SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

29-10-2026

First Class Order of Zayed II

News On AIR

UAE President honours FlyDubai pilot Captain Smit Machchhar with top civilian bravery award for saving passengers during mid-air attack

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has conferred the First Class Order of Zayed II on the flydubai crew members,...



Why in News

- Indian pilot **Smit Machchhar** received the UAE's **First Class Order of Zayed II (2026)** for protecting **174 passengers** aboard a Flydubai flight during an alleged attack by his Omani co-pilot.



About the Decoration

- It is a prestigious **civilian decoration of the UAE**, named after its founding President **Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (1971–2004)**.
- It is generally awarded to **foreign diplomats, senior officials and distinguished international personalities** for contributions to the UAE or its international relations.

Indian Recipients

- **Smit Machchhar (2026)**, former ambassadors **Navdeep Singh Suri** and **Sunjay Sudhir** have received this honour.
- It is distinct from the **Order of Zayed**, the UAE's highest civilian honour, awarded to **Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019**.

Pradhan Mantri Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana (PM VGSY)

PM India

Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for 2026-27 to 2030-31

Pm India Website.



Why in News

- The Union Cabinet approved the **Pradhan Mantri Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana** with an allocation of **₹7,395 crore** to strengthen grassroots governance.

Scheme Overview

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)** covering all States and UTs.
- **Period:** 2026-27 to 2030-31.
- It also covers traditional rural local government institutions in **non-Part IX areas** where Panchayats do not exist.

Constitutional Linkages

- **Part IX (Articles 243–243O)** provides the constitutional framework for Panchayats.
- **Article 243G** deals with powers and responsibilities of Panchayats, while **Article 243ZD** provides for District Planning Committees.

Governance and Institutional Mechanisms

- It targets **2.55 lakh Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs)** annually through the **eGramSwaraj portal**.
- It aims to train and digitally support around **32 lakh elected representatives and Panchayat functionaries annually**.
- It supports at least **2.55 lakh online audit plans annually** through **Audit Online**, along with improved accounting, public disclosure and mobilisation of Panchayat revenue.

Citizen Participation and Implementation

- Each coordinated awareness exercise aims to reach **one crore citizens**, using Gram Sabhas and **PANCHAM**, a two-way platform available in **17 Indian languages**.
- States and UTs will submit annual action plans for appraisal by a **Central Empowered Committee**; need-based contractual staff may be engaged.

Dearness Allowance (DA)

PM India

Cabinet approves Dearness Allowance to Central Government employees and Dearness Relief to Pensioners

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today has approved to release an additional instalment of Dearness...



Why in News

- The Union Cabinet approved a **3% hike in DA and Dearness Relief (DR)**, benefiting over **1.17 crore central government employees and pensioners**.

Concept and Calculation

- **DA** compensates eligible employees for inflation and is calculated as a percentage of **basic pay**; **DR** is calculated on basic pension.
- It protects purchasing power against rising prices and forms part of the salary.

Types of Dearness Allowance

- **Industrial Dearness Allowance (IDA):** Applicable to public sector employees and generally revised quarterly based on **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**.

- **Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA):** Applicable to specified categories of workers, particularly those covered under the central minimum wage framework, and revised periodically based on CPI.
- VDA comprises **Fixed Variable DA, Base Index and CPI** components.

Economic and Taxation Dimensions

- DA revisions help protect the real income of employees and pensioners.
- **DA is generally fully taxable** under the **Income Tax Act, 1961**.
- Private-sector employees do not automatically receive DA; their salary structure depends on the employer.

Noyyal River Pollution

The Hindu

Tamil Nadu Environment Minister's remark on soap, shampoo use causing Noyyal River foaming draws ire

A comment by Tamil Nadu Minister for Environment and Climate Change V.K. Rajeev, that soap and shampoo used by the public can also cause...



Why in News

- The Noyyal River in Tamil Nadu attracted attention over excessive foaming and pollution, particularly in **Tiruppur district**.

Geographical Profile

- The **Noyyal River** is a tributary of the **Cauvery**, originating from streams in the **Vellingiri Hills of the Western Ghats**.
- It flows through **Coimbatore, Tiruppur and Erode** before joining the Cauvery at **Noyyal village, Karur district**.
- It is approximately **158 km long** and is a seasonal river with increased monsoon flows.

