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Top Stories of The Day

- *Strait of Hormuz Gains Global Attention Amid Rising Iran–Israel Tensions*
- *Defence Research and Development Organisation Accelerates Development of Stealth Ghatak UCAV Combat Drone*
- *NITI Aayog and Japan International Cooperation Agency Sign Pact to Boost SDG Progress in Aspirational Regions*
- *Jio Platforms Limited Appoints Dan Bailey as President to Lead Global Expansion*
- *Donald Trump Orders U.S. Strikes on Iran Amid Escalating Nuclear and Regional Security Tensions*
- *Droupadi Murmu Launches Pink National Common Mobility Card for Women in New Delhi*
- *Delhi Government Launches Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana to Support Girl Child Education*
- *Ministry of Defence (India) Signs ₹5,083 Crore Deals for HAL Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter and VL-Shtil Missile System*
- *National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli Signs MoU to Strengthen Food Processing Sector*
- *Indian Army and Forest, Ecology and Environment Department, Ladakh Sign MoU to Protect Himalayan Wildlife in Ladakh*

Strait of Hormuz in Focus Amid Iran–Israel Tensions



- The Strait of Hormuz has gained global attention due to rising tensions linked to the Iran–Israel conflict, as any instability in the region could disrupt one of the world’s most critical energy trade routes.

Location and Geographical Importance

- The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow maritime passage that connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- It lies between Iran to the north and Oman to the south, making it a strategic maritime gateway for global oil shipments.

Importance in Global Energy Trade

- The Strait of Hormuz is considered the world’s most important oil chokepoint, through which nearly one-fifth of global petroleum consumption passes every day.
- Major oil-exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Iran transport crude oil through this route.

Importance for Asian Countries

- Around 80% of oil shipments passing through the strait are destined for Asian countries, including India, China, Japan, and South Korea.
- Therefore, any disruption in this route could significantly affect energy prices and supply security for these economies.

Strategic and Security Concerns

- Due to its narrow width and heavy tanker traffic, the Strait of Hormuz is highly vulnerable to geopolitical tensions. During the Tanker War in the 1980s, several oil tankers were targeted in this region, highlighting its vulnerability during conflicts.

Key Facts:

- The Strait of Hormuz is considered the most critical oil transit chokepoint globally.
- At its narrowest point, it is about 33 km wide, with shipping lanes roughly 3 km wide in each direction.
- It connects the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea via the Gulf of Oman.
- It is the second-busiest oil chokepoint after the Strait of Malacca.
- Major LNG exports from Qatar also pass through this strait.

DRDO’s Ghatak Combat Drone Programme Gains Momentum



- The Defence Research and Development Organisation is accelerating the development of the Ghatak UCAV, an advanced stealth combat drone designed to strengthen India’s future air-combat capabilities.

Planned Procurement by the Indian Air Force

- The Indian Air Force is expected to induct around 60 units of the Ghatak combat drone once the programme is completed. The drone will perform high-risk missions such as deep-

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strike attacks and suppression of enemy air defences without risking pilots.

Features of the Ghatak UCAV

- The Ghatak is a stealth, jet-powered Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) designed with a flying-wing configuration to reduce radar detection. It will be capable of carrying weapons internally and conducting missions such as reconnaissance, surveillance, and precision strikes in contested airspace.
- The platform will be powered by a non-afterburning “Dry Kaveri” turbofan engine developed by DRDO’s Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE), which aims to enhance India’s indigenous propulsion capability.

Development Progress

- A scaled-down technology demonstrator known as the Stealth Wing Flying Testbed (SWiFT) has already been successfully tested to validate the flying-wing design and autonomous flight technologies required for the Ghatak programme.
- The programme was earlier known as AURA (Autonomous Unmanned Research Aircraft) and represents India’s effort to develop a next-generation stealth combat drone domestically.

