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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & **STUDY CENTRE**

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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 **9972258970 & 9740702455**

**#317/A SKB Arcade, D. Subbaiah Road,
Ramaswamy Circle, Mysuru-570004**



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1. Supreme Court Directives on Aravali Mining and Sustainable Management

- The Union Environment Ministry has ordered Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat to enforce Supreme Court directions preventing new mining leases in the Aravali range.
- The ban remains in effect until a Management Plan for Sustainable Mining (MPSM) is finalized under central supervision.
- The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) is tasked with identifying ecologically sensitive, conservation-critical, and restoration-priority areas.
- Existing mines with valid permissions are allowed to operate only if they strictly comply with environmental norms.
- Rampant mining and deforestation in the region have led to severe groundwater depletion and worsening air quality in Delhi-NCR.
- The court deferred to a definition of "Aravali" that includes only mountains 100 meters or higher, potentially leaving 92% of the hills unprotected.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 48A:** DPSP for protection and improvement of the environment and safeguarding forests.
- **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental Duty to protect and improve the natural environment.
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986:** Provides the framework for the Centre to issue such ecological protection orders.

Key Definition:

- **Ecological Buffer Zone:** A transitional area between a protected zone and the surrounding landscape where sustainable land-use practices are promoted.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: The conflict between developmental mining and ecological preservation requires a scientifically-backed management plan to prevent irreversible damage. Relevant for GS Paper III (Environment) and GS Paper II (Judicial Activism).

2. ISRO's LVM3 Launches Heaviest Commercial Payload

- ISRO successfully placed the BlueBird Block-2 satellite, weighing 6,100 kg, into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) using the LVM3 rocket.
- This marks the heaviest payload ever launched by LVM3 from Indian soil and ISRO's first dedicated commercial launch for a U.S. customer.
- The satellite, developed by AST SpaceMobile, is designed to provide space-based broadband connectivity directly to standard smartphones.
- The mission achieved high precision, with an orbital performance error of less than two kilometers from the target altitude.
- NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) facilitated the contract, showcasing India's growing dominance in the global commercial launch market.





- LVM3 (formerly GSLV Mk-III) has established its reliability as a heavy-lift vehicle, essential for India's future Gaganyaan and Moon missions.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Space Policy 2023:** Encourages private participation and enhances the role of NSIL in commercializing space technology.

Key Definition:

- **Direct-to-Cell Technology:** A satellite-based communication system that allows unmodified mobile phones to connect directly to satellites for voice and data.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: Success in heavy-lift commercial launches strengthens India's position in the global space economy (\$546 billion market). Relevant for GS Paper III (Science & Tech) and Economy (Commercial Space Sector).

3. Transition from MGNREGA to VB-GRAMG Act, 2025

- The MGNREGA (2005) has been superseded by the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-GRAMG) Act, 2025.
- The new law shifts the framework from a "demand-driven" right to work to a "supply-driven" model where the Centre determines budgetary allocations.
- The funding ratio between the Centre and States has changed from 90:10 to 60:40, increasing the financial burden on state governments.
- Critics argue this centralizes control and erodes the legal force of the "right to work" as a moral vision of justice for the rural poor.
- The new mission emphasizes "Ajeevika" (livelihood) by focusing on skill-based assets rather than just manual labor.
- Experts fear that poorer states may struggle to meet the 40% funding requirement, potentially leading to lower employment generation.



Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 41:** Right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases.
- **Article 21:** Interpreted by courts to include the right to a dignified livelihood.

Key Definition:

- **Demand-Driven vs. Supply-Driven:** Demand-driven means work must be provided whenever a citizen asks; supply-driven means work is provided only as per the available government budget.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: The shift represents a fundamental change in India's welfare architecture from rights-based to mission-based. Relevant for GS Paper II (Social Justice/Welfare Schemes) and GS Paper III (Economy/Employment).



4. Establishment of the Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)

- The Centre has constituted the Bureau of Port Security (BoPS) as a statutory body under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025.
- Modelled after the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), it will function under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.
- It aims to provide a single regulatory oversight body to address maritime terrorism, smuggling, and piracy at major and minor ports.
- BoPS will include a dedicated division for cybersecurity to protect port IT infrastructure from digital threats.
- The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is designated to conduct security assessments and train private security agencies under BoPS guidance.
- This move aligns with the Maritime India Vision 2030 to enhance ease of doing business through improved security protocols.



Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Merchant Shipping Act, 2025:** The legislative parent act providing the legal mandate for port security.
- **UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea):** Provides the international legal framework for maritime security and territorial waters.

Key Definition:

- **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA):** The effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could impact security, safety, economy, or environment.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: Centralizing port security under a dedicated bureau is vital for India's 7,500 km coastline and global trade safety. Relevant for GS Paper III (Internal Security).

5. Rare Earth Elements and Magnet Manufacturing Scheme

- India has launched a ₹7,280-crore scheme to establish an integrated manufacturing ecosystem for sintered rare earth permanent magnets.
- The goal is to produce 6,000 tonnes of magnets annually to reduce import dependence on China in the EV and wind energy sectors.
- India's primary source is monazite-bearing beach sands, which require complex chemical refining due to their association with radioactive thorium.
- The scheme focuses on Neodymium-Iron-Boron (NdFeB) magnets, which are essential for high-efficiency electric motors.
- Strategic partnerships with Quad countries are being explored to diversify the critical mineral supply chain and ensure "friend-shoring."
- The National Critical Mineral Mission will oversee exploration and extraction projects through 2031 to achieve mineral security.



Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023:** Allows private sector mining for critical and strategic minerals including Rare Earths.

Key Definition:

- **Critical Minerals:** Metallic or non-metallic elements that have high economic importance and high supply risk, essential for green energy transitions.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: Reducing dependence on China for REEs is a strategic necessity for India's "Net Zero" targets. Relevant for GS Paper III (Economy/Energy/S&T).

6. New Labour Codes and Challenges for Unorganized Workers

- Unions have raised concerns over the four new labour codes regarding industrial relations, wages, social security, and occupational safety.
- Over 90% of India's workforce is in the unorganized sector, yet they remain largely excluded from the protections guaranteed in the new codes.
- The Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions (OSHWC) Code is criticized for omitting specific safety rules for construction workers.
- The transition to a web-based inspection system is seen as a move that might violate ILO Convention 81 regarding physical labour inspection.
- The abolition of various sectoral cesses (like beedi and salt cesses) under GST has left specific welfare funds without clear alternate funding.
- Workers' unions argue that the increased threshold for layoffs in industrial units (from 100 to 300 workers) facilitates "hire and fire" policies.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 43:** Directive to the State to secure a living wage and conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life.
- **Concurrent List (Entry 22 & 24):** Both Centre and States can legislate on labour and social security.

Key Definition:

- **Gig Worker:** A person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of a traditional employer-employee relationship.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: The successful implementation of labour reforms depends on balancing "ease of doing business" with "social security for all." Relevant for GS Paper II (Governance) and GS Paper III (Economy).

7. Changing Cyclonic Trends in the North Indian Ocean

- A 125-year analysis (1900–2025) shows that while the total number of cyclonic disturbances is decreasing, their intensity is significantly rising.
- The Arabian Sea is warming faster than the Bay of Bengal, leading to more frequent "Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storms" (ESCS) on India's west coast.



- Seasonality has shifted, with a notable increase in storm frequency during the post-monsoon months (October to December).
- Rising Sea Surface Temperatures (SST) provide more thermal energy, allowing storms to undergo rapid intensification within 24 hours.
- The change in tracks is bringing cyclones closer to densely populated urban centers like Mumbai and Mangaluru.
- Climate models suggest that the "Accumulated Cyclone Energy" (ACE) in the North Indian Ocean is on an upward trajectory.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Provides the legal framework for preparedness, mitigation, and response to cyclonic disasters.

Key Definition:

- **Rapid Intensification:** An increase in the maximum sustained winds of a tropical cyclone of at least 30 knots (55 km/h) in a 24-hour period.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: Changing climate patterns necessitate a revamp of coastal infrastructure and early warning systems. Relevant for GS Paper I (Geography) and GS Paper III (Disaster Management).

8. PESA Mahotsav and Tribal Self-Governance

- The PESA (Panchayats Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Mahotsav in Visakhapatnam highlighted the economic potential of tribal products.
- The festival showcased traditional tribal knowledge, organic millets, and handcrafted bamboo products from multiple states.
- It emphasized the role of the Gram Sabha in managing "Minor Forest Produce" (MFP), which is a core right under the PESA Act.
- The event provided a platform for tribal entrepreneurs to secure Geographical Indication (GI) tags for their unique ethnic crafts.
- Discussions focused on how PESA prevents land alienation and ensures tribal participation in development projects in Scheduled V areas.



Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Fifth Schedule:** Provides for the administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes.
- **PESA Act, 1996:** Mandates that every village shall have a Gram Sabha competent to safeguard traditions and customs.

Key Definition:

- **Minor Forest Produce (MFP):** Includes all non-timber forest produce of plant origin such as bamboo, brushwood, stumps, honey, wax, and lac.



Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: Strengthening PESA is essential for genuine tribal empowerment and countering extremism in tribal belts. Relevant for GS Paper II (Polity/Social Justice) and GS Paper I (Indian Society).

9. Expansion of Geographical Indication (GI) Tags in Telangana

- Telangana is securing GI tags for Narayanpet jewellery, Hyderabad pearls, Banjara needle craft, and Batik paintings.
- These tags protect the intellectual property of local artisans and prevent the sale of counterfeit "traditional" goods.
- A GI tag increases the market value of products in international trade, benefiting rural and cottage industries.
- The process involves documenting the unique geographical link, history, and specific characteristics of the product.
- Currently, items like Pochampally Ikat and Hyderabad Haleem have already placed the state on the global GI map.



Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999:** The legal framework for GI registration in India.
- **TRIPS Agreement (WTO):** International agreement that mandates the protection of GIs globally.

Key Definition:

- **Geographical Indication (GI):** A sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: GI tags are a tool for rural development and heritage preservation. Relevant for GS Paper III (Economy/IPR) and GS Paper I (Art & Culture).

10. Keezhadi Excavations: Ancient Floods and Settlement

- New research suggests that the urban-like structures at Keezhadi were buried approximately 1,155 years ago due to a massive flood.
- High-energy flooding of the Vaigai river deposited layers of sand, silt, and clay, leading to the abandonment of the settlement.
- The discovery of sophisticated brick structures and drainage canals indicates a highly advanced urban planning system in the Sangam era.
- The study highlights that the collapse of ancient civilizations in South India was often linked to hydro-climatic shifts.
- This adds a new dimension to the "Sangam Age" chronology, suggesting that the site was active much later than previously assumed.





Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958:** Governs the protection and excavation of sites like Keezhadi.

Key Definition:

- **Stratigraphy:** The branch of geology and archaeology concerned with the order and relative position of strata and their relationship to the geological time scale.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: Keezhadi provides crucial evidence of a secular, urban civilization in South India contemporary to or succeeding the Mahajanapadas. Relevant for GS Paper I (Ancient Indian History).

11. Avian Influenza (H5N1) and Kuttanad Duck Farming

- A recurring outbreak of H5N1 avian flu has devastated duck farming in Kerala's Alappuzha and Kottayam districts.
- The virus is primarily spread by migratory birds that visit the Vembanad Lake, interacting with domestic ducks in open fields.
- The outbreak threatens the livelihood of thousands of farmers and the genetic diversity of the "Kuttanad" duck breed.
- Culling operations are the primary containment strategy, but compensation delays are causing distress among the farming community.
- Experts suggest moving toward "closed-shed" farming to prevent interaction with wild birds, though it is capital-intensive.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals Act, 2009:** Provides the legal mandate for culling and quarantine.

Key Definition:

- **Zoonotic Disease:** An infectious disease that has jumped from a non-human animal to humans.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: Managing avian flu requires a "One Health" approach, integrating human, animal, and environmental health. Relevant for GS Paper III (Agriculture/Science/Environment).

12. Censor Exemption Controversies at IFFK

- The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting denied censor exemption to several films at the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK).
- Affected films include documentaries on sensitive political issues and historical classics, sparking a debate on artistic freedom.
- Normally, international films shown at festivals receive a "provisional exemption" from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
- Critics argue that denying exemptions amounts to "pre-censorship" and restricts the viewing rights of a specialized audience.



- The government maintains that exemptions can be denied if the content threatens public order or international relations.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 19(1)(a):** Right to freedom of speech and expression.
- **Article 19(2):** Reasonable restrictions on free speech including public order and decency.
- **Cinematograph Act, 1952:** Governs the certification and exhibition of films in India.

Key Definition:

- **Prior Restraint:** Government action that prohibits speech or other expression before it can take place.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance: The balance between national interest and creative liberty is a perennial challenge in a democracy. Relevant for GS Paper II (Fundamental Rights/Governance).
