

Steel Slag Road Technology

Context

India has set a **Guinness World Record** for the world's longest **steel slag road**, with a **1.85-km road** at **Raigarh, Chhattisgarh**.

About Steel Slag

1. **Nature:** An **industrial by-product of steelmaking**, generated during steel production.
2. **Production:** Generated mainly through **electric arc furnaces** and **basic oxygen furnaces**.
3. **Composition:** Contains **calcium, magnesium, manganese and aluminium silicates and oxides**.
4. **Types:** The **cooling process** determines the properties and types of slag for different uses.

Steel Slag Road Technology

1. **Use:** Processes steel slag into **road aggregates**, replacing conventional natural aggregates.
2. **Developer:** Developed by **CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI)** with private-sector participation.
3. **Performance:** Can reduce construction costs by around **40%** and provide about **four times the strength** of conventional roads.
4. **Durability:** In suitable applications, the maintenance cycle can extend to around **15 years**.
5. **Waste-to-Wealth:** Promotes **industrial waste utilisation, resource efficiency and sustainable infrastructure** while reducing dependence on natural aggregates.

Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)

Context

A three-day **Table Top Exercise (TTX)** under the **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)** concluded at **Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam**, focusing on coordinated responses to **illicit maritime activities in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

About Colombo Security Conclave

1. **Nature:** A **regional security framework** established in **2020** to address common transnational security challenges.
2. **Members:** **India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Bangladesh and Seychelles**.
3. **Background:** Evolved from the **India-Maldives-Sri Lanka maritime security trilateral**, initiated in **2011**; Mauritius joined in **2022**, Bangladesh in **2024**, and Seychelles became the **sixth member**.
4. **Secretariat:** **Colombo, Sri Lanka**.

Table Top Exercise 2026

1. **Focus:** Simulated responses to **maritime terrorism, narcotics smuggling, human trafficking and IUU fishing**.
2. **Maritime Domain Awareness:** Strengthened **information sharing and operational coordination**.
3. **Objective:** Review **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** and improve collective response mechanisms.

Ramanathaswamy Temple

Context

The **Ramanathaswamy Temple** in Tamil Nadu featured in the backdrop as the Prime Minister welcomed **BRICS** leaders.

About Ramanathaswamy Temple

1. **Location:** A Hindu temple dedicated to **Lord Shiva**, located on **Rameswaram Island, Tamil Nadu**.
2. **Religious Significance:** One of the **12 Jyotirlinga temples** and one of the four **Char Dham** shrines, along with **Badrinath, Dwarka and Puri**.
3. **Unique Status:** The **only Shiva temple among the four Char Dham shrines** and the **only Jyotirlinga in southern India**.
4. **Mythological Link:** According to the **Ramayana tradition**, Lord Rama worshipped Shiva at Rameswaram after defeating Ravana.

Historical Development

1. **Early Construction:** The first stone temple is associated with the **Chola period in the 12th century**.
2. **Later Additions:** Expanded by the **Pandya and Vijayanagara rulers** and completed under the **Sethupati rulers of Ramnad**.

Architecture

1. **Style:** Known for **Dravidian architecture**, including towering **gopurams, carved granite walls and pillared halls**.
2. **Corridor:** Famous for having one of the **longest temple corridors in India**, measuring about **197 m east-west and 133 m north-south**.
3. **Holy Wells:** Contains **22 sacred wells**, whose water is traditionally used in temple rituals.

South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN)

Context

South Asian countries adopted the **Kathmandu Declaration** to strengthen coordinated action against **illegal wildlife trade and transnational wildlife crime** at the first General Assembly of **SAWEN** in Kathmandu.

About SAWEN

1. **Nature:** A **regional intergovernmental mechanism** for cooperation against illegal wildlife trade.
2. **Members:** **India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bhutan**.
3. **Established:** Officially launched in **2011** at the second meeting of the **South Asia Experts Group on Illegal Wildlife Trade** in **Paro, Bhutan**.
4. **Secretariat:** Formally established in **Kathmandu, Nepal**, in **2011**.

5. **Aim:** Combat wildlife crime through **cooperation, collaboration, coordination, capacity building and communication.**

Kathmandu Declaration

1. **Intelligence Sharing:** Strengthen **regional intelligence and information exchange** on wildlife crimes.
2. **Financial Investigation:** Promote **financial investigations, anti-money laundering measures and asset recovery.**
3. **Criminal Justice:** Improve **investigation and prosecution** of organised wildlife crime.
4. **Transnational Crime:** Support recognition of serious wildlife crime as **transnational organised crime.**

Mayun Island

Context

Mayun Island, also known as **Perim Island**, has gained strategic attention due to its location in the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait** at the southern entrance of the **Red Sea**.

About Mayun Island

1. **Location:** A small **volcanic island of Yemen** situated in the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait**.
2. **Area & Elevation:** Covers about **13 sq km** and rises up to around **65 metres**.
3. **Strategic Position:** Lies near the narrowest part of the strait, which is about **26 km wide**.
4. **Geographical Role:** Divides the Bab el-Mandeb into **two channels** and overlooks the major maritime chokepoint.

Strategic Features

1. **Maritime Chokepoint:** Its position enables influence over shipping passing through the **Bab el-Mandeb**, a key link between the **Red Sea and Gulf of Aden**.
2. **Infrastructure:** Has a **natural harbour** on the southwestern side and a **military airfield** in the north.

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Yemen's Mayun Island

Mayun Island, also known as Perim Island, sits about 3km (1.9 miles) off Yemen's southwestern coast, controlling access to the Bab al-Mandeb strait – a key global shipping chokepoint.

