

INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE 2025



- The prize, which is awarded **annually**, celebrates the **best works of long-form fiction or collections of short stories translated into English and published in the UK and/or Ireland.**

- **History:**

- It was founded in 2005 as a biennial award recognising an author's contribution to world literature.
- At the time there were no requirements that the book be published in a language other than English.
- The rules changed in 2015, and it is now awarded annually for a work of fiction that is originally written in another language and then translated into English.
- **Any nationality is eligible, as long as the work is translated into English.**
- It recognises the **vital work of translators**, with the **£50,000 prize money divided equally between authors and translators.**
- In addition, shortlisted authors and translators each receive £2,500.
- **Administered By: The Booker Prize Foundation.**

International Booker Prize 2025:

- **Heart Lamp** by Banu Mushtaq, translated from Kannada by Deepa Bhashti, is the winner of the 2025 prize.
- The winning book is the **first collection of short stories to be awarded the prize**, and the **first winner originally written in Kannada.**
- Spanning stories written between 1990 and 2023, **Heart Lamp** is a **portrayal of the struggles faced by Muslim women in southern India.**

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (IDB)



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY 2025

Harmony with nature and sustainable development

- Celebrated each year on **May 22**, IDB aims to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.

- **IDB 2025 Theme:**

- This year's theme "**Harmony with nature and sustainable development**", highlights how this campaign for nature connects with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The IDB 2025 seeks to focus the world's **attention on the linkages between the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs and the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)**, as two universal agendas must advance together as they support the recently adopted Pact for the Future.

- **History of IDB:**

- The **United Nations** has proclaimed **May 22** as the **IDB** to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.
- When first created by the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly in late 1993, 29 December (the date of entry into force of the Convention of Biological Diversity), was designated IDB.
- In December 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted 22 May as IDB, to commemorate the **adoption of the text of the Convention on 22 May 1992** by the Nairobi Final Act of the Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the **Convention on Biological Diversity**.
- This was partly done because it was difficult for many countries to plan and carry out suitable celebrations for the date of 29 December, given the number of holidays that coincide around that time of year.

Current Affairs - 22 May 2025

WHAT IS THE SPICED SCHEME?



- Sustainability in the Spice Sector through Progressive, Innovative, and Collaborative Interventions for Export Development (SPICED) is an **initiative of the Spices Board**, under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The scheme **offers financial assistance** across various components, aiming to enhance sustainability, foster innovation, and **promote export development** in the Indian spices sector.
- The scheme aims to **enhance the productivity of small and large cardamom**, improve the **quality of post-harvest processes**, and encourage the production and **export of value-added, GI-tagged, and organic spices**.
- It is also focused on **enabling compliance with global food safety and phytosanitary standards** and boosting the capacity of stakeholders across the value chain.
- **Features:**
 - The scheme offers **support for** activities such as replanting and rejuvenation of **cardamom plantations**, development of **water resources**, **micro-irrigation**, promotion of **organic farming**, and expansion of good agricultural practices (GAP).
 - In addition, it **supports the installation of improved post-harvest infrastructure**, such as modern dryers, slicers, dehullers, and grading machines to ensure superior product quality.
 - The scheme provides **financial assistance to farmers and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)** to **procure essential post-harvest machines** such as spice polishers, turmeric boilers, mint distillation units, and threshing machines.
 - In export development and promotion, the scheme **assists in participating in international trade fairs**, buyer-seller meets, and **other market linkage programs**.

CENTRAL EQUIPMENT IDENTITY REGISTER (CEIR) PORTAL



- It was developed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications, to track lost or stolen mobile phones.
- It acts as a central database of all the mobile phones that are used and registered in India. It contains all the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) or Electronic Serial Number (ESN).
 - IMEI is a 15-digit unique number attached to all the handsets. These numbers are attached to the registered service provider.
- The user can track the devices by providing the required information requested on the portal along with the IMEI and FIR copy.
- The CEIR shares a wide platform that supports all the network operators.
- It helps to receive information on the blacklisted mobile devices from the registered network to notify other networks.
- This helps to track the device even if the Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) has changed.
- The following are the types of lists in the EIR database:
 - **White List:** It contains all the authorised IMEI numbers that are allowed to access the network.
 - **Grey List:** It contains all the authorised IMEI numbers that are kept for observation to track the number.
 - **Black List:** It contains all the unauthorised IMEI numbers that are prohibited from registration in a cellular network.
- Objectives of CEIR:
 - Discourage mobile theft, identify fraudulent mobile markets, and protect consumer interest.

