

SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

16-08-2026

Green India Mission

TNIE The New Indian Express

CAG flags poor planning, funding gaps behind Green India Mission's 98 pc shortfall in forest cover target

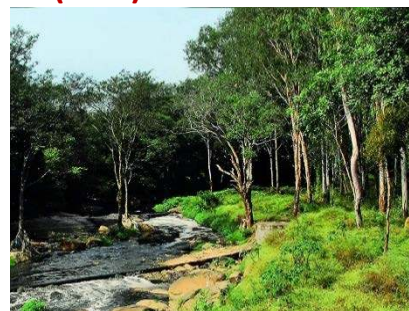
The afforestation programme has fallen short of its forest cover targets over the past decade due to poor planning, weak coordination and...



Why in News: The **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** has flagged major shortcomings in the implementation of the **Green India Mission (GIM)**.

Institutional Framework

- **Green India Mission** was launched in **2014** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
- It is one of the **eight missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**.
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** is the nodal ministry.



Ecological Objectives

- GIM aims to **protect, restore and enhance forest cover** while addressing climate change through **adaptation and mitigation**.
- It seeks to improve **biodiversity, water services and carbon sequestration** and strengthen forest-based livelihoods.

Targets and Climate Commitments

- The mission envisages increasing **forest and tree cover over 5 million hectares** and improving its quality over another **5 million hectares**.
- It targets enhanced annual **CO₂ sequestration of 50–60 million tonnes**.
- India has separately committed to creating an additional **carbon sink of 2.5–3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2030** through additional forest and tree cover.

Vishnugad-Pipalkoti Hydroelectric Project

Why in News: A landslide caused a massive surge of water and debris into an under-construction tunnel

The Indian Express

Blue drums, unlikely rescue rafts: How rescuers hunt for trapped Uttarakhand workers

With water and debris flooding an under-construction tunnel at the Vishnugad-Pipalkoti Hydroelectric Project, making rescue challenging,...



of the **444-MW Vishnugad-Pipalkoti Hydroelectric Project (VPHEP)** in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, killing seven workers.

Geographical and Hydrological Setting

- VPHEP is a **run-of-river hydropower project** being developed on the **Alaknanda River** in **Chamoli district, Uttarakhand**.
- The Alaknanda is a major tributary of the **Ganga River**.
- All diverted water is planned to be returned to the river about **18 km downstream** of the diversion point.

Engineering Specifications

- The project includes a **65-metre-high concrete diversion dam**, a **13.4-km Head Race Tunnel (HRT)** and a **3.04-km Tail Race Tunnel (TRT)**.
- Its installed capacity is **444 MW**, comprising **4 × 111 MW** units.
- It is expected to generate about **1,665 GWh annually** in a typical year and provide **peaking power to India's Northern Grid**.

Institutional and Financial Linkages

- The project is being developed by **THDC India Ltd.**, formerly known as Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Limited.
- **THDC India Ltd.** is a joint venture between the **Government of India and Government of Uttar Pradesh**.
- The project is financed through a **US\$648 million World Bank loan**.

Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers – Disclosure Scheme

 mint

Foreign assets disclosure scheme 2026: Key FAQs on who can apply, what you can declare and how to file

The Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers Disclosure Scheme 2026 offers eligible taxpayers a one-time window to disclose foreign assets and...



Why in News: The government has notified a one-time voluntary disclosure mechanism called the **Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers – Disclosure Scheme (FAST-DS)**.

Legal and Administrative Framework

- **FAST-DS** is a **one-time voluntary disclosure scheme** contained in **Chapter IV of the Finance Act, 2026**.
- The scheme enables eligible taxpayers to disclose certain **undisclosed foreign assets or foreign income** on payment of specified tax or fee.
- The **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** is the nodal agency.

Two Categories of Disclosure

- **Category 1** covers undisclosed foreign assets or foreign income not previously offered to tax, where the aggregate value does not exceed **₹1 crore**.

- Under Category 1, taxpayers pay **30% of the fair market value or undisclosed income as tax** and another **30% as additional income tax in lieu of penalty** to obtain prosecution immunity.
- Category 2** covers foreign assets already offered to tax or acquired while the taxpayer was a non-resident but omitted from the relevant tax-return schedule, subject to a **₹5 crore threshold**.

Immunity and Black Money Law

- Category 2 taxpayers can obtain immunity from **penalty and prosecution** by paying a **₹1 lakh fee**.
- Valid declarations provide immunity from further tax, penalty and prosecution under the **Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015**.

Subansiri River

India Today NE

Subansiri river swells unusually in Arunachal's Upper Subansiri, timber spotted in waters

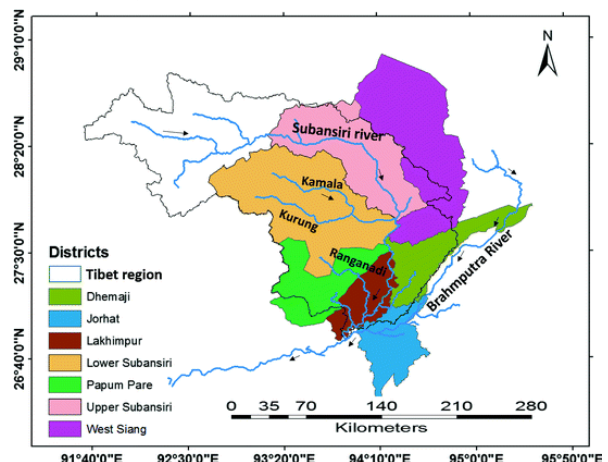
The Subansiri river in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Subansiri district has risen to an unusually high and forceful level despite no rainfall...



