



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

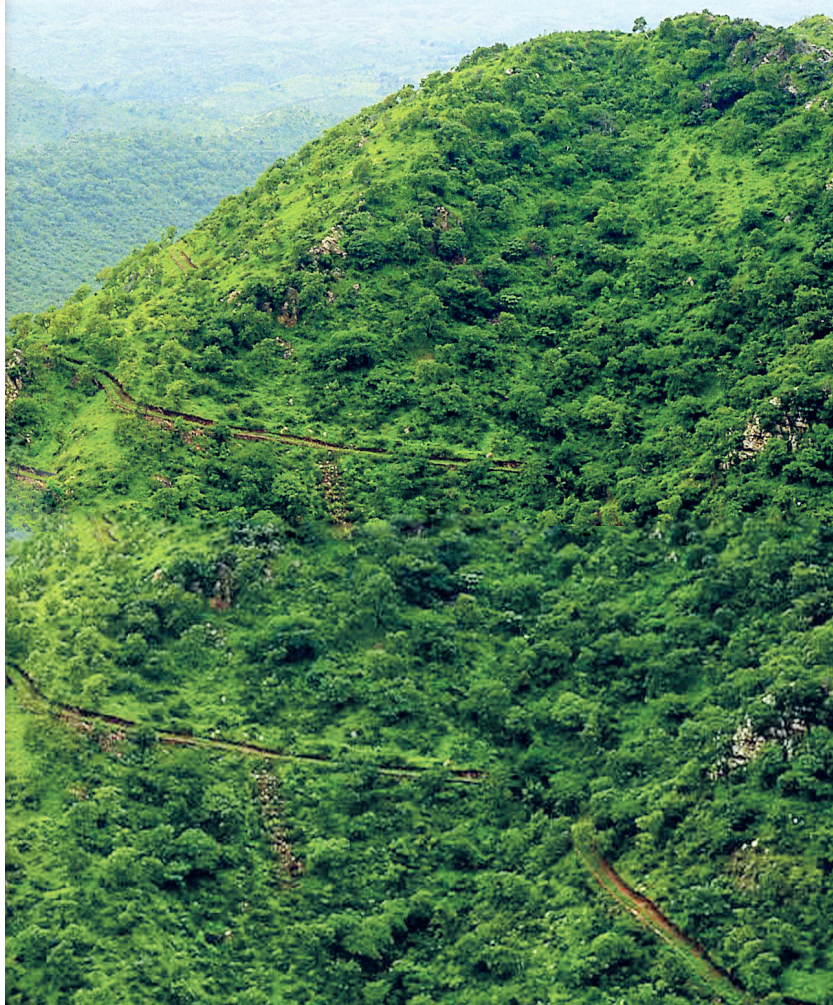
19th Dec. - 25th Dec., 2025

★★ Useful for ★★

**UPSC ESE, PSUs,
RRB, SSC, Banking &
State Services Exams**

Aravalli *under* **Threat**

Union Govt. bans new mining leases in the Aravalli Range amid national outcry.



19th DECEMBER 2025

Securities Markets Code Bill 2025

- **Context:** The Union Finance Minister introduced the Securities Markets Code Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha.



Key Provisions

- **The Bill proposes to consolidate the:**
 - Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956,
 - Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Act, 1992, and
 - The Depositories Act, 1996.
- **Reforms in SEBI's Composition:** The strength of the SEBI Board is proposed to be increased from 9 to 15 members, including the Chairperson. The reconstituted Board will include;
 - The Chairperson.
 - Two officials appointed by the Central Government.
 - One ex-officio member from the Reserve Bank of India.
 - Eleven other members, of whom at least five will be whole-time members. Currently there are three full-time members.
- Members of the SEBI Board are mandated to disclose any direct or indirect interests before participating in decision-making.
- **Decriminalisation and Enforcement Framework:** The Bill also proposed to decriminalise violations of "minor, procedural and technical nature" into civil

penalties to "facilitate the ease of doing business and to reduce the compliance burden." The Bill would bring "unlawful gains or losses" under civil penalties and limit punishments only to cases such as insider trading or trading while in possession of material or non-public information.

