

SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

26-08-2026

Guggal Plant

 Down To Earth

Non-profit undertakes plantation of Guggal species on commons land in attempt to restore Kutch's native medicinal heritage



A Kutch-based non-profit is restoring Gujarat's Gaucharlands by planting native Guggal species and medicinal plants across five villages,...

Why in News

- A Kutch-based non-profit is planting **Khara and Mitha Guggal** across five villages to restore native medicinal heritage and biodiversity on community grazing lands.

Botanical Profile

- Guggal is a **spiny shrub or small tree of the Burseraceae family**, with the scientific name *Commiphora wightii*.
- It is native to **India, Arabia and Pakistan** and occurs in India mainly in the arid regions of **Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka**.
- The plant is adapted to **arid and semi-arid climates**, poor soils, drought and salinity.

Ecological Characteristics

- Guggal has **ash-coloured bark** that peels off in large flakes and generally remains without foliage for much of the year.
- Its seeds have poor germination rates, while saplings take approximately **10 years to mature**, creating challenges for conservation.

Medicinal and Economic Uses

- The resin, known as **guggul**, is traditionally used in incense, lacquers, varnishes, ointments, perfumes and Ayurvedic medicine.
- Guggul gum extract acts on the **Farnesoid X Receptor (FXR)**, which regulates cholesterol and bile-acid metabolism.
- The **National Medicinal Plants Board** prioritises Guggal as an important medicinal plant for conservation.

PM chairs 53rd PRAGATI Meeting

Why in News: The Prime Minister chaired the **53rd meeting of the PRAGATI platform**, which

reviews major projects, schemes and public grievances.

PM India

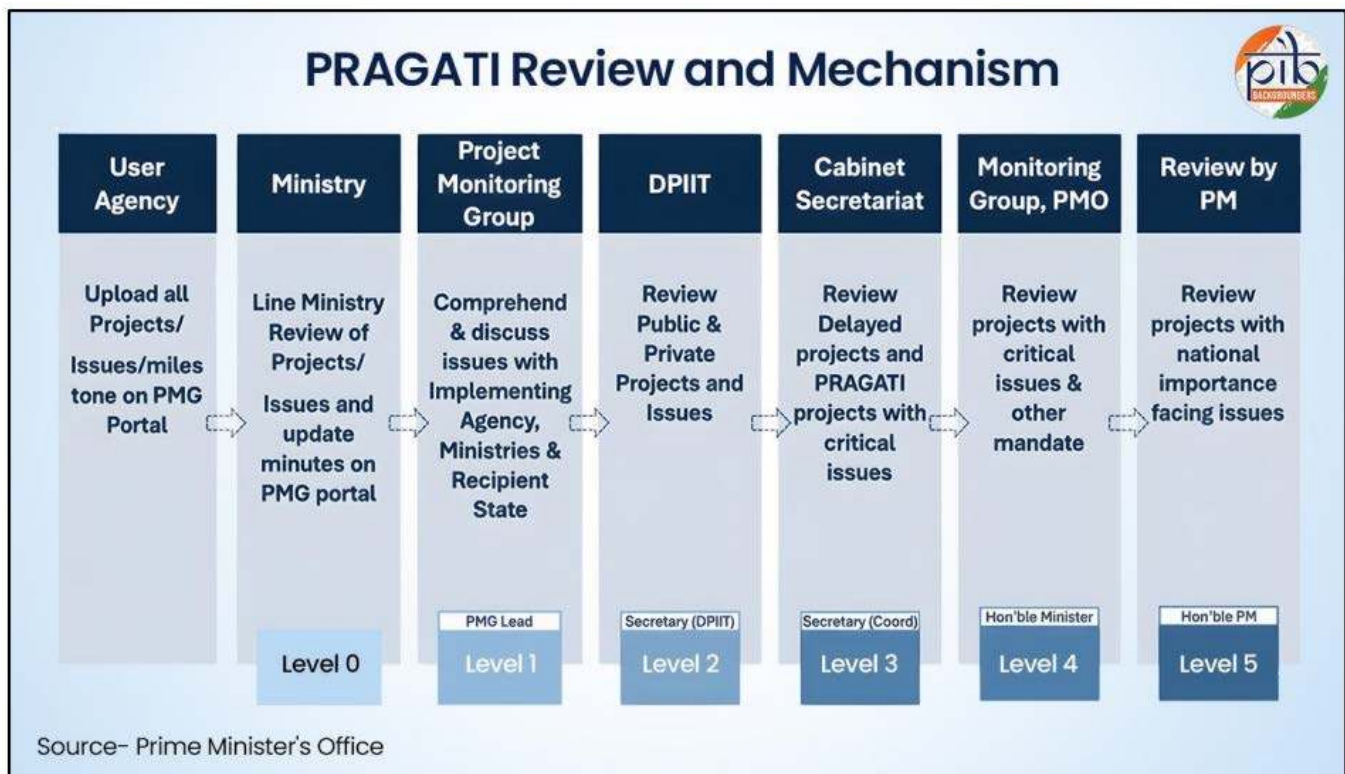
[PM chairs 53rd PRAGATI Meeting](#)