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OVERFISHING THE THREAT TO OCEAN WEALTH, LIVELIHOODS

- India's marine fisheries sector, once increasing source of food and livelihood, has reached a plateau, stabilising at three to four million tonnes of annual capture.
- This indicates that India is operating at the threshold of its maximum sustainable yield.
- However, beyond this impressive volume lies a story of **inequity, ecological degradation, and policy gaps** that threaten both the marine ecosystem and the millions who depend on it.

Concerns Surrounding India's Fisheries Sector

- **Inequity in the Fisheries Sector**
 - Despite the magnitude of India's marine output, the economic benefits remain unequally distributed. **Small-scale fishers, who constitute 90% of the fishing population, are responsible for only 10% of the catch.**
 - The mechanised fleet, often better equipped and capitalised, dominates the rest.
 - This **imbalance is starkly visible in the socio-economic conditions** of fisher communities, three-quarters of whom live below the poverty line.
- **Environmental Cost of Unsustainable Fishing**
 - India's **multi-species, multi-gear fisheries** present unique management challenges.
 - One glaring issue is the **indiscriminate use of shrimp trawlers**, which extract valuable shrimp while discarding up to ten times their weight in bycatch, mostly juvenile and non-target species.
- **Fragmented Regulations and Enforcement Challenges**
 - Each coastal State and Union Territory operates under its own **Marine Fisheries Regulation Act (MFRA)**, creating a regulatory patchwork that is easily exploited.

Conclusion

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- India's 11,098 km coastline and over 3,000 fishing villages are increasingly vulnerable to **climate change, coastal erosion, and economic shocks**.
- If overexploitation continues unchecked, the result will be **deepened poverty, irreparable biodiversity loss, and declining yields**.
- However, **the tools for a sustainable future are within reach: science-based quotas, regulatory harmonisation, community stewardship, and a focus on long-term ecological and economic resilience.**

SWOT SATELLITE



- The **Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT)** satellite, launched in **2022**, is a joint mission of **NASA** and **CNES (French Space Agency)**.
- It uses a specialised instrument called the **Ka-band Radar Interferometer (KaRIn)** to measure the **height, width, and elevation** of **surface water bodies** such as **rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and oceans**.
- SWOT offers **high spatial resolution** by bouncing microwaves off water surfaces and calculating return time, allowing **dynamic water movement**
- The satellite covers **over 55% of large-scale global floods** during their lifecycle through **frequent Earth orbits**.

What Are River Waves and Why Do They Matter?

- **River waves**, also referred to as **flood or flow waves**, are **temporary surges** in water flow typically caused by **intense rainfall, snowmelt, ice jams, or dam breaches**.
- Unlike ocean waves driven by **wind and tides**, river waves are **transient, unsteady phenomena** that can stretch for **tens to hundreds of kilometers**.
- These waves play a crucial **ecological role** by transporting **nutrients and organisms**, but also pose **flood risks** to downstream populations.
- Previously, such large-scale waves could **only be detected locally** by **ground stream gauges**, which are **sparse** in many global regions.

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

Institute of Research Based Learning & Competition

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GOVT TO BOOST PRODUCTION OF MADE-IN-INDIA MERCHANT VESSELS

- India's shipbuilding sector, which currently holds only 1.2% of global ship tonnage, is set for significant growth following policy reforms and financial support announced in Union Budget 2025-26.
- **Ongoing Challenges**
 - **Small & Outdated Shipyards:** Less automation, longer delivery timelines, and higher costs compared to China, Japan, and South Korea.
 - **Expensive Financing:** Indian interest rates (9–10%) are nearly double those in global competitors.
 - **Import Dependency:** Heavy reliance on imported marine-grade steel, navigation systems, and propulsion units.
 - **Weak Repair Ecosystem:** India's global share in ship repair is <1%; most Indian ships are serviced abroad due to cost and quality issues.
 - **Lack of Integrated Maritime Ecosystem:** Bureaucratic delays and absence of dedicated maritime financing institutions continue to constrain growth.

