

SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

13-08-2026

Kuril Islands

 Reuters

Putin visits disputed island near Japan, drawing Tokyo's ire

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited a disputed island close to Japan on Thursday, drawing strong condemnation from Tokyo.



Why in News: Russian President Vladimir Putin visited **Iturup**, marking his first visit to the disputed **Kuril Islands**, amid strained Russia-Japan relations.

Geographical Setting

- The **Kuril Islands** are located in the **Russian Far East** and form the boundary between the **Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Okhotsk**.
- The archipelago stretches about **1,300 km** from the southern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula to northeastern **Hokkaido**.
- It consists of **56 islands** along with several islets and rocks, covering more than **15,600 sq. km**.
- The islands are divided into the **Greater Kuril Chain** and **Lesser Kuril Chain**.



Physical and Human Geography

- The islands lie within the **Pacific Ring of Fire** and contain more than 100 volcanoes, including about **35 active volcanoes**.
- The region has **long, cold and snowy winters** and cool, wet and foggy summers.
- Vegetation ranges from **tundra in the north** to dense forests in the southern islands.

- Major centres include **Kurilsk** on **Iturup**, **Severo-Kurilsk** on **Paramushir**, and **Yuzhno-Kurilsk** on **Kunashir**.

Strategic and Territorial Dispute

- Russia** administers the entire archipelago, but Japan disputes sovereignty over the four southernmost islands.
- Japan refers to these islands as its **Northern Territories** and claims historical ownership dating to the early 19th century.
- The dispute has prevented Russia and Japan from formally concluding a **World War II peace treaty**.

Kollidam River

THE Hindu

Possible Sangam-age irrigation structure exposed on Kollidam river in Tiruchi district

Brick structures that were found on the Kollidam river bed at Koogur near Lalgudi in Tiruchi district, close to the ancient Kallanai dam,...



Why in News: ASI archaeologists discovered remains of a possible **Sangam-era irrigation structure** in the **Kollidam River** near **Lalgudi**, Trichy, Tamil Nadu.

River System and Course

- The **Kollidam**, also called **Kolidam** or **Coleroon**, is the **northern distributary of the Kaveri River**.
- It originates from the northern bifurcation of the Kaveri **just west of Srirangam**.
- The river flows for about 150 km before entering the **Bay of Bengal** through several mouths.

Historical Linkage

- The discovery of a possible **Sangam-era irrigation structure** highlights the historical importance of water-management systems in the Kaveri delta.
- The river ultimately drains into the **Bay of Bengal**, between the Puducherry and Karaikal coastal sectors.

Economic and Geographical Importance

- The Kollidam is the **major northern stream of the Kaveri delta**.

- It was **dammed in 1836** to support irrigation in the fertile and densely populated Kaveri delta.
- The region is particularly known for its **rice production**.
- **Chidambaram** is located on the banks of this river.

Cascade Frogs

 Inshorts

New frog species named after Kerala social worker Padmini Varkey | Sendenyu frog named after Nagaland village | Inshorts

Scientists named a new species of cascade frogs found in Tripura after late social worker from Kerala Padmini Varkey, who was affectionately called...

Why in News: Scientists discovered **three new species of cascade frogs** from the biodiverse forests of **Northeast India**.

Taxonomy and Habitat

- Cascade frogs belong to the genus **Amolops**, which has around 100 species distributed across Asia.
- They are typically associated with **rocky waterfalls and fast-flowing forest streams**.
- They are important ecological indicators because they are sensitive to **clean-water conditions**.

Ecological Significance

- Cascade frogs connect **aquatic and terrestrial food webs** and help regulate pest populations.
- Their sensitivity to water quality makes them useful **bioindicators of freshwater ecosystem health**.

New Species and Locations

- **Ammachi's Cascade Frog** (**Amolops ammachi**) was discovered in the **Jampui Hills of Tripura** and honours social worker **Padmini Varkey**.
- **Sendenyu Cascade Frog** (**Amolops sendenyu**) was discovered in **Nagaland** and named after **Sendenyu Village**.