Key Facts

- Developer: Defence Research and Development Organisation.
- Full Form: UCAV – Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle.
- Project’s Earlier Name: AURA (Autonomous Unmanned Research Aircraft).
- Technology Demonstrator: Stealth Wing Flying Testbed (SWiFT).
- Design: Flying-wing stealth configuration with low radar cross-section.
- Estimated Maximum Take-Off Weight: Around 13 tonnes.
- Expected Role: Deep-strike missions, surveillance, reconnaissance, and suppression of enemy air defences.

- Engine: Indigenous Dry Kaveri turbofan engine under development.

NITI Aayog–JICA Pact to Boost Sustainable Development in Aspirational Regions



- The NITI Aayog and the Japan International Cooperation Agency have signed a Record of Discussions (RoD) for Phase II of the project aimed at promoting Japan–India Cooperative Actions towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The agreement seeks to accelerate development in India’s Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks.

Objective of the Agreement

- The collaboration aims to strengthen policy frameworks, governance systems, and implementation capacity at the district and block levels. The initiative will enhance monitoring, evaluation mechanisms, and institutional capacity-building to improve development outcomes in underserved regions.

Key Areas of Focus

- The project will focus on six major development sectors:
- Global partnership
- Health and nutrition
- Education
- Agriculture and water resources
- Financial inclusion and skill development
- Basic infrastructure

- These areas align with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda.
- Implementation Strategy

The programme will include:

- Knowledge-sharing platforms and Japan–India forums
- Capacity-building and people-to-people exchanges
- Identification and dissemination of best practices
- Strengthening district-level governance and policy frameworks
- The initiative will also support evidence-based policymaking and improved monitoring systems at the grassroots level.

Key Facts:

- NITI Aayog was established in 2015, replacing the Planning Commission.
- Chairperson: Prime Minister of India.
- Vice-Chairperson: Suman K. Bery
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Nidhi Chhibber (Additional Charge)
- The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) was launched in January 2018 to transform 112 underdeveloped districts through data-driven governance and competitive federalism.
- Progress in aspirational districts is monitored through the “Champions of Change” Dashboard using key performance indicators.
- The Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) was launched in 2023, covering 500 blocks across 329 districts.
- The programmes focus on five core development sectors: health & nutrition, education, agriculture & water resources, financial inclusion & skill development, and basic infrastructure.

Jio Platforms Appoints Dan Bailey as President

- Jio Platforms Limited has appointed Dan Bailey as President to lead its international business initiatives and support the company’s global expansion strategy.



Role and Responsibilities

- Dan Bailey will be based in London and will report to Akash Ambani. He will oversee the company’s international business strategy, focusing on expanding Jio’s digital and telecom services beyond India.
- He will also become a member of the Executive Committee of Jio Platforms, contributing to strategic decision-making across the organisation.

Professional Background of Dan Bailey

- During his career, he held senior leadership positions at major global financial institutions such as Morgan Stanley, HSBC, and Citigroup.
- Before joining Jio Platforms, he served as Chairman of the Telecom, Media and Technology (TMT) practice at Deutsche Bank, where he advised major telecom companies on global transactions.

Strategic Significance

- The appointment reflects Jio’s plan to expand its digital platforms, connectivity services, and technology ecosystem globally after building a strong domestic presence in India over the past decade.

Key Facts:

- Parent Company: Reliance Industries Limited.
- Telecom arm: Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited.

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- Chairman of Reliance Industries: Mukesh Ambani.
- Chairman of Reliance Jio Infocomm: Akash Ambani.
- Jio provides 4G and 5G telecom services, broadband, digital platforms, and enterprise connectivity.
- Jio Platforms has built a digital ecosystem serving over one billion users in India.
- The company has been exploring international expansion and potential IPO plans as part of its next phase of growth.

Why Did Donald Trump Choose War on Iran?



- The United States launched military strikes against Iran under the leadership of Donald Trump, marking a major escalation in long-standing tensions between the United States and Iran. The decision followed years of geopolitical rivalry, disputes over Iran's nuclear programme, and attacks on U.S. interests in the Middle East.

