

1. **Fisheries Secretaries Conference 2025** : Recently, the Department of Fisheries organized the Fisheries Secretaries Conference 2025 alongside a National Workshop on Harnessing Technology and Innovation in Aquaculture.
 - This significant initiative aimed to accelerate growth in the fisheries sector by reviewing key national programs and enhancing inter-institutional collaboration.
 - **Key Highlights and Outcomes**
 - **Drone Innovation**: A pilot initiative was introduced for deploying drones to transport live fish across challenging terrains. A 70-kg payload drone is under development.
 - **Satellite Integration**: Satellite technologies will soon be leveraged for enhanced fisher safety, resource mapping, and biometric verification.
 - **Smart Infrastructure**: Plans were outlined for modernizing fishing harbours and fish markets, with sustainability as a core principle.
 - **Strategic Focus on Schemes and Implementation**:
 - **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**: Flagship scheme launched in 2020 to boost fish production, reduce post-harvest losses, double fishers' income, and create employment through sustainable fisheries development
 - **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)**: A ₹7,500 crore fund offering low-interest loans for building fisheries infrastructure like harbors, cold chains, hatcheries, and fish markets.
 - **PM Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)**: Launched in 2024 to formalize fisheries micro-enterprises, provide digital identities, boost insurance coverage, and improve access to institutional finance.
 - India is the **second-largest fish producer**, contributing **8% globally**, with **inland fisheries** making up **75%** of output. It ranks **second in aquaculture**, **first in shrimp**, and **third in capture fisheries**. Key states: Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka.
2. **State of the World's Animal Health Report**: The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has released its inaugural State of the World's Animal Health report, revealing alarming trends in the spread of infectious animal diseases to new regions and species.

- **Key Highlights:** 47% of animal diseases can jump to humans, posing serious global health risks.
 - **Widening Spread of Diseases:** African Swine Fever (ASF), avian influenza, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) are rapidly expanding, threatening food security, biodiversity, and public health.
 - **Drivers:** Climate change and global trade accelerate disease spread and new outbreaks.
- **Other Notable Trends:**
 - Bluetongue Virus: 3500+ outbreaks in 24 countries.
 - Lumpy Skin Disease: First reported in northern Africa and Japan (319 outbreaks).
 - New World Screwworm: 8300+ outbreaks in 7 countries, newly in Mexico.
 - PPR: Re-emerged in Europe (Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary) after being mostly in Global South.
- **About WOAH:** An intergovernmental organization dedicated to transparent sharing of information on animal diseases and enhancing global animal health
 - **HQ:** Paris
 - **Founded:** 1924 as the Office International des Epizooties; renamed WOAH in 2003
 - **Members:** Comprises 183 member countries, including India
- 3. **Kala-Azar:** Recently, six East African countries—Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan—signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to eradicate visceral leishmaniasis (kala-azar).
 - The agreement was formalized during an event co-hosted by the African Union and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva.
- **About Kala-azar :** Caused by the **protozoan parasite Leishmania donovani**.
 - Spread to humans via the bite of infected **female sandflies**—Phlebotomus argentipes being the primary vector in India.
 - Predominantly affects impoverished communities and is linked to factors like malnutrition, displacement, substandard housing, weakened immunity, and poverty.
 - Individuals with compromised immune systems, especially those with HIV, are more susceptible to severe infection.

- **Clinical Symptoms:** Includes recurring fever, dramatic weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and severe anaemia. If left untreated, the disease can be fatal within two years.
- **Diagnosis Tools:** Diagnosis involves both clinical evaluation and confirmation using parasitological or serological methods, including the widely used rK39 rapid diagnostic test.
- **Treatment Options:** Treated with various anti-parasitic drugs; early diagnosis and prompt treatment significantly improve outcomes.

4. FATF Grey List : Recently, the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** confirmed that its Executive Board approved the release of \$2.4 billion in funding to Pakistan without a formal vote, as the disbursement was part of an existing programme rather than a new loan.