Why in News: The **Subansiri River** in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Subansiri district has reached an unusually high and forceful level despite no reported rainfall locally.

Origin and Geographical Course

- The Subansiri is the **largest tributary of the Brahmaputra** and a **right-bank tributary** of the river.
- It originates in **Tibet** and flows through **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.
- It is an **antecedent river**, meaning its course predates the rise of the Himalayas and was maintained as the mountains rose.



River Course and Basin

- The river is formed in the **Tibetan Plateau** by the confluence of **Lokong Chu, Chayal Chu and Tsari Chu**.
- It flows for about **170 km in Tibet** before entering India near **Taksing in Arunachal Pradesh**.

- After traversing the Eastern Himalayas, it enters the Assam Valley at **Dulangmukh in Dhemaji district**.
- It flows through the plains for about **86 km**, passes near **Majuli**, and joins the Brahmaputra at **Jamurighat in Lakhimpur district**.
- Its total length is approximately **442 km**, while its drainage basin covers about **32,000 sq. km**.

Hydrological and Ecological Features

- The river receives water from **Tibetan snowmelt** and **southwest monsoon rainfall** over the Himalayan foothills.
- Major tributaries include **Laro, Nye, Yume, Tsari, Kamla, Jiyadhol, Ranganadi and Dikrong**.

Hydropower Significance

- The **Lower Subansiri Hydroelectric Project** is a **2,000-MW run-of-the-river project** at **Gerukamukh** on the Arunachal Pradesh–Assam border.
- On completion, it is projected to become **India's single largest hydroelectric plant**.

Chips to Start-up Programme

bl. BusinessLine

Over 68,000 students trained in semiconductor chip design under C2S programme

254 chip designs taped out; initiative aims to create 85000 industry-ready professionals.



Why in News: The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** reported that more than **68,000 students** have been trained in semiconductor chip design under the **Chips to Start-ups (C2S) Programme**.

Programme Architecture

- The **C2S Programme** is an umbrella capacity-building initiative launched by **MeitY in 2022**.
- It has a total outlay of **₹250 crore over five years**.
- It aims to develop **85,000 industry-ready professionals** at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels.



Innovation and Human Capital Targets

- The programme seeks to incubate **25 start-ups** and enable **10 technology transfers**.
- Its broader targets include training **1 lakh students**, providing **SMART lab access**, generating **50 patents** and supporting at least **2,000 research publications**.

Technology and Training Ecosystem

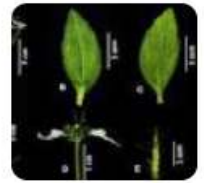
- C2S provides hands-on exposure to **chip design, fabrication and testing** through industry collaboration and mentorship.
- Students receive access to **EDA software, fabrication facilities and semiconductor foundries**.
- R&D projects can involve prototypes of **Application-Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs), Systems-on-Chip (SoCs)** and **IP Core designs**.

Leucas droupadiae

Research Matters

New herb found on Tamil Nadu's sand dunes; named after President Droupadi Murmu

Botanists have discovered a previously unknown plant species growing along the sandy shores of the Coromandel Coast. The new species...



Why in News: Botanists have discovered a new plant species, *Leucas droupadiae*, along the sandy shores of the **Coromandel Coast** in Tamil Nadu.

Taxonomic Identity

- *Leucas droupadiae* belongs to the **Lamiaceae**, commonly known as the **mint family**.
- It was discovered during a coastal-dune survey in **Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu**.
- The species thrives in **nutrient-poor sandy habitats**.

Distinctive Morphology

- Unlike related plants that commonly exhibit creeping or branched growth, it has a **single upright and unbranched stem** of about **15 cm**.
- It possesses a **shallow network of fibrous roots** adapted to sandy substrates.
- Its distinctive **golden-yellow nutlets with irregular dark-brown spots** help differentiate it from related species.

Conservation and Nomenclature

- The species was named in honour of **Droupadi Murmu**, the **15th President of India**.
- Due to its limited known distribution, it has been provisionally classified as **Data Deficient**.

RSVC-AMRIT Platform

PIB

Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India launches RSVC-AMRIT platform developed by NABARD to strengthen rural innovation and technology transfer

Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, launched the RSVC AMRIT platform on 15th August 2025,...



Why in News: The **Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India** has launched the **RSVC-AMRIT platform** to strengthen rural innovation and technology transfer.

Institutional Architecture

- The platform has been developed by **NABARD** in collaboration with the **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA)**.
- **AMRIT** serves as the digital backbone of the **RuTAGe Smart Village Centre (RSVC)** ecosystem.