River Basin and Irrigation Infrastructure

- Its watershed contains **32 tanks, 14 major canals, 23 anicuts and 55 check dams**, many constructed during the **Chola period (9th–12th centuries)**.
- Its main tributaries are **Cheyyar (Chadiaar)** and **Kanchimanadhi** rivers.
- Important dams include **Aathupalayam and Orathuppalayam** dams.

Historical and Environmental Significance

- Historically known as **Kanchi Nadi**, it was an important drinking water source until the early 20th century.
- It is now severely polluted, with industrial pollution affecting **water quality, agriculture, aquatic ecosystems and public health**.

Khelo India Sports Goods Manufacturing Scheme

BW BW Businessworld

Cabinet Approves Rs 1,857 Cr Scheme To Boost Sports Goods Manufacturing



The Union Cabinet has approved a Rs 1,856.67 crore scheme to strengthen India's sports goods manufacturing industry, attract domestic and...

Why in News

- The Union Cabinet approved the scheme with an allocation of **₹1,856 crore** to promote domestic sports goods manufacturing.

Objectives and Framework

- It promotes **investment, manufacturing, innovation and exports** in the sports goods sector.
- **Period:** 2026 to 2033-34.
- It has two components: **manufacturing incentives** and **ecosystem development interventions**.

Manufacturing and Investment Support

- **Integrated Manufacturing Zones** will bring together manufacturers, suppliers, testing facilities and design centres through convergence with the **BHAVYA Scheme and NICDC Industrial Parks**.
- A combined **₹1,130 crore** is allocated for **Anchor Investment Support and Turnover Linked Support**.
- Existing manufacturing clusters and **MSMEs** will receive support for upgrading common facilities and infrastructure.

Export Promotion

- Branding and international market development will be supported through convergence with the **Export Promotion Mission** to improve global competitiveness

Research, Innovation and Skill Development

- **₹105 crore** is allocated for international certification through **International Sports Federations**.
- Centres of Excellence will support research in sports equipment, material sciences and protective gear, with convergence support from the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**.
- **DPIIT-registered sports start-ups** can receive grants up to **₹20 lakh**.
- Skill development will be undertaken with the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**.

Container Manufacturing Promotion Scheme (CMPS)

PM India

Cabinet approves Container Manufacturing Promotion Scheme



The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Container Manufacturing Promotion Scheme (CMPS) with...

Why in News

- The Union Cabinet approved the **Container Manufacturing Promotion Scheme** to develop a globally competitive domestic container manufacturing ecosystem.

Objectives and Framework

- It aims to reduce **import dependence**, promote domestic manufacturing and strengthen supply-chain resilience.
- Its major components are **investment support, operational expenditure assistance, and testing and certification**.



Investment and Production Incentives

- **Interest Subvention Assistance (ISA):** Provides **3% annual interest subvention** on eligible term loans for greenfield and brownfield projects.
- Greenfield facilities must have at least **1 lakh TEUs annual capacity**, while brownfield projects must add **25,000 TEUs** within three years of in-principle approval.
- Projects must comply with **global container standards**.

Operational and Localisation Support

- **Operational Expenditure Assistance (OEA)** has an allocation of **₹8,891 crore**.
- Minimum domestic content must be **70% through FY 2031-32**, increasing to **90% from FY 2032-33**.

Testing and Certification

- **₹150 crore** is allocated for testing and certification infrastructure, including **Dynamic Longitudinal Impact** testing facilities.
- The scheme aims to improve the quality and international competitiveness of Indian containers.

Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)

The Hindu

Vehicle data shared only in masked form: ULIP

Road Ministry seeks audits over vehicle data access as ULIP claims data masking and urges broader scrutiny of platforms selling information.



Why in News

- ULIP faced scrutiny over alleged misuse of vehicle-related information, following which the Road Transport Ministry sought an audit of platform users.
- ULIP rejected the allegations of misuse.

