



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 24-01-2025**

### **GS-1**

1. Mexico

### **GS-2**

2. Jaitpur nuclear power project

### **GS-3**

3. Private sector Investment
4. BRICS
5. 24 new species added to Munnar faunal stock

## **Mexico**

### **Syllabus: GS-1; Geography- Mapping**

#### **Context**

- Trump Plans To Impose Massive 25% Tariffs On Mexico, Canada By February 1 2025.

#### **Geography**

##### ➤ **Location:**

- Situated in North America, Mexico is bordered by the United States to the north, the Pacific Ocean to the west and south, Guatemala and Belize to the southeast, and the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea to the east.



##### ➤ **Physical Features:**

- Mountain ranges: Sierra Madre Occidental, Sierra Madre Oriental.
- Plateau: Mexican Plateau.
- Volcanic Axis: Includes active volcanoes like Popocatepetl.
- Coastline: Over 9,000 km along the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Mexico.

##### ➤ **Climate:**

- Varied: Ranges from desert in the north to tropical rainforests in the south.
- Influenced by latitude, altitude, and ocean currents.
- **Natural Resources:**
  - Rich in petroleum, silver, copper, gold, and agricultural products like avocados and tomatoes.

### History

- **Pre-Columbian Era:**
  - Advanced civilizations such as the Aztecs, Mayans, and Olmecs.
  - Key archaeological sites: Teotihuacán, Chichen Itza, Tulum.
- **Colonial Period:**
  - Conquered by Spain in 1521 (Hernán Cortés).
  - Became a Spanish colony for 300 years.
- **Independence:**
  - Achieved independence on **September 16, 1810**.
  - Recognized as a federal republic in 1824.
- **Modern Period:**
  - Revolution (1910–1920) led to significant social and land reforms.
  - PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) dominated politics for most of the 20th century.

### Polity

- **Government:**
  - Federal Republic.
  - Three branches: Executive (President), Legislative (Congress of the Union), and Judiciary.
- **Constitution:**
  - Adopted in 1917; includes progressive labor and land reforms.
- **Current President:**
  - Andrés Manuel López Obrador (as of 2025).
- **Administrative Divisions:**
  - 31 states and one federal district (Mexico City).

### Economy

- **Monetary Unit**
  - Mexican Peso (MXN).
- **GDP:**
  - 15th largest economy globally (nominal).

- Main sectors: Oil, manufacturing, agriculture, and services.
- **Trade:**
  - Member of USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement), previously NAFTA.
  - Major trading partner: USA.
- **Tourism:**
  - Rich cultural heritage and biodiversity attract millions of visitors annually.
  - Key sites: Cancun, Riviera Maya, Mexico City, and Oaxaca.

### Culture

- **Language:**
  - Spanish (official) and over 60 indigenous languages.
- **Religion:**
  - Predominantly Roman Catholic.
- **Festivals:**
  - Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead).
  - Cinco de Mayo (commemorates the Battle of Puebla).
- **Cuisine:**
  - World-famous for tacos, enchiladas, guacamole, and mole.

### Biodiversity

- Recognized as one of the **17 megadiverse countries**.
- Home to unique flora and fauna like jaguars, monarch butterflies, and agave plants.

### Key International Relations

- **Regional Role:**
  - Active in Latin American politics, a member of **CELAC** and **Pacific Alliance**.
- **Global Role:**
  - Member of the UN, WTO, G20, and OECD.
  - Actively contributes to climate change discussions (Paris Agreement).
- **India-Mexico Relations:**
  - Strategic partnership since 2007.
  - Cooperation in pharmaceuticals, IT, energy, and cultural exchange.

## **Jaitpur nuclear power project**

**Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations**

### **Context**

- India, France discuss high-tech cooperation, civil nuclear issues ahead of Modi visit in February 2025.

### **About**

- The Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) is a significant initiative aimed at bolstering India's nuclear energy capacity.
- **Located in Madban village of Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra**, the project is poised to become the **world's largest nuclear power generating station** upon completion, with a total capacity of 9,900 MW.

### **Key Features of JNPP:**

- **Reactor Specifications:** The project entails the construction of six European Pressurized Reactors (EPRs), each with a capacity of 1,650 MW. These third-generation pressurized water reactors are designed and developed by Framatome (formerly Areva) of France.
- **International Collaboration:** The foundation for this project was laid with the Indo-French cooperation agreement on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, signed in 2008. Subsequently, in December 2010, an agreement was formalized between Areva and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) for the construction of the reactors and a 25-year fuel supply.
- **Economic Considerations:** The estimated cost of constructing the plant is approximately ₹20 crore (US\$2.7 million) per MW of electric power, which is higher compared to ₹5 crore (US\$660,000) per MW for a coal power station. However, nuclear power plants generally have higher initial investment costs but lower day-to-day operating expenses compared to fossil fuel-based plants.

### **Significance for India:**

The Jaitapur project is poised to play a pivotal role in India's energy strategy by:

- **Enhancing Energy Security:** By adding 9,900 MW to the national grid, JNPP will significantly contribute to meeting the country's growing electricity demand.