- **Beautiful Cascade Frog (*Amolops bella*)** was discovered in West Bengal and is characterised by green coloration with mosaic patterns.

Black-Necked Crane

GK Greater Kashmir

LG Ladakh VK Saxena inaugurates Black-Necked Crane Festival

Leh, Aug 11: Ladakh Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, inaugurated the nation's first "Black-Necked Crane Festival 2026" in Ladakh, an initiative...



Why in News: The **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)** sterilised more than **2,950 free-ranging dogs** in Ladakh to reduce attacks on Black-necked Crane chicks and nests in alpine wetlands.

Distribution and Habitat

- The **Black-necked Crane (*Grus nigricollis*)** occurs in high-altitude marshes and lakes of the **Tibetan Plateau**, including Tibet, Qinghai, Xinjiang and Gansu, as well as Sichuan and eastern Ladakh.
- A small wintering population occurs in the **Sangti and Zimithang valleys of Arunachal Pradesh**.
- Important Ladakh breeding areas include wetlands around Hanle, Tso Kar and **Nyoma** in the **Changthang Cold Desert Wildlife Sanctuary**.



Biology and Cultural Significance

- It has a **whitish-grey body, black head and upper neck, red patches around the eyes and long legs** adapted to wetland habitats.
- It breeds at elevations of about **2,600–4,900 metres**, generally nesting in gently sloping wetlands.

- In Ladakh's Buddhist culture, it is regarded as a **sacred bird and a symbol of peace, purity and good fortune.**

Threats and Conservation

- Major threats include **wetland habitat degradation, tourism, linear infrastructure, increasing human use and climate change.**
- The species is listed as **Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List.**
- It is included in **CITES Appendix I and Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.**

Sanchar Mitra Scheme



News On AIR

DoT empowers youth by selecting three Sanchar Mitras as envoys of ITU

The Department of Telecommunications has facilitated the selection of three Sanchar Mitras from India as Generation Connect Youth Envoys...



Why in News: The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications**, is implementing the Sanchar Mitra Scheme to engage students in promoting safe digital behaviour and telecom awareness.

Objectives and Institutional Framework

- The scheme seeks to harness **youth participation** for digital empowerment and public awareness.
- **Student volunteers**, designated as **Sanchar Mitras**, spread awareness about mobile safety, telecom fraud prevention and government digital initiatives.
- The nodal ministry is the **Ministry of Communications**, through the **Department of Telecommunications.**

Eligibility and Training

- Students from technical institutes offering programmes in telecom, electronics, computers, cybersecurity or related fields can participate.

- Training is provided by experts and the **National Communications Academy-Technology (NCA-T)**.
- Training covers **cybersecurity, emerging telecom technologies, telecom policies and regulations**.

Field-Level Role

- Sanchar Mitras conduct awareness activities in **communities, schools and public spaces**.
- Selected performers may receive exposure to **R&D projects, telecom start-ups, policy and standards work, field surveys and DoT initiatives**.
- The scheme is implemented across **all States and Union Territories** through the DoT's **Licensed Service Area (LSA) field offices**.



Southern African Customs Union (SACU)

BW BW Businessworld

India, South Africa-led SACU Set One-year Target For Trade Deal

Central government and Southern African Customs Union on Wednesday signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the proposed trade deal,...



Why in News: India and the **five-member Southern African Customs Union (SACU)** signed **Terms of Reference (ToR)** to begin negotiations for a **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)**, with an aim to conclude talks within a year.

Composition and Institutional Features

- SACU is an African regional economic organisation established in **1910**, making it the **world's oldest customs union**.
- Its five members are **South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini**.
- Its Secretariat is located in **Windhoek, Namibia**.

Customs Union Mechanism

- SACU members maintain a **Common External Tariff (CET)** on goods imported from non-member territories.

- The members constitute a **single customs territory** with free movement of goods and elimination of internal tariffs and other trade barriers.
- They also share customs revenues and coordinate trade-related policies.