Institutional and Digital Framework

- **ULIP** is a digital gateway providing logistics-related government datasets through **API-based integration**.
- It was conceptualised by **NITI Aayog**, developed under the **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan**, and launched on **17 September 2022** under the **National Logistics Policy**.
- It is operated by **NICDC Logistics Data Services (NLDS)**, a **50:50 joint venture** between the Government of India (through NICDIT) and Japan's **NEC Corporation**.

Data Integration and Coverage

- It integrates **44 government systems across 11 ministries**, using **129 APIs** and covering over **1,800 data fields**.
- Major databases include:
  - **VAHAN:** Vehicle registration.
  - **SARATHI:** Driving licences.
  - **FASTag:** Electronic toll collection.
  - **FOIS:** Freight Operations Information System.
  - **ICEGATE:** Indian Customs Electronic Gateway.
  - **Port Community Systems:** Port-related information exchange.

Logistics and Economic Benefits

- It enables **end-to-end supply-chain visibility, consignment tracking, vehicle verification and route optimisation**.
- It facilitates data exchange among government and private stakeholders, improving transportation planning and reducing logistics costs and time.

Governance and Data Security

- The platform highlights the importance of **data access audits, user accountability and information security** in digital governance.

Other Important News of the day

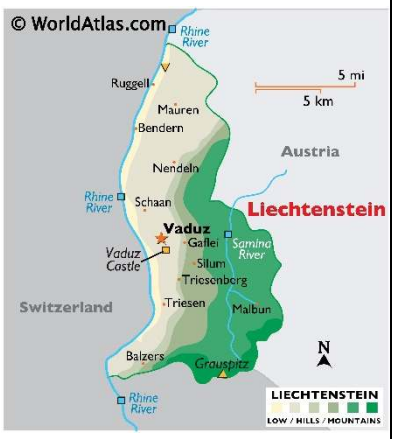
Places in News

Liechtenstein

Why in News

- India and **Liechtenstein** reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation and multilateral institutions.

Geographical Location



- Liechtenstein is a **doubly landlocked country** in Central Europe, bordered by **Austria (north and east)** and **Switzerland (south and west)**.
- It lies along the **Rhine River**, and its capital is **Vaduz**.

Physical Features

- The **Alpine Mountains** dominate the eastern part, while the western region comprises the **Rhine River Valley**.
- **Vorder Grauspitz (2,599 m)** is its highest peak.
- **Gampriner Seele** is its only lake, while the **Rhine and Samina** are its major rivers.

Important Geographical Concept

- A **doubly landlocked country** is surrounded entirely by landlocked countries, requiring passage through at least two countries to reach the sea.
- **Liechtenstein and Uzbekistan** are the world's only two doubly landlocked countries.

Environment

Cyrtodactylus dimensis: New Gecko Species

NENow.in

New gecko species discovered in Assam's Dima Hasao hills

Researchers discover Cyrtodactylus dimensis, a new bent-toed gecko species in Umrangso, Dima Hasao, taking Assam's recorded count to eight.



Why in News

- Researchers discovered a new gecko species, **Cyrtodactylus dimensis**, in **Umrangso, Dima Hasao district, Assam**.

Taxonomic and Geographical Features

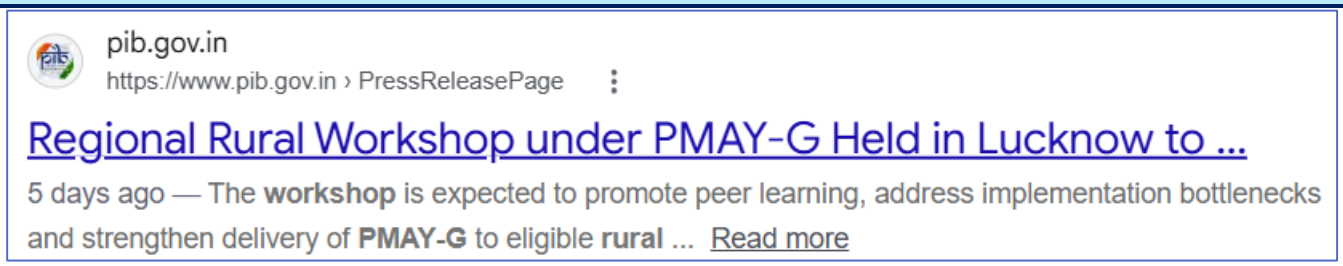
- It belongs to the **bent-toed gecko group** and was discovered in the **Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot**.

