

# SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

21-08-2026

## Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission

 DD India

### PM Janjatiya Vikas Mission: How tribal communities are turning forest produce into livelihoods

For millions of tribal and forest-dwelling communities, forests are not only a source of food and natural resources but also a major source...



**Why in News:** The government is strengthening the forest-based tribal economy through the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM).

### Core Objective

- **PMJVM**, launched in **2021-22**, aims to organise the processing, value addition and marketing of **Minor Forest Produce (MFP)**.
- The mission seeks to shift tribal communities from selling raw forest produce towards **value-added products and entrepreneurship**.
- It combines **traditional knowledge and local resources** with modern technology, skills and market linkages.

### Implementation Architecture

- **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs)** provide infrastructure for primary processing and value addition.
- A typical VDVK clusters around **15 Self-Help Groups** with approximately **300 tribal members**.
- At least **60% of VDVK members** must belong to **Scheduled Tribe communities**.
- The model is based on the **Van Dhan Yojana**, launched in **2018**.



## Support Provided

- Tribal gatherers receive training in **scientific harvesting, processing and value addition**.
- Centres can receive equipment such as **cutters, sieves, decorticators, dryers and packaging machinery**.
- Financial linkages, working capital, storage and transportation support are facilitated through relevant institutions.
- The mission is implemented by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.

## Divyastra Mk3

**TOI** The Times of India

[Kawa UAV successfully conducts maiden test flight of Divyastra Mk3 loitering munition — watch](#)

NEW DELHI: Kawa UAV Pvt. Ltd., a defence start-up based in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, on Sunday announced that it successfully conducted a...



**Why in News:** Lucknow-based defence start-up **Kawa UAV Pvt. Ltd.** conducted the maiden flight test of **Divyastra Mk3**, described in the source as India's first indigenously designed, developed and manufactured **jet-powered loitering munition with an indigenous powerplant**.

### Defence Technology

- **Divyastra Mk3** is an indigenous **loitering munition**, also called a **kamikaze or suicide drone**.
- It is designed to strike **high-value enemy assets, infrastructure and personnel** using an onboard explosive warhead.
- It incorporates **autonomous flight control and AI-enabled target engagement**.

### Strategic Significance

- The use of an indigenous jet engine represents a shift from conventional **electric or piston-engine UAV architectures** towards faster one-way attack systems.
- The platform strengthens indigenous capability in **unmanned systems, propulsion and AI-enabled precision strike technologies**.

## Propulsion Advantage

- The system uses an indigenous **jet-propulsion system developed by DG Propulsion, New Delhi.**
- Jet propulsion can provide higher speed than conventional propeller-driven UAVs, potentially reducing an adversary's reaction time.
- The source indicates an approximate **range of 300–400 km, speed of 250–300 km/h** and **warhead capacity of 15–20 kg**, while noting that official specifications have not been disclosed.

## Christmas Island

 India Today

### SpaceX's Starship towed to Christmas Island after floating 24 days in Indian Ocean

SpaceX has towed Starship to waters off Christmas Island after the spacecraft floated in the Indian Ocean for nearly 24 days.



**Why in News:** **SpaceX** recently towed Starship to waters off **Christmas Island** after the spacecraft remained in the Indian Ocean for nearly 24 days.

## Geographical Location

- **Christmas Island** is an **Australian territory in the Indian Ocean**, located about **360 km south of Java** and **1,400 km northwest of Australia.**
- It is the summit of an **oceanic mountain**, with **Murray Hill** as its highest point at about **361 m.**
- **Flying Fish Cove** is the main settlement and chief port.

## Ecology

- Around **63% of the island** is protected as a **national park**, while tropical rainforest covers most of its area.

## Historical and Economic Context

- European sightings date to **1615**, while the island was named after its rediscovery in **1643.**
- **Phosphate deposits** discovered in **1887** led to British annexation in **1888.**
- The island became an **Australian territory in 1958**, and its economy has gradually shifted from phosphate mining towards **tourism, fishing and subsistence activities.**

- The **Christmas Island red crab** (*Gecarcoidea natalis*) is famous for its annual mass migration.
- Coral reefs around the island support diverse and rare marine species and are sometimes referred to along with the Cocos (Keeling) Islands as “**Australia's Galapagos Islands.**”

## AIKosh Platform

DD News

### IndiaAI Mission Organises AIKosh Workshop to Strengthen India's AI-Ready Data Ecosystem

The IndiaAI Mission organised a workshop on AIKosh, its national platform for datasets, AI models and related resources,...



