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A Weekly Current Affairs Initiative

**KAS, FDA/SDA/PDO/ GROUP C,
PSI/PC, TEACHER'S EXAMS**

ಕನ್ನಡ & English

By- Nandan Sir

August 3rd Week 2026

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- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)
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- Satkosia Tiger Reserve

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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

AUGUST 3RD WEEK 2026

Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme (CMAS)

Government Schemes



Context

- The Union Government has proposed a **₹10,000 crore Container Manufacturing Assistance Scheme (CMAS)**

About -

- **Launch:** Announced in Union Budget 2026–27.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- **Financial Outlay:** ₹10,000 crore over 5 years.
- **Primary Objective:** Build a self-reliant domestic shipping container ecosystem.

Key Targets

- **Production:** Scale capacity to 7.5 lakh TEUs annually.
- **Economic Value:** Unlock ₹80,000 crore market opportunity.
- **Employment:** 3,000 direct and 50,000 indirect jobs.
- **Scope:** Supports both Greenfield and Brownfield units.

Significance

- **Import Substitution:** Reduces reliance on 2 million imported containers annually.

- **Supply Chain Resilience:** insulates Indian exports from global logistics shocks.
- **Policy Synergy:** Aligns with **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**, **PM Gati Shakti**, and **Make in India**.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)

Government Schemes



Context

- The Standing Committee on Rural Development has highlighted the gap between skill training and actual employment outcomes under the **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)**.

About

- **Implementation - Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**
- **Launched in - 2014.**
- It is a **placement-linked skill development programme** under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- **Age Limit:** Rural youth between **15 and 35 years of age** (age limit is up to 45 years for women, SC/ST, persons with disabilities and minorities).
- **Objective - It aims to skill rural youth and promote sustainable livelihoods** for rural youth through placement-linked skilling programs.

PM-POSHAN Government Schemes



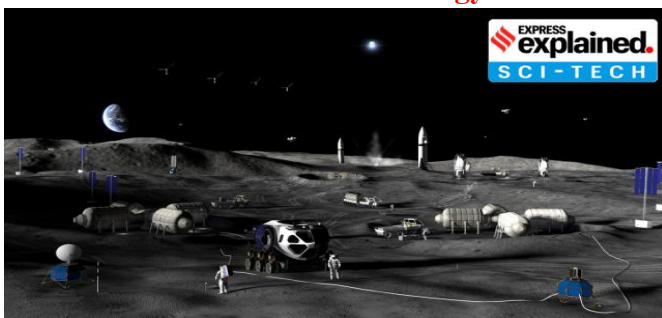
In News

- Delhi government schools will have a new menu for PM-POSHAN with additions such as idli-sambar.

Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN)

- Earlier known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and renamed as PM POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman) in 2021.
- It operates under the Ministry of Education and is approved for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme (jointly funded by Centre and States) providing one hot cooked meal to students in government and aided schools up to Class 8.
- It aims to address hunger (lack of adequate food intake) and educational outcomes (attendance, retention, learning) simultaneously.

Moon Base Programme Science & Technology



In News

- US space agency NASA has invited ISRO to join its Moon Base programme building on partnership under the Artemis Accords.

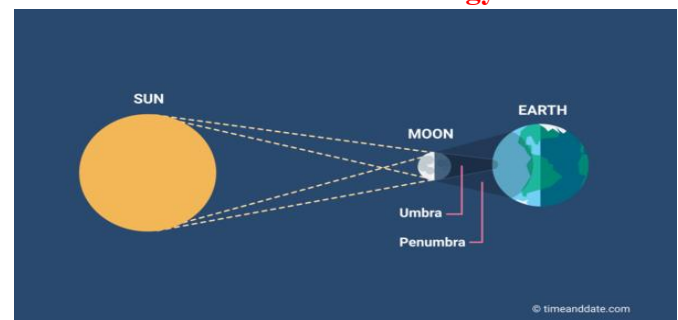
Moon Base

- It is humanity's first lunar outpost, a place where astronauts will live, work, and explore near the Moon's South Pole.
- NASA and its partners will build the infrastructure needed to support an enduring human presence on the lunar surface while advancing science, technology, and exploration for the benefit of all.

Additional Information - Artemis Accord

- Objective - These are a set of principles and guidelines for international cooperation in space exploration.
- Status - They are not a legally binding instrument.
- Launched by - They were announced by NASA in 2020 and named after NASA's Artemis program which is aimed at returning humans to the Moon by the mid-2020s.
- Members: Artemis Accords has 39 members including Australia, France, Germany, India, Japan, United Kingdom, United States of America etc.
- India's membership - India joined the Artemis Accords in 2023.
- Note - Russia and China are not part of the Artemis Accords.

Total Solar Eclipse Science & Technology



Context

- Recently, a total solar eclipse occurred, providing an important opportunity to

understand celestial mechanics, the Earth–Moon system and solar phenomena.

Solar Eclipse

- It occurs when the Moon is between the Sun and Earth and the shadow of the Moon is cast on Earth, blocking the Sun's light from reaching certain parts of the world.