- **Limitation on Inspections:** In the case of contravention of any rules or provisions of the code, no inspection can be done if eight years had passed from the date of contravention.

Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

- **Context:** The Government of India, in collaboration with NABARD, has unveiled a common logo for all Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) under the "One RRB, One Logo" initiative, marking a significant step towards unifying the identity of RRBs across the country.



About "One RRB, One Logo" Initiative

- A reform measure to introduce a single, uniform visual identity for all 43 Regional Rural Banks operating in India.
- Implemented jointly by Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance & National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
- Applies across all RRB branches, digital platforms, passbooks, ATMs, stationery and customer interfaces.

Objectives of the Initiative

- **Unified Identity:** Present RRBs as part of a single national banking system, rather than fragmented regional entities.
- **Customer Trust:** Improve public confidence by ensuring easy recognition and credibility.

- **Operational Integration:** Support recent amalgamation and consolidation of RRBs.
- **Digital Readiness:** Align RRB branding with modern banking and digital financial services.

About RRBs

- RRBs were created under the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976 to expand institutional credit in rural areas and serve small farmers, SHGs, artisans and MSMEs.
- RRBs have a tripartite ownership pattern:
 - Government of India – 50%
 - Concerned State Government – 15%
 - Sponsor Bank – 35%.

RESPOND Basket 2025

- **Context:** Recently, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the RESPOND Basket 2025.

About RESPOND Basket 2025

- It invites submission of research proposals from various premier universities, and other recognised academic and R&D institutions in areas relevant to ISRO's upcoming missions and national priorities.
- It supports ISRO's upcoming projects, including Bharatiya Antariksh Station, Chandrayaan-4, Gaganyaan missions, Venus orbiter, and a human Moon landing.

20th DECEMBER 2025

2nd WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine

- **Context:** India hosted the 2nd WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine in New Delhi.

Key Highlights

- The theme of the summit is "Restoring Balance for People and Planet: The Science and Practice of Well-Being."

Initiatives Launched:

- **My Ayush Integrated Services Portal (MAISP):** A master digital portal for services, research and governance in the Ayush sector.
- **Ayush Mark:** Envisioned as a global quality benchmark for Ayush products and services.
- **Traditional Medicine Global Library (TMGL),** the world's largest digital repository on traditional, complementary and integrative medicine. The initiative is grounded in the Gujarat Declaration (2023) and aligned with WHO's Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034.
- Announcement of international collaborations, including a Centre of Excellence for BIMSTEC countries and an India–Japan partnership in traditional medicine.
- The summit stressed the use of digital health tools and AI for research, data generation and wider access to traditional medicine.

About Traditional Medicines

- Traditional medicine refers to codified or non-codified systems for health care and well-being, comprising practices, skills, knowledge and philosophies originating in different historical and cultural contexts, which are distinct from and pre-date biomedicine, evolving with science for current use from an experience-based origin.
- Traditional medicine emphasizes nature-based remedies and holistic, personalized approaches to restore balance of mind, body and environment.
- The WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC) in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

NOTE

India also hosted the 1st WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine in 2023 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

Operation Hawkeye Strike

- **Context:** The US forces commenced 'Operation Hawkeye Strike' in Syria to eliminate Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) fighters, infrastructure, and weapons sites.

Key Facts

- The operation comes days after a suspected Islamic State attacker struck a convoy of US and Syrian forces in the central Syrian town of Palmyra.
- The US personnel who were targeted were supporting Operation Inherent Resolve, the international effort to combat IS, which seized swaths of Syrian and Iraqi territory in 2014.

NOTE

The terrorist organisation, ISIS, is banned in India under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

21st DECEMBER 2025

Aravalli Hills

- **Context:** The Union Government has issued directions to the States for a complete ban on the grant of any new mining leases in the Aravallis in a major step towards conservation and protection of the entire Aravalli Range stretching from Gujarat to Delhi from illegal mining.



Supreme Court's Key Observations

- The Supreme Court of India accepted a uniform definition of the Aravalli hills, as recommended by a Central Government – appointed expert committee, and issued additional directions to strengthen conservation.
- The Supreme Court pronounced following directions:

- Conservation must be ecological and geological, not revenue-record based.
- The Aravalli should be protected as a single landscape system for hydrology, biodiversity, and climate resilience.
- Directed preparation of a comprehensive Management Plan for Sustainable Mining (MPSM) for the entire Aravalli landscape by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE).