Reasons Behind the Decision

Preventing Iran's Nuclear Weapon Development

- The U.S. administration argued that Iran was advancing its nuclear programme and could potentially develop nuclear weapons, posing a threat to regional and global security.

Countering Iran's Missile and Military Capabilities

- American officials stated that Iran's growing ballistic missile arsenal and drone capabilities threatened U.S. forces and allies in the region.

Pre-emptive Action Against Possible Attacks

- The U.S. claimed that the strikes were a pre-emptive move to prevent potential Iranian attacks on American forces and allies.

Long-standing Hostility Between the U.S. and Iran

- Relations between the two countries have been strained since the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the subsequent Iran hostage crisis, which created decades of mistrust and confrontation.

Pressure to Limit Iran's Regional Influence

- The U.S. has long accused Iran of supporting militant groups in the Middle East and destabilising the region, which was cited as another reason for military action.

Military Build-Up Before the Strikes

- Before launching the operation, the U.S. deployed aircraft carriers, destroyers, and advanced aircraft around Iran, representing one of the largest U.S. military buildups in the Middle East in decades.

Key Facts:

- The United States and Iran have had hostile relations since the 1979 Iranian Revolution.
- In 2018, the U.S. withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action under the Trump administration.
- After withdrawing from the nuclear deal, the U.S. launched the Maximum Pressure Campaign to restrict Iran's oil exports and economy.
- In 2026, U.S. and Israeli strikes targeted Iranian leadership, including the killing of Ali Khamenei during the conflict.

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- The conflict also triggered retaliatory attacks by Iran on U.S. facilities in Bahrain.

President Murmu Launches Pink Mobility Card for Women in Delhi



- The Droupadi Murmu launched the Pink National Common Mobility Card (Pink NCMC) for women in New Delhi during the programme “Sashakt Nari, Samridhd Delhi.” The initiative was introduced by the Delhi government led by Rekha Gupta to strengthen women’s mobility and access to public transport.

Objective of the Scheme

- The Pink Mobility Card aims to provide free bus travel to eligible women residents of Delhi and promote safe, affordable, and inclusive public transportation in the national capital.

Features of the Pink Mobility Card

- Women can travel free of cost on buses operated by the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC).
- The card functions under the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) system.
- It enables seamless travel across multiple public transport systems, including the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and the Regional Rapid Transit System (on a paid basis).

Additional Details

- Three types of mobility cards will be introduced:
- Pink Card: For women beneficiaries
- Blue Card: For general commuters

- Orange Card: For monthly pass users
- Initially, Pink and Blue cards will be issued in the first phase.
- The scheme is aligned with the Government of India’s “One Nation, One Card” vision for integrated digital mobility.

Key Facts:

- National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) is also known as the “One Nation One Card.”
- It was launched by the Government of India in 2019 to enable interoperable transport payments across India.
- The system is developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- NCMC works on RuPay card technology, enabling payments across metro, buses, parking, tolls, and retail purchases.
- The card is part of the Digital India mission aimed at promoting cashless and seamless mobility.

Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana Launched in Delhi



- The Delhi government launched the Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana, a welfare scheme aimed at promoting financial security and education for the girl child in the national capital. The initiative was launched in the presence of Droupadi Murmu along with Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta during the programme titled “Sashakt Naari, Samridhd Delhi.”

Objective of the Scheme

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- The scheme aims to ensure that girls do not drop out of education due to financial constraints and to strengthen the economic empowerment of women and girls in Delhi.

Key Features of the Scheme

- The government will deposit financial assistance in stages from birth until higher education.
- The deposited amount, along with interest, will accumulate to around ₹1 lakh or more by maturity.
- The amount is transferred directly into the Aadhaar-linked bank account of the girl child through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
- The final maturity amount is available when the girl turns 21 years old or completes graduation/diploma studies.