PM reviews six key infrastructure projects across the Railway, Road and Power sectors. Projects reviewed span across 9 States with...



Institutional Architecture

- **PRAGATI** stands for **Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation** and was launched in **2015** as a flagship governance platform of the Government of India.
- It is a **three-tier system** involving the **PMO, Union Government Secretaries and Chief Secretaries of States**.
- The platform was designed in-house by the **PMO** with assistance from the **National**



Informatics Centre (NIC).

Technology and Working

- PRAGATI integrates **digital data management, video conferencing and geospatial technology** for real-time governance.

- The Prime Minister directly reviews identified projects and schemes with concerned Central and State authorities.
- Issues are selected from databases covering **public grievances, ongoing programmes and pending projects**.
- A multi-tier follow-up mechanism tracks implementation after the meetings.

Administrative Significance

- The **Cabinet Secretariat** monitors projects, while schemes and grievances are reviewed at the Ministry level under continuous **PMO oversight**.

National Shipping Board

 The Week

How National Shipping Board's 100-ship push fuels India's broader fleet aggregation strategy

The move was announced by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, at the first 'Sagar Samvad' conducted by the...



Why in News: The **National Shipping Board (NSB)** organised its first '**Sagar Samvad**' and proposed a roadmap to add **100 vessels** to India's merchant fleet over the next five years.

Statutory Framework

- The **National Shipping Board** is a permanent **statutory body** established in **1959** under **Section 4 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958**.
- Its nodal ministry is the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.



Composition

- The Board consists of a **Chairman and Members**, including **six Members elected by Parliament**.
- Of these six parliamentary members, **four are from the Lok Sabha and two from the Rajya Sabha**.

- The Central Government may appoint additional members representing the **Central Government, ship-owners and seamen**.
- The **Chairman and other members have a two-year tenure**.

Functions and Significance

- The NSB advises the **Government of India on shipping-related matters**, including the development of the sector.
- Its deliberations and recommendations have contributed to the evolution of India's **National Maritime Policy**.

UN Mission in South Sudan

Why in News: India condemned an attack on peacekeepers deployed with the **United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)**.

News On AIR

[India condemns attack on UN Peacekeepers deployed with UN Mission in South Sudan](#)

India has condemned the attack on peacekeepers deployed with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), in which an Ethiopian security...



Mandate and Evolution

- **UNMISS** is a UN peacekeeping mission mandated under **Chapter VII of the UN Charter**.
- It was established on **8 July 2011** through **UN Security Council Resolution 1996 (2011)** following South Sudan's independence.
- After civil conflict erupted in December 2013, **UNSC Resolution 2155 (2014)** reprioritised the mission towards **civilian protection and humanitarian assistance**.

Core Responsibilities

- UNMISS works to **protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian assistance, promote human rights and build durable peace**.
- It supports political dialogue through **targeted good offices** to prevent escalation of political violence.
- The mission monitors security-sector and legal reforms, election-related processes and **transitional justice mechanisms**.



- It investigates and reports violations of **international human rights law and international humanitarian law**.

India and UN Peacekeeping

- As of **April 2026**, India was the **largest troop contributor to UNMISS**, with **1,775 Indian military personnel** deployed.
- The capital of South Sudan is **Juba**.

Garbhini Mitra Course

 News On AIR

Ayurveda institute begins six-month “Garbhini Mitra” course for maternal wellness

All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi has introduced a new course titled GARBHINI MITRA to Strengthen Ayurveda-Based Maternal...