Technology Transfer Ecosystem

- The platform supports **rural innovation, technology transfer and adoption of appropriate technologies** in rural areas.
- It covers the RSVC lifecycle from technology discovery and validation to deployment tracking, collaboration, monitoring and knowledge management.
- It will progressively connect innovators, technology providers, start-ups, validators, accelerators, implementation partners, funding agencies, academic institutions and rural communities.

RuTAG Initiative

- **Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG)** was launched by the **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser in 2004** to provide higher-level **Science and Technology intervention for rural areas**.
- RuTAG identifies sector-specific technology needs in collaboration with **NGOs, SHGs, community organisations and start-ups**.
- It promotes **demand-driven technology development, prototype validation, scalability and commercialisation**.

Lebanon Abolishes the Death Penalty

Why in News: Lebanon has formally **abolished the death penalty**, becoming the **first Arab country** to abolish capital punishment in law.

Key Developments

News On AIR

Lebanon becomes first Arab country to abolish death penalty

Lebanon's parliament today abolished the death penalty, making it the first country in the Arab world to replace the sentencing with life...



- The **Lebanese Parliament** replaced existing death sentences with **life imprisonment**.
- Lebanon had maintained a **de facto moratorium since 2004**, with no executions carried out since then.
- The move converts the existing moratorium into **formal legal abolition**.

Significance

- The decision strengthens protection of the **right to life and human rights**.
- It is significant for the **Arab world**, where several countries continue to retain capital punishment.

Other Important News of the day

Environment

Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

 The New Indian Express

Three alleged poachers killed in shootout inside Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka

The men opened fire at the forest personnel using country-made firearms, following which the forest staff retaliated, the forest department...



Why in News: Three alleged poachers were killed in an exchange of fire with forest personnel in the **Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary** in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district.

Location and Landscape

- The sanctuary is spread across **Ramanagara, Chamarajanagar and Mandya districts** of Karnataka.
- Established in **1987**, it covers approximately **1,027 sq. km**.
- The **Cauvery River** flows through a major part of the protected area, with **Tamil Nadu** bordering it to the east and northeast.

Floral Diversity

- Its vegetation comprises **riverine forests, dry deciduous forests and scrub forests**.
- Important tree species include **Teak (Tectona grandis)**, **Sandalwood (Santalum album)**, **Bamboo (Dendrocalamus strictus)**, **Indian gooseberry (Phyllanthus emblica)** and **Terminalia arjuna**.

Faunal Significance

- Major mammals include **Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, elephant, gaur, sloth bear, wild boar and sambar deer**.

	The sanctuary supports more than 250 bird species, including the Crested Hawk Eagle, Indian Roller, White-bellied Drongo, Malabar Pied Hornbill and Great Hornbill.
Science and Technology	SraVaani TH The Hindu <u>First multilingual Indian speech recognition model trained on 65 languages and dialects released</u> Researchers at IISc's SPIRE Lab, in collaboration with ARTPARK and Google, have released SraVaani, the first multilingual Indian speech...  Why in News: Researchers at IISc's SPIRE Lab, in collaboration with ARTPARK and Google, have released SraVaani, a multilingual Indian speech-recognition model. Language and Technical Coverage - SraVaani extends automatic speech recognition (ASR) to underserved regional and non-scheduled Indian languages. - It covers 20 scheduled languages and 45 regional languages and dialects. - The model converts speech into text across 10 scripts and can automatically identify the language being spoken. Project Vaani Foundation - SraVaani is based on Project Vaani, an IISc initiative aimed at understanding India's linguistic diversity. - Project Vaani has compiled around 31,000 hours of speech data from more than 156,000 speakers across 165 regions. Technology and Applications - SraVaani uses a FastConformer-based automatic speech recognition architecture. - It supports languages such as Garó, Angika, Chakma, Kokborok, Tulu, Bundeli and Bajjika. - Potential applications include education, digital services, banking, healthcare, e-governance and customer support, particularly in regional-language environments.

Uttar Pradesh in News

Uttar Pradesh Integrated Youth Policy

TH The Hindu

U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath announces new 'Youth Policy' on Independence Day

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday (August 15, 2026) announced a new 'Youth Policy' for the youth of Uttar Pradesh and...



Why in News: UP Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath** announced an **Integrated Youth Policy** focusing on skills, employment, innovation and youth development.

Policy Framework

- The policy will cover youth aged **16–35 years** and integrate **education, skills, employment, entrepreneurship, health, sports and digital empowerment**.
- The **Youth Welfare Department** will be the nodal department, with inputs from **29 government departments**.

Youth Commission

- A proposed **State Youth Commission** will monitor youth programmes, provide recommendations and address emerging youth concerns.

Coaching and Mentorship

- The **Chief Minister Abhyudaya Coaching Scheme** may expand from **163 centres in 75 districts to 300+ centres**, including the tehsil level.
- The scheme will provide **UPSC, JEE and NEET** coaching through physical and online modes.
- Young **IAS/IPS officers** and newly inducted doctors are proposed as mentors.

Convergence

- The government plans to bring around **90 youth-related schemes** under a more accessible and coordinated framework.