

### 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.**

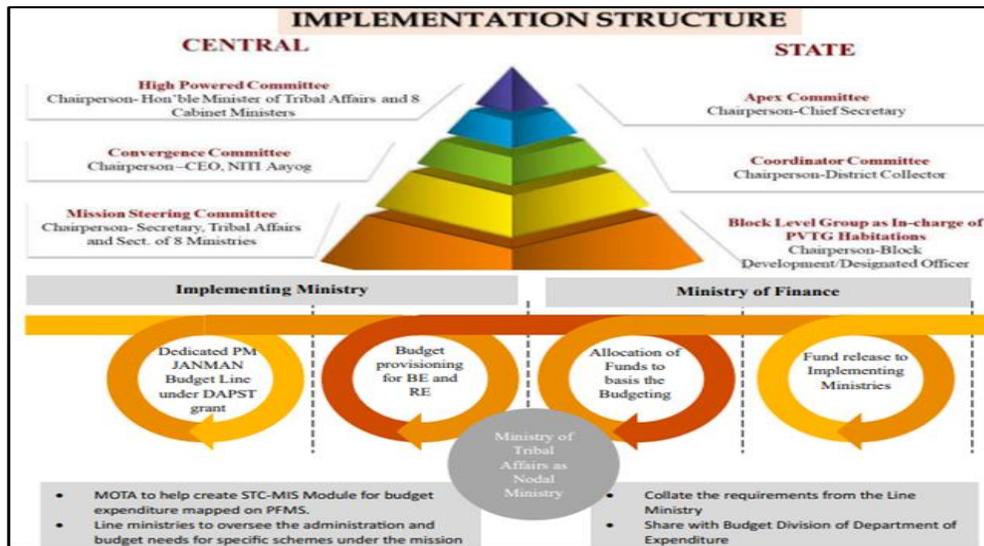
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## [PRADHAN MANTRI JANJATI ADIVASI NYAYA MAHA ABHIYAN \(PM-JANMAN\)](#)

### 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**.

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## 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.