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Current Affairs Today – January 17, 2026

17 January 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED**ECONOMY****ENVIRONMENT****SCIENCE & TECH****POLITY****HISTORY & CULTURE****SOCIAL ISSUES****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

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WHY IN NEWS

India's National Critical Mineral Mission is gaining policy momentum as the country seeks to reduce import dependence for EV and clean energy supply chains; Tamil Nadu's proposed International Dugong Conservation Centre faced design review; and preparations began for the 2026 Medaram Jatara — Asia's largest tribal festival.

NATIONAL CRITICAL MINERAL MISSION (NCMM) — INDIA'S STRATEGIC MINERALS PUSH

India launched the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)** in 2025 with a corpus of **Rs 34,300 crore** (2025–2031) to reduce import dependency for minerals critical to clean energy, defence, and advanced manufacturing. India is **100% import-dependent** for 10 critical minerals including lithium, cobalt, and nickel — the primary inputs for electric vehicle batteries and renewable energy storage.

KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd) — a joint venture of NALCO, HCL, and MECL — is India's designated overseas mineral acquisition arm. KABIL secured a **Rs 200 crore agreement with Argentina** for lithium exploration in the Lithium Triangle (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile — which holds ~65% of world's lithium reserves).

Key Facts:

India ranks 2nd globally in aluminium production and 3rd in iron ore production (2025)

Domestic refined copper production surged 43.5% in FY26 (first half)

NCMM corpus: Rs 34,300 crore (2025–2031); Ministry of Mines

KABIL: JV of NALCO + HCL + MECL; acquires overseas mineral assets

Mineral Security Partnership (MSP): 14-nation grouping including India, US, EU, Japan, Australia — coordinates critical mineral supply chain diversification

Mines and Minerals Amendment Act 2025: grants Central Government authority over 24 strategic minerals

GSI (Geological Survey of India) conducted 368 critical mineral exploration projects in 3 years

Recycling Incentive Scheme: Rs 1,500 crore (2025); target: recover 40 kilo tonnes of minerals annually from e-waste by 2030

India-Australia Critical Minerals Partnership (2022): 5 lithium security projects identified

UPSC RELEVANCE

NCMM corpus, KABIL (JV composition), MSP membership, Mines Amendment Act 2025.

MAINS GS-3:

Energy security; critical mineral supply chains; China+1 diversification; EV ecosystem.

MEDARAM JATARA (SAMMAKKA-SARALAMMA JATARA) 2026

The **Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara** (also known as **Medaram Jatara**) — the biennial tribal festival described as **Asia's largest tribal festival** — is scheduled to begin on **January 28, 2026**, in Medaram village, **Mulugu district, Telangana**. The event draws over **1 crore devotees** (10 million) and is held once every two years during the full moon of the Hindu month of Magh.

The Jatara is held inside the **Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary** in the Dandakaranya forest belt and is conducted exclusively by **Koya Adivasi tribal priests** using indigenous rituals. Devotees offer **jaggery (bangaram)** — symbolising agrarian equality — rather than gold or conventional temple offerings.

The deities Sammakka and Saralamma are believed to be a mother and daughter who legendarily resisted taxation by the Kakatiya dynasty and died defending their people. They became symbols of tribal resistance and are revered across Telangana and neighbouring states.

Key Facts:

Location: Medaram village, Mulugu district, Telangana; inside Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary

Frequency: biennial (every 2 years) during Magh full moon

Attendance: over 1 crore — second only to Kumbh Mela for attendance in India

Ritual: No idol worship; worship through bamboo totems, sacred trees, clan flags (dalgudda)

Distinctive offering: **Bangaram (jaggery)** — symbolises agrarian, egalitarian values

Community: **Koya Adivasi** tribe; priests are exclusively from the tribal community

Background: Sammakka + Saralamma resisted Kakatiya dynasty taxation; martyred; deified by Koya community

UPSC RELEVANCE

Location (Mulugu district, Telangana; Eturnagaram WS), offering (bangaram/jaggery), tribe (Koya), frequency (biennial/Magh).

