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## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC**



*1st May 2026*

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## EXERCISE PRAGATI

### Why in News

- Indian Army is hosting the first multilateral **Exercise PRAGATI** in Meghalaya.

### Strategic Orientation

- **PRAGATI (Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in Indian Ocean Region)** is a multilateral defence exercise.
- It aims to **enhance interoperability, defence cooperation, and mutual trust** among participating nations.
- It reflects India's commitment to **collective security and regional stability in the Indo-Pacific**.

### Participating Countries and Scope

- The exercise includes **11 countries** such as **Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Nepal, Maldives, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bhutan**.
- It is conducted at **Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya)**, enhancing India's Northeast strategic relevance.

### Operational and Diplomatic Dimensions

- Focus is on **counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations**, improving joint capabilities.
- It marks a shift from **bilateral to consortium-based military engagements**.
- Includes **defence industry exposition**, promoting **ASEAN defence industrial partnerships**.

## E-PRAAPTI PORTAL

### Why in News

- **EPFO** is launching **E-PRAAPTI portal** for managing inactive PF accounts.

### Governance and Institutional Framework

- Developed by **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** under Ministry of Labour.
- Linked to **Universal Account Number (UAN)** introduced in **2014** for portability.

### Functional Mechanism

- Portal enables **Aadhaar-based authentication** for tracking inoperative EPF accounts.

- A PF account becomes inactive after **36 months without contribution**.
- It facilitates **identification, UAN linking, profile updating, and account activation**.

### Digital and Financial Inclusion Dimensions

- Initial rollout is **member ID-based**, ensuring secure implementation.
- Future expansion will cover users **without access to member IDs**, enhancing inclusivity.
- Strengthens **ease of doing business and labour welfare digitisation**.

## PIPRAHWA RELICS

### Why in News

- Sacred **Piprahwa relics of Buddha** were displayed in Ladakh after repatriation.

### Historical and Archaeological Significance

- Discovered in **1898 at Piprahwa Stupa (Uttar Pradesh)** by **William Claxton Peppé**.
- Associated with **Kapilavastu**, linked to early life of **Gautam Buddha**.
- Relics include **bone fragments, crystal caskets, gold ornaments, and gemstones**.

### Epigraphic and Cultural Evidence

- **Brahmi inscription** links relics to **Sakya clan**, dated to **3rd century BC**.
- Confirms early **Buddhist funerary practices and relic worship traditions**.

### Legal and Conservation Aspects

- Classified as **'AA' antiquities under Indian law**, prohibiting export or sale.
- Governed historically by **Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878**.
- Preserved in **National Museum (New Delhi)** and **Indian Museum (Kolkata)**.

### Repatriation and Diplomacy

- Recovered through **public-private collaboration** between **Government of India and Godrej Group**.
- Reflects **cultural diplomacy and heritage repatriation efforts**.

## NAVAL ANTI-SHIP MISSILE SHORT RANGE (NASM-SR)

### Why in News

- DRDO and Indian Navy successfully tested **NASM-SR** off Odisha coast.

### Defence Technology Profile

- It is India's **first indigenous helicopter-launched anti-ship missile**.
- Developed by **DRDO (Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad)**.

### Operational Capabilities

- Range of **55 km** with **fire-and-forget capability** in all weather conditions.
- Equipped with **fibre-optic gyroscope INS, radio altimeter, and two-way data link**.
- Uses **solid propulsion booster and long-burn sustainer**.

### Strategic Significance

- Replaces **Sea Eagle missile**, reducing import dependency.
- Features **sea-skimming trajectory and waterline strike capability**, enhancing lethality.
- Strengthens **naval maritime strike capabilities in Indian Ocean Region**.

## PANCHAYAT ADVANCEMENT INDEX (PAI) 2.0

### Why in News

- Ministry of Panchayati Raj released **PAI 2.0 Report (2023–24)**.

### Governance and Institutional Role

- It is a **data-driven framework for assessing Gram Panchayat performance**.
- Covers over **2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats** across India.

### Framework and Indicators

- Based on **Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs)**.
- Uses **150 indicators and 230 data points across 9 thematic areas**.

### Performance Classification System

- Categories include **Achiever (A+), Front Runner (A), Performer (B), Aspirant (C), Beginner (D)**.
- Enables **evidence-based planning and performance monitoring**.

### Policy Relevance

- Supports **decentralisation under Part IX of Constitution (73rd Amendment)**.
- Enhances **grassroots governance and SDG localisation**.

## MISSION SAKSHAM

### Why in News

- RBI launched **Mission SAKSHAM** for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs).

### Institutional and Regulatory Context

- Initiated by **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** for strengthening UCB sector.
- Focuses on **capacity-building and compliance improvement**.

### Operational Framework

- Targets **1.40 lakh participants**, including **board members and senior management**.
- Uses **blended learning model (digital + in-person)** with regional language support.

### Financial Stability Dimensions

- Enhances **risk management, audit, and IT capabilities**.
- Builds **institutional resilience and systemic stability** in cooperative banking.

## PREAH VIHEAR TEMPLE

### Why in News

- Renewed conflict between **Thailand and Cambodia** over the temple.

### Geographical and Cultural Context

- Located in **Preah Vihear Province (Cambodia)** on **Dangrek Mountains border**.
- Built during **Khmer Empire (11th–12th centuries)**, dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.

### Architectural Features

- Features **series of sanctuaries connected by pavements over 800 metres axis**.
- Includes **multiple gopuras and tiered platforms**, typical of Khmer architecture.

### Legal and International Dimensions

- Dispute dates back to **1904 treaty between Thailand and Cambodia**.
- **International Court of Justice (1962)** awarded ownership to Cambodia.
- Declared **UNESCO World Heritage Site (2008)**.