Solar eclipse

- Solar eclipses are **classified mainly into three types**:
- **Total Solar Eclipse (Umbra)**: The Moon fully blocks the visible disc of the Sun. Those in the line of totality will get to experience a brief darkness in the daylight.
- **Partial Solar Eclipse (Penumbra)**: The Moon obscures part of the Sun, causing a 'bite' to be taken out of the solar disc.
- **Annular Solar Eclipse (Antumbra)**: When the Moon is approaching the point of its orbit farthest from Earth, its apparent size is smaller than the Sun. It therefore leaves a dazzling outer ring, commonly known as the 'Ring of Fire'.

Black-necked Cranes (BNC) **Environment**



Context

- The **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)** has sterilised over **2,950 Free Ranging Dogs (FRD)** to save **Black-necked Cranes (BNC)** and wildlife in Ladakh.

Black-necked Crane (Grus nigricollis)

- It is **one of the 15 crane species** found worldwide
- It is considered the **only high-altitude/alpine crane species**.
- **Habitat & Distribution**: In India, it is found in **Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh**, particularly in high-altitude wetlands and marshes.
- Its global range extends across the Tibetan Plateau and adjoining Himalayan regions, including **China, India, Bhutan and Nepal**.
- **Population**: **Fewer than 100 Black-necked Cranes** are estimated to remain in India, out of a **global population of around 15,000**.
- **Major Threats**: Predation by **free-ranging dogs**, **changing agricultural practices**, rapid and **unregulated development around high-altitude wetlands**.

Conservation Status:

- The species receives the highest legal protection under **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 - Schedule I**
- **IUCN Red List - Near Threatened**
- It is also protected under **CITES and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species**
- **Near Threatened under IUCN Red List**.
- **State Bird**: It is the **State bird of Ladakh** and holds special significance in Ladakh's Buddhist culture.

Additional Information - Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)

- BNHS is **one of the largest and oldest non-governmental organizations** in India dedicated to **nature conservation and biodiversity research**.
- **Founded on September 15, 1883, in Mumbai**, its mission is to conserve nature through action based on research, education, and public awareness.

Vaishya Tekri Stupa in Ujjain History & Culture



Context

- The Madhya Pradesh government is considering fresh excavation at Vaishya Tekri in Ujjain, where a massive Buddhist stupa probably larger than Sanchi Stupa, was partially excavated in 1938–39.

Vaishya Tekri

- Vaishya Tekri is a large archaeological mound located near Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.
- It is believed to contain the remains of a large Buddhist stupa, popularly associated with the ancient Kanipura/Kanakgiri Buddhist establishment.
- The site has been tentatively dated to the Mauryan period, around the 3rd century BCE. The monument has traditionally been associated with Emperor Ashoka and his period of governance at Ujjain.
- The stupa is estimated to have an approximate diameter of 350 ft and a height of 100 ft or more.

Additional Information - The Great Stupa of Sanchi

- A stupa is a Buddhist commemorative monument usually containing sacred relics of the Buddha or other saints.

- **Established:** The stupa was commissioned in the third century BCE by Emperor Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty.
- The stupa was subsequently enlarged and embellished during the Shunga and Satavahana periods.
- **Structure:** The Great Stupa is a hemispherical dome made of stone and brick, with a central structure that is a large, raised platform containing the relics of the Buddha.
- It is topped by a 'harmika' that holds the triple umbrella, or 'chhatraveli', which represents the three jewels of Buddhism – the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.
- Above the dome, there is a pillar-like structure called the chatra, which is a symbol of the Buddha's presence and enlightenment.
- The Stupa is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a pilgrimage destination for Buddhists from around the world.

India's Campaign For a UN Security Council (UNSC) Seat in 2028-29 International Relation

Context

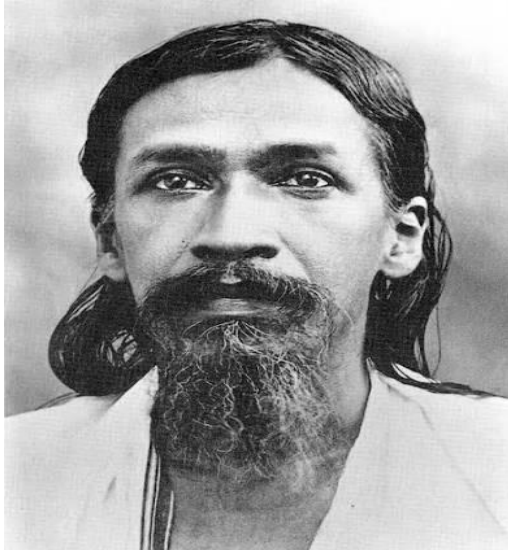
- India has launched its campaign for a non-permanent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) seat for 2028–29, with the election scheduled for June 2027.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations
- **Objective** - to maintain international peace and security.
- It is the only UN body empowered to issue legally binding resolutions that all UN member states are obligated to comply with under international law.
- **Structure and Composition:** The Council has 15 members divided into two categories:
- **Permanent Members (P5) with Veto Power:** China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

- A single veto from any P5 member is sufficient to block any substantive resolution, regardless of how many other members support it.
- **Non-Permanent Members (10 seats):** Elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms, distributed geographically.
- **Headquarters:** New York, USA

Sri Aurobindo History & Culture



Context

- PM Modi paid tribute to Sri Aurobindo (15 August 1872–5 December 1950) on his birth anniversary.

