

## 1. Patna Water Metro: Turning River Constraints into a Transit Asset

### What is the Patna Water Metro Project?



- A modern passenger ferry system along the Ganga.
- Will use electric or hybrid boats, functioning like a metro on water.
- Inspired by the Kochi Water Metro, which launched in 2023.

### Why Does Patna Need It?

- Chronic road congestion on major routes like Gandhi Setu, Bypass Road.
- The city's linear layout and surrounding rivers limit road expansion.
- Thousands of heavy vehicles, especially sand trucks, exceed Patna's road capacity daily.
- Existing rivers are under-utilised for transport despite being central to Patna's geography.

### The Role of Patna's Geography

- Bounded by rivers: Ganga (north), Sone (west), and Punpun (south).
- These rivers offer a natural corridor for water-based public transport.

### Challenges Ahead

- Seasonal river changes (depth and sedimentation) can impact navigation.
- Need for modern infrastructure and regulatory frameworks.
- Existing ferry operations are unregulated and informal.

### Key Benefits

- Reduces traffic on crowded roads.

- Eco-friendly: Electric boats emit less pollution.
- Affordable daily commute option.
- Boosts local economy: Jobs in construction, tourism, and transport.
- Enhances connectivity for riverside communities.

### National Significance

- Part of India's push to improve urban water transport.
- Aligned with the Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) on National Waterway-1.
- Supports India's inland shipping and green transport goals.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: Indian Express

## 2. Global Potato Research Center to be Set Up in Agra: What It Means for India

### What's the Big News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved a new International Potato Center - South Asia Regional Centre (CSARC) in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
- It will be a regional wing of the Peru-based International Potato Center (CIP), a global leader in potato and sweet potato research.

### What is the International Potato Center (CIP)?

- Headquartered in Lima, Peru, CIP was founded in 1971.
- It focuses on improving potato, sweet potato, and other tuber crops, especially in developing countries.
- CIP started working with India in 1975, in partnership with ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research).

**Cabinet Approves International Potato Center's South Asia Regional Centre in UP**

To be established in **Uttar Pradesh's Agra**

**Major objectives:**

- To increase **food & nutrition security, farmers' income,** and generate **job opportunities**
- To improve **potato & sweetpotato productivity, post-harvest management, and value-addition**

The infographic also features a photograph of a farmer working in a potato field, surrounded by harvested tubers.

### Why is This Important for India?

- Potato is the 3rd most consumed crop globally after rice and wheat.
- India is 2nd largest producer (after China)

### A major consumer but with low yields:

Potato: 25 tonnes/ha (can go up to 50 tonnes/ha)

Sweet potato: 11.5 tonnes/ha (can go up to 30 tonnes/ha)

### • The center will:

- Improve seed quality and availability

- Reduce dependence on seed imports
- Open up export opportunities
- Strengthen the food processing sector

### How Does This Compare Globally?

- China set up a similar center in Beijing in 2017 — the China Center for Asia Pacific (CCCAP).
- This will be the second international CIP center in Asia.
- It will also be India's second international agri-research center, after the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Varanasi.

### India's Potato Power: Key Stats

- Global production (2020): 359 million tonnes
  - China: 78.24 million tonnes
  - India: 51.30 million tonnes
- **Top producing states in India:**
  - Uttar Pradesh: 15 million tonnes
  - West Bengal: 15 million tonnes
  - Bihar: 9 million tonnes
  - Others: Gujarat, MP, Punjab

Relevance: GS Prelims; Geography

Source: Indian Express

## 3. Shaktipeeth Expressway: A ₹80,000-Crore Project Facing Roadblocks

### What is the Shaktipeeth Expressway?

- A proposed 802-km, six-lane greenfield expressway from Nagpur to Goa, passing through 12 districts of Maharashtra.
- Designed to boost religious tourism by connecting 18 major Shaktipeeth temples, and promote economic growth across central and western Maharashtra.
- The project is led by Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), with initial planning by the Public Works Department (PWD).