- In a related move, India is preparing to send a dossier to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) urging Pakistan's re-inclusion in the 'grey list', citing its failure to implement the anti-terror laws it committed to in 2022.
- **About FATF:** An intergovernmental policy-making and standard-setting body focused on combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
 - **Objective:** To establish global standards and promote national and international policies to counter financial crimes.
 - **Established:** 1989 at the G7 Summit in Paris, initially to address money laundering; mandate expanded in 2001 to include terrorism financing. (Hq: Paris, France)
- **Functions :** Develops and promotes anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT) policies.
 - Conducts mutual evaluations of member countries' compliance with FATF standards.
 - Publishes reports on money laundering and terrorist financing trends.
- **FATF Watchlists: Grey List:** Countries with strategic deficiencies in AML/CFT efforts; placed under increased monitoring and warned of possible blacklisting.
 - **Black List:** High-risk jurisdictions with serious AML/CFT failures; currently includes North Korea, Iran, and Myanmar.

- 5. RBI Surplus Transfer to Government :** Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a record surplus transfer of ₹2.69 lakh crore to the Central Government for the fiscal year 2024–25 (FY25).
- This marks the highest-ever dividend payout by the central bank, significantly exceeding all previous records.
 - **Key Highlights:** A 27.4% increase from ₹2.1 lakh crore in FY24 and significantly higher than ₹87,416 crore in FY23.
 - Finalised during the 616th meeting of the Central Board of Directors.
 - The Board assessed global and domestic growth and inflation risks before determining the dividend.
 - **Economic Capital Framework (ECF) :**Based on the revised ECF with the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) raised to 7.5% of the RBI's balance sheet—the upper limit of the 4.5–7.5% range.
 - **Sources of Surplus:** Returns on foreign exchange reserves and investments
 - Valuation gains from currency movements
 - Income from currency issuance and other operations
 - **Fiscal Impact:** Boosts the Centre's efforts to meet the fiscal deficit target of 4.4% of GDP.
- 6. Liberalised Remittances Scheme (LRS) of the RBI :** Recently, for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted overseas travel and study plans, remittances sent abroad by resident Indians under the Reserve Bank of India's Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) declined by 6.84%.
- The amount fell to \$29.56 billion in the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) from \$31.74 billion in FY24.
 - **About LRS:** Governed by the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) 1999 and regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
 - Launched by RBI in 2004 to facilitate outward remittances by resident individuals from India.
 - **Remittance Limit:** Individuals, including minors, can remit up to USD 250,000 per financial year (April–March) under LRS.

- **Permissible Uses:** Travel expenses (personal or business) , Medical treatment abroad , Education fees overseas , Gifts and donations , Maintenance of close relatives abroad and Investments in shares, debt instruments, and immovable property overseas
- Individuals may open and maintain foreign currency accounts abroad for transactions allowed under LRS.
- Scheme is not available to corporations, partnership firms, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), trusts, or similar entities.

7. **K2-18b:** Recently, a team of astronomers sparked worldwide excitement by reporting possible signs of life on the **distant exoplanet K2-18b**, more than 120 light-years away.

- They claimed to have detected dimethyl sulfide—a molecule on Earth associated solely with biological activity—in the planet's atmosphere.
- **About Exoplanets:** Planets orbiting stars outside our solar system; the term comes from "extrasolar planet."
 - They vary widely in size, from gas giants larger than Jupiter to small, rocky planets like Earth.
 - Their temperatures range from extremely hot to freezing cold.
 - The first confirmed exoplanet discovery was in 1992, though possible evidence appeared as early as 1917.
 - Over 5,000 exoplanets have been discovered to date, according to NASA.
- **About K2-18b:** An exoplanet located 124 light-years away from Earth in the constellation Leo.
 - It orbits a star named K2-18.
 - Discovered in 2015 by the Kepler Space Telescope.
 - Likely to have a hydrogen-rich atmosphere.
 - It is approximately 5.2 times wider and 9 times more massive than Earth.
 - Receives a similar amount of stellar radiation from its star as Earth does from the Sun, suggesting the potential for habitable surface conditions.