Why in News: The **All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)**, New Delhi launched the **Garbhini Mitra course** for the **2026–27 academic session**.

Institutional Framework

- The programme is implemented by **AIIA**, an autonomous institution under the **Ministry of Ayush**.
- It is a structured **healthcare skill-development programme** focused on pregnancy and the postnatal period.

Course Features

- The programme is a **six-month offline course** conducted from Monday to Friday between **3:00 PM and 5:00 PM**.
- Its curriculum draws upon Ayurvedic concepts of **Garbhini Paricharya, Sutika Paricharya and Garbhadhana Vidhi**.
- Training covers **trimester-specific dietetics, lifestyle modification, pregnancy-safe yoga, emotional support during labour, newborn massage and basic life support**.
- It also includes **infection control, sanitisation, biomedical waste management and workplace safety**.

Eligibility and Outcomes

- Candidates must have passed **Senior Secondary (10+2)** from a recognised Indian board and be at least **18 years old**.
- Candidates awaiting Class 12 results may submit **provisional applications**.
- Graduates can work as **Garbhini Mitra Assistants, prenatal/postnatal care assistants, antenatal wellness guides and maternal health support workers**.

Lithium

 Down To Earth

Lithium carbonate prices fall 10.3%, energy storage cells extend decline as market eyes 2027 surplus

Lithium carbonate prices are set to drop 10.3% in August to around RMB 140000 per tonne, while high-capacity energy storage cell prices fell...



Why in News: Battery-grade **lithium carbonate** prices were projected to average around **RMB 140,000 per tonne in August**, representing a **10.3% month-on-month decline**.

Periodic and Physical Properties

- **Lithium (Li)** is a soft, silvery-white metal belonging to **Group 1 (alkali metals)** of the periodic table.
- It has the **lowest density among all metals** and is the **lightest solid element**.
- Lithium reacts vigorously with **water**, corrodes rapidly in air and is highly flammable.
- It is therefore stored under **inert conditions**, such as mineral oil or vacuum.

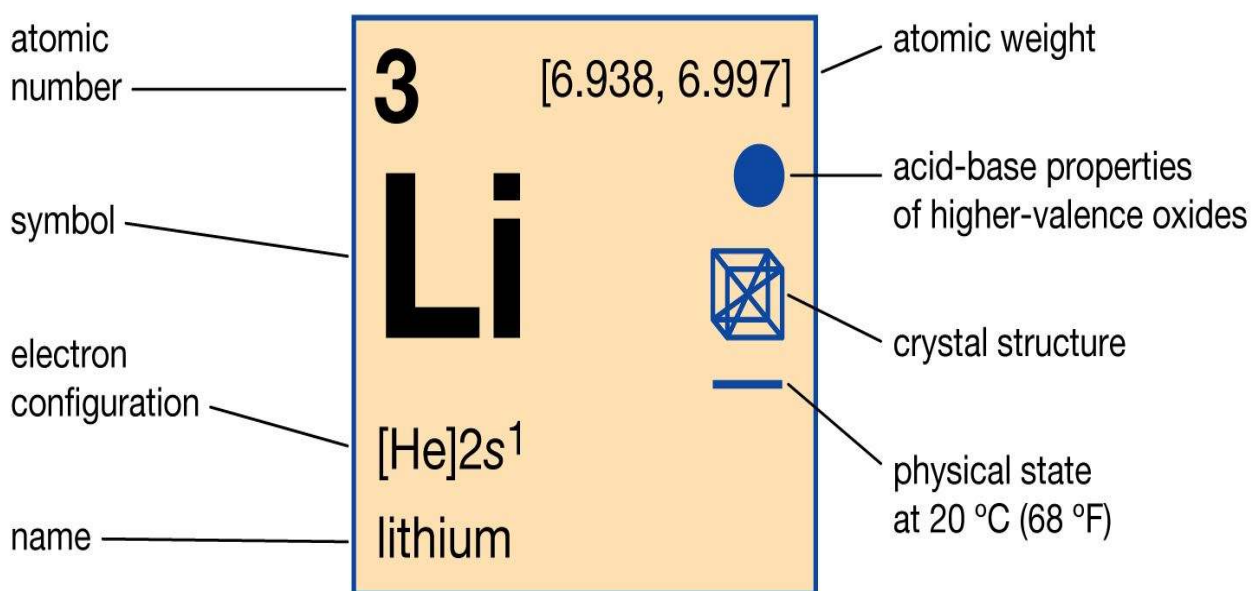
Occurrence and Resources

- Lithium does not occur as a free metal in nature and is found mainly in **igneous rocks, pegmatitic minerals and saline brines**.
- Important lithium-bearing minerals include **spodumene and petalite**, while brines are another major source.
- The **Lithium Triangle** comprises **Argentina, Bolivia and Chile**, which together contain a major concentration of lithium deposits.