Eligibility Criteria

- The girl child must be born in Delhi.
- The family should have been residing in Delhi for at least three years.
- The annual family income should not exceed ₹1.20 lakh.
- A maximum of two girl children per family can avail the benefits.

Implementation and Vision

- The scheme is part of the Delhi government's broader efforts to promote women-led development, gender equality, and education of the girl child, aligning with national initiatives aimed at empowering women.

India Signs ₹5,083 Crore Defence Deals for Helicopters and Missiles

- The Ministry of Defence (India) signed defence contracts worth ₹5,083 crore to strengthen the operational capabilities of the Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Navy.

Procurement of Helicopters for Coast Guard

- Under the deal, six Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III (Maritime Role) will be procured for the Indian Coast Guard from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
- Contract value: about ₹2,900 crore.
- These helicopters are designed for maritime surveillance, search and rescue, and coastal security operations.
- The helicopters are equipped with modern avionics, sensors, and twin-engine capability for better operational performance.



Acquisition of Missiles for Indian Navy

- Another contract worth ₹2,182 crore was signed with Rosoboronexport (Russia) for the procurement of Surface-to-Air Vertical Launch (VL-Shtil) missiles for the Indian Navy.
- These missiles will enhance ship-based air defence of frontline naval warships.
- They are capable of intercepting aircraft, drones, and anti-ship missiles.

Strategic Significance

- The procurement is part of India's effort to modernise its armed forces and strengthen maritime security, especially in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) where naval activity by major powers has increased.

Key Facts:

- The Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) is also known as Dhruv.
- It is indigenously designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

- ALH Mk-III variants are used by the Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, and Indian Coast Guard.
- The procurement falls under the “Buy (Indian-IDDMM)” category (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured).
- The VL-Shtil missile system is a naval surface-to-air missile (SAM) used for fleet air defence.
- The Indian Coast Guard operates under the Ministry of Defence and is responsible for maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, and coastal security.

NIFTEM-K Signs MoU to Strengthen Food Processing Sector



- National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli (NIFTEM-K), functioning under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with an organisation to promote collaboration in the food processing and allied sectors. The agreement aims to enhance research, training, skill development, and industry collaboration in the food processing ecosystem.

Objectives of the MoU

- The partnership will focus on:
- Promoting innovation and research in food processing technologies.
- Enhancing skill development and entrepreneurship in the food sector.
- Supporting capacity building and knowledge sharing between institutions.

- Encouraging sustainable development and value addition in agricultural produce.

Key Facts :

- NIFTEM-K is located at Kundli, Sonapat district, Haryana.
- It was established in 2012 and functions under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- In 2021, it was granted Institute of National Importance (INI) status through the National Institutes of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Act, 2021.
- NIFTEM-K offers B.Tech, M.Tech, MBA/PGDM, and PhD programmes in food technology and related fields.
- The institute aims to create “techno-managers” for the food industry by integrating food technology with management skills.
- It works closely with FSSAI and food industry stakeholders to support research, food safety standards, and entrepreneurship development.

Indian Army and Ladakh Forest Department Sign MoU for Wildlife Conservation



- The Indian Army and the Forest, Ecology and Environment Department of the Union Territory of Ladakh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen wildlife conservation and protect the fragile high-altitude ecosystem of the region.
- The MoU was signed by the Army’s Fire and Fury Corps.

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Focus on Conservation of Key Himalayan Species

- The collaboration aims to conserve iconic Himalayan wildlife species such as the snow leopard, Himalayan wolf, bharal (blue sheep), ibex, Himalayan marmot, and the black-necked crane, along with their natural habitats in Ladakh's cold desert ecosystem.
- A Joint Snow Leopard Conservation Cell will also be established to coordinate conservation efforts, monitor wildlife populations, and enhance collaboration between the Army and forest authorities in remote border areas.

Objective of the MoU

The agreement aims to:

- Promote sustainable development and environmental protection in Ladakh's high-altitude ecosystems.
- Protect biodiversity while balancing national security responsibilities in border regions.

- Strengthen cooperation between defence forces and environmental authorities to preserve fragile ecosystems.

Additional Key Facts:

- Fire and Fury Corps is the 14 Corps of the Indian Army, headquartered in Leh, responsible for operations in the Ladakh sector along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- The initiative aligns with the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP), an international programme involving 12 snow-leopard range countries.
- The snow leopard is classified as "Vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Important protected areas for snow leopards in Ladakh include Hemis National Park, one of the largest national parks in South Asia.
- Ladakh's cold desert ecosystem supports unique wildlife adapted to high altitude, low oxygen, and extreme temperatures.

Lets Revise

- ❖ The Strait of Hormuz, which has gained global attention due to rising tensions linked to the Iran–Israel conflict, connects the Persian Gulf with which water body? **Gulf of Oman.**
- ❖ The Ghatak, being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, is a type of which aerial platform? **Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV).**
- ❖ Which organisation signed a pact with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to boost sustainable development in Aspirational Districts and Blocks? **NITI Aayog.**
- ❖ Who has been appointed President of Jio Platforms Limited to lead its global expansion? **Dan Bailey.**

- ❖ Which Supreme Leader of Iran was killed during the 2026 U.S.–Israel strikes on Iran?
Ali Khamenei.
- ❖ The Pink Mobility Card provides free travel for women on buses operated by which organisation? **Delhi Transport Corporation.**
- ❖ Which state government launched the Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana in 2026? **Delhi Government.**
- ❖ Under the Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana, the maturity amount for beneficiary girls may reach approximately how much? **About ₹1 lakh.**
- ❖ The Ministry of Defence signed contracts worth ₹5,083 crore to procure helicopters for which force? **Indian Coast Guard.**
- ❖ NIFTEM-K operates under which Union Ministry? **Ministry of Food Processing Industries.**
- ❖ The Indian Army signed an MoU with which department to strengthen wildlife conservation in Ladakh? **Forest, Ecology and Environment Department of Ladakh.**
- ❖ The Indian Army unit that signed the wildlife conservation MoU with Ladakh is which Corps? **Fire and Fury Corps (14 Corps).**

Current affairs form the dynamic backbone of preparation for competitive examinations such as UPSC, SSC, and banking services. They bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world developments, transforming static knowledge into practical understanding. In an age marked by rapid geopolitical changes, economic reforms, and policy innovations, a significant portion of these exams—often 30–35%—draws directly or indirectly from recent events.

Mastery of current affairs not only enhances scores but also cultivates analytical thinking, clarity of perspective, and decision-making skills—qualities indispensable for future administrators and professionals.

Key Dimensions of Importance

- **Syllabus Integration:** Current events seamlessly connect with core subjects like polity, economy, history, and geography. For instance, understanding constitutional provisions becomes more meaningful when linked to recent judicial reforms or landmark judgments.
- **Scoring Edge:** Many questions in prelims and mains are derived from contemporary developments. A well-prepared aspirant can secure quick and confident marks through accurate knowledge of high-yield topics from reliable news sources.
- **Interview Excellence:** In personality tests and interviews, panels evaluate awareness of pressing national and global issues—ranging from climate diplomacy to economic policy—requiring thoughtful, balanced responses.

As many toppers emphasize, current affairs are not a separate subject but the soul of exam preparation. Consistent engagement with credible sources like The Hindu, PIB releases, and Yojana magazine strengthens critical thinking and nurtures a well-rounded outlook, moving beyond rote memorization.

In a competitive landscape where millions aspire for limited opportunities, current affairs serve as a decisive differentiator. Adopting structured habits—daily news analysis, monthly revisions, and regular mock tests—empowers candidates to adapt confidently to evolving exam patterns. Ignoring this essential component is like navigating uncertain waters without direction—while mastering it ensures clarity, confidence, and a competitive advantage.

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