India's Push to Become a Global Maritime Power

- The Indian government has launched an ambitious initiative to significantly expand its fleet of large 'Made in India' merchant ships.
- The aim is to position India among the top maritime nations over the next two decades, with specific targets to be in the top 10 shipbuilding countries by 2030 and top 5 by 2047.
- **Need for Indigenous Fleet**
 - In times of emergency, such as conflicts or high-alert situations at ports, foreign ships may avoid Indian ports, disrupting trade.
 - A self-reliant fleet would ensure continuity in trade and economic stability.
- **Role in National Development**
 - Maritime power is seen as a critical pillar of that development journey.

Strengthening India's Maritime Finance and Shipbuilding Ecosystem

- **Establishment of SCI Bharat IFSC Ltd**
 - A new shipping company, SCI Bharat IFSC Ltd, was incorporated in August 2024, at GIFT City, Gandhinagar.
 - It is designed to operate under the ship leasing framework of the GIFT International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), focusing on vessel ownership, chartering, and other permitted shipping activities.
- **Strategic Objective: 1,000 New Ships by 2034**
 - In collaboration with public sector oil, gas, and fertiliser companies, the government plans to expand the Indian merchant fleet by at least 1,000 ships in the next decade. This would reduce dependence on foreign ships and is expected to bring down freight costs by at least 33% by 2047.
- **Current Status and Need for Growth**
 - The policy push aims to trigger a substantial increase in large, domestically built ships to match global standards and secure India's maritime trade interests.
- **India's Ship Recycling Strength**
 - India is already a global leader in ship recycling.
 - In 2024, **it ranked second** globally in ship recycling by tonnage, with a 33% share in the global market.
 - The Alang Ship Breaking Yard in Gujarat remains a vital hub, dismantling a significant portion of retired ships worldwide.

INSV KAUNDINYA



- This initiative was launched in July 2023 under a tripartite agreement involving the **Ministry of Culture**, the **Indian Navy**, and **Hodi Innovations**.

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- The Ministry of Culture funded the ship as a **symbol of India's ancient shipbuilding tradition** and to promote **maritime heritage awareness**.
- INSV Kaundinya is scheduled to sail along the **ancient maritime trade route** from **Gujarat to Oman** later in 2025.

Traditional Shipbuilding Techniques

- The ship was **constructed using ancient "stitched ship" techniques**, where **wooden planks are joined using coir ropes, coconut fibres, and natural resin, without metal nails**.
- The design was based on a **5th-century maritime scene** depicted in the **Ajanta mural paintings**.
- As there are **no surviving blueprints**, the design process involved **interpreting 2D artistic representations** through **archaeological, naval architectural, and hydrodynamic analysis**.

Symbolism and Cultural Integration

- A **Harappan-style stone anchor** on the deck connects the ship to India's **Indus Valley maritime legacy**.
- Named after **Kaundinya**, a legendary Indian sailor who reached **Southeast Asia**, the ship highlights India's role in **ancient transoceanic trade and cultural exchange**.

About Ajanta Paintings

- The **Ajanta Caves**, located in **Maharashtra**, date from the **2nd century BCE to the 6th century CE**, and are among the **earliest surviving examples of Indian mural art**.
- The paintings follow the **tempera technique** (painting on dry plaster with pigments), using **vegetable and mineral dyes** like **red ochre, black, and brown**.
- The murals focus on **Buddhist themes**, such as the **Jataka Tales, life of the Buddha, and Avadanas**, often interwoven with **nature motifs and decorative patterns**.
- Figures are depicted with **heavy proportions, expressive gestures, and distinctive hairstyles**, showcasing **emotional depth and spiritual symbolism**.