Strategic Applications

- Lithium is crucial for **rechargeable batteries** used in mobile phones, laptops, digital cameras and **electric vehicles (EVs)**.
- Lithium forms alloys with **aluminium and magnesium**, making materials stronger and lighter.
- Lithium oxide** is used in special glasses and glass ceramics, while **lithium stearate** is used as a high-temperature lubricant.
- Lithium carbonate** also has pharmaceutical applications, including treatment of manic depression.

Lithium



	Alkali metals		Solid
	Body-centred cubic		Strongly basic

Other Important News of the day

Persons in News	Kerala's Kaziah Liz Mejo Crowned Miss Universe India 2026 Why in News: Kaziah Liz Mejo, a 19-year-old law student from Kerala, won the Miss Universe India 2026 title at the grand finale in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Title and Competition Kaziah Liz Mejo emerged victorious among 52 finalists from across India. Vaishnavi Gannesh of Tamil Nadu was the first runner-up, while Anushri Satavlekar of Gujarat was the second runner-up. - She became the first woman from Kerala to win the Miss Universe India title. International Representation - She will represent India at the 75th Miss Universe pageant, scheduled to be held in Puerto Rico in November 2026. - The achievement provides Kerala representation at the international Miss Universe platform. Background and Achievements - Kaziah Liz Mejo is pursuing law and has also worked as a model. - She was the first runner-up at Miss Teen International 2025 and won the Miss Teen Diva 2024 title. - She is trained in classical dance and has interests in music and acting.
Places in News	Morocco Why in News: The Minister of State for Commerce and Industry is scheduled to co-chair the 7th Session of the India-Morocco Joint Commission. Geographical Profile



- **Morocco** is located in the **Maghreb** region of **North Africa** and borders **Algeria** to the east and **Western Sahara** to the south.
- It has coastlines along both the **Atlantic Ocean** and the **Mediterranean Sea**, making it the only African country with coastlines on both.
- Its capital is **Rabat**.



Physical Geography

- Much of Morocco, particularly its coastal areas, experiences a **Mediterranean climate** with mild wet winters and hot dry summers.
- The **Moulouya River** originates in the **Atlas Mountains** and flows into the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Jebel Toubkal** is the highest point of Morocco and the highest peak of the **Atlas Mountains**.

Resource Base

- Morocco has deposits of **iron ore, coal, barite, manganese, lead and zinc**.

Environment

Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary

 The New Indian Express

[Monsoon survey: 124 bird species recorded in Kerala's Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary](#)

The survey also recorded reptiles and amphibians endemic to the Western Ghats and the Blue Nawab, a rare butterfly found in the state.



Why in News: A monsoon bird survey by the **Thiruvananthapuram Wildlife Division** recorded **124 bird species** in Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary.

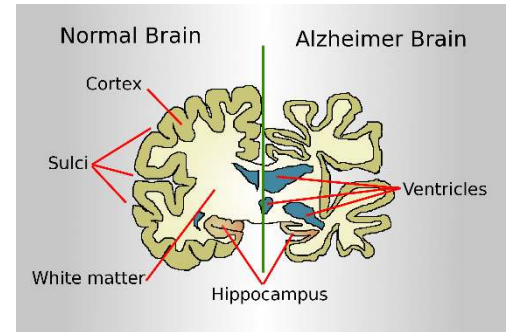
	Location and Landscape • Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala, and was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1983. • It is bordered by the Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu in the northeast, Palode Reserve Forest in the north and Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary in the south. • The sanctuary forms the catchment of the Peppara Dam, constructed across the Karamana River. • Important peaks include Chemmunjimottai (1,717 m) and Athirumalai (1,594 m). Ecological Characteristics • Major vegetation types include tropical evergreen, moist mixed deciduous, semi-evergreen and Myristica swamp forests. • Important flora includes Terminalia paniculata, T. bellerica, Pterocarpus marsupium, Palaquium ellipticum, Mesua ferrea, Hopea parviflora and Bombax ceiba. Faunal Diversity • Mammals reported from the sanctuary include tiger, leopard, sloth bear, Asian elephant, sambar, barking deer, lion-tailed macaque, Nilgiri langur and Nilgiri tahr.
Defence	ICGS Ajit  PIB <u>Goa Shipyard Limited hands over ICGS Ajit to Indian Coast Guard</u> Goa, 25 August 2026. Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), a leading Defence Public Sector Undertaking, achieved another milestone in indigenous...  Why in News: Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) has handed over the indigenously built ICGS Ajit to the Indian Coast Guard.

