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National and International News

<p>Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM): A New Initiative for Marine Conservation</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission has introduced the Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM), a bold initiative aimed at addressing critical marine challenges in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: OCM aims to conserve the Caribbean and North Brazil shelf, regions rich in biodiversity, coral reefs, and fisheries that contribute \$610 million annually to local economies. Launch Date & Organization: Announced on January 14, 2025, by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. Significance of Target Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Brazil Shelf (a Large Marine Ecosystem) supports 500+ fish species and acts as a storm barrier. Coral reefs and fisheries sustain coastal economies and protect marine biodiversity. Threats to Oceans: Pollution, overfishing, climate change, and habitat destruction threaten marine ecosystems and human livelihoods. Approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative & Integrated Management – Addressing gaps left by previous initiatives like the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP). Blue Carbon Projects – Using coastal ecosystems for carbon storage, benefiting both the environment and local communities. Community Engagement – Merging traditional knowledge with scientific research for effective and inclusive conservation.
<p>Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Budget 2025. The Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme aims to provide digital textbooks in Indian languages for school and higher education students. <p>Key points:</p> <p>Objective of the Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make learning more accessible by offering study materials in regional languages. Supports the government's vision of integrating technology in



	<p>education while promoting linguistic diversity.</p> <p>Scope & Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbooks and learning resources will be available in digital formats for students across schools and universities. • The initiative aligns with ongoing efforts to strengthen education in mother tongues. <p>ASMITA Initiative & Its Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASMITA (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian Languages through Translation and Academic Writing) was launched in July 2024 by the Ministry of Education & UGC. • Focuses on developing 22,000 books in 22 Indian languages over the next five years. • A joint effort between UGC and Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, emphasizing translation and original academic writing.
<p>Guneri Inland Mangrove</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Guneri inland mangrove site in Kutch district has been declared Gujarat's first Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS). <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This 32.78-hectare site is one of only eight inland mangrove sites worldwide and the last remaining of its kind in India. • The declaration was made by the Gujarat government based on recommendations from the Gujarat Biodiversity Board. <p>Unique Features of Guneri Inland Mangrove:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike typical mangroves found on sea coasts, the Guneri mangrove site is 45 km from the Arabian Sea and 4 km from the Kori Creek. • It is not influenced by seawater and lacks coastal sludge, making it a rare inland mangrove ecosystem. • This inland mangrove is believed to have originated either due to marine transgression in the Miocene period or on the banks of the lost Saraswati River in the Great Rann of Kachchh (3000-4000 B.C.). • Limestone deposits in the region sustain the mangrove ecosystem by allowing continuous groundwater flow.
<p>India's Global Position in Textile Exports</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India ranks as the sixth-largest exporter of textiles and apparel globally. • The textile sector contributes significantly to GDP, industrial production, and exports. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India's textile exports amounted to USD 34 billion. <p>Government Initiatives & Policy Support:</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PM MITRA Scheme: Development of textile parks with world-class infrastructure to integrate supply chains and attract foreign direct investment (FDI). ● National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocated ₹1,480 crore for R&D in Man-Made Fiber (MMF) products. ○ 168 research projects approved in 2024 under this initiative. ○ Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) extended till March 31, 2026, to promote exports.
South Georgia Island	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The world's largest iceberg, A23a, is currently drifting in the South Atlantic Ocean and is expected to strike South Georgia Island within two to four weeks. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A23a weighs approximately one trillion tons and covers an area of about 400 square miles. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● South Georgia Island is a remote island located in the southern Atlantic Ocean and is part of the British Overseas Territory. ● The island covers an area of approximately 3,755 square kilometers (1,450 square miles) and is known for its rugged, mountainous terrain and glacial coverage. ● South Georgia Island is home to penguins and seals, and scientists are concerned about the potential ecological impact if A23a becomes stranded near the island. ● Around 75% of South Georgia Island is covered in glaciers, making it one of the most inhospitable yet ecologically significant places on Earth. ● The island is home to diverse wildlife, including King Penguins, Macaroni Penguins, Fur Seals, Elephant Seals, and various species of whales.



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