

WHAT ARE ZONAL COUNCILS?



- The idea of the creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, **Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, in 1956.**
- The Zonal Councils are the **statutory bodies.**
- **Five zonal councils were set up in 1957** under Sections 15-22 of the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956.**
- **Objective:** To provide a **common meeting ground to the states and UTs in each zone for resolution of interstate and regional issues**, fostering balanced socio-economic regional development and building **harmonious Centre- State relations.**
- The present **composition of each of these five Zonal Councils** is as follows:
 - **Northern Zonal Council:** Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Chandigarh.
 - **Central Zonal Council:** Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.
 - **Eastern Zonal Council:** Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal.
 - **Western Zonal Council:** Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.
 - **Southern Zonal Council:** Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry.
- **North Eastern Council:**
 - The **North Eastern States, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Nagaland**, are not included in the Zonal Councils, and their special problems are **looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.**

Current Affairs - 11 July 2025

- The State of **Sikkim** has also been **included in the North Eastern Council** vide the North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002, notified on 23rd December 2002.
 - **Each Zonal Council is an advisory body** and may discuss any matter in which some or all of the States represented in that council, or the Union and one or more of the States represented in that Council, have a common interest and **advise the Central Government and the Government of each State** concerned as to the action to be taken on any such matter.
 - **Organisational Structure:**
 - **Chairman:** The **Union Home Minister** is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
 - **Vice Chairman:** The **Chief Ministers** of the States included in each zone act as vice-chairman of the zonal council **for that zone by rotation**, each holding office for a **period of one year at a time**.
 - **Members:** **Chief Minister and two other ministers as nominated by the Governor** from each of the States and **two members from Union Territories** included in the zone.
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WORLD POPULATION DAY 2025



- Observed annually on **July 11**, World Population Day is a **United Nations initiative** aimed at **raising awareness** about the challenges and opportunities of **global population growth**.
- With the world population now surpassing 8.2 billion, the day highlights the importance of sustainable development, equitable access to resources, reproductive rights, and gender equality.
- **World Population Day 2025 Theme:** ‘Empowering young people to create the families they want in a fair and hopeful world’.

- **History:**

- WPD was established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1989, following the global interest generated by "Five Billion Day" on 11 July 1987, when the world's population reached 5 billion.
- Dr KC Zachariah, a senior demographer at the World Bank, suggested that this day be commemorated.
- In December 1990, the UN General Assembly decided to keep celebrating WPD annually to promote understanding of population issues and how they connect to the environment and development.
- The first WPD was celebrated on July 11, 1990, in over 90 countries.

Key Facts on World's Population:

- The world's population has increased by over three times since the middle of the 20th century.
- According to the UN, there were 2 billion people on the planet as of July 2025.
- The population is predicted to peak at 10.4 billion in the middle of the 2080s, having reached 7 billion in 2050.
- India leads globally with 1.46 billion people, followed by China's 1.41 billion.
- India's total fertility rate has fallen below the replacement level.
- India's population is expected to grow to approximately 7 billion before beginning to decline around 40 years from now, as stated in the UN Population Fund's (UNFPA) 2025 State of World Population Report.

EARTH INTELLIGENCE



- It indicates the application of AI to Earth observation data to deliver solutions specific to industries and business functions.
- It is the practice of combining data from satellite imagery and remote sensors with social, economic, and policy information to

generate actionable insights about our planet.

- It encompasses gathering and providing Earth observation data, fit-for-purpose transforming it, and then using it to produce actionable insights with domain-specific AI models, tools and applications.
- It is the next step in this process, transforming **raw data into actionable insights** by integrating Earth and social science, advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, and co-produced knowledge from local and Indigenous communities.
- It can identify **fallen trees blocking railroad tracks after a storm**, monitor the **temperature of every metal refinery** to assess global production, **count vehicles to analyse traffic patterns** and consumer trends, and track sea cargo to evaluate shipping activity.
- It would significantly **impact every industry** as it rapidly moves from government to the private sector.
- **Significance:** Earth Intelligence represents a shift from simply providing data to ensuring that data is **accessible, understandable and useful** to decision-makers across all levels, from governments and businesses, from NGOs to local communities.