**Why in News:** A workshop on the **AIKosh platform** was recently organised at the **India Habitat Centre, New Delhi**.

### Platform Architecture

- **AIKosh** is a national platform providing access to **datasets, AI models and related resources**.
- It aims to improve the **discoverability, accessibility and responsible use** of AI-ready resources.
- The platform also provides **AI sandbox capabilities**, an integrated development environment, tools and tutorials.

### Institutional Linkage

- AIKosh is an initiative under the **IndiaAI Mission** and is associated with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- The IndiaAI Mission seeks to expand access to **high-end computing resources** for startups and researchers.





## IndiaAI Mission Components

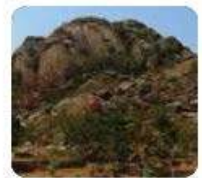
- Key pillars include **Common Compute Facility, AI Kosha, AI Safety Institute of India, IndiaAI Innovation Centre, AI Application Development Initiative, Future Skills Initiative and Startup Financing.**
- **IndiaAI** functions as an independent business division under **MeitY** for implementation of the mission.

## Singhbhum Craton



### Indian geologist finds 3.5bn-year-old evidence of life in the rocks of Jharkhand

A team of Indian geologists have discovered the earliest life forms fossilised in the rocks of Jharkhand. They are dated to be 3.5 billion...



**Why in News:** Researchers identified a **3.5-billion-year-old layered rock formation** within the **Singhbhum Craton** that may contain some of the earliest chemical evidence of life on Earth.

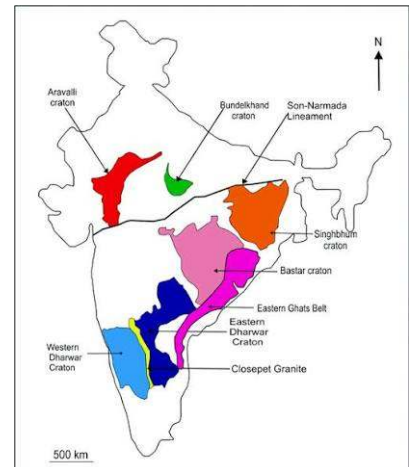
### Geographical and Geological Setting

- The **Singhbhum Craton** lies mainly in **Jharkhand and Odisha**, between the **Chhota Nagpur Plateau and Eastern Ghats**.
- A **craton** is a stable continental block composed predominantly of ancient crystalline rocks.
- Parts of the Singhbhum Craton date to around **3.5 billion years**, making it one of the oldest components of the **Indian Shield**.

### Greenstone Assemblages

- Its oldest rock assemblages include **volcanic and sedimentary greenstone successions**.
- Greenstones predominantly contain **submarine volcanic rocks** with smaller sedimentary components.

- Similar geological formations occur in the **Barberton and Nondweni areas of South Africa** and the **Pilbara Craton of Western Australia**.
- These regions preserve evidence of **submarine mafic volcanism**, including **pillow lava and komatiites**, dating to roughly **3.5–3.3 billion years ago**.



### Scientific Significance

- The craton provides evidence for understanding **Archaean tectonic activity and early crustal evolution**.
- Its geological record helps scientists reconstruct early **surface, atmospheric and potentially habitable conditions** on Earth.
- Such evidence is important for studying the **emergence of life** on the planet.

## National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research

DD News

### India Hosts 8th BRICS Working Group Meeting on Ocean and Polar Science in Goa

The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) organised the 8th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Ocean and Polar Science and Technology (OPST)...



**Why in News:** The **Ministry of Earth Sciences** organised the **8th BRICS Working Group on Ocean Polar Science and Technology (OPST)** meeting in Goa, hosted by **NCPOR**.

### Institutional Profile

- **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)** was established as an autonomous R&D institution on **25 May 1998**.

- It was formerly known as the **National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR)**.
- Its headquarters is at **Vasco da Gama, Goa**, under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.



### Core Responsibilities

- NCPOR coordinates and implements the **Indian Antarctic Programme** and conducts expeditions in the **Antarctic, Arctic, Southern Ocean and Himalayas**.
- It undertakes strategically important work related to **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) mapping, continental shelf surveys and the Deep Ocean Mission**.

