

SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

14-08-2026

Petermann Glacier

 The Economic Times

In 2019, an international team began monitoring Greenland's Petermann Glacier's floating ice tongue from s

Petermann Glacier Greenland: An international team of researchers has monitored Greenland's Petermann Glacier, revealing its largest calving...



Why in News: An international research team reported that **Petermann Glacier** in northwest Greenland calved a **76.4 km² ice island on 4 August 2026**, its largest floating-ice loss since 2012 and the largest Arctic calving event since 2020.

Geographical Setting

- **Petermann Glacier** is located in **northwest Greenland**, east of the **Nares Strait**.
- The **Nares Strait** is a narrow sea passage separating **Greenland and Ellesmere Island (Canada)**.
- It is one of the major glaciers connecting the **Greenland Ice Sheet with the Arctic Ocean**.
- The glacier covers approximately **1,295 sq. km**.

Climate Significance

- Petermann periodically sheds large icebergs as it discharges ice into the ocean.
- Its **ice flow has accelerated** in recent years.
- Complete collapse of Petermann Glacier is estimated to potentially raise global sea level by about **30 cm**.

Polar-System Linkages

- **Land-based glaciers in Greenland** are important contributors to global sea-level rise.
- Increasing global temperatures can accelerate **ice melting and oceanward ice discharge**.

Delisting of 18 Centrally Protected Monuments



18 Monuments Delisted From Protected Sites List Since 2021: Centre

Bara Khamba Cemetery in Delhi and a banyan grove of "great antiquity" containing traces of ancient buildings are among the 18 sites which...



Why in News: The Central Government has **delisted 18 monuments** from the list of centrally protected sites since 2021, leaving the **ASI** responsible for **3,688 centrally protected monuments and sites**.

Legal Framework

- Centrally protected monuments are sites declared to be of **national importance** under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958**.
- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** functions under the **Ministry of Culture** and is responsible for their protection, conservation and maintenance.
- **Section 35 of the AMASR Act, 1958** provides for delisting monuments that cease to be of national importance.
- A **Gazette notification dated 8 March 2024** initiated the delisting process for the 18 monuments on this ground.

Examples of Delisted Monuments

- The delisted sites include the **Nicholson Statue in Delhi** and **Kos Minar No. 13 in Gurugram**.
- Other examples include **Kos Minar at Shahabad, Bara Khamba Cemetery in Delhi** and **Gunner Burkill's Tomb in Jhansi**.
- **Telia Nala Buddhist ruins in Varanasi** and an ancient **banyan grove in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh**, are also among the listed sites.

Administrative Implications

- Following delisting, the **ASI's statutory responsibility for conservation and maintenance** of the concerned site ends.
- India had retrieved **662 historical artefacts from foreign countries up to June 2026**, including **589 artefacts from the United States**.

India Wins Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2026

 News On AIR

India wins 17 medals, including 4 gold, on opening day of U-23 Commonwealth Fencing Championship

India has made a strong start at the U-23 Commonwealth Fencing Championship in Lagos, Nigeria, winning 17 medals, including 4 gold,...



Why in News: India won its **maiden overall title** at the **Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2026** in Lagos, Nigeria, securing **35 medals** and the **Wilkinson Sword Trophy**.

Championship Profile

- The 2026 championship was held in **Lagos, Nigeria, from 9–12 August 2026**.
- Fencing has three Olympic weapons: **foil, épée and sabre**.
- Competitions are conducted in **individual and team events** across senior and age-group categories for men and women.

India's Medal Performance

- India finished with **13 gold, 8 silver and 14 bronze medals**, totalling **35 medals**.
- **Taniksha Khatri** won the Senior Women's Épée individual gold after defeating **Khushi Dabhade 15–7** in an all-Indian final.
- **Kanaglakshmi, Rajendran Shanthimol Sherjin** and **Karan Singh** won senior individual gold medals in Women's Foil, Men's Épée and Men's Sabre respectively.

Institutional Linkage

- The **Commonwealth Fencing Federation** has awarded the Wilkinson Sword Trophy since **1982** for the best overall performance.
- The **Fencing Association of India** is the national governing body for fencing in India.

Team Events

- India won gold in **five of the six Senior Team events**.
- The gold medals came in **Men's Sabre, Women's Sabre, Men's Épée, Women's Épée and Women's Foil**, while Men's Foil secured silver.
- India's overall performance earned it the **Wilkinson Sword Trophy** for the best-performing nation.

Srikalahasti Temple

TOI The Times of India

Srikalahasti temple rolls out time slots for VIP darshans

Srikalahasti Temple to introduce VIP darshan time slots, protocol ID cards for board members, and dedicated donation counters with bank...