TALASH INITIATIVE



- The Tribal Aptitude, Life Skills and Self-Esteem Hub (TALASH) is a national- program to support the all-round development of students in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs).

- It was launched by National Education Society for Tribal Students in partnership with UNICEF India.
- It aims to **improve both the education and personal growth of tribal students across India.**

Current Affairs - 11 July 2025

- The name TALASH, reflects a focused search for self-awareness, life skills, and career clarity among tribal youth.
- The first initiative of its kind in India is **aimed specifically at tribal students**.
- It is expected to benefit over 1,38,336 students enrolled in EMRSs across 28 States and 8 Union Territories, making it a truly national movement for inclusive education.
- **Features of TALASH Initiative**
 - It is an **innovative digital platform** designed to equip EMRS students with essential tools for **self-discovery and career planning**.
 - It **promotes self-awareness**, helps students make informed **career choices**, and **builds essential life skills**.
- **The initiative offers:**
 - **Psychometric Assessments:** Inspired by NCERT's 'Tamanna' initiative, TALASH offers a common aptitude test to help understand each student's strengths and interests. Based on the test results, **students receive Career Cards** that suggest the best career options suited to their skills and abilities.
 - **Career Counselling :**The platform guides students toward informed career decisions, helping them align their aspirations with their aptitudes.
 - **Life Skills & Self-Esteem Modules:** It has special sections that help students learn important life skills like solving problems, communication skills, and handling emotions.
 - **E-Learning for Teachers:** A **specialized portal equips educators** with resources and training to effectively mentor and support students in their academic and personal journeys.

YAMUNA RIVER REJUVENATION

Delhi's Yamuna Project - A Microcosm for Larger River Reforms:

- **Urban governance and pollution control:**

- Nearly 80% of Yamuna's pollution load originates from Delhi, primarily due to **uncaptured and untreated sewage**.
- This highlights the **critical role of urban governance in river restoration**.
- **Potential as a scalable model:**
 - Yamuna's interstate river status necessitates **interstate cooperation**, making Delhi's approach a test case for federal collaboration.
 - It can help identify motivations and drivers for effective subnational mobilisation under NGP.

Learning from Global Best Practices:

- **Europe's** slow but effective institutional evolution (ICPR), post events like the Sandoz disaster, led to the **Water Framework Directive**.
- India's NGP can follow a similar route by **mobilising internal subnational responses through institutional partnerships**.

Conclusion:

- Delhi's Yamuna cleaning initiative offers a critical opportunity for **reciprocal learning** under the NGP, helping to address the **current gaps in state participation, urban sewage management, and interstate cooperation**.
- If leveraged correctly, this can lead to a **robust, multi-tiered policy and institutional ecosystem for river rejuvenation in India**, with broader implications for environmental federalism, urban development, and sustainable water governance.

AGRICULTURAL MONITORING AND EVENT DETECTION (AMED) API



- AMED is an artificial intelligence (AI)-based **open-source application programming interface (API)** launched by
- It provides **field-level crop data**, specifically helping in monitoring crops and detecting agricultural events at **individual fields across India**.



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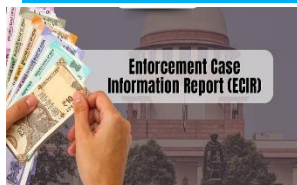
Current Affairs - 11 July 2025



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- The AMED API details the **type of crop** on a given field, **crop season**, and the **field's size** and also provides **historical information** about the **agricultural activity** on it for the **last three years**.
- These insights can help significantly **improve agricultural management on farms** and also **address the specific needs of each crop** – including the right soil and water conditions, growth patterns, and climatic needs – as well as **predict crops' harvest volume**.
- **Google will be sharing the AMED API for agriculture startups** to find more innovative solutions to improve the agriculture ecosystem.
- **AMED API data** is also **refreshed nearly every two weeks**, enabling the ecosystem partners leveraging AMED API access to continuously updated information that **accounts for field-level changes**.
- AMED API builds on the **Agricultural Landscape Understanding (ALU) Research API** that the company launched last year.
 - It uses **satellite imagery and AI** to map field boundaries and land use across India.

