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1 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (Source: The Indian Express)

Establishment

- UNEP was established on 5th June 1972 by the United Nations General Assembly during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden.

Mandate

- UNEP's primary goal is to promote international cooperation on environmental issues, address environmental challenges, and encourage sustainable development globally.

Headquarters

- Nairobi, Kenya.

Funding

- UNEP relies on voluntary contributions from member states, organisations, and donors to finance its programs and activities.

Reports

- Emissions Gap Report (annual)
- Adaptation Gap Report
- Production Gap Report
- Global Environment Outlook (GEO)
- Frontiers Report
- Environment Rule of Law Report

Initiatives

- Global Methane Assessment (with CCAC).
- Clean Seas Campaign against marine plastic pollution.
- #BeatPollution / #BeatPlasticPollution initiatives.
- Faith for Earth Initiative.
- UNEP organises World Environment Day (WED) on 5th June every year.



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Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope (Source: The Indian Express)

The Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope is NASA's newest infrared space observatory, launched on 30 August 2026 to study dark energy, dark matter, exoplanets, and the large-scale structure of the universe.

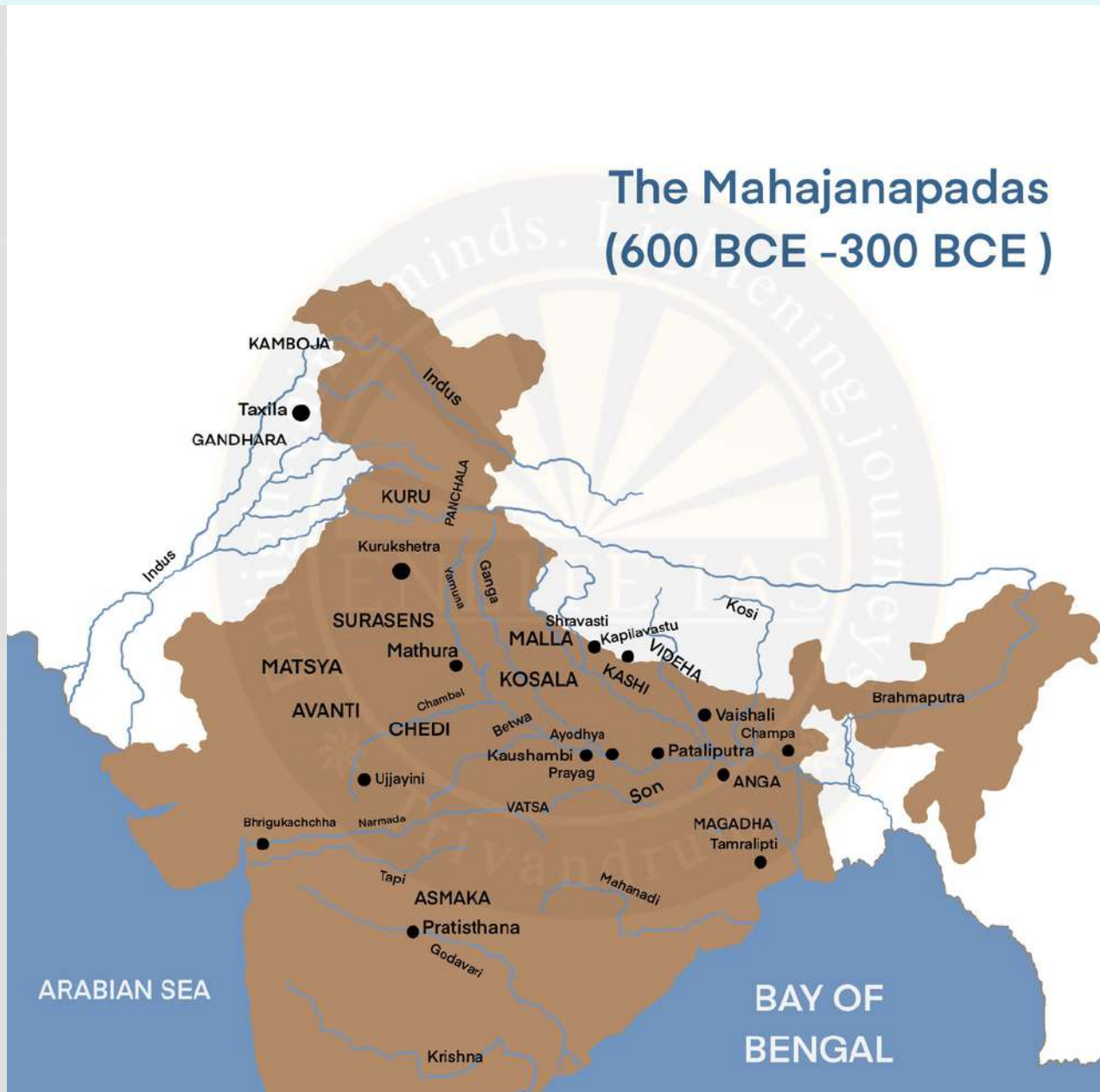
- **Launch:** SpaceX Falcon Heavy from Kennedy Space Center, Florida.
- **Orbit:** Heading to the Sun–Earth L2 Lagrange point.
- **Mission Duration:** 5-year primary mission, to operate up to 10 years.
- **Named After:** Dr. Nancy Grace Roman, NASA's first chief of astronomy, known as the "Mother of Hubble"