Why in News: Authorities have submitted a **₹114.06 crore proposal** to the Centre under the **PRASAD scheme** for improving pilgrim and tourist amenities at Srikalahasteeswara Temple.

Historical and Geographical Context

- **Srikalahasteeswara Temple** is located at **Srikalahasti** in **Tirupati district, Andhra Pradesh**.
- The temple stands beside a hill on the banks of the **Swarnamukhi River**.
- It is also known as “**Dakshina Kailasam**”, meaning the Southern abode of Shiva.
- Its origins date to the **5th century**, while the outer temple and main structure were built in the **11th century** by **Rajendra Chola I**.

PRASAD Scheme

- **PRASAD** is a **Central Sector Scheme** of the **Ministry of Tourism** for integrated development of identified pilgrimage destinations.
- The scheme was renamed **National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive** in **October 2017**.
- It provides financial assistance to **State Governments and Union Territory administrations** for tourism infrastructure.

Architectural Heritage

- The temple represents the **Dravidian architectural style**, characterised by elaborate carvings and sculptures.
- **Kulottunga Chola I** constructed its magnificent entrance gopurams.
- The **Vijayanagara Empire** contributed substantially to later renovations, including the approximately **120-metre-high Rajagopuram**.

Infrastructure Focus

- PRASAD supports facilities such as **last-mile connectivity, information centres, eco-friendly transport, illumination, parking, drinking water, toilets, first-aid centres and craft bazaars**.

Indonesian Babirusas

 Down To Earth

As African swine fever threatens to push Indonesian babirusas towards extinction, UK's Chester Zoo welcomes critically important piglet

Babirusas are important to island ecosystems as they drop seeds as they forage, helping forest regeneration, and are a key indicator species...



Why in News: **Chester Zoo, United Kingdom**, recently announced the birth of a babirusa, highlighting conservation concerns surrounding these threatened wild pigs.

Taxonomy and Distribution

- Babirusas are wild pigs commonly called “**pig-deer**” and belong to the genus **Babyrousa**.
- Three extant species recognised since 2001 include **Buru babirusa** (*Babyrousa babyrussa*), **North Sulawesi babirusa** (*B. celebensis*) and **Togian babirusa** (*B. togeanensis*).
- They occur on Indonesian islands including **Sulawesi, Togian, Sula and Buru**.

Conservation

- The **IUCN Red List** categorises the Indonesian babirusa as **Vulnerable**.
- Females have a gestation period of approximately **155–158 days** and generally produce **one or two piglets**.

Distinctive Features

- Male babirusas possess **upper tusks that erupt through the snout bone and curve backwards** towards the face.
- Both sexes possess **lower canine tusks**.
- They are relatively hairless compared with other pigs and are capable of swimming.

Habitat and Ecology

- Babirusas inhabit **moist swampy forests and tropical rainforests**.
- Their diet includes **fruits, plants and small animals**, while specialised hooves help them dig for roots and insect larvae.
- They can run at speeds of approximately **30 miles per hour**.

Shompen Tribe

THE Hindu

Former A&NI Chief Secretary said Shompen tribe must 'adopt modern lifestyle' brought by GNI project, alleges Tribal Council

Tribal leaders claim the Shompen tribe is pressured to adopt a modern lifestyle due to the Great Nicobar Island project.



Why in News: Tribal leaders recently accused the **Andaman and Nicobar administration** of attempting to draw the isolated **Shompen community** towards a modern lifestyle.

Geographical and Constitutional Context

- The **Shompen** inhabit the dense tropical rainforests of **Great Nicobar Island** in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- They are classified as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)**.
- They are regarded as one of the **most isolated indigenous communities** in the world.



Traditional Lifestyle

- The Shompen traditionally live as **nomadic hunter-gatherers** in small groups.
- Their diet includes a variety of rainforest plants, with **pandanus fruit (larop)** being a staple.
- They speak their own language with **multiple dialects**.

Social and Cultural Features

- Shompen society is organised around **nuclear families** consisting of a husband, wife and unmarried children.
- **Monogamy** is generally practised, although polygamy is also permitted.
- They worship the **Moon, known as Houou**, as a goddess believed to have created the universe.

PM Vishwakarma Scheme

bt Business Today

30 lakh artisans, one big moment: PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries enter the spotlight

PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries get a historic Red Fort invitation as 100 artisans showcase India's traditional crafts, women makers and the...



Why in News: The Government invited **100 PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries from Delhi-NCR** as Special Guests for the **80th Independence Day Ceremony at the Red Fort**.

Scheme Architecture

- **PM Vishwakarma** is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched in **2023**.
- The scheme provides comprehensive support to traditional **artisans and craftspeople** across rural and urban India.
- The **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** is the nodal ministry.
- It operates for **five years from FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28**.