	Technical Profile • ICGS Ajit is a 51.43-metre-long, 8-metre-wide Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) with a displacement of 330 tonnes. • It is powered by twin marine diesel engines driving controllable pitch propellers (CPP). • It can attain a speed of over 27 knots and has an endurance of 1,500 nautical miles. • Its advanced integrated machinery control system improves operational readiness, efficiency and sustainability. Operational Significance • The vessel is designed for multi-mission roles including coastal patrol, fisheries protection, anti-smuggling and anti-piracy operations. • It is also suited for search and rescue (SAR) missions, particularly around India's island territories and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Indigenisation • Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) has built the vessel, highlighting indigenous shipbuilding capability for the Indian Coast Guard.
Science and Technology	Alzheimer's Disease Why in News: A smartphone-enabled fluorescence-responsive molecular probe has been developed for accessible detection of the amyloid-β (Aβ) biomarker associated with Alzheimer's disease.



Disease Profile

- **Alzheimer's disease (AD)** is a progressive **neurodegenerative disorder** characterised by memory loss, cognitive decline and behavioural impairment.
- It is the most common cause of **dementia**, accounting for approximately **60–80% of dementia cases worldwide**.
- The disease usually affects people aged **65 years and above**.



Pathological Hallmarks

- Misfolded **amyloid- β ($A\beta$)** forms fibrils and deposits as **extracellular amyloid plaques**, contributing to neurotoxicity and neurodegeneration.
- The two major pathological hallmarks are **amyloid plaques and tau tangles**.

Cause and Management

- Its exact cause is not fully understood, but **genetic, environmental and lifestyle factors** are believed to contribute.
- There is currently **no cure**, although medicines and therapies can temporarily manage symptoms.

Uttar Pradesh in News

Uttar Pradesh to Develop 500-Acre Japan City Near Noida Airport

18 News18

[CM Yogi Announces 500-Acre Japan City In UP: Why It Matters And What It Will Offer | Details](#)

UP News Today: Uttar Pradesh is set to develop a dedicated 500-acre 'Japan City' in Greater Noida, as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath seeks...



Why in News: The **Uttar Pradesh Government** has proposed a **500-acre 'Japan City'** in the **Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA)** area near the

Noida International Airport at Jewar. The proposal was announced by **Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath** during the **UP-Japan Investment Meet 2026** in New Delhi.

Industrial and Strategic Focus

- The proposed **Japan City** aims to create an integrated industrial ecosystem for **Japanese companies, suppliers and supporting industries.**
- It will promote sectors such as **semiconductors, electronics, clean energy, technology and manufacturing.**
- The project will be located around **3 km from Noida International Airport**, with nearby **semiconductor, electronics clusters and data centres** planned.
- The initiative seeks to attract Japanese investment and position Uttar Pradesh as a **“second industrial home”** for Japanese companies.

Investment and Employment

- Two Japanese projects worth approximately **₹3,191 crore** were virtually launched in the **YEIDA region** during the investment meet.
- These projects are expected to generate more than **10,000 jobs**, strengthening the region's industrial and employment potential.

India-Japan Economic Linkages

- The initiative seeks to deepen **India-Japan economic and industrial cooperation** through manufacturing, technology and investment.
- Uttar Pradesh plans to leverage Japanese expertise in **robotics, precision engineering, Kaizen and 5S** for workforce development.
- The proposed ecosystem can support technology-intensive manufacturing and strengthen **Japanese industrial participation in Uttar Pradesh.**