Expert Committee Recommendations

Operational Definitions:

- **Aravalli Hills:** Any landform in notified Aravalli districts with local relief (elevation) of ≥ 100 metres.
- **Aravalli Range:** Two or more Aravalli Hills located within 500 metres of each other.

Core / Inviolate Zones Safeguards:

- Absolute prohibition of mining in protected Areas and Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs), tiger Reserves, wetlands and CAMPA plantation sites.

Significance of the Aravalli Range

- The Aravalli Range, stretching over approximately 692 kilometres in a northeastern direction, traverses the Indian states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Haryana before culminating in Delhi, is the oldest mountain range in India.
- The Aravalli Range is unlike any other mountain system in India. Estimated to be nearly two billion years old, it dates back to the Proterozoic era — long before the Himalayas, dinosaurs, or even complex life forms evolved. Aravalli range has survived tectonic shifts, erosion, and climatic transformations that have erased many other ancient formations worldwide.
- Rajasthan accounts for nearly two-thirds of the mountain range.
- It acts as a critical ecological barrier preventing the eastward expansion of the Thar Desert into Haryana, Rajasthan, and western Uttar Pradesh.

- The Aravallis support water-recharge systems and are the source of rivers such as the Sabarmati and Luni.
- The region is rich in minerals including sandstone, limestone, marble, granite, lead, zinc, copper, gold, and tungsten.
- **Initiatives for Protection**
 - **Matri Van Initiative:** Development of a 750 acre urban forest in Aravalli hills. Linked to 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign.
 - **Aravalli Green Wall Project:** Creation of a 5 km green buffer around Aravalli across four states. It aims to combat desertification and land degradation.

Anjadip

- **Context:** The Indian Navy received Anjadip, the third of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts (ASW SWC).



Key Facts

- The ship is named after Anjadip Island, located off the coast of Karwar in Karnataka, and carries forward the legacy of the erstwhile INS Anjadip, a Petya-class corvette that was decommissioned in 2003.
- It is indigenously designed and built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata. The project has been executed under a public-private partnership.
- The ASW SWC is the largest Indian naval warship to be propelled by waterjets. The craft is equipped with advanced lightweight torpedoes, indigenously

developed anti-submarine rockets and shallow water sonar systems, enabling effective detection and engagement of underwater threats.

- The platform is expected to significantly enhance the Navy's anti-submarine warfare, coastal surveillance and mine laying capabilities.

22nd DECEMBER 2025

National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)

- **Context:** India and the Netherlands have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in maritime heritage, marking a step toward the development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat.

About National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)

- The NMHC is a comprehensive cultural and heritage project aimed at presenting India's long and continuous maritime tradition.
- It is being developed near Saragwala village, close to the archaeological site of Lothal in Gujarat.
- Key Components of the NMHC include:
 - A museum featuring 14 galleries,
 - A Lothal Town and Open Aquatic Gallery,
 - A Lighthouse Museum, a Bagicha Complex, Coastal State Pavilions, and the Recreation of Lothal City.
- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) is the nodal ministry for the project. The Indian Ports Association (IPA) has been appointed as the nodal agency.

Historical Significance of Lothal

- Lothal, dates back to around 2400 BCE. It was one of the prominent urban centres of the Harappan (Indus Valley) Civilization.
- Lothal emerged as a thriving port city and trading hub, facilitating inland and overseas commerce.

• Major Archaeological Features:

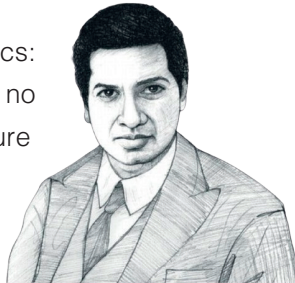
- Discovery of the world's oldest known artificial dockyard, over 5,000 years old.
- The dock was connected to an ancient course of the Sabarmati River.
- Evidence of advanced urban planning, including, an acropolis and a lower town, warehouses and a bead-manufacturing factory.