### Polar Infrastructure

- Indian research stations established through its programmes include **Dakshin Gangotri, Maitri and Bharati** in Antarctica.
- **Himadri** is India's research station in the Arctic, while **Himansh** is a Himalayan research station.

## 47th Sarala Puraskar

Deccan Chronicle

### Odisha: Dr Ashutosh Parida To Receive 47th Sarala Puraskar For 'Bishwas De Pruthwi'

BHUBANESWAR: Noted Odia poet, essayist and former CSIR-IMMT scientist Dr Ashutosh Parida has been selected for the 47th Sarala Puraskar for...



**Why in News:** Dr. Ashutosh Parida has been selected for the **47th Sarala Puraskar** for his Odia poetry collection *Bishwas De Pruthwi*.

### Award Details

- The **Sarala Puraskar** recognises outstanding **Odia literature** and is administered by **IMPACT**, the charitable arm of IMFA.

- The award carries ₹7 lakh, a citation and a copper plaque.
- The ceremony will be held in **Bhubaneswar on 25 October 2026**.

### Other Award

- **Ila-Bansidhar Panda Kala Samman 2026** for lifetime excellence in arts was awarded to **Guru Durga Charan Ranbir** and **Damodar Behera**.
- Each recipient receives ₹2.5 lakh, a citation and a copper plaque.

### Other Important News of the day

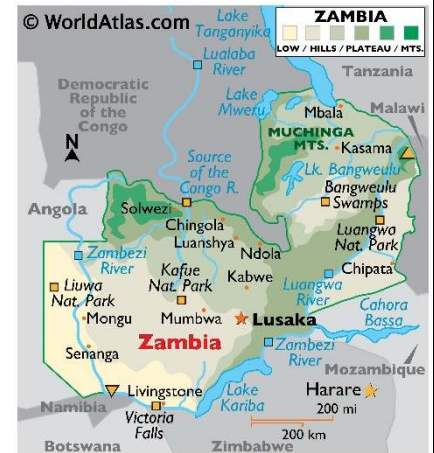
#### Places in News

#### Zambia

**Why in News:** The Prime Minister of India congratulated **Hakainde Hichilema** on his re-election as President of **Zambia**.

#### Geographical Profile

- **Zambia** is a **landlocked country in Southern-Central Africa**, with **Lusaka** as its capital.
- The country is bordered by the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and Angola**.
- Its relatively high elevation moderates its otherwise **subtropical climate**.



#### Physical Features

- The **Zambezi River** is the country's most significant river and drains into the **Indian Ocean**.
- Other major rivers include the **Kafue and Luangwa**, while important water bodies include **Lake Tanganyika and Lake Kariba**.



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|                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Mafinga Mountains</b> are an important mountain system of Zambia.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resource Base</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zambia is rich in <b>copper, cobalt, silver, uranium, lead, coal, zinc, gold and emeralds</b>.</li> <li>Its mineral-resource base gives the country significance in <b>African mining and critical-mineral supply chains</b>.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>Environment</b></p> | <p><b>Sea Urchin</b></p> <div>  ET HealthWorld<br/> <a href="#">IIT Mandi develops sea urchin-inspired coating for 3D-printed bone implants</a><br/>       IIT Mandi researchers have developed a revolutionary sea urchin-inspired coating for 3D-printed bone implants, enhancing bone integration...     </div> <p><b>Why in News:</b> Researchers at <b>IIT Mandi</b> developed a <b>sea-urchin-inspired surface coating</b> for 3D-printed bone implants that can mechanically disrupt bacteria and promote implant integration with bone.</p> <p><b>Biological Classification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sea urchins are marine invertebrates belonging to the phylum <b>Echinodermata</b>, meaning <b>spiny-skinned animals</b>.</li> <li>Other echinoderms include <b>starfish and sea cucumbers</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Morphological Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They generally possess a <b>spherical or flattened spiny body</b> with radial organisation.</li> </ul> <div>  </div> <div>  </div> |