India–SACU Economic Linkages

- **South Africa** contributes around **91%** of SACU's total economic output and is India's largest trading partner within the grouping.
- The proposed **PTA** could expand India's trade and economic engagement with Southern Africa.
- All five SACU members are also part of the broader **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**.

SAMRIDH Programme



PIB

<https://www.pib.gov.in> > PressReleaseDetail

MeitY's SAMRIDH Programme Supports 5 Startups through ...

2 days ago — tY's **SAMRIDH Programme Supports 5 Startups** through Accelerator-led Innovation; The programme successfully concluded on 31st January, 2026.

Why in News: The Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology informed the Rajya Sabha about the **SAMRIDH Programme**, a flagship startup-acceleration initiative of MeitY.

Objectives and Institutional Framework

- **SAMRIDH** stands for **Startup Accelerator of MeitY for Product Innovation, Development, and Growth**.
- It aims to strengthen accelerators that identify and support promising **IT-based startups** for scaling.
- The programme focuses on customer connect, investor connect and access to international markets.
- It is a flagship programme of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.

Targets and Financial Support

- The programme targets **300 technology startups over three years**, with each cohort comprising **5–10 startups**.
- In its first cohort, **22 accelerators across 12 States** are supporting 175 startups.
- Selected accelerators receive **₹2 lakh per startup**, while startups can receive matching funding of up to **₹40 lakh**.

Implementation Architecture

- The programme is implemented by **MeitY Start-up Hub (MSH)** and the **Digital India Corporation (DIC)**.
- The initiative seeks to strengthen India's **software-product startup ecosystem** through structured acceleration and market linkages.

Tripura's Mustard Honey Export

Why in News: **APEDA** facilitated Tripura's first international shipment of

mustard honey, with **Dergang FPO** exporting **1 metric tonne to Dubai**.

Export and FPO Role

- The export highlights the role of FPOs in connecting small farmers with global markets.
- **Salt Range Foods Pvt. Ltd.** supported the FPO in developing an **export-oriented honey supply chain**.

Agricultural Significance

- The initiative promotes **apiculture, organic agriculture, quality standards and value addition** in Tripura.
- **APEDA** facilitates agricultural exports through market linkages, capacity building and quality assurance, particularly for the Northeast.

 News On AIR

[First | Akashvani News](#)

First-ever export of mustard honey from Tripura to Dubai creates access to international markets for locals. First-ever export of mustard...



Other Important News of the day

Places in
News

Liberia



MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, SMT. ANNPURNA DEVI MEETS PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AND THE WOMEN'S...



The Minister of Women and Child Development, Government of India, Smt. Annpurna Devi, today met with a Parliamentary delegation from the...

Why in News: India's Union Minister for Women and Child Development met a **parliamentary delegation from Liberia** to discuss women-led development, political representation and gender-responsive governance.

Geographical Location

- **Liberia** is located on the **Atlantic coast of West Africa**, with **Monrovia** as its capital.
- It shares borders with **Sierra Leone**, Guinea and **Côte d'Ivoire**.
- The **Atlantic Ocean** forms its southern and south-western boundary.

Historical and Physical Features

- Liberia is described in the source as **Africa's oldest republic** and the only African state never subjected to colonial rule.
- **Mount Wuteve** is its highest peak.
- Major rivers include the **Mano, Morro and Cavalla**, with some forming parts of Liberia's international boundaries.

Economic Resources

- Liberia has substantial mineral resources, including **iron ore, diamond, gold, manganese, graphite and cyanite**.

