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National and International News

<p>ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the 14th meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts' Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (EWG on CT) held in New Delhi, co-chairs India and Malaysia announced plans for a table-top exercise in Malafmfmdmfysia in 2026 and a field training exercise in India in 2027. These exercises are part of the group's 2024–2027 work plan. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. It was established to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region. The Inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 12 October 2010. Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build capacity among ASEAN Member States to address shared security challenges, considering varying capacities. Promote mutual trust and confidence between defense establishments through dialogue and transparency. Enhance regional peace and stability through defense and security cooperation, addressing transnational security challenges. Contribute to the ASEAN Security Community, aiming for peace, stability, democracy, and prosperity as outlined in the Bali Concord II. Support the Vientiane Action Programme to create a peaceful, secure, and prosperous ASEAN, with strong external relations. <p>What is ASEAN?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional grouping that aims to promote economic and security cooperation among its ten members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
<p>Right to Information Act, 2005</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 30 civil society organizations are urging the Union government to refrain from undermining the Right to Information Act, 2005, according to the National Council for People's Right to Information (NCPRI).



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	<p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right To Information is derived from the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 of the Constitution. • If we do not have information on how our Government and Public Institutions function, we cannot express any informed opinion on it. • The basic object of the Right to Information Act is to empower the citizens, promote transparency and accountability in the working of the Government. • The Act and its rules define a format for – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ requisitioning information, ○ a time period within which information must be provided, ○ a method of giving the information, ○ charges for applying and ○ exemptions of information which will not be given. • The RTI Act, 2005 extends to the whole of India. • All bodies, which are constituted under the Constitution or under any law or under any Government notification or all bodies, including NGOs, which are owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government are covered. • All private bodies, which are owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government are directly covered. • Key Provisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sec. 4: Public authorities must maintain records that are catalogued and indexed to facilitate access to information. Sec. 6: Individuals can request information from the Central or State Public Information Officer by submitting a written request specifying the details. Sec. 7: The Public Information Officer must provide or reject the requested information within 30 days, as per Secs. 8 and 9. Sec. 19: If no decision is made within 30 days or the individual is aggrieved by the decision, they can appeal to a senior officer. Exemptions: Information related to defense, national security, or personal details is exempt from disclosure.
<p>Supplementary Demands for Grants</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lok Sabha approved the Demands for Grants for various ministries for 2025-26, sanctioning an expenditure of over ₹50 lakh crore. • The House passed the Demands for Grants using the guillotine process, meaning the funds for ministries affected by it are considered approved without any discussion. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 115 of the Indian Constitution provides for supplementary, additional, or excess grants. • Supplementary grants: The President shall cause to be laid before both Houses of Parliament a demand if the amount authorized



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	<p>under Article 114 (Appropriation Bills) is found to be insufficient for the purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The additional grant required to meet the required expenditures of the government is called Supplementary Grants. • They are presented to and passed by the House before the end of the financial year. • They are regulated by the same procedure that is applicable in the case of a regular budget. <p>What is Guillotine?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on a matter of general public importance can take place only when motion made with the consent of the presiding officer. • Guillotine is a type of motion which falls under the category of closure motion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Closure Motion is a motion moved by a member to cut short the debate on a matter before the House. If the motion is approved by the House, debate is stopped forthwith and the matter is put to vote.
<p>Genetically Modified (GM) Crops</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An official has stated that there is progress on genetically modified (GM) food crops. This comes amid concerns regarding the Environment Ministry's approval for the commercial cultivation of GM mustard in 2022. The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear petitions on the matter next month. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic Modification involves altering an organism's DNA. This can be done by altering an existing section of DNA, or by adding a new gene altogether. • Working: When a scientist performs genetic modification to a plant, they insert a foreign gene (called transgene) in the plant's own genes. • This could be introduced from one plant to another plant, from a plant to an animal, or from a microorganism to a plant. • Genetically Modified (GM) Crops in India: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bt-Cotton: It is the first non-food and only approved GM crop in 2002 for commercial cultivation. It was introduced to protect against the widespread infestation of bollworm. ○ Bt-Brinjal: In 2009, Bt-brinjal was cleared by GEAC for commercial cultivation, but it was put on a 10-year moratorium by the Technical Expert Committee (TEC). ○ DMH-11 is developed by the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (Delhi University). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It paves the way for the commercialisation of the country's first GM food crop. • Regulatory Framework of GM Crops in India: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006: Prohibits import, manufacture, use, or sale of GM food without FSSAI approval.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM): Monitors GM organism R&D under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). ○ State Biotechnology Coordination Committee (SBCC): Reviews safety and control measures at institutions handling GMOs. ○ District Level Committee (DLC): Inspects and reports to SBCC/GEAC on regulatory compliance of GMOs. ○ GM Crop Approval Process: Granted after thorough scientific evaluation of health and environmental safety per the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
<p>Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As India prepares to take over as Chair of IORA from November 2025, after currently serving as Vice-Chair, it has the opportunity to strengthen resilience in its governance structure. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IORA is an inter-governmental organisation which was established on 7 March 1997. ● It was formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). ● The IORA Secretariat is based in Mauritius. ● It became an observer to the UN General Assembly and the African Union in 2015. ● Members: It has 23 Member States and 11 Dialogue Partners. China is a dialogue partner in the IORA. ● Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To promote sustainable growth and balanced development of the region; ○ To focus on those areas of economic cooperation which provide maximum opportunities for development, shared interest and mutual benefits; ○ To promote liberalisation, remove impediments and lower barriers towards a freer and enhanced flow of goods, services, investment, and technology within the Indian Ocean rim. <p>About Indian Ocean Region (IOR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IOR is a geographical region that encompasses the Indian Ocean and its surrounding areas, including the littoral states and islands. ● The region spans from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the African coast in the west to the Australian coast in the east, and ○ from the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf in the north to the southern coast of Sri Lanka and Australia in the south. ● It is home to several important sea lanes of communication, including the Strait of Malacca, the Suez Canal, and the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, which connect Asia, Europe, and Africa.



Places in news: Mount Lewotobi Laki

Why in news?

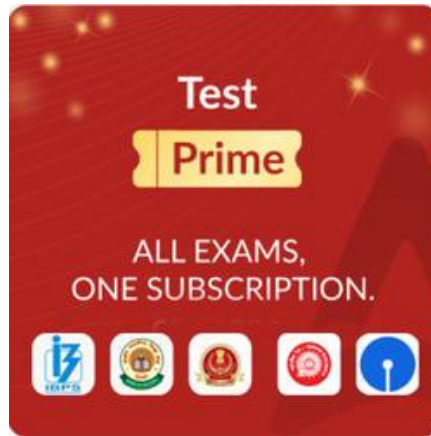
- Indonesia has raised an alert as the Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki volcano erupts.

Key Points:

- It is located on **Flores Island**.
- It is a **volcanic mountain situated in East Nusa Tenggara province of Indonesia**.
- The volcano is part of a **twin-volcano system that the local residents perceive as male and female mountains**.
- The ongoing volcanic eruption has occurred at the male counterpart of the system (Lewotobi Lakilaki) while the female mountain is known as Lewotobi Perempuan.
- The two mountains are classified as stratovolcanoes which are the most commonly occurring volcanoes around the world and are formed by the layers of lava that repeatedly oozes out of the crater.

What are Stratovolcanoes?

- It is a tall, steep, and cone-shaped type of volcano.
- Unlike flat shield volcanoes, they have higher peaks.
- They are typically found above subduction zones, and they are often part of large volcanically active regions, such as the Ring of Fire that frames much of the Pacific Ocean.



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