

7. Short News

1. Specialty Fertilisers

Recently, India is facing rising specialty fertiliser prices as China suspends exports of urea and specialty fertilisers, affecting global and domestic markets.

Specialty Fertilisers

Definition – Specialty fertilisers are nutrient sources applied under specific soil and plant conditions to achieve higher efficiency and optimum crop yield.

Role – They gradually release nutrients, reduce losses, improve nitrogen use efficiency, and enhance plant growth, addressing food security, environmental concerns, and climate change.

Examples – Technical Monoammonium Phosphate (TMAP) and emission-control solutions like AdBlue.

Status in India

High Import Dependence – India imports approximately 95% of its specialty fertilisers, primarily from China, including TMAP and AdBlue.

Consumption Pattern – India consumes around 250,000 tonnes annually, with 60–65% used during the rabi season (October–March).

Price hike risk – Current Chinese export curbs could increase prices by 10–15%, though supply for the ongoing season is secured through global traders. Alternative sources like South Africa, Chile, and Croatia exist but cover only limited products.

2. Iran Ratifies Un Convention Against Terror Financing

Iran has ratified a law to join the UN International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (CFT), aiming to improve access to global banking and ease sanctions pressure.

About the UN International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (CFT)

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999, the CFT seeks to criminalize and prevent the financing of terrorism by state and non-state actors.

Parties – Ratified by 188 countries, including India among the most universally accepted anti-terror treaties.

Objective – Criminalize, prevent, and punish terror financing; enhance global cooperation against terror-linked financial networks.

Scope – It covers direct or indirect provision of funds for acts causing death or injury to civilians/non-combatants.

Iran's Case

Iran was blacklisted by FATF in 2020, alongside North Korea and Myanmar, for inadequate measures against terror financing. The move follows renewed UN sanctions (September 2025) and ongoing diplomatic efforts to revive the nuclear deal disrupted earlier in the year.

About FATF

FATF (1989) – The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) sets international standards for Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT). The FATF develops policy recommendations that member countries, including India, must implement. CFT, therefore, is a key component of the broader anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CFT) framework overseen by the FATF.

3. Mullaperiyar Dam

An early onset of the northeast monsoon in 2025 has led to simultaneous heavy rainfall in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, intensifying flood risks around the Mullaperiyar Dam.

About Mullaperiyar Dam

Introduction – The Mullaperiyar Dam, built in 1895, is a gravity dam made of limestone and surkhi, designed to divert water from Kerala's Periyar River to Tamil Nadu's Vaigai basin.

Location – Situated in the Cardamom Hills of the Western Ghats near Kumily, Idukki district (Kerala), it

lies along the Kerala–Tamil Nadu border.

Ecological and Economic Significance – The dam is vital for irrigation and drinking water supply to southern Tamil Nadu districts like Theni, Madurai, and Dindigul. It also supports agriculture and regional livelihoods dependent on the Vaigai River system. The Periyar Tiger Reserve lies around the Dam reservoir.

Safety and Environmental Concerns – The dam lies in a seismically active zone and faces heightened risks from heavy rainfall, landslides, and potential structural vulnerabilities due to its age.

Inter-State Water Dispute – Tamil Nadu wants the water level raised to 142 ft in accordance with the 2014 Supreme Court decision, whereas Kerala insists on maintaining it at 139 ft due to damage to dams and environmental concerns.

4. International Day of The Snow Leopard 2025

India celebrated International Snow Leopard Day on October 23, with a nationwide campaign “#23for23”.

About

In 2024, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed October 23 as the International Day of the Snow Leopard to enhance international and regional cooperation for its conservation. The ‘#23for23’ campaign is an initiative of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP) and the Snow Leopard Trust Worldwide.

About Snow Leopards (*Panthera uncia*)

Physical traits – Snow leopards are adapted to rugged, cold environments, with thick fur, stocky bodies, and long tails that serve as rudders for balance and warmth.

Habitat – They inhabit the high-altitude mountain ranges of 12 Asian countries, including India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. They are often referred to as the ‘ghosts of the mountains’ as they are hardly ever seen.

Population – The global population is estimated at 4,500–7,500, with India accounting for 10–15%. The first-ever Snow Leopard Census across the Indian Himalayas recorded 718 individual snow leopards, of which Ladakh alone hosts 477.

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List – Vulnerable

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 – Schedule I species

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) – Appendix I (since 1975)

CMS (Convention on Migratory Species) – Appendix I (since 1986)

Threats – Climate change, habitat loss, reduced prey, retaliatory killings, and poaching.

Significance – State animal of Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh.

Conservation Initiatives

Bishkek Declaration entitled “Caring for snow leopards and mountains – our ecological future”, signed by 12 snow leopard range countries, including all five Central Asian countries.

Samarkand Resolution of 2024 for snow leopard conservation and climate adaptation, adopted at the eighth Steering Committee Meeting of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) – An Indian initiative to promote the conservation of seven big cats, including the snow leopard, through research collaboration, funding, and capacity building across range countries.

Project Snow Leopard (2009) – A flagship scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) focusing on landscape-based management of high-altitude ecosystems.