Environment	It has a tropical hot-humid climate.
	Ghatiana Karnataka
	 Deccan Herald  <u>'Ghatiana Karnataka': Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary beat forester names new crab species after state</u> Ghatiana Karnataka is the 15th species of Ghatiana family to be discovered in the Western Ghats and eight of them, including the latest one,... Why in News: A beat forester from Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary, Udupi, Karnataka, scientifically described a new freshwater crab species, Ghatiana Karnataka. Taxonomic and Geographical Significance Ghatiana Karnataka is a newly described freshwater crab species discovered in Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary. - It is the 15th species of the genus Ghatiana recorded from the Western Ghats. Eight Ghatiana species, including the new species, are endemic to Karnataka. - The genus Ghatiana comprises freshwater crabs occurring in the Western Ghats. Habitat and Ecology - The species inhabits areas near perennial streams and evergreen or semi-evergreen forests. - During the monsoon, it occurs on laterite rocks, while in other seasons it shelters inside moist tree cavities. - Unlike several other Ghatiana species that are difficult to locate during dry seasons, it has been recorded throughout the year. Identifying Features - It has a distinctive dark-purple body and light-pink claws.

	• These colour characteristics distinguish it from the other seven Ghatiana species discovered in Karnataka.
Space	NASA Moon Base Programme THE Hindu <u>NASA invites ISRO to join Moon Base programme</u> NASA has invited ISRO to collaborate on its Moon Base program, enhancing U.S.-India space cooperation.  Why in News: NASA has invited India to join its Moon Base programme aimed at establishing a sustained human presence near the lunar South Pole. Strategic and Scientific Significance • The programme seeks to establish a sustained human presence near the Moon's South Pole, building infrastructure for long-duration exploration. • The lunar South Pole is significant because of water ice in permanently shadowed regions, scientific opportunities and potentially useful lunar resources. • India's Chandrayaan-3 mission first accessed the lunar South Pole region in August 2023. Phased Development • Phase I (Now–2029) focuses on robotic exploration, technology demonstrations, site identification and risk reduction. • Phase II (2029–2032) will deploy initial power, cargo, logistics and communication infrastructure. • Phase III (2032 onwards) envisages assembling a permanent lunar outpost with habitats, power, communications and transportation systems.

Science and Technology

Param Pragya Facility – IIT Delhi

 The Economic Times

[PM Modi inaugurates 'Param Pragya' AI-powered supercomputing facility, honours students at IIT Delhi's 57th](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended IIT Delhi's 57th Convocation Ceremony as chief guest. He presented prestigious awards to graduating...



Why in News: Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **AI-powered Param Pragya facility** at **IIT Delhi** during its **57th Convocation**.

Technological Significance

- **Param Pragya** strengthens **High-Performance Computing (HPC)** and **Artificial Intelligence** capabilities.
- It will support research in AI, Machine Learning, scientific computing and data-intensive applications.

Strategic Value

- The facility strengthens **IIT Delhi** as a hub for advanced technological research.
- It can enhance India's **domestic AI-computing capacity** and reduce dependence on external infrastructure.

Uttar Pradesh in News

BEL Defence Manufacturing Facility – Chitrakoot

 The Times of India

[BEL to start Rs 600cr defence manufacturing facility in Chitrakoot](#)

BEL to invest over Rs 600 crore to set up a defence manufacturing facility in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh, producing radar and air defence...



Why in News: **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** will invest over **₹600 crore** to establish a defence manufacturing facility at the **Chitrakoot node** of the **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC)**.

Investment and Infrastructure

- BEL has proposed an investment of over ₹600 crore, including an initial investment of about ₹562.5 crore.
- Around 75 hectares of land has already been allotted to BEL at the Chitrakoot Defence Industrial Corridor.
- The facility is planned as a state-of-the-art defence manufacturing unit.

Defence Technology and MRO

- The project will include a dedicated Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility.
- The facility is intended to support projects involving QRSM, Air Defence Systems and Next Generation Radar Systems.
- The project can strengthen India's indigenous defence manufacturing and maintenance capabilities.

Institutional and Regional Significance

- The High Level Empowered Committee (HLEC) approved the proposal for granting a Letter of Comfort (LoC) to BEL.
- The HLEC is chaired by Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary S.P. Goyal.
- The facility is expected to promote industrial development and economic activity in Bundelkhand through the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor.