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Current Affairs - 28 October 2025

SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION (SIR) - ELECTION COMMISSION LAUNCHES SIR OF ELECTORAL ROLLS IN 12 STATES AND UTS

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has initiated a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in 12 states and Union Territories, **covering 51 crore electors**, to **ensure the purity and accuracy of electoral rolls**.
- This is the **first nationwide SIR since 2002–2005**, aimed at eliminating duplicate, migrated, or ineligible entries and verifying voter eligibility.

Background and Significance:

- **Evolution of SIR:**
 - **The ECI's order** (June 2025) mandated all registered electors to fill new enumeration forms, while those added after the last intensive revision (2002–2005) must submit eligibility and citizenship-related documents.
- **Constitutional and legal basis:**
 - The ECI cites **Article 326** of the Constitution — which restricts voting rights to Indian citizens aged 18 and above — to justify verifying eligibility (not citizenship cancellation).
 - The process is governed by the **Representation of the People Act, 1950**.
 - **This ensures free and fair elections**, one of the **basic features** of the Constitution.
- **Need for SIR:**
 - Political parties have repeatedly complained about the “impurity” in electoral rolls due to -
 - **Migration and multiple registrations.**
 - **Non-removal of deceased voters.**
 - **Wrongful inclusion of non-citizens.**
 - The SIR had been conducted 8 times since 1951 and the last intensive revision was conducted between **2002–2005**, followed by only summary revisions.

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Coverage and Implementation:

- **States and UTs involved:** The SIR will be conducted in A&N Islands, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Lakshadweep, MP, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, UP, and West Bengal.

Operational Details:

- **Enumeration process:**
 - 5.33 lakh Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to conduct **house-to-house verification**.
 - All electors must **submit enumeration forms by December 4** to remain on the draft roll.
 - **Eligibility proof** required for those not traceable to 2002–2005 SIR rolls.
- **Documents accepted:**
 - **13 types of documents**, including Aadhaar and extracts from Bihar’s SIR roll.
 - **Aadhaar** to be used only for identity verification, not citizenship proof.
 - **Electors born after July 1, 1987** must submit proof of parents’ eligibility.

Challenges and Controversies:

- **Legal challenge:** The Supreme Court is hearing petitions questioning -
 - ECI’s authority to verify citizenship of registered voters.
 - The procedure adopted in Bihar’s SIR.
- **Political opposition:**
 - West Bengal CM termed it an “**NRC through the backdoor**”.
 - However, ECI maintains that constitutional bodies will carry out their respective roles independently.

Conclusion:

- The SIR of electoral rolls **marks a major administrative reform** to restore public trust in the electoral process.
 - By verifying eligibility and updating voter lists, the EC **aims to strengthen democratic legitimacy**.
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WHAT IS THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH (ICAR)?



INDIAN COUNCIL OF
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (ICAR)

- It is an **autonomous organisation** under the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)**, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

- It is the **apex body** for coordinating, guiding, and **managing research and education in agriculture**, including **horticulture, fisheries, and animal sciences**, throughout the country.

Formerly known as the **Imperial Council of Agricultural Research**, it was **established on 16 July 1929** as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, in pursuance of the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

- The ICAR has its **headquarters in New Delhi**.
- With **101 ICAR institutes and 71 agricultural universities** spread across the country, this is one of the largest national agricultural systems in the world.

ICAR's primary mandate **focuses on the thematic areas of Crop Science, Horticultural Science, Natural Resource Management, Agricultural Engineering, Animal Science, Fisheries Science, Agricultural Education and Agricultural Extension**.

The ICAR has **played a pioneering role in ushering in the Green Revolution** and subsequent developments in agriculture in India through its research and technology development.

- It has played a major role in **promoting excellence in higher education in agriculture**.
- It is engaged in cutting-edge areas of science and technology development and its scientists are internationally acknowledged in their fields.



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NEED FOR PRESERVING DOGRI LANGUAGE



- The **Dogri language**, once a vibrant symbol of Jammu's cultural identity, is now at a critical juncture.
- Despite being recognised as one of the **22 official languages of India** and one of the **five official languages of Jammu and Kashmir**, the language is experiencing a gradual erosion from public life, particularly among the younger generation and urban populations.
- Dogri belongs to the **Indo-Aryan branch** of the Indo-European language family and is mainly spoken in the Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir, parts of Himachal Pradesh, and by diaspora communities across North India.
- It is written in both **Devanagari** and **Takri scripts**, and is deeply embedded in the **Dogra culture**, expressed through its literature, folklore, crafts, and oral traditions.

Causes Behind the Decline

- The decline of Dogri in Jammu and surrounding regions can be understood through three interlinked factors: **policy neglect, generational disconnect, and urban influence**.
- **Policy Gaps and Limited Institutional Support**
 - Dogri received formal recognition much later than other regional languages such as Urdu and Hindi.
 - This delay resulted in a **lack of infrastructure for linguistic promotion**, from teacher training to the development of textbooks and cultural programming.
- **Generational Disconnect**
 - Dogri's decline is particularly visible across generations. Respondents above 60 years of age showed **full proficiency in speaking** and **moderate reading and writing skills**, while the 21-40 age group showed **near-zero literacy in Dogri**.
 - Among those under 20 years of age, **no proficiency** in reading or writing Dogri was recorded.

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Broader Linguistic Context in India

- Dogri's decline is part of a **wider linguistic crisis** in India.
- The **People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI)** estimates that nearly **half of India's 780 languages** could vanish in the next 50 years if current trends persist.
- Factors such as **migration, economic aspirations, and cultural homogenisation** have weakened local linguistic ecosystems.
- Experts argue that the **hegemony of English** as the academic and aspirational language has pushed regional languages to the periphery.

Revival Strategies and the Way Forward

- Reviving Dogri requires a **multi-pronged cultural and policy approach** that focuses on education, awareness, and community engagement.
 - **Integration into Education**
 - Dogri must be introduced at the **primary and secondary education levels**, ensuring that children develop early familiarity with the language.
 - The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** already advocates the use of **mother tongues as mediums of instruction**, a provision that could benefit Dogri if implemented effectively in Jammu's schools.
 - **Digital and Media Promotion**
 - Dogri's visibility can be enhanced through **digital archives, online courses, and media content** in Dogri, including films, radio shows, and social media platforms.
 - **Cultural Incentives and Employment Opportunities**
 - Language preservation efforts must tie linguistic skills to **economic and cultural incentives**.
 - Government jobs, tourism initiatives, and creative industries could reward bilingualism in Dogri and Hindi, reinforcing the idea that preserving one's language can have **practical advantages**.
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COFFEE



- It is a **tropical plant** generally grown under shady trees.
- **Required Climatic conditions for coffee production**
 - It is grown on hill slopes at elevations from **600 to 1,600 metres** above sea level.
 - **Climate:** It requires a **hot and humid climate** for its growth.
 - **Temperature:** 15°C and 28 °C
 - **Rainfall:** It requires **150 to 250 cm** of rainfall.
 - **Soil:** Well-drained, **loamy soil** containing a good deal of **humus and minerals** like iron and calcium are ideal for coffee cultivation.
 - **Dry weather** is necessary at the **time of ripening** of the berries.
- **Types of Coffee:** Robusta and Arabica
- **Major Coffee growing states:** It is largely cultivated in **Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha**, among which, Karnataka produces the most with over 70% of the total output.
- **Europe** is the top destination for **India's coffee exports**.
- The major countries which import the commodity from India include Italy, Germany, Belgium, Middle East nations, Korea, and Japan.

LOKTAK LAKE



- **Location:** It is located in the state of
- It is the **largest freshwater lake** in **Northeast India**.
- It is famous for the **phumdis floating over it**.
- The **Keibul Lamjao National Park**, home to the rare brow-antlered deer, is an **integral part of the lake**.
- **Rivers:** Rivers like **Khuga, Western, Nambul, Imphal, Kongba, Iril, Thoubal, Heirolk,** and **Sekmai drains into this lake**.



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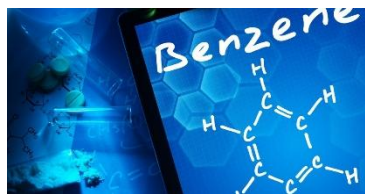
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- It was designated as a wetland of international importance under the **Ramsar Convention** in
- **Flora and Fauna:** Loktak Lake is home to **132 plant species and 428 animal species**.
- It supports **hydropower, fisheries, transport, and tourism**.

