

## 9. Short News

### 1. Mahi Banswara Rajasthan Atomic Power Project

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation stone for the Mahi Banswara Rajasthan Atomic Power Project, as part of a broader launch of development projects in the state.

#### About the Project

**Location** – It will be constructed on the right bank of the Mahi River, near the Mahi Bajaj Sagar Dam in Rajasthan.

**Capacity and Technology** – The project will consist of four indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), each with a capacity of 700 MWe, bringing the total capacity to 2,800 MWe.

**Developer** – It is being developed by Anushakti Vidhyut Nigam Limited (ASHVINI), a joint venture between the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and NTPC Limited.

**Significance** – This will be Rajasthan's second nuclear power plant, after the existing Rawatbhata Atomic Power Plant (RAPP).

#### India's Nuclear Power Goals

**Current Capacity** – India currently operates 24 reactors with a total capacity of 8,180 MW.

**Future Targets** – The country aims to expand its nuclear power capacity to 22,480 MW by 2031-32 and has a long-term vision of achieving 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047.

### 2. Megalithic Dolmens of Kodaikanal

The ancient megalithic dolmens of Kodaikanal, some dating back over 5,000 years, are rapidly disappearing due to neglect, overgrowth of vegetation, and deliberate destruction.

**Dolmens** – Dolmens are prehistoric burial monuments. They are typically constructed with four large vertical stone slabs supporting a massive horizontal capstone. They served as tombs or memorials for important individuals or tribal chiefs.

#### Key Features of Kodaikanal Dolmens

**Construction** – They were built using naturally available stone slabs with minimal shaping, indicating simple construction techniques. The capstones were gently sloped to drain rainwater.

**Location** – They are primarily found on rocky ridges and slopes in sites like Thandikudi, Pethuparai, and Perumalmalai.

**Archaeological Significance** – Excavations have revealed artifacts such as black and red ware pottery and carnelian beads, suggesting their use from the Iron Age into historic periods. The sites are located along ancient trade routes and in high-altitude areas that were favored for settlement due to the availability of valuable resources like pepper and cardamom.

### 3. Central American Integration System (SICA)

During the India-SICA Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New York, India's External Affairs Minister highlighted the deepening engagement between India and the SICA countries, particularly in trade, investment, and digital payments.

#### About SICA

**Establishment** – SICA was created in 1991 to promote regional peace, democracy, and development in Central America. Its headquarters is in El Salvador.

**Membership** – It consists of eight full members – Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, and the Dominican Republic.

**Objectives** – The bloc aims to form a Free Trade Area and eventually a Customs Union, and to integrate regional infrastructure.

**India-SICA Cooperation** – Formal engagement began in 2004. Since then, India and SICA have established a Joint Technical Committee and an India-SICA Business Forum. They hold regular ministerial meetings and annual consultations to strengthen cooperation.

### 4. Dugong (Sea Cow)

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), during its 2025 World Conservation

Congress, formally recognized and endorsed India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay, which was declared by the Tamil Nadu government in 2022.

**About the Dugong** – The dugong, also known as the "sea cow," is a large, gentle marine herbivorous mammal.

**Diet and Habitat** – They feed exclusively on seagrass meadows and inhabit shallow, warm coastal waters, typically less than 10 meters deep.

**Distribution in India** – Dugongs are found in the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, Gulf of Kutch, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

**Conservation Status** –

**IUCN Red List** – Vulnerable

**Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** – Schedule I (providing the highest level of legal protection).

**About the IUCN World Conservation Congress** – It is a global environmental forum held every four years, bringing together governments, civil society, and experts to set priorities and drive action on conservation and sustainable development. The 2025 Congress was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

## 5. National Centre for Divyang Empowerment (NCDE)

The National Centre for Divyang Empowerment (NCDE) in Hyderabad is successfully rehabilitating Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel who have been disabled in the line of duty, training them as para-athletes and IT professionals.

**About "Divyang Warriors"** – This term refers to CAPF personnel who have sustained grievous injuries, such as amputations or vision loss, during counter-insurgency or anti-terrorist operations.

**About the NCDE** –

**Aim** – It is a single-window facility designed to rehabilitate and empower these "Divyang warriors," restoring their dignity and providing them with new career paths.

**Establishment** – The center was inaugurated in December 2020 at the CRPF Group Centre in Hyderabad.

**Facilities and Achievements** – The NCDE provides holistic rehabilitation, including prosthetic limb fitment, physiotherapy, and trauma counseling. It has a tie-up with BITS Pilani for skill development in IT courses. Since 2020, 219 Divyang warriors have been trained, with many going on to win medals as para-athletes in national and international events, while others have been successfully upskilled for desk-based roles in intelligence and data management.