

INDIAN ARMY DAY



The President and Prime Minister recently conveyed their warm wishes to Indian Army personnel on the occasion of Army Day.

- Indian Army Day is celebrated every year on **January 15**.
- On the special occasion of Army Day, the **officials will perform a parade** in the presence of higher dignitaries, and its **salute is taken by the Indian Army Chief**.

History:

- On **January 15, 1949**, Field Marshal **K.M. Cariappa** became the **first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army**, and **took over authority from the British Commander-in-Chief General Francis Butcher**, and became the **first Indian to command the Army** in its long, rich history.
- **From 1949 until 2022**, the Army Day parade was **organised at the Cariappa Parade Ground in the Delhi Cantonment**.
- **In 2023**, the Southern Command was responsible for the parade **in Bengaluru**. It was the **first time the Army Day parade was held outside the country's capital**.
- **Indian Army Day 2024:**
 - This year marks the **76th Army Day**.
 - This year, the parade **will be held** under the command of Army's Central Command, which is headquartered **in Lucknow**.
 - **The theme** of Indian Army Day 2024 is **“In Service of the Nation”**.
 - This year's theme also resembles the **motto of the Indian Army**, **“Service Before Self.”**

Who was Field Marshal KM Cariappa?

- He was the **First Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army** and **led the Indian forces on the Western Front during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1947**.

- He is **one of the two Indian Army officers to hold the highest rank of Field Marshal** (the other being Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw).
- He was appointed as the first Commander-in-Chief of an independent Indian Army on 15 January 1949 which is celebrated as Indian Army Day.
- He took over the command of the Indian Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.
- In 1947, Cariappa was **the first Indian** who was **selected to undergo a training course at Imperial Defence College, Camberley, UK** on the higher directions of war.
- He was awarded the ‘**Order of the Chief Commander of the Legion of Merit**’ by American President, Harry S. Truman.
- The Government of India **conferred the rank of Field Marshal on Cariappa in 1983.**

MAKAR SANKRANTI

Cultural celebrations are held across many states of India under different names – Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Magh Bihu, etc. on January 14.



About the Makar Sankranti:

- It marks the **Sun changing directions and shifting its trajectory** towards the north, therefore, entering the Makara or Capricorn zodiac sign.
- The day is a marker for a **change of season** – warmer months are close and we are moving away from winter, which is seen as a period of inactivity in many ways.
- It is said that the **northward journey of the sun** (Uttarayan) begins on this day.
- Unlike most festivals that follow the lunar cycle, Makar Sankranti **follows the solar cycle** and thus, is celebrated almost on the same day every year.
- Astronomically, the Earth revolves around the Sun in an elliptical orbit that requires about 365 1/4 days to complete, as it continues to rotate on its own axis.
- The earth’s spin axis is tilted with respect to its orbital plane. This, along with its distance from the Sun, determines the change in seasons for life on Earth.

- For the Northern Hemisphere, the axis points most toward the sun in June (specifically around June 21), and away from the sun around December 21.
- This corresponds to the **Winter and Summer Solstice** (solstice is Latin for “the sun stands”). For the Southern Hemisphere, this is reversed.”

It is also called as –

- **Paush Parbon** in Bengal
- **Pongal** in Tamil Nadu,
- **Uttarayan** in Gujarat,
- **Bhogali Bihu** in Assam,
- **Lohri** in Punjab and Jammu,
- **Makar Sankramana** in Karnataka,
- **Saen-kraat** in Kashmir.
- **Khichdi Parwa** in parts of Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

WHAT IS THE GENETIC ENGINEERING APPRAISAL COMMITTEE (GEAC)?

About Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC):



- It is the **statutory committee** constituted under the “Rules for the Manufacture, Use/Import/Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells (Rules, 1989)” framed **under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEF & CC)**.

Functions:

- It is responsible for the **approval of activities involving large-scale use of hazardous living microorganisms and recombinants in research and industrial production** from an environmental perspective.