About -

- He received his **primary education in England at St. Paul's School, London, and King's College, Cambridge.**
- He returned to India in **1893** and worked for the next thirteen years in the **Princely State of Baroda** and as a professor in Baroda College.

Role in freedom struggle

- He helped establish a **series of youth clubs**, including the **Anushilan Samiti of Calcutta in 1902.**
- In 1906, Aurobindo was appointed the **first principal of the National College in Calcutta (Bengal National College)**, and started to impart national education to Indian youth.
- He was the **first political leader in India to openly put forward the idea of complete independence for the country** in his newspaper **Bande Mataram.**
- In 1907 at the **Surat session of Congress**, he led along with extremists.
- He was **arrested in 1908** in connection with the **Alipore Bomb Case.**

Yogic Life

- Sri Aurobindo had **begun the practice of Yoga in 1905 in Baroda.**
- In 1910 he **withdrew from politics** and went to Pondicherry in order to **devote himself entirely to his inner spiritual life and work.**
- During his forty years in Pondicherry he evolved a **new method of spiritual practice, which he called the Integral Yoga.**
- In 1926, he founded the **Sri Aurobindo Ashram.**

Literary works

- **The Life Divine**, which deals with the philosophical aspect of Integral Yoga.
- **Synthesis of Yoga**, which deals with the principles and methods of Integral Yoga.

- **Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol**, an epic poem.
- He also started two weeklies: the **Karmayogin** in English and the **Dharma** in Bengali.

Rajasthan Trees (Protection) Bill-2026

Polity

Context

- The Rajasthan Cabinet has approved the **Rajasthan Trees (Protection) Bill-2026**.

Rajasthan Trees (Protection) Bill, 2026

- **Aim:** Regulate tree felling on **non-forest/private land** and strengthen tree conservation.
- **Protected species:** **29 tree species**, including **Khejri, Peepal, Bargad, Rohida, Mahua and Tendu**.
- **Permission:** Prior permission required for felling protected trees, including on private land.
- **Compensatory plantation:** Permission may require planting prescribed trees in the same area.
- **Penalty:** Up to **1 year imprisonment and/or ₹1 lakh fine**.
- **Significance:** Protects biodiversity, checks **desertification** and safeguards Rajasthan's ecologically important trees.

Surrogate Advertisements

Polity

Context

- Maharashtra's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued **show-cause notices to actors alleging that their advertisement for Vimal Elaichi** amounts to surrogate advertising for Vimal Pan Masala.

Surrogate advertising

- It is a form of marketing used **to promote products banned or limited from advertising**

under government regulations, such as alcohol, tobacco, and pan masala.

- Maharashtra has prohibited gutkha and pan masala containing tobacco or nicotine since 2012 under Section 30(2)(a) of the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006.

Misleading Advertisement Under the Consumer Protection Act 2019

- **Legal Definition (Section 2(28))** - Any advertisement that falsely describes products, gives deceptive guarantees, or deliberately conceals material information.
- **Enforcing Body:** The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** regulates violations and enforces the 2022 Guidelines to protect consumer rights.
- **Advertising:** Strictly banned to stop restricted items (alcohol/tobacco) from using permitted shadow products (soda/cardamom) for branding.
- **Coaching Institute Crackdown:** Penalises institutes that hide course details when using toppers' photos (e.g., claiming a mock-interview student as a full-time student).
- **Greenwashing & Labels:** Targets unverified, misleading eco-friendly or health claims like "100% natural" to ensure scientific accuracy.
- **Financial Penalties:** Fines up to **₹10 Lakh** for a first offence and up to **₹50 Lakh** for subsequent violations.
- **Targeted Liability:** Punishes manufacturers, publishers, and celebrity endorsers, with endorsers facing a product endorsement ban of up to 3 years.