- **Promoting Sustainable Energy:** Nuclear power offers a low-carbon alternative to fossil fuels, aiding in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and supporting India's commitments to combat climate change.

### Controversies and Challenges:

Despite its potential benefits, the Jaitapur project has faced several challenges:

- **Seismic Concerns:** The proposed site is in a region categorized under seismic Zone 3, indicating a moderate risk of earthquakes. Historical data from the Geological Survey of India indicates over 92 quakes in 20 years, with the largest recorded at 6.2 on the Richter scale. This has raised safety concerns among local communities and environmentalists.
- **Public Opposition:** There have been significant protests from local residents and environmental groups, citing potential risks to the environment and public safety. Notably, in April 2011, protests escalated, resulting in casualties and heightened tensions in the region.
- **Economic Viability:** Critics have pointed out the high costs associated with the EPR technology and have questioned the economic feasibility of the project, especially when compared to other energy sources.

## Private sector Investment

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy

### Context

- With domestic demand seen waning amid a spike in inflation and input costs, investment plans by India's private sector took a notable hit, falling 1.4% in the October-December 2024 quarter (Q3) after a fleeting recovery in the second quarter (Q2) of 2024-25.
- **Significance of Private Sector Investment**
- **Economic Growth:** Contributes significantly to GDP by driving industrial production and innovation.
- **Employment Generation:** Creates jobs across diverse sectors, including manufacturing, services, and technology.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Investment in critical areas like transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure.
- **Capital Formation:** Bridges the gap in public resources for economic development.
- **Technology Transfer:** Brings advanced technologies and expertise.

### Types of Private Sector Investment

- **Domestic Private Investment:** Capital from Indian private companies invested in various sectors.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Investment by foreign entities in Indian businesses.
- **Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI):** Investment in financial instruments like stocks and bonds.
- **Private Equity and Venture Capital:** Investment in start-ups and high-growth potential businesses.

### Sectors Attracting Private Investment in India

- **Manufacturing:** Through initiatives like "Make in India" and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes.
- **Infrastructure:** Roads, highways, airports, and renewable energy projects.
- **Information Technology:** Software exports and IT services.
- **Healthcare:** Hospitals, diagnostics, and pharmaceuticals.
- **Retail and E-commerce:** Driven by the rising digital economy and consumer demand.

### Government Initiatives to Encourage Private Sector Investment

- **Ease of Doing Business Reforms:** Streamlining regulations, reducing red tape, and digitizing approvals.
- **FDI Policy Reforms:** Liberalizing investment caps in sectors like defense, insurance, and aviation.
- **Incentives:** Tax holidays, reduced corporate tax rates, and PLI schemes.
- **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP):** A roadmap for private participation in infrastructure.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):** Collaboration in infrastructure and service delivery.
- **Startup India:** Support for entrepreneurship and venture capital funding.

### Challenges in Private Sector Investment

- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Complex compliance requirements and delays in approvals.
- **Land Acquisition Issues:** Prolonged processes increase project costs.
- **Policy Uncertainty:** Frequent changes deter long-term investments.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Poor connectivity and logistical bottlenecks.
- **High Cost of Capital:** Elevated interest rates reduce affordability for businesses.

### Recent Developments and Data

- **FDI Inflows:** India received \$83.57 billion in FDI during FY2021-22, marking significant growth.
- **PLI Scheme Expansion:** Extends to sectors like electronics, auto components, and textiles to boost domestic manufacturing.
- **Digital India Drive:** Increased private investments in IT infrastructure and fintech.
- **Greenfield and Brownfield Investments:** Investments in new projects and expansions of existing ones.

### International Comparisons

- **India vs. China:** While China heavily focuses on domestic manufacturing, India emphasizes service exports and digital technologies.
- **India vs. Southeast Asia:** Nations like Vietnam and Indonesia compete with India in attracting FDI due to lower costs and liberal policies.

## **BRICS**

### Syllabus: GS-3; Economic Institutions

#### Context

- Recently, United States President Donald Trump repeated his intention to impose 100% import tariffs on the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries if they took any steps towards cutting the use of the dollar in global trade.





## About

- **BRICS** is an acronym for **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**, representing five major emerging economies. Together, these countries aim to foster economic, political, and cultural cooperation to address global challenges.

## Background

- **Formation:**
  - Originally a grouping of four countries (BRIC) proposed by economist **Jim O'Neill** in 2001.
  - **South Africa** joined in **2010**, turning it into BRICS.
- **Objective:**
  - To promote **peace, security, and development** in a multipolar world.
  - Reform international financial and political institutions to reflect the interests of emerging economies.

## Key Features of BRICS

- **Economic Significance:**
  - Represents over **41% of the world population**.
  - Accounts for **26% of global GDP** (nominal) and nearly **32% of global GDP** in purchasing power parity (PPP).
  - Contributes about **16% of global trade**.
- **Geopolitical Importance:**
  - Aims to counterbalance Western-dominated institutions like the **World Bank, IMF, and UN Security Council**.
- **Institutions and Mechanisms:**
  - **New Development Bank (NDB):**
    - Established in 2014, headquartered in **Shanghai, China**.
    - Provides infrastructure and sustainable development loans to member and non-member countries.
  - **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA):**
    - A financial safety net to provide liquidity support during economic crises.
  - **BRICS Business Council:**
    - Facilitates cooperation among private and public sectors.