WHAT IS THE ENFORCEMENT CASE INFORMATION REPORT (ECIR)?



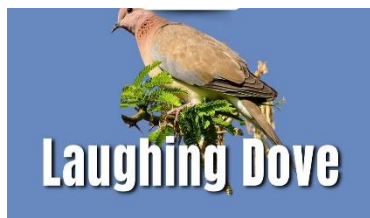
- The ECIR is a **formal entry of the complaint lodged by the Enforcement Directorate (ED)**.
- Whenever the ED receives information about the commission of an offence of money laundering, it is converted into a formal report known as the ECIR.
- It serves as a **starting point for ED's proceedings, including the attachment of assets and arrests**.
- There is **no mention of the ECIR in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA Act), or Rules**.

- Since the PMLA does not necessitate the registration of ECIR, it is considered a **non-statutory document**.
- However, as per the practice of ED, the **ECIR is lodged before taking any action under the PMLA Act**.
- The ECIR under the PMLA Act is **similar to the First Information Report (FIR) lodged by the Police** for cognizable offences.
- However, the **Supreme Court held that an ECIR cannot be equated with an FIR**, which is mandatorily required to be recorded and supplied to the accused.
- **As per the ED, ECIR is a document meant for identification of a particular case and for departmental convenience and is purely an internal document.**
- **ED is not legally bound to provide a copy of the ECIR to the accused.**
- Since ECIR lacks statutory status, there is **no requirement to quash them**.

Key Facts about Enforcement Directorate (ED):

- The **Directorate of Enforcement** or Enforcement Directorate (ED) is a domestic **law enforcement agency and economic intelligence agency**.
- It was **established** in the year **1956** with its **Headquarters at New Delhi**.
- It is responsible for **enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crimes** in India.
- It is responsible for inspecting and taking legal action involving economic crimes, **money laundering, corruption, and breaches of foreign exchange laws**.
- **Nodal Ministry: Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**
- **Objectives of the ED:** The prime objective of the Enforcement Directorate is the **enforcement of three key Acts** of the Government of India, namely:
 - **Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)**,
 - **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)**, and
 - **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA)**.

WHAT IS LAUGHING DOVE?



- It is a **small pigeon** that is a **resident breeder** in **Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian Subcontinent.**
- **Scientific Name: Spilopelia senegalensis**
- Other names include **laughing turtle dove, palm dove, and Senegal dove**, while in India the name of **little brown dove** is often used.
- **Distribution:**
 - The species is found in much of **sub-Saharan Africa, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.**
 - It is also found in **Israel, Lebanon, Syria, the UAE, and Turkey** (these populations may be derived from human introductions).
 - It was also introduced in **Western Australia.**
- **Habitat:** It is found in **dry scrub and semi-desert habitats** where pairs can often be seen feeding on the ground.
- **Features:**
 - It is a **long-tailed, slim** pigeon, typically 25 cm in length.
 - Its **back wings and tail** are **reddish-brown with blue-grey in the wings.**
 - In flight, the underwings are rich chestnut.
 - The **head and underparts** are **pinkish**, shading to whitish on the lower abdomen.
 - There is black spotting on the throat. The **legs are red.**
 - Juveniles are more rufous than adults, and have reduced throat spotting.
 - They are **fairly terrestrial, foraging on the ground** in grasslands and cultivation.
 - They are not particularly gregarious, and are **usually alone, or in pairs.**
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List: Least Concern.**