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|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five bands of pores extend from the mouth towards the anus, accommodating <b>tube feet</b>.</li> <li>• Their hard internal skeleton or <b>test</b> consists of interlocking plates or ossicles covered by movable spines.</li> <li>• <b>Pedicellariae</b> are pincer-like structures found on the test and may contain poison glands.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ecological Adaptations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea urchins occur in <b>rocky shores, coral reefs, seagrass beds and sandy marine habitats</b>.</li> <li>• They are primarily <b>herbivorous</b>, feeding mainly on algae and plant material.</li> <li>• Their specialised feeding apparatus, <b>Aristotle's lantern</b>, scrapes algae and other food from surfaces.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Defence</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Terrier Cyber Quest 2026</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  News On AIR<br/> <u><a href="#">Territorial Army launches national-level hackathon 'Terrier Cyber Quest 2026'</a></u><br/>       The Territorial Army has launched a national-level hackathon, Terrier Cyber Quest 2026, aimed at developing innovative solutions to emerging...        </div> <p><b>Why in News:</b> The <b>Territorial Army</b> launched <b>Terrier Cyber Quest 2026 (TCQ 3.0)</b> with <b>CyberPeace</b> to promote indigenous cyber-defence solutions.</p> <p><b>Competition Tracks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bug Hunting:</b> Identifying vulnerabilities through <b>Capture-the-Flag</b> and sandbox challenges.</li> <li>• <b>AI Kavach:</b> Developing <b>AI/ML-based cyber-defence, threat intelligence and anomaly detection</b> solutions.</li> <li>• <b>National Creators Challenge:</b> Creating awareness against <b>deepfakes, phishing and misinformation</b>.</li> </ul> |

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|                                      | <p><b>Key Dates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration deadline: <b>31 August 2026</b>.</li> <li>• Screening: <b>1–10 September 2026</b>.</li> <li>• Grand Finale: <b>6–8 October 2026, New Delhi</b>.</li> <li>• The <b>Territorial Army</b> is a <b>part-time reserve force of the Indian Army</b>.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Science and Technology</b></p> | <p><b>RK-251 Drug</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p> News On AIR</p> <p><u><a href="#">New Smart Drug RK-251 Developed as Replacement for Chemotherapy</a></u></p> <p>The Ministry of Science and Technology today informed about a new smart drug that can replace traditional chemotherapy.</p>  </div> <p><b>Why in News:</b> The <b>Ministry of Science and Technology</b> highlighted <b>RK-251</b>, a smart cancer-drug candidate designed to preferentially activate inside cancer cells.</p> <p><b>Targeted Mechanism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RK-251</b> remains relatively inactive in normal tissues but is activated in cancer cells with high <b>reactive oxygen species (ROS)</b> levels.</li> <li>• ROS triggers the release of the anticancer compound <b>NBDHEX</b>, which blocks proteins involved in cancer-cell survival and treatment resistance.</li> <li>• The drug showed strong activity against <b>triple-negative breast cancer cells</b> with comparatively limited effects on healthy cells.</li> </ul> <p><b>Research and Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The drug was developed in collaboration with <b>Dr. Asis Bala of IASST</b> and <b>Dr. K.P. Bhabak of IIT-Guwahati</b>.</li> <li>• Its <b>fluorescence response</b> in the presence of ROS can indicate drug activation in ROS-rich cancer cells.</li> </ul> |

## Uttar Pradesh in News

### Uttar Pradesh: 'Kaushal Sampark' QR Code

Jagran

UP Labour Code 2026: योगी कैबिनेट की मंजूरी, न्यूनतम मजदूरी की गारंटी और ओवरटाइम पर दोगुना भुगतान अनिवार्य

उत्तर प्रदेश कैबिनेट ने मजदूरी संहिता-2025 को मंजूरी दे दी है, जिससे अब...



**Why in News:** The **Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission** launched the '**Kaushal Sampark**' **QR Code** on Independence Day for direct trainee feedback.

#### Key Features

- Trainees can scan the QR code to submit **feedback, complaints and suggestions** directly to the Skill Development Mission.
- The system enables authorities to **monitor training centres and undertake corrective measures**.
- A '**Kaushal Vatika**' (**Skill Garden**) was also inaugurated at the Mission headquarters.

#### Skill Development

- MoUs were signed with **ITP Intense Education Tech Pvt. Ltd.** and **Fulgor Energy Pvt. Ltd.** for specialised training.
- Training will cover **AI, technical knowledge, soft skills, communication, personality development and job preparation**.