	➢ Its discovery increased the number of described *Cyrtodactylus* species recorded from Assam to **eight**. **Scientific Identification** ➢ It is closely related to **Cyrtodactylus vanarakshaka**, another species discovered in Dima Hasao. ➢ It differs in **genetic and morphological characteristics**, including scale arrangements and specialised body structures. **Biodiversity Significance** ➢ The discovery highlights the rich but incompletely documented reptilian diversity of **Northeast India**.
Defence	**Exercise IN-RoKN: India–South Korea Naval Exercise** DD News INS Sahyadri's South Korea Visit to Strengthen Indo-Pacific Maritime Cooperation Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sahyadri, an indigenously designed and built guided-missile stealth frigate of the Indian Navy, arrived at Busan...  **Why in News** ➢ **INS Sahyadri** participated in the India–Republic of Korea Navy (**IN-RoKN**) bilateral exercise at **Busan Naval Harbour, South Korea**. **Exercise Framework** ➢ It is a bilateral naval exercise between the **Indian Navy and Republic of Korea Navy**. ➢ **Harbour Phase:** Includes cross-deck visits, cross-training, professional interactions and exchange of operational best practices. ➢ **Sea Phase:** Involves **INS Sahyadri and ROKS Munmu the Great**, strengthening interoperability and operational coordination. **Strategic Significance** ➢ The exercise strengthens India-South Korea maritime cooperation and supports peace, stability and security in the **Indo-Pacific region**. **INS Sahyadri: Key Features** ➢ It is the **third Shivalik-class guided-missile stealth frigate**, built by **Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai**. ➢ It was indigenously designed and constructed and commissioned in **2012**.

	➢ It has a displacement of approximately **6,800 tonnes** and a maximum speed of **32 knots**. ➢ Its armaments include **BrahMos anti-ship missiles, Barak-1, Shtil-1 (3S90M) missiles and anti-submarine rocket launchers**. ➢ It carries advanced sensors and weapons to counter **air, surface and subsurface threats** and can operate multi-role helicopters.

Uttar Pradesh in News

PMAY-G Regional Workshop in Lucknow



Why in News

- The Ministry of Rural Development organised a two-day regional workshop under **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana–Gramin (PMAY-G)** in Lucknow on **27–28 October 2026** to review implementation and discuss reforms for the next phase.

Targets and Proposed Reforms

- **Target:** Construction of **4.95 crore rural houses by March 2029**.
- Four proposed reforms were discussed:
  - Cluster-based housing.
  - Strengthening Rural Mason Training.
  - Establishment of Centres of Excellence.
  - Credit framework for rural housing.
- Discussions also covered **AwaasSoft** and **SNA-SPARSH** to improve digital monitoring, fund management and beneficiary coverage.

About PMAY-G

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Rural Development.
- **Objective:** To provide pucca houses with basic amenities to houseless households and those living in kutcha or dilapidated houses in rural areas.
- The scheme initially targeted **2.95 crore houses for 2016–17 to 2023–24**, with an additional **2 crore houses approved for 2024–25 to 2028–29**.

Eligibility, Assistance and Funding

- **Minimum House Size:** 25 sq. metres, including a dedicated hygienic cooking area.

- **Unit Assistance:**
  - ₹1.20 lakh in plain areas.
  - ₹1.30 lakh in hilly and difficult areas.
- Beneficiaries are identified using housing deprivation parameters from **SECC 2011**, with verification by Gram Sabhas.
- Priority is given to landless beneficiaries, and at least **60% of national targets** are earmarked for SC/ST households.
- **Funding Pattern:**
  - 90:10 for North-Eastern and Himalayan States.
  - 60:40 for other States.
  - 100% Central funding for Union Territories without a legislature.
- **Digital Monitoring:** AwaasSoft (MIS) and the AwaasApp mobile application.