Beneficiary Coverage

- The scheme covers **18 traditional trades**, including **boat makers, armourers, blacksmiths and hammer-and-tool-kit makers**.
- Eligible beneficiaries must generally be **18 years or older** and engaged in a traditional trade.
- Beneficiaries should not have availed similar loans during the preceding **five years**.

Capacity and Market Support

- Artisans receive a **PM Vishwakarma Certificate and ID Card** for formal recognition.
- **Basic Training of 5–7 days** and **Advanced Training of 15 days or more** are supported with a **₹500-per-day stipend**.
- A **toolkit incentive of up to ₹15,000** is provided through e-vouchers at the beginning of Basic Skill Training.

Credit and Livelihood Support

- The scheme provides **collateral-free Enterprise Development Loans up to ₹3 lakh** in two tranches of **₹1 lakh and ₹2 lakh**.
- These loans carry a **concessional interest rate of 5%** and are intended to strengthen sustainable livelihoods through finance, digital enablement and market linkages.

Other Important News of the day

**Places
News**

in

Kenya

Why in News: India welcomed **Kenya's decision to recognise Persons of Indian Origin as an indigenous community.**



Geographical Location

- **Kenya** is located in **East Africa** and has a coastline along the **Indian Ocean**.
- It shares land borders with **Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania**.
- Its capital is **Nairobi**, which hosts the headquarters of **UNEP and UN-Habitat**.

Physical Geography

- Major lakes include **Lake Victoria** and **Lake Turkana**, while Lake Victoria is shared with **Uganda and Tanzania**.
- Important rivers include the **Tana, Athi/Galana and Mara**, with the **Tana** being Kenya's longest river.
- Major highland features include the **Aberdare Range and Mau Escarpment**.

	Strategic Geographic Features ➤ Mount Kenya is the second-highest mountain in Africa after Mount Kilimanjaro. ➤ Lamu Island forms part of the Lamu Archipelago in the Indian Ocean. ➤ Kenya has a predominantly tropical climate.
Defence	AH-64E Apache Helicopter  WION <u>US Army Apache helicopter crashes in Texas, killing two soldiers</u> Two US soldiers were killed after an AH-64E Apache attack helicopter assigned to Fort Hood crashed near Salado, Texas.  Why in News: Two US Army personnel were killed when an AH-64E Apache attack helicopter crashed near Salado, Texas, during routine operations. Platform and Origin ➤ The AH-64E Apache Guardian is an advanced multi-role combat helicopter of the United States. ➤ It is manufactured by Boeing and represents the latest Apache variant used by the US Army. ➤ It is operated by several countries, including India, Japan, Israel, South Korea, the UK and Saudi Arabia. Operational Capabilities ➤ The helicopter is designed for reconnaissance, precision strikes and close air support. ➤ It is a twin-engine ground-attack helicopter operated by a crew of two. ➤ Its maximum speed is approximately 300 km/h. Weapons and Sensors ➤ It can employ Hellfire missiles, 70-mm rockets and a 30-mm chain gun against ground targets.

	➤ It can also employ Stinger short-range air-to-air missiles. ➤ An integrated infrared laser assists target designation and enhances infrared imagery by combining infrared and night-vision capabilities. ➤ The system can track up to 128 targets per minute and prioritise threats.
Space	Voyager 2 Mission
	 The Indian Express <u>Nasa's Voyager 2 gets power-saving upgrade, mission extended by a year</u> Nasa engineers have successfully implemented a new power-saving upgrade on Voyager 2, extending the iconic spacecraft's science mission by... 
	Why in News: NASA's Voyager 2 recently received a power-saving upgrade, extending its mission by approximately one year. Mission Profile ➤ Voyager 2 is an unmanned space probe launched by NASA in 1977. ➤ Its primary mission involved studying the outer planets, including Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, and their moons. ➤ It subsequently continued into an interstellar mission. Major Scientific Achievements ➤ Voyager 2 is the only spacecraft to have visited both Uranus and Neptune. ➤ It is the only spacecraft to have studied all four giant planets at close range. ➤ It discovered the 14th moon of Jupiter. ➤ At Uranus, it discovered 10 new moons and two new rings. ➤ At Neptune, it discovered five moons, four rings and the Great Dark Spot. Interstellar Significance ➤ Voyager 2 became the second spacecraft to enter interstellar space.

