

CURRENT AFFAIRS

UPSC CSE 2026



DAILY CURRENT
AFFAIRS NOTES

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Heat stress may have played a key role in Karur stampede, states study

- The 41 deaths in the stampede during the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) rally in Karur were likely influenced by extreme heat stress.
- It found that oppressive heat, high crowd density, and poor event planning created conditions of mass thermophysiological stress.
- Researchers estimated that heat generated by the dense crowd equaled the solar energy falling on the same area, intensifying heat accumulation.
- Instances of fainting occurred even before the event began, indicating severe thermal strain among attendees.
- The collective recommended restrictions on rallies between February and October, provision of shaded spaces and drinking water, integration of UTCI-based heat alerts, and recognition of extreme heat as a notified disaster under the Disaster Management Act.
- Tamil Nadu has already recognised heat stress as a State disaster and issued guidelines for action, including drinking water kiosks, rescheduling outdoor work, ex gratia for victims, and urban planning measures like green spaces and cool-roof technologies.
- A State Planning Commission analysis found that rising temperatures due to urban sprawl, deforestation, and land-use changes are increasing risks to people, ecosystems, and infrastructure.

Fresh low pressure area may turn into a cyclone for T.N.

- The potential cyclonic storm is likely to be named 'Cyclone Montha', a name suggested by Thailand for tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean.
- An orange alert has been issued, indicating the possibility of very heavy rainfall up to 20 cm.

Study says fat composition is the secret of civet coffee

- Civet-processed robusta coffee (Kopi Luwak) shows distinct differences in fatty acid methyl esters and total fat content compared to naturally harvested robusta beans.
- The findings provide scientific evidence supporting the unique aroma, flavour, and nutritional qualities of civet coffee, one of the world's most exotic brews.
- Civet coffee is produced from the excreta of the Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) after the animal consumes ripe coffee cherries.
- The pulp is digested, and the beans undergo natural fermentation in the civet's gut, before being excreted intact and collected for processing. The study found that civet-processed beans are larger and have higher fat content than manually collected beans.
- Researchers concluded that the civet's digestive and enzymatic processes cause natural fermentation, altering the bean's chemical structure and enhancing its sensory profile.

Respect the health rights of India's children

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) under the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, regulates large drug manufacturers and export approvals in India.
- State drug control officers oversee the regulation, care, manufacture, sale, and distribution of drugs by small- and medium-scale manufacturers.
- India faces major challenges in ensuring child protection as guaranteed under Article 39(f) of the Constitution, a Directive Principle of State Policy.
- Children under 18 years constitute 39% of India's population, making paediatric healthcare a critical concern.
- Clinical trials of drugs are usually conducted on adults, and rarely on children due to ethical and safety concerns, leading to a lack of paediatric dosage and administration guidelines.
- The absence of specific paediatric pharmaceutical legislation in India is a major gap; unlike the European Union (under the Paediatric Use Marketing Authorisation) and the United States (under the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act – BPCA), which incentivise paediatric drug research.

- India currently **operates on general drug guidelines** without specific policies for paediatric formulations.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** introduced the **Essential Medicines List for Children (EMLc)** to guide policymakers in updating national medicine lists.
- While the **Essential Medicines List (EML) for adults** is **periodically revised**, the **EMLc for children** in India is **not regularly updated**.
- There is a need for **education of caregivers and pharmacists** to ensure **correct dosage, label reading, and monitoring for side effects**, especially for **over-the-counter (OTC) medications**.
- **Regulation of OTC medicines for children**, particularly for **cough, cold, and fever**, is an **important aspect of public health care**.
- **India's paediatric medicine policy** must be based on **Indian genetic and clinical data**, not on **foreign research**, to ensure **safe and effective child healthcare**.

The mirage of port-led development in Great Nicobar

- The proposed **seaport at Great Nicobar's Galathea Bay** has drawn attention after several **critical commentaries** questioned its **strategic, economic, and ecological viability**.
- **Proponents** claim it will make **India a regional maritime hub** and **boost economic growth**, while **critics** argue it threatens **indigenous communities**, causes **ecological damage**, and rests on **weak commercial logic**.

Strategic and Economic Claims

- Supporters argue that India is **dependent on foreign ports** such as **Colombo and Singapore** for **transshipment**, and a **mega port at Galathea Bay** would help **capture regional container trade**. However, experience with the **Vallarpadam Port (Kerala)** shows that **infrastructure alone** does not ensure success.
- **Transshipment hubs** depend on **network connectivity, feeder links, cargo base, and carrier loyalty**, not merely port capacity.