- The committee is also responsible for **the appraisal of proposals relating to the release of genetically engineered (GE) organisms and products into the environment, including experimental field trials.**
- **Clearance of GEAC is mandatory for the environmental release of GM crops.**
- The committee or any person authorised by it has the **power to take punitive action under the Environment Protection Act.**

Composition:

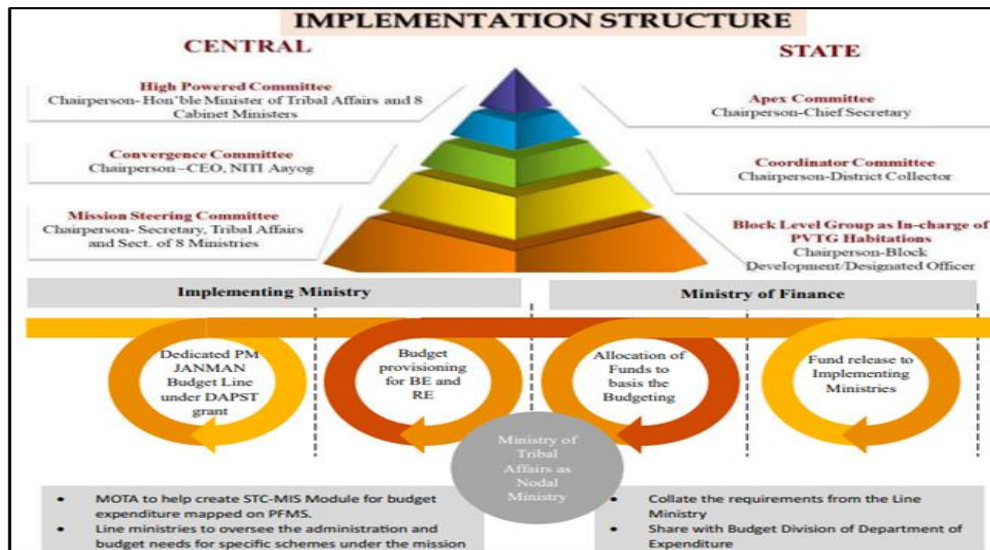
- GEAC is **chaired by the Special Secretary/Additional Secretary of MoEF&CC** and co-chaired by a representative from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- Presently, it has **24 members** and **meets every month** to review the applications in the areas indicated above.
- **The members comprise experts from other ministries as well as institutions such as the ICAR, ICMR, CCMB, and so on.**

PRADHAN MANTRI JANJATI ADIVASI NYAYA MAHA ABHIYAN (PM-JANMAN)

What is the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN)?

- The Union Cabinet during November 2023 approved PM JANMAN with total outlay of Rs.24,104 crore (Central Share: Rs.15,336 crore and State Share: Rs.8,768 crore) to be implemented during FY 2023-24 to 2025-26.
- The PM-JANMAN (comprising Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes) to focus on **11 critical interventions through 9 Ministries** including Ministry of Tribal Affairs which are as follows:
- Other than the interventions mentioned above, the following intervention of other Ministries will be part of Mission:

- The Ministry of Ayush will set up **Ayush Wellness Centre** as per existing norms and Ayush facilities will be extended to PVTG habitations through Mobile Medical Units.
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will facilitate **skill and**



vocational training in PVTG habitations, Multipurpose centres and hostels as per the suitable skills of these communities.

WHAT IS A PUNGANUR COW?



The Prime Minister was recently seen feeding several Punganur cows with fodder with his own hands at his residence in New Delhi.

About Punganur Cow:

- Standing at just around **70-90 cm tall** and weighing **less than 200 kg**, it is among the world's most dwarf cattle breeds.
- It is **native to Punganur village** in the Chittoor district of **Andhra Pradesh**.
- It has **high resilience to drought** and can adapt to **low-quality feed**.
- It is also **prized for its milk**, which boasts a **higher fat content**, making it ideal for producing ghee.
 - A Punganur cow can give **around 1 to 3 litres a day**, and the **milk fat content is 8 percent** as compared to 3 to 4 percent in other native breeds.

- The milk is also **rich in nutrients** such as Omega fatty acids, calcium, potassium, and magnesium.
- **Body colour:** It is **white, grey, or light brown to dark brown or red in colour.** Sometimes, animals with white colour mixed with red, brown, or black patches are also seen.
- It has a **broad forehead and short horns.** The **horns are crescent-shaped** and often lose curving backward and forward in males and lateral and forward in females.
- Punganur cows are **considered eco-friendly, requiring less water, feed, and space** compared to hybrid breeds.
- **Cultural Significance:** Even today, **many temples in Andhra Pradesh, including the famous Tirupati Tirumala Temple, use the milk of a Punganur cow for Ksheera Abhishekam** (milk offering to the deity).

RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR

The nominations for Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2024 awards are invited on Award Portal of Ministry of Home Affairs from 14th January 2024 to 28th February 2024.



About Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar:

- The Government of India has announced the “**Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar**” in the field of **Science, Technology and Innovation.**
- The National Award recognizes outstanding and inspiring scientific, technological and innovation contributions of researchers, technologists and innovators.
- The awards shall be given in following four categories:
 - **Vigyan Ratna (VR):** Maximum of three awards to be bestowed to recognize lifetime achievements & contributions made in a given field of Science and Technology.
 - **Vigyan Shri (VS):** Maximum of 25 awards to be given to recognize the distinguished contributions in the given field of Science and Technology.

- **Vigyan Yuva: Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB) award:** Maximum of 25 awards to be given to recognize and encourage young scientists who made an exceptional contribution in the given field of Science and Technology.
- **Vigyan Team (VT) award: Maximum of three awards** may be awarded to a team comprising three or more scientists/researchers/innovators who have made an exceptional contribution working in a team in a given field of Science and Technology.
- It shall be given in the following **13 domains**, namely: Physics, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, Mathematics & Computer Science, Earth Science, Medicine, Engineering Sciences, Agricultural Science, Environmental Science, Technology & Innovation, Atomic Energy, Space Science and Technology, and Others.
- The awards this year are being **coordinated by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- The awards shall be announced on National Technology Day (11th May).
- The Award Ceremony for all categories of awards will be held on National Space Day (23rd August).

KACHCHHI KHAREK

Kachchhi Kharek, the indigenous variety of dates of Kutch, has become the second fruit of Gujarat to get a geographical indication (GI) tag from the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDT) of India.



About Kachchhi Kharek:

- The presence of dates in Kachchh (Kutch) is believed to be around **400-500 years old**.
- It is believed that date palm groves along **the north-western border of India** have developed from the seeds thrown by the settlers, who used to visit Middle-East countries for Haj.

- It is also probable that the **Arab gardeners** working in the palaces of the former rulers of Kachchh might also have contributed to the import of the date seeds and offshoots from Arab countries.

Features

- Dates grown in Kutch are **harvested at the khalal stage**, the stage when fruits have matured, accumulated sucrose, and have turned red or yellow but are still crisp.
- The Kutch date season typically commences on June 15 each year, and the trees are known for their **tolerance to salinity and adaptability to extreme drought** and heat conditions.
- In other countries, they are allowed to ripen further till they become soft and dark brown or black in colour.
- Kachchh is the only place around the globe where fresh dates are economically cultivated, marketed, and consumed.
- There are around two million date palms in Kutch today and around 1.7 million of them are seedling-origin palms of deshi (indigenous) varieties.
- They are seedling propagated palms, each of them is a unique palm in itself, representing a vast range of diversity in characteristics.
- The area accounts for more than 85 % of total date palm cultivation in India.
- These dates in Kutch have to be harvested at khalal stage as **they can't withstand moist weather**.

FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA (FCI)

About Food Corporation of India (FCI):

- The FCI is a statutory body formed by the enactment of the Food Corporation Act, 1964 by the Parliament.
- **Objectives of FCI:**

- Effective price support operations for safeguarding the **interests of the farmers**,
- Distribution of food grains throughout the country for **Public Distribution System (PDS)**,
- Maintaining satisfactory level of operational and **buffer stocks of food grains** to ensure National Food Security.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

Role of FCI in Ensuring Food Security in India:

- Procurement of food grains at Minimum Support Price (MSP):
 - One of the important functions of FCI is its involvement in the procurement of the food grains. The objectives of procurement include:
 - Ensuring MSP to the farmers
 - Availability of food grains to the weaker sections at affordable prices
 - FCI procures food grains to ensure that effective market intervention is in place to keep the prices under check and also to ensure country's food security.
 - FCI, along with other state agencies takes up the procurement of Wheat and Paddy. This is done under the **Price Support Scheme**.
 - Apart from these two, Coarse grains (Jowar, Bajra etc.) are also procured. This is taken by the State Government agencies as per the directions issued by Government of India.
 - The Government of India announces the MSP as per the recommendation of **Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**, prior to every harvest (Rabi/kharif season).
 - The farmers have the freedom to sell elsewhere (i.e. to traders, millers etc.) if a higher price is offered.
 - FCI and other government agencies are required to provide safeguards such that farmers are compelled not to sell at a lower price.