



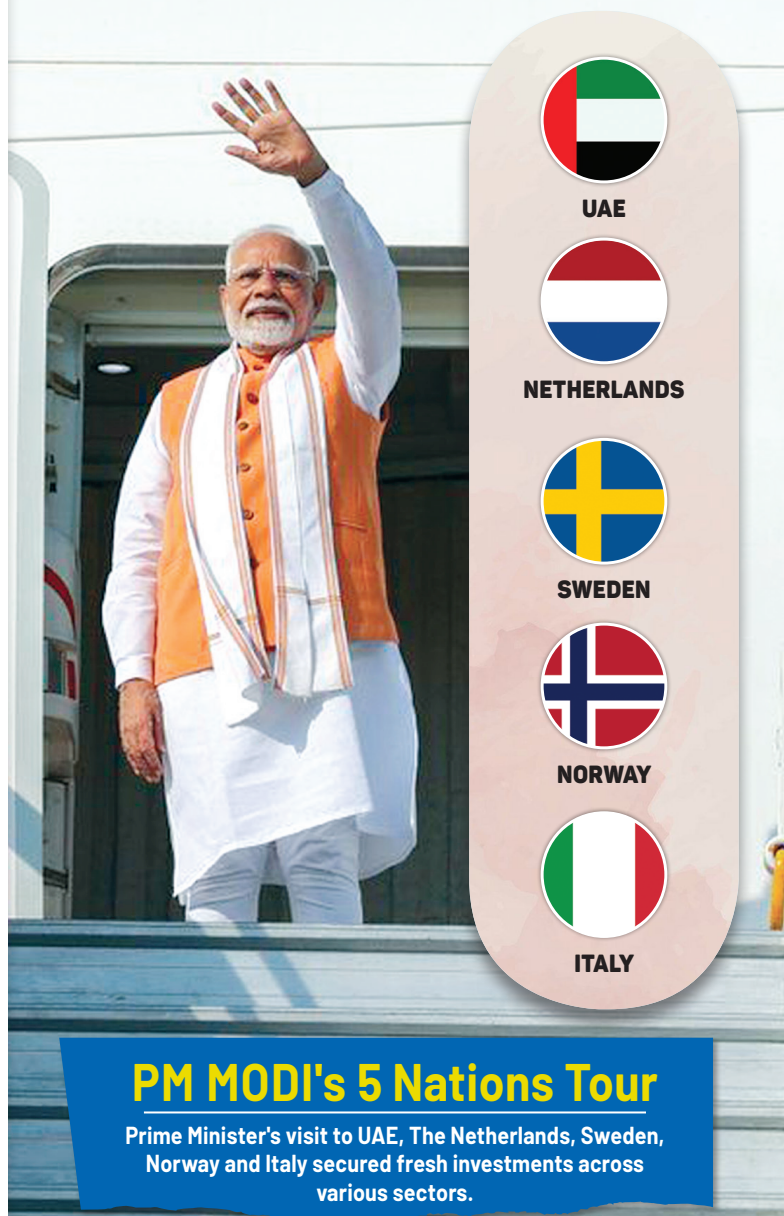
WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

15 May - 21 May, 2026

★★ Useful for ★★

**UPSC ESE, PSUs,
RRB, SSC, Banking &
State Services Exams**



15th MAY, 2026

LEAPS Awards 2025

- **Context:** Union Minister of Commerce and Industry felicitated winners of the LEAPS Awards 2025 and released the LEADS 2025 report in New Delhi, highlighting achievements across India's logistics sector.

Key Facts

- Indian economy, growing strongly, supported by recovery across key sectors and improved supply chains.
- The logistics sector plays a vital role in enabling trade, manufacturing, and services.
- India improved its Logistics Performance Index ranking to 38th in 2023, up six places since 2018, reflecting progress in modernizing the sector. It aims to reach the top 25 globally by 2030 and reduce logistics costs to below 10% of GDP.

Advantages

- **Supply chain efficiency:** Logistics ensures a smooth and efficient supply chain, minimising delays and reducing lead times. This efficiency is vital for businesses to meet consumer demand promptly and optimize production processes.
- **Connectivity and accessibility:** Logistics networks enhance connectivity and accessibility, linking various regions and markets. This connectivity contributes to economic integration by enabling businesses to reach a wider customer base and fostering trade between states and regions.
- **Cost reduction and competitiveness:** Efficient logistics operations contribute to cost reduction in transportation, storage, and distribution. This, in turn, enhances the competitiveness of businesses as they can offer products at competitive prices in the market.
- **Job creation:** The logistics sector is a significant source of employment, providing jobs in

transportation, warehousing, distribution, and related services. Job creation contributes to income generation and economic empowerment.

- **Technology adoption:** The industry's embrace of technology (such as GPS tracking, RFID, and advanced analytics) improves operational efficiency, reduces costs, and enhances overall productivity. This technological advancement positively influences the broader economic landscape.
- **Economic integration:** A well-developed logistics sector facilitates economic integration by connecting various economic zones and promoting a seamless flow of goods and services. This integration is essential for fostering a more robust and interconnected national economy.

Various steps taken by governments

- **Dedicated freight corridors:** India's logistics sector is improving due to reforms like GST and infrastructure status, which have increased efficiency and reduced delays. A key development is the Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs), high-speed rail routes connecting major hubs such as Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Howrah, enhancing freight speed and reliability.
- **Multi-modal logistics parks:** India is developing Multi-Modal Logistics Parks (MMLPs) to improve freight efficiency by integrating road, rail, and air transport with advanced facilities like warehouses, cold storage, and customs services.
- **Parivahan portal:** The Parivahan portal, along with SARATHI and VAHAN, digitises driving licence and vehicle registration services. Integrated through the mParivahan app, it streamlines transport administration and improves efficiency in logistics operations by enabling easy, unified access to key documents and services.
- **Introduction of e-way bill:** The e-Way Bill system under GST is a digital document required for goods over 50,000, aimed at reducing paperwork, improving transparency, and streamlining interstate transport. It enhances compliance and logistics efficiency nationwide.

- **GatiShakti:** PM GatiShakti (2021) is a national initiative to improve logistics efficiency and reduce costs through integrated, multi-agency infrastructure planning. It promotes multi-modal connectivity, faster project execution, and reduced delays via a National Master Plan, supporting economic growth and job creation, with significant infrastructure investment
- **National Logistics Policy:** The National Logistics Policy (2022) aims to improve efficiency by creating a seamless, integrated logistics system, including a single-window e-logistics platform, boosting MSME competitiveness and reducing logistics costs as a share of GDP.
- **Logistics Efficiency Enhancement Programme (LEEP):** LEEP improves freight efficiency by reducing transport time and costs and enhancing logistics practices through better infrastructure, technology, and tracking systems.
- **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047** aims to modernize India's maritime sector by expanding ports, improving efficiency through digitalization, promoting green initiatives, and boosting shipbuilding, tourism, and skills.
- **Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP):** It is a digital logistics platform that integrates data from multiple government departments, improving transparency and efficiency.
- **Goods and Services Tax** streamlined goods movement in India by removing interstate checkpoints, simplifying taxes, and improving transport efficiency by over 33%, boosting logistics productivity.
- **LEADS:** It is an annual report released by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, to assess the logistics performance of States and Union Territories across infrastructure, services, regulatory environment, and sustainability, offering insights to guide policy and investment decisions

About LEADS 2025 Report

- It was released alongside the awards, introducing a revised four-tier classification of States and Union Territories based on logistics performance

The new four-tier categorization is as follows:

- **Exemplars:** Exemplars represent the top-performing States and Union Territories, demonstrating sustained excellence across policy, infrastructure, service delivery, and regulatory dimensions.
- **High Performers:** High Performers comprise States and Union Territories that demonstrate strong and consistent outcomes across the majority of performance indicators.
- **Accelerators:** Accelerators comprise States and Union Territories that have demonstrated notable improvement momentum and a clear reform orientation in recent years.
- **Growth-Seekers:** Growth Seekers represent States and Union Territories that are at a foundational stage of logistics system development and institutional strengthening.

Global Capability Centre (GCC)

- **Context:** India's Global Capability Centre (GCC) ecosystem is undergoing rapid transformation, with multinational firms increasingly using their India centres not just for back-office operations but for AI development, engineering, research and global business functions.

About Global Capability Centres (GCCs)

- GCCs are offshore units established by multinational corporations to perform strategic business functions for their global operations.
- These functions include technology and software development, engineering and R&D, finance and accounting, data analytics, product development, and operations management.
- India currently hosts around 2,117 GCCs, employing nearly 2.36 million professionals and generating approximately \$98.4 billion in revenue in FY26 (Nasscom-Zinnov report).
- The sector has expanded by nearly 32% over the last five years, with more than 500 new GCCs established during this period.

Evolution of GCCs in India

- The traditional outsourcing model focused on reducing operational costs.
 - However, GCCs are now increasingly handling product ownership, AI deployment, platform engineering, and business transformation programmes.
 - The Nasscom-Zinnov report describes this transition as the movement from 'delivery engines' to 'enterprise nerve centres'.
- AI has become central to the transformation of GCCs. Key trends include:
 - Over 1,200 GCCs in India now possess AI and Machine Learning capabilities.
 - More than 250 AI/ML Centres of Excellence (CoEs) have been established.
 - India employs over 250,000 AI professionals, making it the world's second-largest enterprise AI talent base after the United States.

Importance of GCCs for India

- **Economic Contribution:** GCCs contribute significantly to export earnings, high-skilled employment, urban economic growth, and technology transfer. The sector's nearly \$100 billion revenue highlights its growing role within India's services economy.
- **Employment Generation:** GCCs create large-scale employment opportunities in engineering, AI and Data Science, finance, cybersecurity, research and development.
- **Integration into Global Value Chains:** India's GCC ecosystem strengthens the country's integration into global production and innovation networks. It enables India to move higher in global value chains by participating in product innovation, advanced engineering, and research-led activities.
- **GCCs versus Traditional IT Services Firms:** The rise of GCCs is reshaping India's IT services industry.
 - Traditional IT firms historically depended on labour-intensive outsourcing, and time-and-materials contracts.

- However, GCCs increasingly prefer end-to-end ownership, value-share and gain-share models, and product-centric operations.

- **Impact on Indian IT Companies:** GCCs attract talent through better salaries, product exposure, and long-term strategic work. It presents opportunities for Indian firms to move towards AI integration, consulting services, platform engineering, and automation solutions.

Common Criteria Development Board (CCDB)

- **Context:** India has been nominated as the Chair of the Common Criteria Development Board for the period from April 2026 to April 2028, during the 1st Quarter Meeting of the Common Criteria Recognition Arrangement in Tokyo, Japan.

About Common Criteria Recognition Arrangement (CCRA)

- The CCRA is an international arrangement that enables the mutual recognition of IT security certificates among member countries. It provides a common framework for evaluating and certifying the security of IT products.
- Under the arrangement, products certified in one member country are accepted by other member nations without the need for re-certification. This system facilitates seamless international trade in secure IT products. The CCRA comprises 20 certificate-authorizing nations and 18 certificate-consuming nations.
- The CCRA also maintains the Common Criteria Portal, which serves as the global repository for certified secure IT products.

About Common Criteria Development Board (CCDB)

- The CCDB serves as the technical core of the Common Criteria Recognition Arrangement).
- It is the technical body responsible for developing and maintaining:

- Common Criteria (CC) standards, and
- Common Evaluation Methodology (CEM).
- The board develops and updates technical standards and evaluation methodologies for IT security certification.
- While other CCRA groups focus on policy matters, the CCDB concentrates on technical standards and evaluation criteria for secure IT products.

India's Participation

- India became a member of the CCRA in 2013 as a Certificate Authorizing Nation.
- India participates in the arrangement through the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) Directorate.
- The STQC Directorate acts as India's official Certification Body for IT security evaluations.

16th MAY, 2026

Kimberley Process

- **Context:** The Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting 2026 concluded in Mumbai.

Key Facts

- The Kimberley Process is a tripartite initiative involving governments, the international diamond industry and civil society to prevent the trade in conflict diamonds. It operates through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS).
- KPCS established pursuant to a UN resolution, came into effect on 1 January 2003.
- The Kimberley Process (KP) is open to any country that can meet its standards.
 - Currently, it comprises 60 participants representing 86 countries, with the EU and its 27 Member States counted as one participant under the European Commission.
 - India is a founding member of the KP.
 - The members account for over 99 percent of the global rough diamond trade.

- The chair oversees the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) and operations of the working groups, committees and administration that activate the KP.
- The Kimberley Process Secretariat is headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana.

About Conflict Diamonds

- Conflict diamonds are rough diamonds mined in war zones and sold to finance armed conflict, insurgencies or rebel activities against legitimate governments.
- These diamonds were linked to civil wars in parts of Africa such as Sierra Leone, Angola and Liberia during the 1990s.

Abhay: AI-powered Verification System

- **Context:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has launched an AI-based helpbot called "Abhay" for authentication of CBI notices.

Key Facts

- Cyber-enabled fraud is becoming a major threat to India's criminal justice system.
- Advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence and deepfakes are making it harder for people to tell real information from fake content.
- To help citizens stay aware and protected, the CBI launched "Abhay," which can be accessed through the official CBI website.

About Abhay

- It is the AI-powered chatbot-style verification mechanism for the public to verify notices issued by CBI.
- It is designed to protect the citizens from the growing menace of cyber fraud and digital arrest scams.
- It has been designed keeping in mind data confidentiality and the requirement for a public-facing authentication mechanism.

17th MAY, 2026

PM Narendra Modi's 5 Nations Tour

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent five-nation - UAE, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy, visit has helped India secure an investment pipeline worth nearly \$40 billion, with several multinational firms committing fresh investments and expansion plans across key sectors.

Key Highlights

- PM Modi held meetings with chief executives and senior representatives of over 50 global companies during the tour, covering sectors such as semiconductors, logistics, infrastructure, defence, energy and technology.
- The combined market valuation of these companies is estimated between \$2.7 trillion and \$3 trillion.
- According to officials cited by news agency IANS, many of these firms already have a major presence in India, with their cumulative investments and business exposure in the country estimated at nearly \$180 billion.
- Several companies are now planning to expand operations to benefit from India's strong economic growth and rising domestic demand.
- Among the major announcements, the United Arab Emirates committed fresh investments worth nearly \$5 billion in India, officials said.

Focus on defence, semiconductors and energy ties

- PM Modi's five-country tour covered the UAE, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy, during which India signed multiple agreements and upgraded ties with several nations.
- India and the UAE signed seven agreements during PM Modi's stopover, including a strategic defence partnership framework, energy cooperation deals and a proposed maritime infrastructure project at Vadinar in Gujarat.

- The UAE also committed investments worth \$5 billion across Indian infrastructure and financial sectors.
- India and the Netherlands elevated bilateral ties to a strategic partnership and unveiled a roadmap covering trade, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, green hydrogen and maritime security.
- The visit also produced 17 agreements, including cooperation in critical minerals, renewable energy and defence manufacturing.
- India and Sweden upgraded relations to a strategic partnership, with both countries endorsing a joint action plan for 2026-2030 focused on green transition, emerging technologies, trade, defence and climate action.

Italy ties elevated to 'Special Strategic Partnership'

- A major outcome of the tour came in Italy, where India and Italy elevated ties to a "Special Strategic Partnership" after talks between PM Modi and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.
- India and Italy signed agreements spanning defence manufacturing, critical minerals, higher education, maritime cooperation, climate research, healthcare and Ayurveda.
- The two countries also unveiled a Defence Industrial Roadmap aimed at boosting joint manufacturing and advanced technology cooperation.

India-Nordic Engagement

- During the visit, PM Modi also attended the third India-Nordic Summit in Norway and held bilateral meetings with Nordic leaders. External affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the Italy leg as the successful conclusion of a "five-country tour marked by significant outcomes and fresh momentum in India-Italy ties".
- Officials said the overall investment commitments and business expansion proposals discussed during the visit reflected growing international confidence in India's long-term economic prospects and strategic importance.

18th MAY, 2026

Bhojshala

- **Context:** The Madhya Pradesh High Court declared the Bhojshala complex in Dhar district a Hindu temple.

About Bhojshala Complex

- Raja Bhoja, the greatest ruler of the Paramara dynasty, founded the famous Bhojshala at Dhar around 1000–1055 A.D. as a major center of learning dedicated to Goddess Saraswati. Later, the structure was converted into the Kamal Maula Mosque during Muslim rule.
- It served as a premier college and centre of Sanskrit learning. The mosque still contains carved pillars, ceilings, and stone inscriptions from the original Bhojshala.
- Important inscriptions include Sanskrit grammar tables, hymns to Vishnu, praises of Paramara kings, and the Sanskrit drama Karpuramanjari written by Madana during the reign of Arjunavarma Deva.

PM-SHRI Schools Scheme

- **Context:** The government in West Bengal signed an agreement with the Centre to implement the PM-SHRI school scheme in the state.

About PM SHRI Scheme

- The scheme aims to turn existing government schools into model schools. The scheme is for existing elementary, secondary, and senior secondary schools run by the central government and state and local governments around the country.
- It is a Centrally sponsored scheme with a total project cost of 27,360 crore for the period of five years from 2022-23 to 2026-27 for transforming nearly 14,500 schools across the country.
- It will showcase all components of the National Education Policy 2020, act as exemplary schools and also offer mentorship to other schools in their vicinity.

- A 'School Quality Assessment Framework' is being developed to measure the progress and performance of these schools.

Key features

- **Development of 'Green schools':** These will be equipped with solar panels, LED lights, nutrition gardens, and waste management, water conservation and harvesting systems.
- **Modern facilities:** Schools will include ICT (information and communication technologies) facilities, smart classrooms, library, digital library, science labs and vocational labs etc. Schools will also get science and math kits and annual school grants for libraries or sports.
- **Mother tongue and local languages** to be encouraged.

19th MAY, 2026

Solar Wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (SMILE)

- **Context:** A joint mission of the European Space Agency and the Chinese Academy of Sciences named SMILE is being developed to study how Earth's magnetic shield responds to solar storms and space weather events.

About SMILE Mission

- SMILE stands for Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer.
- The mission will study the interaction between solar wind emitted by the Sun and Earth's magnetosphere, ionosphere, and magnetic environment.
- SMILE will study the fundamental modes of the solar wind/magnetosphere interaction, understand substorm cycles, and monitor coronal mass ejection (CME) driven storms to improve space weather forecasting.
- It is the first mission designed to image Earth's magnetic environment, specifically the magnetopause and polar cusps, in soft X-rays. It will also capture ultraviolet images of the northern lights.

- The payload includes a Soft X-ray Imager (SXI), an Ultraviolet Imager (UVI), a Light Ion Analyser (LIA), and a Magnetometer (MAG).

Oslo Summit

- **Context:** PM Modi participated in the Third India–Nordic Summit held in Oslo.

Key Facts

- The summit brought together leaders of the five Nordic countries; Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland.
- The summit aims to strengthen cooperation between India and Nordic countries in trade, investment, clean energy, technology, innovation, maritime affairs and sustainable development.
- The first India–Nordic Summit was held in Stockholm in 2018 and the second summit took place in Copenhagen in 2022.

Significance of Nordic Countries for India

- **Technological Cooperation:** Nordic countries are global leaders in clean technologies, innovation and digital governance.
- **Green Energy Partnership:** Nordic expertise in offshore wind, green hydrogen and sustainable technologies supports India's energy transition goals.
- **Maritime Cooperation:** Nordic countries possess advanced capabilities in shipbuilding, maritime logistics and sustainable port infrastructure.
- **Arctic Significance:** Nordic cooperation is important for India's climate research and Arctic engagement.
- **Research and Innovation:** Collaboration in research, education and start-up ecosystems can strengthen India's knowledge economy.

20th MAY, 2026

India-South Korea Defence Cooperation

- **Context:** The recent visit of India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to South Korea, reflects the growing

strategic importance of India–South Korea defence cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key Highlights

- Agreements were exchanged between both the nations on:
 - promoting cooperation in the field of Defence Cyber;
 - training between India's National Defence College and Korea National Defence University; and
 - UN Peacekeeping Cooperation, making the partnership stronger and multidimensional.
- Both the nations signed two significant MoUs for co-developing Self-propelled air defence systems and Directed energy weapon systems.
- Larsen & Toubro and Hanwha signed an agreement to strengthen defence technology cooperation and capacity building.
- They also deliberated on a roadmap for the India-Korea Defence Innovation Accelerator Ecosystem (KIND-X), aimed at integrating the innovation ecosystems of the two countries.