National Mathematics Day

- **Context:** National Mathematics Day is observed every year on 22 December to commemorate the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan.

About Srinivasa Ramanujan

- Srinivasa Ramanujan was an Indian mathematician born in 1887 in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu.
- Contribution to Mathematics: Despite having almost no formal training in pure mathematics, he made substantial contributions to mathematical analysis, number theory, infinite series, and continued fractions, including solutions to mathematical problems then considered unsolvable.
 - In 1913, he wrote to British mathematician G.H. Hardy, leading to his invitation to Cambridge.
 - He became one of the youngest Fellows of the Royal Society and the first Indian Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.
- He passed away at the age of 32.



About Hardy–Ramanujan Number

- The Hardy-Ramanujan number is 1729, the smallest number that can be expressed as the sum of two cubes in two different ways:

$$1^3 + 12^3 = 1 + 1728 = 1729;$$

and

$$9^3 + 10^3 = 729 + 1000 = 1729$$

Ghost Pairing

- **Context:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has warned that a cyber campaign known as “Ghost Pairing” is being used to hijack WhatsApp accounts.

About Ghost Pairing

- It is a cyber-attack that targets WhatsApp and Telegram users through social engineering.
- Attackers pose as known contacts, bank officials, or government representatives and send messages like “Hi, check this photo” with a link.
- The link leads to a verification process where users unknowingly grant hackers access to their WhatsApp accounts.
- No password theft or SIM swapping is needed. Once accessed, attackers can steal sensitive photos, videos, or bank information and use them to blackmail victims or steal money.

23rd DECEMBER 2025

Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant

- **Context:** Japan is set to resume operations at the world's largest nuclear plant (Kashiwazaki-Kariwa) for the first time since the 2011 Fukushima disaster.



Key Facts

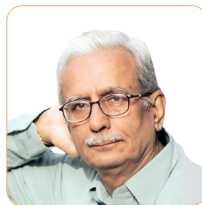
- **Location:** It spans the towns of Kashiwazaki and Kariwa in Niigata Prefecture, (Island of Honshu) Japan, on the coast of the Sea of Japan.
- **Capacity:** Approximately 8,200 MW, making it the largest nuclear power plant globally.
- **Operator:** Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO).
- Japan is the world's fifth-largest single-country emitter of carbon dioxide, after China, the United States, India and Russia, and is heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels.
- Nearly 70% of Japan's power needs in 2023 were met by power plants burning coal, gas and oil.
- Before the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, nuclear power generated about a third of Japan's electricity.
- Fourteen reactors, mostly in western and southern regions, have resumed operation since the post-Fukushima shutdown after strict safety standards were imposed.
- Japan aims to make renewables its top power source by 2040.
- Under the plan, nuclear power will account for around 20% of Japan's energy supply by 2040 – up from 5.6% in 2022.

Vinod Kumar Shukla

- **Context:** Eminent Hindi litterateur and Jnanpith Award winner Vinod Kumar Shukla passed away.

About Vinod Kumar Shukla

- He was a renowned poet, novelist, and experimental writer.
- He was the first from Chhattisgarh to receive the Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary honour.
- He was known for his simple, sensitive style portraying everyday life.
- His notable works include Naukar Ki Kameez and Deewar Mein Ek Khidki Rahti Thi and Khilega To Dekhenge.



About Jnanpith Award

- It is the highest literary honour of India given to writers who have excelled in literature in different Indian languages.
- It was instituted in 1961 by the Bharatiya Jnanpith Trust to recognise outstanding contributions to Indian literature.
- Initially awarded for the best literary work, it later shifted to honouring an author's entire literary contribution across Indian languages, including English.
- The selection process involves Language Advisory Committees and an independent Selection Board, ensuring objectivity and national representation.

24th DECEMBER 2025

BlueBird Block-2 Satellite

- **Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the LVM-3 rocket carrying the BlueBird Block-2 satellite, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.

