

SHORTNEWS

1.INC-5.2 TALKS IN GENEVA

The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) is underway in Geneva (5–14 August 2025) to finalise a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC)

Formed under a historic resolution adopted at the resumed fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) in March 2022. Mandated to Develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including marine pollution. The scope is to Address the full life cycle of plastic – production, design, and disposal through a comprehensive approach. Work started in the second half of 2022, with a target to finish negotiations by the end of 2024.

Key Sessions

1. INC-1: 2022, Punta del Este, Uruguay
2. INC-2: 2023, Paris, France
3. INC-3: 2023, Nairobi, Kenya (midway point)
4. INC-4: 2024, Ottawa, Canada
5. INC-5.1: 2024, Busan, Republic of Korea
6. INC-5.2: Aug 2025, Geneva, Switzerland

2.SEA OF GALILEE IN ISRAEL

The Sea of Galilee, a freshwater lake in Israel, has recently turned red, sparking panic among nearby residents and visitors. The change in colour was caused by an algae bloom, with officials confirming the water is safe. The Water Ministry identified *Botryococcus braunii*, a green algae from the Chlorophyta group, as the cause. When exposed to sunlight, the algae produce a natural red pigment (carotenoids) that accumulates in parts of the lake, creating the red hue. *Botryococcus braunii* has been studied for its ability to produce large amounts of hydrocarbons, making it a potential biofuel candidate.

Sea of Galilee

Located in northern Israel within the Jordan Rift Valley, about 210 m below sea level. Bordered by the Lower Galilee hills (west & southwest) and Golan Heights (east). Largest freshwater lake in the region. Known by Other names as Sea of Kinneret, Lake of Gennesaret, Sea of Ginosar, Sea of Tiberias, Lake of Tiberias, Bahr Tubariya. Fed primarily by the Jordan River, plus streams and seasonal wadis from the Galilee hills. Contains hot water springs and is home to 27 fish species, many endemic. Surrounded by historic towns such as Tiberias, Hammat Gader, Korazim, Kursi, Capernaum, and Tabgha. Formed over millions of years as the Arabian plate drifted from Africa. Mild winters (~14°C) and hot summers (~31°C), supporting crops like bananas, dates, citrus, and vegetables.

3.CANCER AI & TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE (CATCH) GRANT PROGRAM

IndiaAI Independent Business Division (IBD), in collaboration with the National Cancer Grid (NCG), has announced the launch of the Cancer AI & Technology Challenge (CATCH) Grant Program.

CATCH Grant Program

Promote AI-based innovations in cancer screening, diagnosis, treatment, and healthcare operations.

Grant Support

1. Pilot grants, Up to ₹50 lakh per project (co-funded by IndiaAI & NCG).
2. Scale-up funding Up to ₹1 crore for nationwide deployment (based on pilot success).
3. Focus Areas-AI-enabled screening, diagnostics, clinical decision support, patient engagement, operational efficiency, research, and data curation.
4. Eligibility- Startups, Health Tech Firms, Academia, and Hospitals.
5. Implementation & Governance
6. IndiaAI, an IBD under the Digital India Corporation (DIC) of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), is the implementation agency of the IndiaAI Mission
7. Aims for democratisation of AI, global leadership, technological self-reliance, and ethical AI.
8. NCG- A network of cancer centres for coordinated research, treatment, and care.

4.WORLD SANSKRIT DAY

On August 9, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended greetings on World Sanskrit Day, reaffirming the government's commitment to preserving and promoting Sanskrit heritage. World Sanskrit Day, or Vishva-Sanskrit-Divas, is celebrated annually on Shravan Purnima, which usually falls in August, to honour Sanskrit as a classical language and cultural treasure of India. The date coincides with festivals like Raksha Bandhan and Upakarma in various parts of India. Initiated by the Government of India in 1969, with the goal of reviving and encouraging the usage of Sanskrit in everyday life. The choice of Shravana Purnima is symbolic as it is traditionally considered auspicious for starting Vedic learning and rituals.

Government Initiatives to Promote Sanskrit

1. Provided the status of Classical Language to Sanskrit in 2005.
2. It is also the official language of Uttarakhand.
3. Establishing Central Sanskrit Universities.
4. Opening Sanskrit Learning Centres.
5. Providing grants to Sanskrit scholars.
6. Gyan Bharatam Mission to digitise ancient Sanskrit manuscripts.

Significance of Sanskrit

1. A Timeless Language

Sanskrit is one of the world's oldest languages, serving as a repository of India's spiritual, literary, and scientific heritage for millennia. It is the language of Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita.

2. Global Relevance

Its linguistic structure and philosophical depth have influenced languages and knowledge traditions across Asia and beyond.

3. Role in Modern India

Beyond its cultural value, Sanskrit continues to inspire research in linguistics, computational sciences, and traditional knowledge systems.