## BRICS Summits

- **First Summit:**
  - Held in **Yekaterinburg, Russia (2009)**.
- **Rotational Presidency:**
  - Each member holds the presidency on a rotational basis and hosts the annual summit.

- **Recent Summit:**
  - **15th BRICS Summit** in **Johannesburg, South Africa (2023)**.
  - Key outcomes included expansion of BRICS and discussions on de-dollarization and digital currencies.

### BRICS Expansion

- **New Members Announced in 2023:**
  - **Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Egypt, Argentina, Ethiopia** to join in **2024**.
- **Impact of Expansion:**
  - Represents a broader coalition of Global South nations.
  - Strengthens BRICS's global influence in economic and geopolitical matters.

### Key Areas of Cooperation

- **Economic:**
  - Trade and investment.
  - Promotion of intra-BRICS trade using local currencies.
- **Technology:**
  - Collaboration in space technology, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence.
- **Health:**
  - Efforts to combat pandemics, including BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Center.
- **Sustainability:**
  - Commitment to addressing climate change and promoting renewable energy.
- **Global Governance:**
  - Advocacy for reforming the **UN, IMF, and World Bank** to reflect the interests of developing countries.

### Significance for India

- **Economic Growth:**
  - A platform for increasing trade and investment among member nations.
  - Access to development funds for infrastructure and green projects.
- **Geopolitical Influence:**
  - Enables India to play a significant role in shaping global policies.
- **Strategic Interests:**
  - Counterbalance to China in Asia and in multilateral forums.
- **South-South Cooperation:**
  - Strengthens ties with other Global South countries.

### Challenges

- **Internal Divisions:**

- Differing political systems and national interests, especially between India and China.
- **Economic Disparities:**
  - Members have varying levels of development and economic capabilities.
- **Geopolitical Rivalries:**
  - India-China border tensions often hinder unified decision-making.
- **Dependence on the Dollar:**
  - Despite discussions on de-dollarization, most trade is still dollar-denominated.

## **24 new species added to Munnar faunal stock**

**Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity**

### **Context**

- The exercise, undertaken by the Forest department and the Travancore Nature History Society from January 8 to 12, simultaneously surveyed national parks and wildlife sanctuaries lying between 500 and 2,800 metres in elevation.



### **Survey Details**

The survey was carried out by the **Forest Department** in collaboration with the **Travancore Nature History Society** between **January 8 and 12, 2025**. It covered six key locations:

- **Mathikettan Shola National Park (MSNP)**
- **Pambadum Shola National Park (PSNP)**
- **Anamudi Shola National Park (ANP)**
- **Kurinjomala Wildlife Sanctuary (KWLS)**
- **Eravikulam National Park (ENP)**
- **Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary (CWLS)**

The surveyed region spans an elevation range of 500 to 2,800 meters and involved 21 teams comprising 78 delegates.

### **Bird Species Highlights**

A total of **217 bird species** were documented, including **11 new additions**, bringing the bird checklist of the Munnar Wildlife Division to **258 species**. The newly documented birds are:

- Brown Hawk Owl
- Barred Buttonquail
- Spotted Owlet
- Mottled Wood Owl
- Baya Weaver
- Red Munia (Red Avadavat)
- Richard's Pipit
- Jerdon's Bushlark
- Golden-Headed Cisticola
- Large Grey Babbler
- Chestnut-Bellied Nuthatch

Other notable sightings include the **Nilgiri Wood Pigeon**, **Mountain Imperial Pigeon**, **Steppe Eagle**, **Montagu's Harrier**, and **Indian Grey Hornbill**.

### **Butterflies**

Munnar's butterfly diversity grew with **166 species** recorded, including **8 new additions**, raising the total to **246 species**. Key endemic butterflies observed include:

- Red-disc Bushbrown
- Palni Bush-Brown
- Palni Fritillary
- Nilgiri Clouded Yellow
- Nilgiri Tiger

24 January 2024

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The **Grass Jewel**, the smallest butterfly in the State, was abundant at Chinnar, while the largest Indian butterfly, the **Southern Birdwing**, was widely documented.

### Odonates

The survey identified **five new odonate species**, increasing Munnar's total to **58 species**. Newly recorded species include:

- *Cratilla lineata calverti*
- *Macrodiplax cora*
- *Palpopleura sexmaculata*
- *Tholymis tillarga*
- *Lestes elatus*

### Mammals, Reptiles, and Amphibians

The survey also documented key mammals, including:

- **Nilgiri Tahr**
- **Tigers**
- **Leopards**
- **Nilgiri Martens**
- **Gaurs**
- **Elephants**

Additionally, **12 species of reptiles and amphibians** were recorded.

The survey was formally inaugurated by **Harikrishnan K.V., Wildlife Warden, Munnar Wildlife Division**.