### Strategic and Political Relevance

- Continues to be a **flashpoint in Southeast Asian geopolitics**.
- Reflects **territorial disputes and cultural heritage conflicts**.

## IN–SLN DIVEX 2026

### Why in News

- India and Sri Lanka conducted **IN–SLN DIVEX 2026** in Colombo from **21–28 April 2026**.

### Strategic and Operational Aspects

- It is a **bilateral naval diving exercise** focusing on **underwater operations and maritime security in IOR**.
- It supports India's maritime vision of **MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)**.

### Naval Deployment and Exercises

- India deployed **INS Nireekshak**, a **Diving Support and Submarine Rescue Vessel**.
- Joint drills included **harbour and open-sea diving operations** to improve coordination.

### Technical Capabilities

- Divers conducted **deep-sea and mixed gas dives beyond 55 metres**.
- Exercises on **WW-era wrecks (SS Worcester, SS Perseus)** enhanced rescue and salvage skills.

### Regional Cooperation

- India provided **BHISM cubes under Aarogya Maitri initiative** for disaster support.
- Activities like **yoga and beach cleaning** strengthened bilateral ties.

## APPOINTMENT OF NCLT PRESIDENT

### Why in News

- The Union Government appointed **Justice Anupinder Singh Grewal** as **President of NCLT**.

### Institutional Framework

- **NCLT** is a **quasi-judicial body under Companies Act, 2013** dealing with **corporate and insolvency disputes**.

### Appointment Details

- Appointment notified on **29 April 2026** with tenure of **5 years or up to 67 years**.

- The President is generally a **former High Court judge**.

### Judicial Developments

- The **Delhi High Court** declared the petition on acting president appointment **infructuous**.
- The dispute involved **seniority vs convention of appointing senior-most judicial member**.

### Governance Significance

- Ensures stability in **tribunal functioning and IBC framework**.
- Highlights need for **clear rules in tribunal appointments**.

## OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS OF THE DAY

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Places in News</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>KYRGYZSTAN</b></p> <p><b>Why in News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ SCO Defence Ministers’ Meeting was held in <b>Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Geopolitical Location</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Kyrgyzstan</b> is a <b>landlocked Central Asian country</b> bordered by <b>Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China</b>.</li> <li>➤ It is often called the <b>“Switzerland of Central Asia”</b> due to mountainous terrain.</li> </ul> <p><b>Physical Geography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Dominated by <b>Tian Shan mountain range</b>, influencing climate and settlement patterns.</li> <li>➤ Highest peak is <b>Victory Peak (7,439 m)</b>, indicating high-altitude geography.</li> <li>➤ Major rivers include <b>Syr Darya, Naryn, and Chu</b>, supporting irrigation systems.</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural Resources and Strategic Value</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rich in <b>coal, oil, natural gas, uranium, gold, and rare earth metals</b>.</li> <li>➤ Presence of <b>Lake Issyk-Kul</b>, the <b>second-largest saline lake</b>, has ecological importance.</li> </ul>
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<b>Environ- ment</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEW SPECIES OF FIREFLIES</b></p> <p><b>Why in News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Scientists discovered two new firefly species in Meghalaya’s East Khasi Hills.</li> </ul> <p><b>Taxonomic and Nomenclature Aspects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The species are named <b>Diaphanes meghalayanus</b> and <b>Diaphanes mawlynnong</b>, belonging to fireflies.</li> <li>➤ <b>D. meghalayanus</b> derives its name from <b>Meghalaya</b>, indicating wider regional distribution.</li> <li>➤ <b>D. mawlynnong</b> is named after <b>Mawlynnong village</b>, recognising local Khasi community association.</li> </ul> <p><b>Habitat Ecology and Behavioural Traits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Both species prefer <b>dark, humid ecosystems with minimal anthropogenic disturbance</b>.</li> <li>➤ <b>D. meghalayanus</b> occurs in <b>semi-evergreen forests and betel nut plantations with bamboo patches</b>.</li> <li>➤ The species thrives at <b>18–20°C temperature and 77–80% humidity</b>, indicating climatic sensitivity.</li> <li>➤ Males exhibit <b>bioluminescent flight at 10–15 metres height</b>, aiding mate attraction.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Species-Specific Adaptations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>D. mawlynnong</b> is habitat-specific, found in <b>dense bamboo forests near rocky streams</b>.</li> <li>➤ Female fireflies are <b>wingless and ground-dwelling</b>, observed beneath boulders.</li> <li>➤ Females emit <b>slower and longer pulsating light signals compared to males</b>, indicating reproductive roles.</li> </ul>
<b>Science and Technology</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLATYPUS</b></p> <p><b>Why in News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discovery of <b>ancient platypus fossils with teeth</b> in Australia.</li> </ul> <p><b>Biological Classification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Scientific name: <b>Ornithorhynchus anatinus</b>.</li> <li>➤ It is a <b>semi-aquatic, egg-laying mammal (monotreme)</b> endemic to Australia.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Morphological and Functional Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Has <b>dense waterproof fur and streamlined body</b>, aiding aquatic adaptation.</li> <li>➤ Uses <b>webbed limbs for swimming and tail for fat storage</b>.</li> <li>➤ Males possess <b>venomous spur connected to gland</b>, rare among mammals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Habitat and Conservation Status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Found in <b>freshwater rivers, creeks, and ponds across Australia and Tasmania</b>.</li> <li>➤ Listed as <b>Near Threatened under IUCN Red List</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<p><b>LEAF SPOT DISEASES</b></p> <p><b>Why</b></p>
<b>Defence</b>	<p><b>INS KALPENI</b></p> <p><b>Why</b></p>

## UTTAR PRADESH IN NEWS

### **AYODHYA–MUMBAI AMRIT BHARAT EXPRESS**

**Why**