MAINS GS-1:

Tribal culture and intangible heritage; religious traditions outside mainstream Hinduism; Scheduled Tribe governance.

INTERNATIONAL DUGONG CONSERVATION CENTRE — EXPERT REVIEW

The **Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC)** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** directed Tamil Nadu to redesign the proposed **International Dugong Conservation Centre** at **Manora, Thanjavur district** to ensure compliance with Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms and minimise ecological impact on the surrounding seagrass habitats.

The dugong (*Dugong dugon*), a large herbivorous marine mammal, is **IUCN Vulnerable** and listed in **CITES Appendix I** and India's **Wildlife Protection Act Schedule I**. India's only significant dugong populations exist in the **Gulf of Mannar** and the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**. India declared the world's first **Dugong Conservation Reserve** in the Gulf of Mannar (Tamil Nadu) in **2013**.

Key Facts:

Species: *Dugong dugon* (sea cow); only exclusively marine herbivorous mammal — manatees also exist but use freshwater, while dugongs never enter freshwater

IUCN: Vulnerable; CITES: Appendix I; WPA: Schedule I

Length: up to 3 m; weight: 400+ kg; paddle flippers + whale-like tail fluke

Habitat: seagrass meadows in warm shallow Indo-Pacific coastal waters

Ecological role: keystone species — maintains seagrass ecosystem health

India's dugong range: Gulf of Mannar (Tamil Nadu) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Dugong Conservation Reserve: declared 2013, Gulf of Mannar — first such reserve in the world

Proposed centre: Manora, Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu; EAC directed design revision

CRZ (Coastal Regulation Zone): regulated under CRZ Notification 2019; EAC must clear coastal infrastructure

UPSC RELEVANCE

Dugong IUCN status, CITES Appendix I, WPA Schedule I, Dugong Conservation Reserve (2013, Gulf of Mannar).

MAINS GS-3:

Marine biodiversity; CRZ governance; seagrass ecosystems; species-specific conservation reserves.

STARTUP INDIA — 10 YEARS (NATIONAL STARTUP DAY, JANUARY 16)

Startup India completed **10 years** on January 16, 2026 — marked as **National Startup Day**. Launched on **January 16, 2016** by PM Modi at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, the initiative has transformed India into the **3rd largest startup ecosystem globally** (after the US and China), with over **2 lakh DPIIT-recognised startups** as of December 2025.

Approximately **50% of recognised startups** now come from Tier-II and Tier-III cities — a significant inclusion outcome.

Key Facts:

Launch date: **January 16, 2016**; National Startup Day: January 16 (declared 2022)

Nodal body: **DPIIT** (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade), Ministry of Commerce

Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS): Rs 10,000 crore corpus; managed by **SIDBI**; channelled through AIFs (Alternative Investment Funds)

Tax benefits: 3-year income tax holiday, capital gains exemption, 80IAC benefits

MAARG portal: Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience and Growth — for startup mentorship

India: 3rd largest startup ecosystem (US → China → India); ~2 lakh recognised startups

50% from Tier-II/III cities; key sectors: Fintech, Edtech, Agritech, Health, Defence, Space

Support for Aatmanirbhar Bharat: defence and space startup ecosystems

UPSC RELEVANCE

Startup India launch date, DPIIT, FFS corpus (Rs 10,000 crore), SIDBI, India's rank in startup ecosystem.

MAINS GS-3:

Entrepreneurship ecosystem; innovation; ease of doing business; economic growth drivers.

LOKPAL FOUNDATION DAY — JANUARY 16

Lokpal completed 12 years of legal existence on January 16, 2026. The Lokpal came into force on **January 16, 2014**, under the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**, after decades of legislative effort since 1963.

The concept was first recommended by the **First Administrative Reforms Commission (1966)** under Morarji Desai. Multiple Lokpal Bills (1968, 1971, 1977, 1985, 1989, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2011) lapsed before the 2013 Act was passed.