About BlueBird Block-2 Satellite

- The BlueBird Block-2 satellite is the largest-ever commercial communications satellite to be deployed in low Earth orbit (LEO). As the name suggests, LEO is an orbit that is relatively close to Earth's surface. It is normally at an altitude of less than 1,000 km.
- The BlueBird Block-2 satellite was launched aboard LVM3-M6 under a commercial agreement handled by NewSpace India Limited.
- Weighing around 6,100 kilograms, it is the heaviest payload placed into low-Earth orbit by India to date. The mission marks LVM3's third fully commercial



flight and highlights the increasing use of Indian launch vehicles by global satellite operators.

- It was designed by the US company AST Space Mobile and will be part of an LEO constellation.
- It is among the heaviest commercial satellites, weighing around 6.5 tonnes.
- It will provide direct-to-mobile connectivity, allowing satellites to communicate directly with smartphones without ground stations.
- It will enable 4G and 5G calls, messages, streaming, and data services anytime and anywhere.
- **Importance**
 - The BlueBird Block-2 mission marks ISRO's third commercial launch using the LVM-3, following OneWeb satellite launches in 2022 and 2023, after India emerged as a key launch option due to Russia's withdrawal and the retirement of ESA's Ariane-5.
 - Through this launch, ISRO aims to demonstrate its ability to conduct heavy-lift missions at a lower cost than competitors like SpaceX's Falcon-9 and Ariane-6.

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025

- **Context:** President Droupadi Murmu conferred the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025 on distinguished scientists at a special ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.



Key Facts

- The National Science Awards recognise outstanding and inspiring contributions across science, technology and innovation, reflecting India's growing emphasis on research-led development.
- In the second edition of the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, a total of 24 awards were presented under four categories — Vigyan Ratna, Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Yuva and Vigyan Team.
- Modelled on the Padma awards, the honours acknowledge excellence across 13 scientific domains, including physics, chemistry, biological sciences, medicine, engineering, agriculture, atomic energy and space science.
- The highest honour, Vigyan Ratna, was conferred posthumously on eminent physicist Jayant Vishnu Narlikar for his lifetime achievements and pioneering contributions to science and technology. Widely respected for his work in cosmology and science communication, Narlikar's recognition underscores the award's focus on enduring scientific impact.

25th DECEMBER 2025

Good Governance Day 2025

- **Context:** Good Governance Day 2025 was observed on December 25, which marks the 101st birth anniversary of the former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Key Facts

- The former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee is remembered for his inclusive vision, democratic ethos, and institutional integrity.
- Good Governance Day was first observed in 2014 by the Government of India. The date was chosen to honour Atal Bihari Vajpayee, whose governance style emphasised consensus, integrity, and democratic values.

- The observance also aligns with the government's efforts to make public service delivery more efficient and inclusive.

NOTE

To commemorate this occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Rashtra Prerna Sthal in Lucknow, to mark 101st birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

INSV Kaundinya

- **Context:** The Indian Navy is set to revive India's ancient maritime legacy as INSV Kaundinya, a unique stitched sailing vessel, prepares for its maiden overseas voyage on December 29, 2025.

Key Highlights

- The voyage will begin from Porbandar, Gujarat, and conclude at Muscat, Oman, retracing historic sea routes used by Indian traders centuries ago.



- INSV Kaundinya stands apart from modern ships due to its ancient stitched-plank construction method,

- Wooden planks are stitched together using coconut coir rope.
- Seams are sealed with natural resins.
- No nails or metal fasteners are used.
- Design inspired by ancient Indian ship depictions.
- This method allowed ancient ships to flex with waves, making them suitable for long ocean journeys.
- The maiden voyage will follow a historically important maritime route:
 - **Flag-off location:** Porbandar, Gujarat
 - **Destination:** Muscat, Oman
 - **Purpose:** Symbolically retrace ancient Indian Ocean trade routes
 - These routes once enabled trade in spices, textiles, and precious goods between India and the wider world.
- The project was developed under a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) involving, Ministry of Culture, Indian Navy and M/s Hodi Innovations.
- The vessel was built by traditional artisans, guided by master shipwright Shri Babu Sankaran, with design, research, and testing support from the Indian Navy and academic institutions. The ship is fully seaworthy and capable of ocean navigation.

About Kaundinya

- The ship is named after Kaundinya, a legendary ancient Indian mariner believed to have sailed from India to Southeast Asia. His journey symbolises India's historic role as a maritime and cultural connector across regions.