Saptadhara Economy



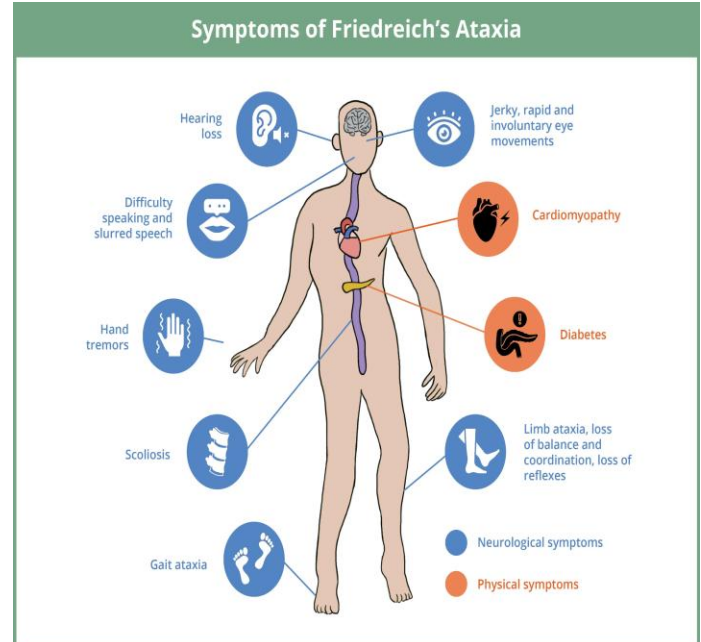
News

- Prime Minister launched a seven-point 'Saptadhara' reform framework to fast-track India's goal of attaining a Viksit Bharat by 2047,

Saptadhara

1. **Manufacturing Power:** Scaling up quality and global integration.
2. **Agricultural Power:** Boosting processing, storage, and food exports.
3. **Technology & Innovation:** Advancing AI, semiconductors, and R&D.
4. **Connectivity:** Enhancing multimodal logistics and infrastructure.
5. **Defence Power:** Achieving self-reliance in high-tech armaments.
6. **Green & Blue Economy:** Expanding renewables and ocean resources.
7. **Soft Power:** Promoting culture, tourism, and heritage globally.

Friedreich's ataxia (FRDA) Health & Society



Context

- Many Indian communities practice consanguinity.
- It greatly increases the risk of genetic diseases that are otherwise rare, Friedreich's ataxia is one such disease.

Friedreich's ataxia, or FRDA

- It is a genetic disorder that progressively damages the nerves and the heart.
- The affected individuals typically begin to show symptoms between the ages of 5 and 15.

Symptoms:

- Unsteady and impaired coordination.
- Speech slows down and slurs, swallowing becomes difficult, Hearing and vision deteriorates.
- Fatigued, lost sensation, eventually, most patients die relatively young, of heart disease.
- There is no cure.
- FRDA is more likely when both parents carry the defective gene.
- FRDA is caused by mutations in the FXN gene.

- **Consanguineous marriages** (marriages between relatives, such as cousins) increase the chance that both parents carry the same rare genetic mutation.

Hara Mangrove Forests Environment



Context

- A major oil spill off the southern coast of Iran has emerged as a serious ecological threat to the Hara mangrove forests.

Hara Mangrove Forests

- It also known as the Qeshm–Hara mangrove forests
- **Location** - It is located around Qeshm Island and the Strait of Hormuz in southern Iran.
- They are dominated by the grey mangrove (*Avicennia marina*), a species highly adapted to saline coastal environments.
- The area has been recognised as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Mangroves

- **Definition:** A mangrove is a woody plant which lives between the sea and the land, in areas which are flooded by tides for part of the time.

- **Halophytes** - Mangroves are salt-tolerant plants, also called halophytes.
- **Climatic conditions** - receiving rainfall between 1,000 to 3,000 mm and temperature ranging between 26-35°C.
- **Ecotone** - Since mangroves are located between the land and sea they represent the best example of ecotone.

Sundarbans Location:

- **Location** - The Sundarbans Forest located on the delta of Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna in South Asia (India & Bangladesh).
- **Global Significance:** It is the largest mangrove forest in the world.
- It is Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a Ramsar Site.

Dahi Handi Festival History & Culture



Context

- The Maharashtra government is seeking UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage recognition for the Dahi Handi festival.
- It also plans to send 'Govindas', who form human pyramids during the festival, to Spain to showcase this traditional practice.

Dahi Handi Festival

- Dahi Handi, held a day after Janmashtami to mark the birth of Lord Krishna.
- It combines religious devotion with community participation and sport.
- Participants, or Govindas, form tall human pyramids to reach and break an earthen pot filled with curd, butter, and milk.

India-Spain Connection

- The traditional practice of building human pyramids and towers is the **common link between the Dahi Handi festival and Spain**, where communities practice building **human towers called castells**.
- **Spain's Catalan Castells (human towers)—is already recognized by UNESCO.**
- Spanish teams regularly visit Mumbai and Thane to participate in the Dahi Handi festival.

Connect with the basics - Intangible Cultural Heritage

UNESCO defines “intangible” as “expressions that have:

1. Passed from one generation to another.
 2. Evolved in response to their environments.
 3. Contributed to giving us a sense of identity and continuity.
- According to an official document by UNESCO, ‘intangible cultural heritage’ includes “**oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices** concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.”
 - **To date, 16 Indian elements have been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List (including Deepavali)**
 1. Garba of Gujarat (2023)
 2. Durga Puja in Kolkata (2021)
 3. Kumbh Mela (2017)
 4. Navroz (2016)
 5. Yoga (2016)

6. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab (2014)
7. Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur (2013)
8. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir (2012)
9. Chhau dance (2010)
10. Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan (2010)
11. Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala (2010)
12. Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas (2009)
13. Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre (2008)
14. Tradition of Vedic chanting (2008)
15. Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana (2008)
16. **Deepavali (2025) - Recently added**

Communal Award History & Culture

In News

- **Recently, the anniversary of the Communal Award announcements was observed.**

Communal Award

- **Announced by - Ramsay MacDonald in August 1932.**
- **Objective - It granted separate electorates to the Depressed Classes and 71 reserved seats.**
- It also provided **separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans.**
- **Aim:** political representation and protection of minorities.

Gandhi's Response

- Gandhi opposed separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, **arguing they would divide Hindu society.**
- He began a fast unto death at Poona on 20 September 1932.

- **M.C. Rajah and B.G. Horniman** also opposed separate electorates.

Ambedkar's Views

- Ambedkar strongly supported separate electorates for the Depressed Classes.
- He believed they needed independent political representation.
- Initially, he refused to compromise, prioritising their interests.

Poona Pact

- Signed on 24 September 1932 after negotiations between Gandhi and Ambedkar.
- Separate electorates were replaced by joint electorates.
- Reserved seats increased from 71 to 148 in provincial legislatures.
- The Pact became a modification of the Communal Award.
- Political reservation for SCs continued after independence.

Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)

Economy

Context

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) approved projects collectively worth ₹7,877 crore for incentives under the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS).

Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)

- **Launched:** 2025 by the Government of India.
- **Objective:** To develop a strong domestic ecosystem for electronic components and reduce import dependence.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY).
- **Outlay:** ₹22,919 crore over 6 years.

- **Focus:** Manufacturing of components such as PCBs, camera modules, display modules, connectors, and other electronic sub-assemblies.
- **Benefits:** Attracts investment, creates jobs, strengthens supply chains and promotes **Make in India**.
- **Significance:** Supports India's goal of becoming a **global electronics manufacturing hub**.

MQ-9B Sea Guardian Unmanned Aircraft

Science & technology



Context

- The Ministry of Defence signed a contract with the U.S. General Atomics Aeronautical to lease two MQ-9B Sea Guardian High-Altitude Long-Endurance (HALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) for the Indian Navy.

MQ-9B SeaGuardian Unmanned Aircraft

- **Type:** High-altitude, long-endurance (HALE) remotely piloted aircraft.
- **Manufacturer:** General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, USA.
- **Role:** Maritime surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence gathering.
- **Key feature:** Can operate for 40+ hours and cover vast maritime areas.
- **India:** The Indian Navy is acquiring MQ-9B SeaGuardians to strengthen maritime

domain awareness and surveillance in the Indian Ocean Region.

- **Significance:** Enhances India's ability to monitor **ships, submarines and suspicious maritime activity** over long distances.
- **Note:** It is an **unmanned aircraft**, but is remotely controlled by operators rather than being fully autonomous.

Draft SHANTI Rules 2026

Polity

Context

- Recently, the government has released the draft SHANTI Rules, 2026,

Draft SHANTI Rules, 2026

- **Full form** – Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India
- **Purpose:** Operationalise the SHANTI Act, 2025 and expand India's nuclear energy sector.
- **Private participation:** Framework for greater private-sector involvement in nuclear activities.
- **Licensing:** Provides for a **composite licence** covering the nuclear installation lifecycle.
- **Safety:** Strengthens requirements for **nuclear safety, radiation protection and emergency preparedness**.
- **Liability:** Operators must maintain **insurance/financial security** against nuclear damage.
- **Nuclear Liability Fund:** Proposed fund supported through **operator levies** for compensation.
- **Technology:** Facilitates use of **foreign nuclear technologies**, subject to Indian regulatory requirements.
- **Goal:** Supports India's target of **100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047** and **net-zero by 2070**.

Tamirabharani River Environment



Context

- The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has declared Tamil Nadu's Tamirabharani river a deity, thereby granting it legal personhood to curb pollution from funeral rites and waste dumping.

Background-

- In 2017, the Uttarakhand High Court recognised the Ganga and Yamuna as legal persons. However, the Supreme Court later stayed the order, citing practical and administrative difficulties, particularly since the rivers flow across multiple states.
- Globally, New Zealand's Whanganui River became the first river in the world to be recognised as a legal person in 2017.

Additional Information- Tamirabharani River

- **Origin:** Pothigai Hills (Western Ghats), Tamil Nadu.

- **Course:** Flows through **Tirunelveli** and **Thoothukudi** districts.
- **Mouth:** Drains into the **Gulf of Mannar**.
- **Type:** One of the few **perennial rivers** of **Tamil Nadu**.
- **Major tributaries:** **Manimuthar**, **Gadananathi**, **Pachaiyar** and **Chittar**.
- **Importance:** Irrigation, drinking water and hydropower.
- **Key feature:** Supports agriculture in the **Tirunelveli–Thoothukudi** region.

BRICS calls EU's Carbon Tax Punitive International

Context

- BRICS environment and climate ministers opposed the **European Union's (EU) Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** calling it a discriminatory and protection measure that is not in line with international law.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- It is a carbon tariff on carbon intensive products, such as cement and some electricity, imported by the European Union.
- **Significance** - As a price on carbon, it discourages emissions. As a trade-related measure, it affects production and exports.

Introduction of Blackbucks Into Banni Grassland Environment



In News

- The Gujarat Forest Department, with technical support from Greens Zoological Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre, **Vantara**, released **20 blackbucks (Antelope cervicapra)** into the **Banni Grassland of Kutch**.

Blackbuck (Antelope cervicapra)

- **Appearance:** Males have striking spiral horns that can reach up to **75 cm (30 inches)** in length and their coat is a dark brown to black color.
- Females are smaller and have a reddish-brown coat without horns.
- **Habitat:** They are typically found in **grasslands, savannas, and open forests**. They prefer areas with short grass for grazing.
- **Threats:** Earlier extensively hunted in the princely states of India, **Habitat destruction, Illegal Hunting for economic consumption**
- **Conservation Status:** IUCN Status: **Least Concern**
 - **CITES:** Appendix III
 - **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act of 1972**.
- **State animal** - Declared as state animal of **Punjab, Haryana, and Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Cultural Importance:** In Hinduism, the **Blackbuck** is considered a symbol of purity, with its skin and horns revered as sacred objects. In Buddhism, it represents good luck.

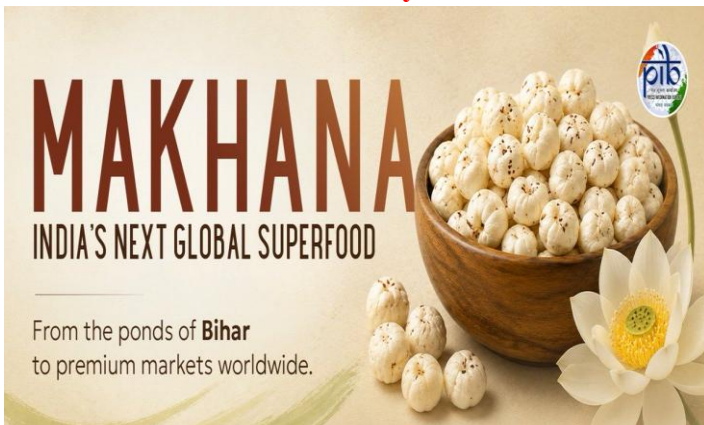
Banni Grassland

- **Location** - The Banni grasslands in **Kachchh**
- **Uniqueness** - Asia's largest natural grasslands
- **Pastoral communities** - **Fakirani Jat**.
- The region contains over **70 species** of nutritious grasses and supports grazing of camels, buffaloes, sheep, and goats.
- **Nearby** - **Chhari Dhand Wetland Conservation Reserve** is a **Ramsar site** important for migratory birds and local biodiversity.

Concerns

- Local communities fear loss of grazing land, cultural spaces, graveyards, and traditional livelihoods.
- Conservationists warn that solar infrastructure, light pollution, and human activity may disturb bird habitats and migratory routes.

India's Makhana Sector Economy



In News

- Makhana has emerged as one of India's fastest-growing agri-food sectors, driven by rising health awareness, expanding domestic demand, and strong export potential.

National Makhana Board

- Objective - to strengthen and modernize India's Makhana sector.
- It is headquartered in Purnea, Bihar.

Makhana (*Euryale ferox*)

- It is a flowering plant classified in the water lily family (Nymphaeaceae).
- Climatic condition: Requires a temperature range of 20-35°C, and annual rainfall between 100- 250 cm.
- It is a fully organic non-cereal food found principally in India but also in Korea, Japan, as well as parts of eastern Russia.
- Bihar accounts for ~90% of India's makhana production.

- GI Tag: In 2022, 'Mithila Makhana' was conferred a GI tag.

New Development Bank International



News

- Iran decided to join the New Development Bank to strengthen monetary, financial and banking cooperation with BRICS countries.

New Development Bank (NDB)

- Established: 2015 by BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).
- Headquarters: Shanghai, China.
- Objective: Financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging and developing economies.
- Membership: Open to UN member countries; both borrowing and non-borrowing members are allowed.
- Members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Bangladesh, UAE, Egypt, Algeria and Uzbekistan.
- Uzbekistan: 10th member and first Central Asian country to join NDB.

Raichur Miyawaki Forest Environment



In Context

- The Miyawaki method has been in the news repeatedly over the past year from **Raichur's Yakalaspura dumpsite-turned-forest in Karnataka**, to **Rajkot's Nakrawadi landfill transformation in Gujarat**, to urban afforestation drives in Mumbai.

Miyawaki Method

- **Afforestation technique** for creating **dense, native, multi-layered forests** in a short time, including small urban spaces.
- Developed in the **1970s by Japanese botanist Dr. Akira Miyawaki**.
- Based on **"Potential Natural Vegetation"** — vegetation that would naturally occur in an area if left undisturbed.
- **Key principle:** Plant diverse **native species closely together**, creating competition for sunlight and nutrients and enabling rapid forest growth.
- **Benefits:** High biodiversity, carbon sequestration, improved soil quality and urban cooling.

Amazon Rainforest Environment



Context

- A recent study published in Global Change Biology has found that just **15–25 tree species play a major role in regenerating deforested areas of the Amazon rainforest**.

Amazon Rain Forests

- **Location:** The region belongs to **nine nations of the South American continent**.
- **Surrounded by -** It is bounded by the Guiana Highlands to the north, the Andes Mountains to the west, the Brazilian central plateau to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east.
- **Area Covered:** The majority of the forest, **60%, is in Brazil**, followed by **Peru with 13%**, **Colombia with 10%**, and with minor amounts in **Bolivia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela**.
- **Climate:** Hot and humid climate with temperatures of **26-30°C throughout the year**. There are no periodic seasons. The precipitation ranges from **2,000 mm to 10,920 mm annually**.

- **Tribes:** Yanomamo, Kayapo, Akuntsu, Matsigenka, Tupi etc.
- **Fauna:** Anaconda, Jesus lizard, howler monkey, golden lion tamarin, jaguar, sloth, spider monkey, Amazon River dolphin, toucan and the scarlet macaw, poison dart frog and the glass frog.
- **Flora:** Moist broadleaf tropical rainforest like myrtle, laurel, palm, acacia, rosewood, Brazil nut, rubber tree, mahogany and Amazonian cedar.

Significance of the Rainforests

- **Lungs of the planet:** Rainforests generate about 20% of the world's oxygen and its trees play a key role in reducing pollutant levels.
- **Fight climate change:** They act as a crucial buffer in the global fight against climate change as it holds tremendous capacity to store carbon.
- **Medicinal Properties:** Many of these plants contain bioactive compounds capable of treating diseases that are not yet curable, especially cancer.

Threat to the forests

- **Climate Change:** Due to climate change the forests are witnessing various challenges like changes in rainfall patterns, pollution etc.
- **Deforestation:** The size of the Amazon forest shrank dramatically as a result of settlers' clearance of the land to obtain lumber and to create grazing pastures and farmland.
- **Wildfires:** It causes threat to the survival of ecosystems and biodiversity. The 2019 forest fires in the region have led to widespread devastation in the region.

Additional Information - Amazon River

- It is the largest river by volume of water and second longest river after the Nile river of Africa in the world.

- **Source:** River has its source in the Peruvian Andes, at an elevation of 5,598 m.
- **Length:** 6400 km.
- **Basin:** The basin includes the greater part of Brazil and Peru, some parts of Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia and a small area of Venezuela.
- **Tributaries:** Japurá, Juruá, Madeira, Negro, Purus, and Xingu rivers.
- **Mouth:** Atlantic Ocean on the northeastern coast of Brazil.

South Zone Council Polity



Context

- The 31st Southern Zonal Council meeting was held in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu.

Zonal Councils — UPSC

- **Statutory bodies** established under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 to promote Centre-State and inter-State cooperation.
- **Chairman:** Union Home Minister.
- **Vice-Chairman:** Chief Minister of one member State, rotationally.
- **Nature:** Advisory bodies; Standing Committee of Chief Secretaries examines issues before the Council.
- **Five Zonal Councils:** Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern.

- **North Eastern Council (NEC):** Established under the **North Eastern Council Act, 1972** for the special problems of the Northeast.
- **NEC States:** Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and **Sikkim** (added in 2002).
- **Key point: Zonal Councils ≠ Constitutional bodies;** they are **statutory and advisory**.

Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM)

Government Schemes



Context

- The **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM)** is **unlocking India's tribal forest economy**.

About PMJVM

- **Launched in 2021-22,**
- **Financing-** It is a **Central Sector Scheme** of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- **Nodal agency - Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)**

Objectives

- Promote **tribal entrepreneurship, livelihood and income generation**.
- Focuses on **Minor Forest Produce (MFP)**, tribal products and value addition.

- Supports **tribal producer enterprises, SHGs and Van Dhan Vikas Kendras**.
- Aims to strengthen **tribal value chains, market linkages and access to finance**.
- It also provides **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for identified **Minor Forest Produce (MFP)** through **direct procurement** from tribal gatherers.
- **Key focus:** *From collection → value addition → branding → marketing* of tribal products.

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) **Polity and Governance**

Context

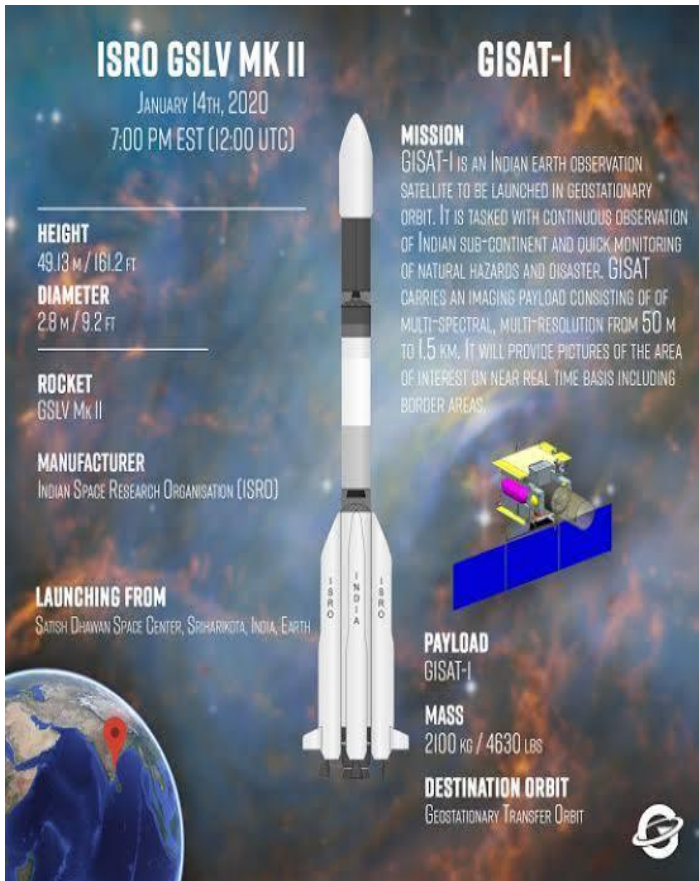
- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has transferred the processing of pending citizenship applications under the **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)** to **District Collectors** in eight States and Union Territories (UTs).
- **District Collectors in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh** have been authorised.

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019

- **Amends:** **Citizenship Act, 1955;** received **Presidential assent on 12 December 2019** and came into force on **10 January 2020**.
- **Eligibility:** Provides a pathway to Indian citizenship for **Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians** from **Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan** who entered India on or before **31 December 2014**.
- **Exclusion:** **Muslims** are not included in this specific category.
- **Naturalisation period:** Reduced from **11 years to 5 years** for eligible persons.
- **CAA Rules, 2024:** Notified on **11 March 2024**, enabling implementation of the Act.
- **Exemptions:** Does not apply to **Sixth Schedule tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura**, and areas covered by the **Inner Line Permit (ILP)** system.

- **Key debate:** Concerns relate to **Article 14 (equality)**, secularism and the exclusion of Muslims, while the government describes it as a measure for persecuted minorities from the three specified countries.

GISAT-1A Science and Tech



In News

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing to launch the GISAT-1A Satellite.

GISAT-1A (Geo Imaging Satellite)

- It is also referred to as EOS-05 under the new nomenclature .
- It is a replacement satellite for the 2021-launched GISAT-1 (or EOS-03), which missed the orbit after the final propulsive segment of the rocket failed to ignite.
- It is scheduled to launch aboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV).

- The mission will be Isro's first launch since the PSLV-C62/EOS-N1 mission failed in January 2026.
- **Purpose :** GISAT-1A is designed for high-frequency imaging of large areas of the Indian landmass.
- Its applications include monitoring natural disasters, agriculture, forestry and other changes on the ground.
- The satellite has a planned 10-year mission life.

Satkosia Tiger Reserve Environment



Context

- The Odisha government has formed a high-level inquiry committee to look into the displacement of villages from the Satkosia Tiger Reserve (STR) amid allegations that the villagers were forcibly evicted.

Satkosia Tiger Reserve

- **Location:** Odisha, at the meeting point of the Deccan Peninsula and the Eastern Ghats.
- **Established:** In 2007 under Project Tiger.
- **Area:** The reserve includes the Satkosia Gorge Wildlife Sanctuary and Baisipalli Wildlife Sanctuary, which together span an area of around 1,000 sq km.
- The Mahanadi River flows through the reserve and forms the spectacular Satkosia Gorge.
- **Flora:** Mixture of deciduous forests including Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and riverine forest.

Additional Information - Tiger Reserves Facts

- **Legal basis:** Declared under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, through the **Project Tiger** framework.
- **Project Tiger:** Launched in **1973** with **9 tiger reserves**.
- **Nodal authority:** **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, established under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.
- **Core + Buffer:** Tiger Reserves have a **Core/Critical Tiger Habitat** and a **Buffer area**.
- **Tiger census:** Conducted every **4 years** under the **All India Tiger Estimation (AITE)**.
- **Latest estimate:** India had **3,682 tigers in 2022**, according to the fifth AITE.
- **India's share:** India supports around **75% of the world's wild tiger population**.
- **Largest Tiger Reserve:** **Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem (Andhra Pradesh/Telangana)**.
- **Smallest Tiger Reserve:** **Bohr (Maharashtra)**
- **First Tiger Reserve:** **Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand** (among the original 9).
- **State with most tiger reserves:** **Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Important point:** A **Tiger Reserve is not a separate category of protected area** like a National Park or Wildlife Sanctuary; it can include one or more such protected areas.
- **International initiative:** **Global Tiger Initiative / TX2** aims to double wild tiger numbers.



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