Issues Highlighted by the study

- **Changes in land use**, agriculture, settlements, and shifting cultivation have been **deteriorating the water quality** of rivers feeding the lake.
- These activities are threatening its biodiversity and the livelihoods of the local communities.

BENZENE



- Benzene is a **colorless liquid** with a **sweet odor**.
- **Discovered by:** In 1825, the English scientist **Michael Faraday**, isolated a new substance from the oily residue of the illuminating gas used to light London and **August Kekulé** proposed a revolutionary cyclic structure for benzene.
- **Properties of Benzene:**
 - It **evaporates into the air** very quickly and dissolves slightly in water.
 - It is **highly flammable** and is formed from both **natural processes and human activities**.
 - Natural sources of benzene include volcanoes and forest fires.
 - It forms the base for styrene, **phenol, cyclohexane, nylon, and polystyrene**.
 - It belongs **to the BTEX family** (Benzene, Toluene, Ethylbenzene, Xylene) of so called aromatics because of their sweet, pleasant smell.

Application of Benzene:

- Some industries use **benzene to make other chemicals** which are used to make plastics, resins, and nylon and synthetic fibers.



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- Benzene is also used to make some types of rubbers, lubricants, dyes, detergents, drugs, and pesticides.
 - **Impact on Health:** Long-term exposure to Benzene leads to **acute myeloid leukaemia**, aplastic anemia, and **myelodysplastic syndrome**.
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INS IKSHAK



- It is the indigenously built **Survey Vessels (Large) (SVL)** which will study underwater hydrography.
- The ship's name, Ikshak, **meaning "The Guide"**, symbolises its purpose: to chart unexplored waters, ensure safe navigation for mariners.
- It is constructed by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) Ltd**, Kolkata.

Features of INS IKSHAK

- It boasts over **80% indigenous content**.
 - The Survey Vessel (Large) ships are 110 m long, 16 m wide with deep **displacement of 3400 tons**.
 - Propulsion system of the ship consists of two Main Engines in twin shaft configuration and is designed with cruise speed of **14 knots and maximum speed of 18 knots**.
 - **Role:** Beyond its primary role in hydrographic survey operations, Ikshak is equipped with **dual-role functionality**, enabling it to operate as a **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) platform** and a hospital ship during emergencies.
 - It is the first vessel in the SVL class to feature **dedicated accommodation for women officers** and sailors.
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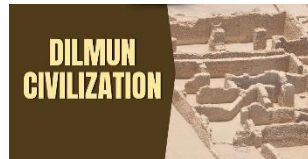
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KEY FACTS ABOUT DILMUN CIVILIZATION



- Dilmun (**Telmun**) was a civilization located in the **eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula**.
- Dilmun was mainly located on the **islands of Bahrain and Failaka Island in Kuwait**.
- It also had a **presence in parts of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and the nearby Iranian coast** in the Persian Gulf.
- Although this was quite an old civilization, it is much **less famous than the four cradles of civilization of the Old World, Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, the Indus Valley Civilization, and the Yellow River Civilization**.
- **Growth:**
 - The Dilmun civilization **first took shape** towards the end of the **4th millennium BCE**, around **3200 to 3000 BCE**, starting out as a modest **trading hub**.
 - By the **early 3rd millennium BCE**, it had grown into a **recognised power in the region**.
 - Dilmun acted as a **central point for trade between** two of the biggest ancient civilizations: **Mesopotamia** (modern-day Iraq) and the **Indus Valley Civilization** (modern-day Pakistan and India).
 - Goods like copper, pearls, and other materials passed through Dilmun. This made it a rich and powerful place.
- **Decline:**
 - **After 1600 BCE**, the empire began to dwindle, then slowly declined like many other empires.
 - It was eventually **absorbed into Mesopotamia and Persia** at a later date.
 - **Archaeologists have found many ancient sites in Bahrain and Kuwait** that match the descriptions of Dilmun. These sites include **old settlements, burial mounds**, and artifacts like **unique stamp seals**.