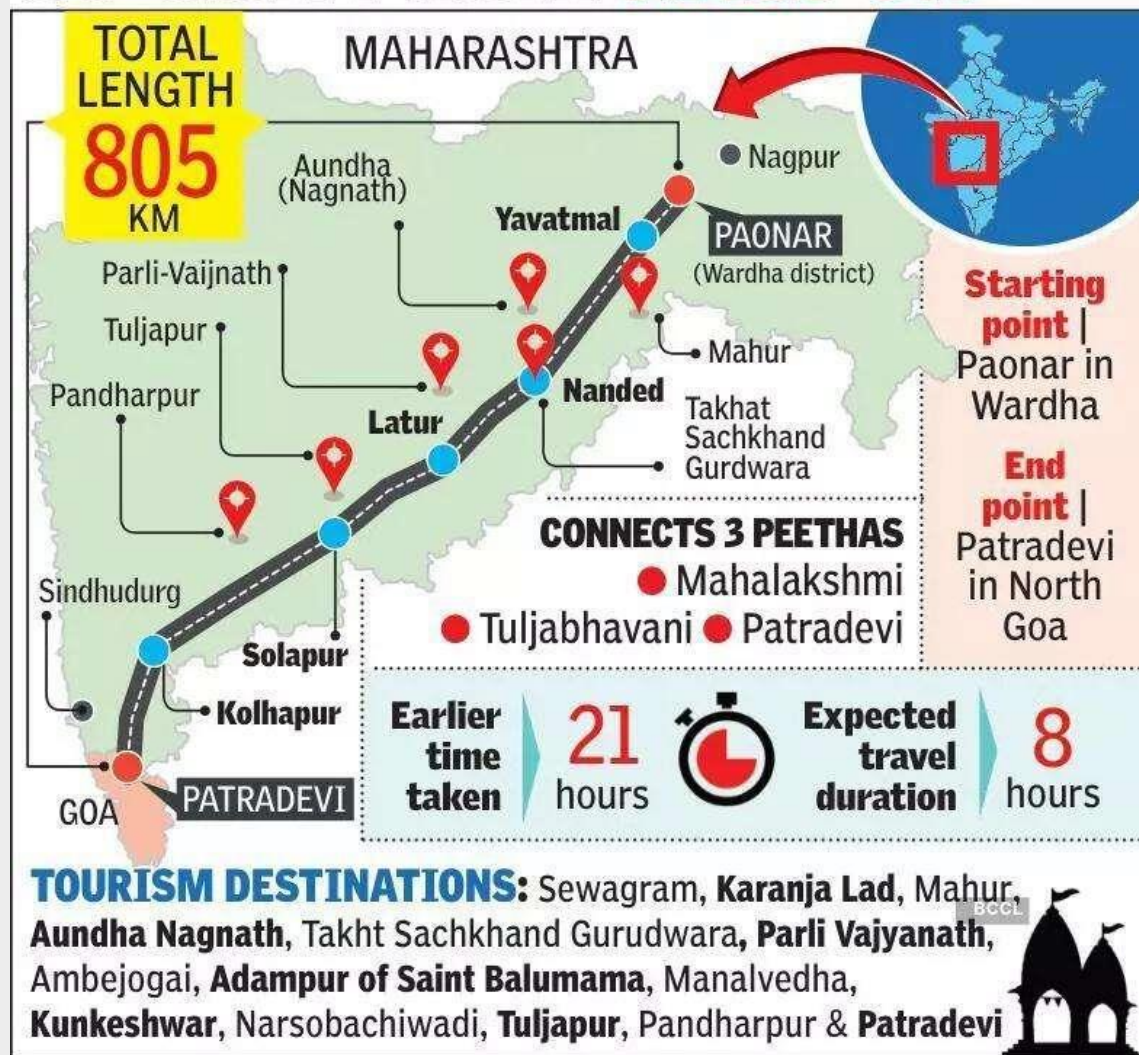
### Project Highlights

- Estimated Cost: Over ₹80,000 crore.
- Land Needed: 8,615 hectares (8,149 ha privately owned).
- Key Funding: ₹20,787 crore allocated for land acquisition; ₹12,000 crore secured from HUDCO.
- Construction Model: EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) — one contractor handles the entire process.

### Why Was the Project Proposed?

- Announced in September 2022 by then-Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis.
- Aims to reduce current 21-hour travel time from Nagpur to Goa.

# GO GOA FROM NAGPUR



## Current Status (as of June 2025)

- Land acquisition resumed in February 2025 after BJP returned to power in Maharashtra.
- On June 24, the state cabinet approved funds for acquisition and planning.
- Full-scale construction yet to begin, pending clearances and resolution of land acquisition issues.

## Why Are Farmers Protesting?

- The expressway cuts through fertile, agriculturally productive areas, especially in Western Maharashtra.
- Key districts like Solapur, Yavatmal, and Kolhapur are set to lose large swathes of private farmland.
- Farmers, especially sugarcane and cash crop growers, fear loss of livelihood and low compensation.
- The expressway became a major election issue in 2024, with local leaders like Raju Shetti and Ashok Chavan openly opposing it.

### **Concerns Over Redundancy and Environment**

- Critics argue that the Nagpur–Ratnagiri National Highway, already being expanded, covers a similar route.
- Environmentalists worry about ecological damage in the Western Ghats and Konkan, both biodiversity hotspots and ecologically sensitive zones.

### **State Government's Stand**

- CM Fadnavis defends the project as a game-changer, saying it will boost connectivity to ports, airports, and pilgrimage centres.
- He compares its potential impact to that of the Samruddhi Expressway, which helped transform the economy along its route.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

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