Structural Limitations of Galathea Bay

- The port has **no hinterland, no urban or industrial base, and no logistics ecosystem** to sustain traffic.
- Every **container must be shipped in and out**, making the project **costly and logistically inefficient**.
- As a transshipment hub, it would rely on **feeder services** that currently **do not exist**.
- In contrast, **Colombo** benefits from a **dense web of regional routes** linking **South Asia, East Africa, and Southeast Asia**, which **Nicobar lacks**.
- Building such a network would require **massive subsidies and long-term state support**, unlikely to attract **commercial interest**.

Geographical and Operational Challenges

- **Galathea Bay** is **1,200 km from the Indian mainland**, making **feeder operations uneconomical**.
- **Containers, provisions, personnel, and fuel** must all be **shipped in**, sharply raising **operational costs**.
- **Shipping schedules** would need to be **reworked** to include this **remote location**, making it **less attractive** to global carriers.
- **High handling and port-calling costs** — already seen at Indian terminals such as **Krishnapatnam Port (Andhra Pradesh)** — further reduce competitiveness.

Strategic Rationale and Military Dimension

- Proponents argue that the project would **enhance India's maritime domain awareness** and **deterrence posture** in the **eastern Indian Ocean**.
- However, **INS Baaz**, the **existing naval facility**, already supports **surveillance operations**, making the **strategic justification limited**. **Military presence** need not depend on **large-scale commercial port infrastructure**.

Connectivity and Integration Concerns

- Claims that **Galathea Bay will integrate with Vizhinjam (Kerala) and Vadhavan (Maharashtra)** are **unrealistic**, as Great Nicobar is **cut off from major industrial corridors**.
- The region **lacks any organic cargo base**, and its **distance from trade routes and production hubs** undermines its **feeder potential**.

Prime Minister will lead parade on 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- The nation is celebrating the **150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, the **first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of India**.
- The event is themed '**Unity in Diversity**' and will be held at **Ekta Nagar**, located between the **Satpura and Vindhya mountain ranges in Gujarat**, where the **Statue of Unity** was inaugurated in **2018**.
- **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day)** on **October 31** commemorates **Sardar Patel's pivotal role in uniting 562 princely states** and shaping **independent India**.
- The celebration will also feature a **demonstration by indigenous dog breeds — Rampur hounds and Mudhol hounds**— showcasing their **skills and agility**.

Gyan Bharatam Mission to ink pact with institutes

- **Gyan Bharatam** is a **flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture** aimed at **identifying, documenting, conserving, digitising, preserving, and promoting India's vast manuscript heritage**.
- The initiative was **announced during the Union Budget** of the current year.
- Its key objective is to **preserve manuscripts** and establish a **dedicated digital platform — the National Digital Repository (NDR)** — to share India's manuscript heritage globally.
- The Ministry has signed **Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)** with around **20 institutes across India** for the **conservation, upkeep, and digitisation of manuscripts**.
- The participating institutes are **categorised as cluster centres and independent centres**.
- A **cluster centre** will be responsible for **executing manuscript-related activities** of its own centre and up to **20 designated partner centres**.
- An **independent centre** will handle **manuscript-related activities only for its own collection**.
- **Gyan Bharatam** will provide the **overall framework, guidance, monitoring, and support** for the implementation of activities under this partnership.
- It will also provide **funding, equipment, and budgetary allocations** to centres, based on **approved work plans, milestones, and quality verification**.
- Each centre must establish a **dedicated Gyan Bharatam Cell**, staffed with **experts in various domains**, to ensure **effective communication, coordination, and voluntary participation**.
- **Funds will be released in phased instalments** according to the **implementation schedule and milestones** mentioned in the **approved work plan**.

Manipur Nagas declare restrictions ahead of Muivah's visit to Senapati

- The **Nagas in Manipur** have declared a '**Genna**' to honour **Thuingaleng Muivah**, leader of the **National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN)**, ahead of his **visit to Senapati**.
- In **Naga culture and traditions**, '**Genna**' refers to **restrictions imposed to ensure maximum participation** during an **important community event or national observance**.
- The **NSCN**, also known as the **Isak-Muivah faction (NSCN-IM)**, is a key organisation in the **Naga political movement**.
- **Senapati**, the **headquarters of the Naga-majority district** with the same name, is located about **60 km north of Imphal**, the **capital of Manipur**.