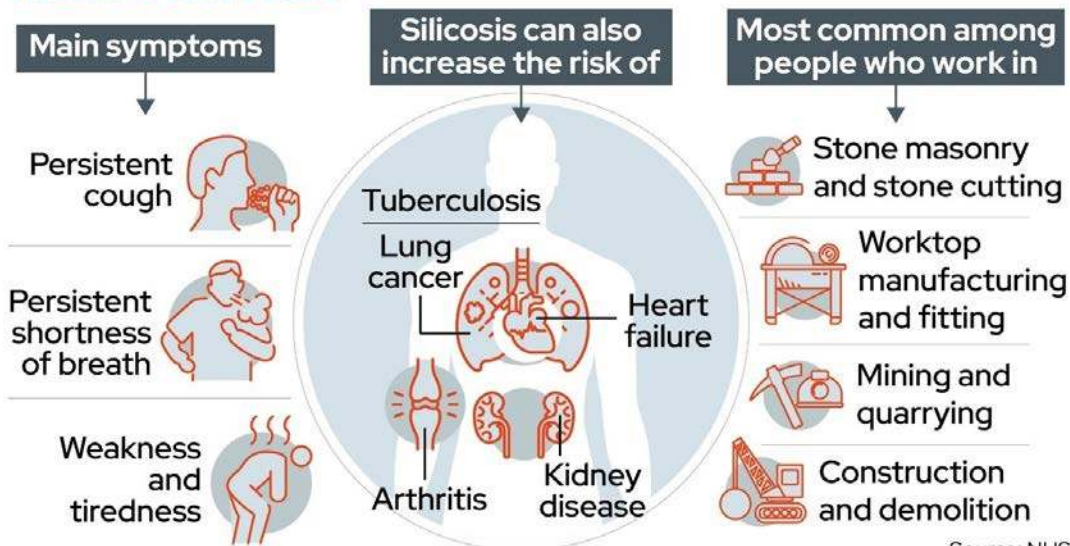
	➤ It was the first human-made object to fly past Uranus and subsequently the first to fly by Neptune.
Science and Technology	Silicosis
	 Los Angeles Times <u>Hundreds of California stonecutters fall ill with deadly disease 'for a product we do not need'</u> 
	Why in News: Nearly 600 workers in California's engineered-stone countertop industry have been diagnosed with silicosis since 2019, highlighting occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica. Pathology and Cause ➤ Silicosis is a progressive respiratory disease characterised by hardening and damage of the lungs. ➤ It results from prolonged inhalation of silica dust or crystalline silica. ➤ Silica exposure occurs in materials such as soil, sand, concrete, mortar, granite and artificial stone. Occupational Exposure ➤ High-risk occupations include construction, mining, oil and gas extraction, kitchen engineering, dentistry, pottery and sculpting. ➤ Cutting, grinding and polishing engineered-stone slabs can generate respirable crystalline silica. Clinical Forms ➤ Chronic silicosis generally follows low-level exposure for more than 20 years and is the most common form. ➤ Accelerated silicosis develops after higher exposure over approximately 3–10 years. ➤ Acute silicosis follows short-term exposure to very high concentrations and can cause severe breathlessness and low blood oxygen.

- Common symptoms include **persistent cough, shortness of breath, weakness and tiredness.**

Public Health Dimension

- Silicosis is a **progressive disease with no cure**, making workplace exposure prevention crucial.

What is silicosis?



Source: NHS

Uttar Pradesh in News

Sprite Tejas Express

India Today

India's first private branded train is here: Meet the 'Sprite' Tejas Express

The Tejas Express between Lucknow and Delhi was launched in 2019 and was promoted as a premium, modern rail service.



Why in News: The **Lucknow–Delhi Tejas Express** is set to operate as the **Sprite Tejas Express** under a commercial branding arrangement, making it India's first **brand-named train**.

Railway Operations

- The train operates between **Lucknow and New Delhi** under the **North Eastern Railway zone**.
- Train numbers **82501 and 82502** are associated with the Lucknow–Delhi Tejas Express.
- **IRCTC** manages the train's branding and service operations, while **Indian Railways** retains ownership of railway infrastructure and collects standard hauling charges.

Branding Period

- The scheduled branding period is from **19 August 2026 to 11 November 2026**.
- **Non-fare revenue** in Indian Railways includes income generated through mechanisms such as **advertising and branding rights**.

Commercial Branding Model

- **Sprite**, a beverage brand of **Coca-Cola**, has secured branding and advertising rights for the train.
- The arrangement permits **exterior vinyl wrapping and internal advertisements** inside the train.
- The initiative represents a model of generating **non-fare revenue** through advertising and branding rights.

Tejas Express and IRCTC

- **Tejas Express** is a category of **air-conditioned superfast trains** operated on the Indian Railways network.
- The Lucknow–Delhi Tejas Express became India's first **private corporate train** when IRCTC assumed its operation and service management.