Key Facts:

Established: January 16, 2014 (Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013)

Composition: Chairperson + up to 8 Members; ≥50% must be judicial; ≥50% from SC/ST/OBC/minorities/women

Chairperson eligibility: Former Chief Justice of India or former Supreme Court judge

Tenure: 5 years or until age 70, whichever is earlier

Jurisdiction: PM (with restrictions), Union Ministers, MPs, Group A–D central government officials, PSU officials

First Lokpal: Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose (appointed March 2019)

First proposed by: Santhanam Committee (1962–64) and First ARC (1966)

Lokpal is NOT a constitutional body – it is a statutory body under the 2013 Act

Distinction from CVC: Lokpal covers elected officials; CVC covers civil servants only

UPSC RELEVANCE

Lokpal Act year (2013), foundation date (January 16, 2014), composition, jurisdiction, First Lokpal (Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose), First ARC recommendation, statutory vs constitutional status.

MAINS GS-2:

Anti-corruption institutions; accountability; oversight mechanisms.

CVC — PRAVEEN VASHISTA SWORN AS VIGILANCE COMMISSIONER

Praveen Vashista (IPS, Bihar cadre, 1991 batch) was sworn in as **Vigilance Commissioner** of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) on January 16, 2026.

The CVC was initially established in **1964** through an executive resolution based on the **Santhanam Committee** recommendations, and later granted statutory status through the **Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003**. The appointment is made by the President on the recommendation of a committee comprising the **Prime Minister, Home Minister, and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha**.

Key Facts:

CVC composition: 1 Chief Vigilance Commissioner (Chairperson) + up to 2 Vigilance Commissioners

Appointment committee: PM + Home Minister + Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha

Tenure: 4 years or until age 65, whichever is earlier

Statutory basis: CVC Act, 2003 (NOT a constitutional body)

Jurisdiction: All India Services, Group A officials, PSU executives, RBI, SEBI, public sector banks

Powers: superintendence over CBI (corruption cases); advises government on vigilance; investigates complaints

Whistle-blower protection: Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014

Annual report: presented to President; laid before Parliament

UPSC RELEVANCE

CVC Act year (2003), composition (1+2), appointment committee, tenure (4 years/65 years).

MAINS GS-2:

Anti-corruption institutions; role of CVC vs Lokpal; statutory bodies; accountability framework.

VANDE BHARAT SLEEPER TRAIN — INDIA'S FIRST (JANUARY 17, 2026)

PM Modi flagged off India's **first Vande Bharat Sleeper train** from **Malda Town Railway Station, West Bengal** on January 17, 2026. The train operates on the **Howrah (Kolkata)–Guwahati (Kamakhya)** route and reduces travel time by approximately **2.5 hours**.

The Vande Bharat Sleeper is a fully air-conditioned overnight train — a step beyond the Chair Car version (launched 2019) toward replacing aging Rajdhani/Duronto sleeper fleets. Trains are manufactured at Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai, under Make in India.

PM Modi also dedicated rail and road infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,250 crore in West Bengal and flagged off additional Amrit Bharat Express trains to Nagercoil, Tiruchirappalli, Bengaluru, and Mumbai from North Bengal stations.

Key Facts:

Route: Howrah–Guwahati (Kamakhya); connects 10 major cities

Fares: Rs 2,300 (3AC), Rs 3,000 (2AC), Rs 3,600 (1AC)

Journey time reduction: ~2.5 hours over conventional sleeper trains

Flagged off: Malda Town station, West Bengal; January 17, 2026

Manufacturing: Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai

UPSC RELEVANCE

Vande Bharat Sleeper route (Howrah-Guwahati), fares, flagging-off station (Malda Town, WB), ICF Chennai.

MAINS GS-3:

Railway modernisation; infrastructure investment in Northeast connectivity; premium vs mass-transit trade-off in railway capex.

KAZIRANGA ELEVATED WILDLIFE CORRIDOR — 18 BIDS RECEIVED

The **Kaziranga Elevated Wildlife Corridor** project on **NH-715** (Kaliabor–Numaligarh section, Assam) received **18 contractor bids** — a major milestone for the Rs 6,956 crore infrastructure-conservation hybrid project. PM Modi formally inaugurated related works on January 18, 2026, during his Assam visit.

The **34.5 km elevated section** is designed so that animals — primarily **one-horned rhinos, elephants, and tigers** — can pass safely underneath the highway during **monsoon floods**, when they migrate from Kaziranga to the **Karbi Anglong hills**. A Wildlife Institute of India (WII) study found **63 large animals killed on NH-715 in a single year**.

The project includes four-laning of 30 km of existing highway and 21 km of bypasses at Jakhlabandha and Bokakhat. The **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** approved it with **34 specific conditions** including speed limits and wildlife crossing requirements.

Key Facts:

Project cost: Rs 6,956 crore; 36-month construction timeline

Implementing agency: **NHIDCL** (National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd), under MoRTH

Elevated section: 34.5 km on NH-715 (Kaliabor–Numaligarh, Assam)

Purpose: Animals pass under during monsoon migration (Kaziranga → Karbi Anglong hills)

NBWL: 34 conditions; chaired by Prime Minister; Environment Minister chairs SCNBWL

WII study: 63 large animals killed on NH-715 in one year

UPSC RELEVANCE

NHIDCL (vs NHAI), NBWL approval, 34 conditions, NH-715, Rs 6,956 crore, Kaziranga NP (Assam; UNESCO WHSite; one-horned rhino).

MAINS GS-3:

Human-wildlife conflict; infrastructure in protected area buffers; NBWL governance; conservation in development corridors.

SANGAI DEER CRISIS — FRESH CENSUS SCHEDULED (FEBRUARY 20–27, 2026)

The **Sangai** (*Rucervus eldii eldii*) — Manipur’s state animal and one of the world’s rarest deer — faces a population in freefall. A fresh census has been scheduled for **February 20–27, 2026**, at **Keibul Lamjao National Park** — the **world’s only floating national park**, situated on **Loktak Lake, Manipur**.

Population data: **90 (2006) → 76 (2019) → 64 (2023)**. The effective **breeding population is estimated at only ~7.5 individuals** — dangerously below the genetic diversity threshold.

The Sangai lives exclusively on **phumdis** — heterogeneous masses of floating vegetation, soil, and decomposing organic matter unique to Loktak Lake. The **Ithai Barrage (1983)**, built for the Loktak Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project, raised lake water levels and sent monsoon backflow into the park — eroding phumdis and introducing untreated sewage into the lake.

Key Facts:

Scientific name: *Rucervus eldii eldii*; Manipur’s state animal; also called “brow-antlered deer” / “dancing deer”

IUCN: **Endangered**; WPA 1972: **Schedule I** (highest protection)

Habitat: **Keibul Lamjao National Park** (est. 1977); world’s only floating national park

Location: Loktak Lake (largest freshwater lake in Northeast India); **Ramsar Wetland** site

Population collapse: 90 → 76 → 64 (2006–2023)

Primary threat: Ithai Barrage (1983) raising lake levels; phumdi degradation

Phumdis: floating masses of vegetation + soil + decomposing matter — unique to Loktak Lake

UPSC RELEVANCE

Scientific name (*Rucervus eldii eldii*), IUCN Endangered, WPA Schedule I, Keibul Lamjao NP (world’s only floating national park), Loktak Lake (Ramsar site, NE India’s largest freshwater lake), phumdis.

MAINS GS-3:

Species conservation; hydropower vs biodiversity; wetland degradation; Schedule I species protection under WPA.

INDIA’S BRICS 2026 CHAIRMANSHIP

India formally assumed the **BRICS Chairmanship** from Brazil on **January 1, 2026**. The official BRICS 2026 logo and website (brics2026.gov.in) were launched on January 13, 2026. This is India’s first chairmanship in the **expanded 10-nation BRICS+ format** (5 original + Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE).

Theme: “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability” — where BRICS forms the theme acronym. India will host the **18th BRICS Summit** in 2026.

Key priorities: promoting India’s Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) model for the Global South; AI governance frameworks; UNSC permanent membership reform.

Key Facts:

India chairs BRICS for 2026; successor to Brazil (2025)

Theme: “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability”

India’s position: Founding BRICS member (since 2009/2006 BRIC formation)

10 current members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa + Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE (joined Jan 2024)

18th BRICS Summit to be hosted in India in 2026

UPSC RELEVANCE

BRICS 2026 chair (India), theme acronym, membership count (10), official website.

MAINS GS-2:

BRICS as a multilateral forum; India’s Global South leadership; BRICS New Development Bank (NDB); UNSC reform.

GAIL MUMBAI–NAGPUR NATURAL GAS PIPELINE — COMPLETED (694 KM)

GAIL India Limited completed the **694-km Mumbai–Nagpur Natural Gas Pipeline**, with approximately **96% of the pipeline** built within a narrow 3-metre utility corridor alongside the **Samruddhi Mahamarg (Mumbai–Nagpur) Expressway**.

This is a model for **integrated transport and utility planning** under the **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan** — co-locating pipelines with existing road infrastructure reduces land acquisition costs and speeds completion.

The pipeline will enhance city gas distribution across Maharashtra and reduce dependence on coal and LPG for industrial use, contributing to India’s **National Gas Grid** expansion target.

Key Facts:

GAIL full name: Gas Authority of India Limited (now GAIL India Limited)

Pipeline length: 694 km; route: Mumbai to Nagpur

96% alongside Samruddhi Mahamarg Expressway (701-km eight-lane expressway, completed 2023)

Significance: PM GatiShakti integrated corridor model

Part of: National Gas Grid (pan-India pipeline network target)

Ministry: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

UPSC RELEVANCE

GAIL (full name, ministry), pipeline length (694 km), Samruddhi Mahamarg co-location, National Gas Grid.

MAINS GS-3:

Energy infrastructure; natural gas in India's transition fuel strategy; PM GatiShakti; integrated multi-modal corridors.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
NATIONAL CRITICAL MINERAL MISSION (NCMM):

Launch: 2025; Ministry of Mines; corpus Rs 34,300 crore (2025–2031)
 India 100% import-dependent for: lithium, cobalt, nickel, + 7 others
 KABIL: JV of NALCO + HCL + MECL; overseas mineral acquisition
 KABIL Argentina deal: Rs 200 crore; lithium exploration
 Mineral Security Partnership (MSP): 14 nations; India + US + EU + Japan + Australia
 Mines Amendment Act 2025: Central authority over 24 strategic minerals
 Recycling Incentive Scheme: Rs 1,500 crore; 40 kT recovery by 2030
 GSI exploration: 368 critical mineral projects in 3 years

MEDARAM JATARA (SAMMAKKA-SARALAMMA):

Location: Medaram village, Mulugu district, Telangana
 Setting: Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, Dandakaranya forest
 Tribe: Koya Adivasi; priests exclusively tribal
 Frequency: biennial; during Magh full moon
 Attendance: 1 crore+ (2nd only to Kumbh Mela in India)
 Offering: Bangaram (jaggery) — not gold/money
 Ritual: bamboo totems, clan flags, sacred trees; NO idol worship
 2026 start: January 28, 2026

DUGONG CONSERVATION:

Species: Dugong dugon; only exclusively marine herbivorous mammal (manatees also exist but use freshwater)
 IUCN: Vulnerable; CITES: Appendix I; WPA: Schedule I
 India's range: Gulf of Mannar + Andaman & Nicobar Islands
 Dugong Conservation Reserve: Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu, 2013 (first in world)
 Habitat: seagrass meadows; Indo-Pacific; keystone species
 Proposed conservation centre: Manora, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu; EAC directed redesign

STARTUP INDIA:

Launch: January 16, 2016; National Startup Day: January 16 (from 2022)
 Nodal body: DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce
 Recognised startups: 2 lakh+ (Dec 2025)
 India's rank: 3rd largest startup ecosystem globally
 Fund of Funds: Rs 10,000 crore; managed by SIDBI through AIFs
 MAARG portal: mentorship for startups
 50% startups from Tier-II/III cities

LOKPAL — KEY DATA:

Legislation: Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013; came into force January 16, 2014
 First proposed: Santhanam Committee (1962–64); First ARC (1966)
 Composition: Chairperson + up to 8 Members; 50% judicial; 50% SC/ST/OBC/minorities/women

Tenure: 5 years or age 70

Jurisdiction: PM (with restrictions), Ministers, MPs, Group A–D officials, PSU officials

First Lokpal: Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose (2019)

NOT a constitutional body

CVC — KEY DATA:

Initially established: 1964 (executive resolution; Santhanam Committee)

Statutory basis: CVC Act, 2003

Composition: 1 CVC (chair) + up to 2 Vigilance Commissioners

Appointment: President; recommended by PM + Home Minister + Leader of Opposition

Tenure: 4 years or age 65

Jurisdiction: All India Services, Group A, PSUs, banks, SEBI, RBI

CVC vs Lokpal: CVC covers civil servants; Lokpal covers elected officials too

VANDE BHARAT SLEEPER — KEY DATA:

First train flagged off: January 17, 2026; Malda Town station, West Bengal; PM Modi

Route: Howrah (Kolkata) → Guwahati (Kamakhya); 10 cities

Journey time saving: ~2.5 hours vs conventional sleeper

Fares: Rs 2,300 (3AC) / Rs 3,000 (2AC) / Rs 3,600 (1AC)

Manufacturer: Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai

Related projects: Rs 3,250 crore rail/road projects dedicated in West Bengal

KAZIRANGA ELEVATED WILDLIFE CORRIDOR:

Highway: NH-715, Kaliabor–Numaligarh section, Assam

Elevated section: 34.5 km; total project includes 30 km four-laning + 21 km bypasses

Cost: Rs 6,956 crore; implementing agency: NHIDCL (under MoRTH)

NBWL approval: 34 conditions (speed limits, wildlife crossings)

WII study: 63 large animals killed on NH-715 in one year

Animals benefited: one-horned rhinos, elephants, tigers (migrate to Karbi Anglong during floods)

PM Modi inaugurated: January 18, 2026

SANGAI DEER — CONSERVATION DATA:

Scientific name: *Rucervus eldii eldii*; Manipur's state animal

IUCN: Endangered; WPA 1972: Schedule I

Habitat: Keibul Lamjao NP (world's only floating national park); Loktak Lake, Manipur

Loktak Lake: Ramsar Wetland; largest freshwater lake in Northeast India

Population: 90 (2006) → 76 (2019) → 64 (2023); effective breeding population ~7.5

Habitat: phumdis (floating masses of vegetation + soil + organic matter, unique to Loktak Lake)

Primary threat: Ithai Barrage (1983); raises lake levels; erodes phumdis; introduces sewage

Fresh census: February 20–27, 2026

BRICS 2026 (INDIA CHAIRMANSHIP):

India chairs BRICS from January 1, 2026; hosted from Brazil

Theme: "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability"

Summit: 18th BRICS Summit to be hosted in India

Format: 10-nation BRICS+ (5 original + Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE; joined Jan 2024)

Website: brics2026.gov.in; logo launched January 13, 2026

GAIL MUMBAI–NAGPUR PIPELINE:

Length: 694 km; follows Samruddhi Mahamarg Expressway for ~96% of route

Utility: City gas distribution in Maharashtra; reduces coal/LPG dependence

Framework: PM GatiShakti National Master Plan — integrated utility + transport corridors

GAIL India Limited: under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas; India's largest gas company

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Lithium Triangle: Argentina + Bolivia + Chile; ~65% of global lithium reserves

India-Australia Critical Minerals Partnership (2022): 5 lithium projects identified

Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary: Mulugu district, Telangana; part of Dandakaranya forest

CRZ Notification 2019: governs construction and development in coastal areas

Seagrass meadows: critical blue carbon sinks; dugong habitat; vulnerable to dredging/runoff

NHIDCL vs NHAI: NHIDCL focuses on border and Northeast state highways; NHAI manages national network overall

Samruddhi Mahamarg: 701-km eight-lane Mumbai–Nagpur Expressway, completed 2023

Sources: PIB, The Hindu, Indian Express, ZeeBiz, Down to Earth

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