3 Mahajanapadas (Source: The Hindu)

The Mahajanapadas were 16 large and powerful kingdoms that emerged in ancient India during the 6th century BCE.

- The Mahajanapadas were found in northern and eastern India.
- The modern-day states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh were included.
- Magadha, Anga, Kashi, Kosala, Avanti, Vatsa, Gandhara, Kamboja, Chedi, Vajji, Malla, Kuru, Panchala, Matsya, Surasena, and Assaka were among the 16 Mahajanapadas.





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Political Structure

- Mahajanapadas had monarchies, republics (Ganas/Sanghas), and oligarchies, with monarchies being the most common.
- Monarchies were ruled by a king, assisted by the Mantri-Parishad (Council of Ministers).
- Kings consulted Brahmanas, ministers and Rajsabha on important matters.
- Republics were governed by a council or assembly, headed by an executive chief.
- Oligarchies were controlled by a small group of powerful people.
- Each Mahajanapada had a capital city and organised administrative system.
- The king was responsible for defence, supported by an organised army.
- An efficient tax and revenue collection system supported the administration.

Socio-Economic Condition

- Society consisted of nobles, traders, peasants, artisans and workers
- The caste system was evolving and social distinctions became more prominent.
- Kassaka and Ksetrika were terms associated with cultivators or peasants.
- Slavery existed, with slaves employed in manual and domestic work.
- Marriage alliances were used to develop political relations between kingdoms.
- Agriculture was the principal occupation, making the economy predominantly agrarian.
- Expansion of trade routes and urban centres encouraged trade and commerce.
- Punch-marked coins, mainly made of silver and copper, facilitated commercial transactions.
- Coins generally carried symbols and marks punched onto the metal.

Reasons for the Development of Mahajanapadas

- **Agricultural Surplus:** Increased agricultural production generated surplus and supported larger political units.
- **Trade and Commerce:** Expansion of trade routes created wealth and encouraged control over important commercial centres.
- **Decline of Tribal/Vedic Order:** Older tribal political structures gradually gave way to more organised territorial states.
- **Competition for Resources:** Rivalry over fertile land, water, minerals and trade routes encouraged territorial expansion.
- **Population Growth:** Increasing population required stronger and more organised administrative systems.
- **Urbanisation:** Growth of towns created new centres of political and economic activity.
- **Social Stratification:** Emergence of powerful ruling and wealthy classes strengthened organised political institutions.
- **Iron Technology:** Iron tools facilitated forest clearance and agricultural expansion, while iron weapons strengthened armies.