

SHORTNEWS

1.COWPEA

NEWS: Cowpea is a legume that scientists now believe could be vital in the global fight against climate change.

About Cowpea

- Cowpea (**Vigna unguiculata**), also known as **black-eyed pea**, is naturally **drought-tolerant legume** within the pea family (Fabaceae).
- It thrives in **poor soils**, and can withstand **heat**, making it ideal for **climate-vulnerable regions**.
- It **improves soil fertility** through **nitrogen fixation**, benefiting low-input farming systems.
- It is a **staple food in West Africa**, often referred to as “**poor man’s meat**” due to its affordability and high protein.
- **Regional Names:** **Lobia (Hindi)**, **chavli (Marathi)**, **karamani (Tamil)**, **alasandulu (Telugu)**.
- Recently ISRO conducted the **Cowpea Experiment in Space aboard the PSLV-C60/POEM-4 mission**, reaching the two-leaf stage in microgravity .

2.IBERIAN-NORTH AFRICAN GENETIC LINKS

NEWS: Recently, a groundbreaking genetic study that reveals how **North Africa** and the **Iberian Peninsula (modern-day Spain and Portugal)** were **closely connected for millennia**—genetically, culturally, and historically—until a **major ethnic cleansing event** in the 17th century severed that connection.

Genetic Findings

- **Pre-Islamic North African Ancestry:** DNA confirms North African links in Iberia before 711 CE, likely due to trade/Carthaginian ties.
- **Islamic Period Intensified Mixing:** Strong North African genetic signatures in early Al-Andalus, gradually diluted over time.
- **Post-Reconquista Survival:** North African DNA persisted in Christian populations until the 17th century.
- **Morisco deportations** (1609–1614) drastically reduced but did not fully erase this ancestry.
 - The Moriscos were **Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity** in Iberia after the **Christian Reconquista (1492)**.
 - Many of them secretly kept Muslim traditions, leading to suspicion, violence and deportation.
- **Legacy in the Americas:** Some North African-Iberian DNA carried to Latin America by early colonists.

Significance of the Findings

- Challenges simplistic narratives of **Iberian history** (e.g., “pure” Christian reconquest).
- Highlights how political decisions (like **ethnic cleansing**) can reshape **genetic landscapes**.

3.CHENAB BRIDGE

NEWS: The **Chenab bridge in Jammu and Kashmir** (the highest arch-railway bridge in the world) has **been recently inaugurated**.

About Chenab Bridge

- The bridge is **one of the 927 bridges in the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project** and is the **only arch-shaped railway bridge in India**
- The project also **includes India’s first cable-stayed rail bridge at Anji Khad**.

4.RBI CUTS REPO RATES BY 50 BPS

NEWS: The **Reserve Bank of India’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** has cut the repo rate by **50 basis points to 5.50 per cent** recently.

- The rate cut **marks the third consecutive reduction since February 2025**.
- The **Cash Reserve Ratio of banks was also slashed by 100 basis points to 3 per cent**, releasing Rs 2.5 lakh crore of lendable resources to the banking system.
- **Policy Stance:** It has **changed from ‘accommodative’ to ‘neutral’** in a bid to support economic growth.
- **GDP and Inflation Estimates:** The policy panel **retained the GDP growth estimates at 6.5 per cent but projected a lower CPI inflation of 3.7 per cent in the current fiscal**.
- **Reason:** The fall in retail inflation driven by the sustained fall in food prices.
 - Inflation rates were below **4 per cent in the last three months (February, March and April) of 2025** and a sharp fall in food inflation.
- **Impact:**
 - The rate cut **will boost growth prospects as it will stimulate borrowing and investment**, leading to a higher growth rate and will benefit borrowers, especially home loans.
 - The rate cuts will **benefit the bond market as bond prices will rise and bond Yields may decline further**, enhancing returns for existing bondholders and boosting demand for fixed-income assets.
 - It will **negatively impact the savers and depositors** who will see their returns declining as there will be a reduction in the deposit rate.

About Cash Reserve Ratio

- CRR is the **proportion of a bank’s Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL)** that must be **maintained with the RBI in cash form**.
- The Cash Reserve Ratio serves as **one of the reference rates when determining the base rate**.

- **CRR and Liquidity:** When CRR is increased, banks have to keep more money with the RBI, reducing their ability to lend. The **higher the CRR, the lower is the liquidity with the banks and vice-versa.**
 - **Banks don't earn returns on money parked as CRR.**