Significance of South Korea for India

- South Korea is a global leader in semiconductors, EV batteries, electronics, and shipbuilding, helping India strengthen its manufacturing and technological capabilities. Companies such as Samsung, Hyundai Motor Company, LG Electronics, and Kia Corporation support India's Make in India initiative through investment and technology transfer.
- India and South Korea share common interests in maintaining a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. South Korea's advancing aerospace sector, including the KF-21 fighter programme and the FA-50 light combat aircraft, has opened new avenues for collaboration in fighter technologies, engines, avionics, missile integration, and maintenance systems.
- South Korea is an important source of FDI and a major trading partner for India under the India-ROK CEPA.

- South Korea's expertise in shipbuilding and submarine technologies supports India's maritime and naval modernisation ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region.

India- South Korea Relations

- **Cultural and Historical Relations:** The two countries share deep historical ties, notably the legendary marriage of an Indian Princess from Ayodhya (Queen Heo Hwang-ok) to King Kim Suro of the Gaya kingdom in 48 CE. The growing cultural exchanges through K-pop, K-dramas, and Indian cinema strengthen people-to-people ties.
- **Diplomatic Cooperation:** India and South Korea elevated their ties to a Special Strategic Partnership in 2015.
 - Both countries aim to increase bilateral trade to US\$ 50 billion by 2030 and are negotiating an upgrade of the CEPA agreement.
 - India's Act East Policy and South Korea's regional strategic vision increasingly complement each other.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Bilateral trade between India and South Korea stood at nearly US\$ 27 billion in FY2025 under the India-ROK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
 - South Korea is India's 13th largest FDI investor between 2000- 2024, standing at US\$ 5.85 billion.
- **Diaspora:** The Indian community in South Korea is estimated at around 17,000 people as of 2025, including professionals, researchers, students, and businesspersons.

Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA)

- **Context:** Iran has established a new regulatory body named as Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA).

Key Facts

- **Aim:** To oversee and manage operations in the strategically significant Strait of Hormuz. The move marks the formal creation of a dedicated authority responsible for monitoring the strait.

- Under the new system, vessels will be required to follow directives issued by the authority and secure transit permits before entering the Strait of Hormuz.
- Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Strait of Hormuz falls under the transit passage principle protecting uninterrupted international shipping – a convention Iran signed but never ratified.
- The US, Gulf states, and European nations have all rejected the legality of Iran's fee regime.

21st MAY, 2026

International Booker Prize 2026

- **Context:** 'Taiwan Travelogue' has won the prestigious International Booker Prize 2026, becoming the first novel translated from Mandarin Chinese to receive the award. Written by Taiwanese author Yang Shuang-zi and translated by Taiwanese-American translator Lin King, the novel explores themes of forbidden love, identity and food culture.

About International Booker Prize

- Formerly known as the Man Booker International Prize, this honor is presented annually for a work of fiction, either a novel or a collection of short stories that was originally written in a language other than English, then translated into English and published in the U.K. and/or Ireland.
- The prize highlights the crucial role of translators, with £50,000 shared equally between the author and translator.
- Past Winner: In 2025, Heart Lamp by Banu Mushtaq, translated by Deepa Bhashti, won the prize. It was the first book translated from Kannada to receive this honor.

■ DO YOU KNOW: _____

The Booker Prize is a separate award given annually for the best novel written in English, published in the UK or Ireland. Past Indian Booker Prize winners: Arundhati Roy (God of Small Things), Kiran Desai (Inheritance of Loss), and Aravind Adiga (White Tiger).

PRAGATI 2026 Exercise

- **Context:** The multilateral military exercise PRAGATI 2026 commenced at Umroi Military Station in Meghalaya.

Key Facts

- PRAGATI stands for Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Apart from host India, soldiers from “12 friendly nations” are participating in the PRAGATI 2026 military exercise. They are Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.
- The exercise will focus on counter-terrorism operations in semi-mountainous and jungle terrain.

Agricola Medal

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the prestigious Agricola Medal by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) at its headquarters in Rome, Italy. The medal was presented by FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu.

About Agricola Medal

- The Agricola Medal is the highest honour conferred by the Director-General of the FAO.
- The medal is named after Georgius Agricola, a German scholar widely considered the “father of mineralogy” and a pioneer in agricultural and mining sciences.
- It is awarded to distinguished world leaders and individuals for exceptional and long-term contributions to global food security, sustainable agriculture, poverty reduction and improved nutrition.

About Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve food security.
- It was founded on 16 October 1945.
- **Members:** The FAO comprises 195 members, including 194 countries and the European Union.
- **Headquarters:** Rome, Italy.

