **Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary (GBM)**.
- Its terrain includes plateaus, ridges, gorges and deep valleys.

Rivers, Vegetation and Biodiversity

- **Major River:** Krishna; important tributaries include Dindi and Peddavagu.
- **Vegetation:** Tropical dry deciduous forests with bamboo and grass undergrowth.
- Important endemic flora includes *Andrographis nallamalayana*, *Eriolaena lushingtonii*, *Crotalaria madurensis* var., *Dicliptera beddomei* and *Premna hamiltonii*.
- Major fauna includes **tiger, leopard, wolf, wild dog, jackal, sambar, chital, chowsingha, chinkara, mouse deer, wild boar and porcupine**.

	Tribal and Cultural Significance ➢ **Chenchu and Lambada** communities maintain traditional relationships with the Nallamala forests. ➢ Important cultural sites include **Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple at Srisailam** and Buddhist archaeological remains at **Nagarjuna Konda**. **Conservation Significance** ➢ The proposed elevated corridor seeks to balance transportation requirements with wildlife conservation. ➢ The reserve is an important tiger habitat in the Eastern Ghats landscape.
Science and Technology	**Macromitrium nelliampathyanum: New Moss Species** Inshorts Rare new moss discovered in Kerala's misty hills | Tap to know more | Inshorts An international team of botanists from the University of Calicut, the University of Bonn, and the Real Jardin Botanico in Madrid has... **Why in News:** Botanists discovered a new moss species, **Macromitrium nelliampathyanum**, in Kerala's Nelliampathy Hills. **Geographical and Taxonomic Features** ➢ **Location:** Hill Top Mount, Nelliampathy Hills, **Palakkad district, Kerala**. ➢ **Altitude:** Approximately 1,400 metres above sea level. ➢ It belongs to the genus **Macromitrium**, whose mosses commonly grow on trees and rocks in tropical regions. ➢ Its scientific name honours its type locality, the Nelliampathy Hills. **Distinctive Biological Characteristics** ➢ Its narrow leaves curl and twist along their midribs when dried. ➢ It produces a spherical spore capsule with a pleated hood bearing a few hairs at its tip. ➢ It exhibits **true anisospory**, wherein a single capsule produces spores of two distinctly different size classes. **Ecological Significance** ➢ The discovery adds to the documented moss diversity of the Western Ghats region. ➢ Mosses are **non-vascular, spore-producing plants**.

Uttar Pradesh in News

IIT Kanpur and Bharat1.ai Launch AI Kavach

The Economic Times

IIT Kanpur, Bharat1.ai launch AI cybersecurity lab to secure financial systems

IIT Kanpur and Bharat1.ai have established AI Kavach to strengthen cybersecurity measures in India's financial sector. The lab will focus on...



Why in News?

- **IIT Kanpur and Bharat1.ai (Intellineuro Private Limited)** launched AI Kavach on **18 November 2026**, an AI cybersecurity and assurance lab for the financial sector.

Objectives and Institutional Roles

- Focuses on AI systems used in banking, payments, lending, insurance and digital financial services; provides testing and security assessment before deployment.
- **IIT Kanpur's Wadhwani School of AI:** Academic leadership, research and laboratory infrastructure.
- **Bharat1.ai:** AI infrastructure, secure testing, deployment platforms and partnerships.
- Plans to train over **300 students and professionals annually**.
- Launched during the **29th Bengaluru Tech Summit (17–19 November 2026)**.

Important Frameworks

- **RBI Regulatory Sandbox (2019):** Allows controlled testing of eligible financial innovations under safeguards and regulatory oversight.
- **NIST AI Risk Management Framework:** Four functions—**Govern, Map, Measure and Manage**.
- **CERT-In:** India's national cybersecurity incident-response agency under **Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000**.