

SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

21-10-2026

Taleju Bhawani Temple



News On AIR

Nepal celebrates Bada Dashain festival; historic Taleju Bhawani Temple opens for devotees

Nepal is celebrating Bada Dashain, its biggest and most important festival, with religious fervour and traditional enthusiasm.



Why in News?

- The historic **Taleju Bhawani Temple** in Kathmandu, Nepal, opened to devotees on **Maha Navami**, the ninth day of Dashain.

Historical and Religious Significance

- The temple is dedicated to **Goddess Taleju Bhawani**, regarded as a form of **Goddess Durga**.
- It was constructed in the **16th century by King Mahendra Malla**.
- The **Malla dynasty** ruled the Kathmandu Valley from the 12th to the 18th century and was closely associated with the worship of Taleju Bhawani.
- The temple is generally opened to the public only once a year on **Maha Navami**.

Geographical and Heritage Linkages

- The temple is located in **Kathmandu Durbar Square, Nepal**.
- Kathmandu Durbar Square forms part of the **Kathmandu Valley UNESCO World Heritage property**.

Architectural Features

- The temple represents the traditional **Newar pagoda architectural style**.
- Its major features include a **three-tiered pagoda roof**, elaborately carved eaves and gilded finials.
- Its **12-stage plinth**, four decorative gateways guarded by stone lions, and carved wooden windows are distinctive features.
- The inner sanctum houses golden statues of the **ten-armed goddess**, while the overall layout is modelled on the sacred **Shri Yantra**.

Puzhal Lake

Why in News?

TH The Hindu

Bodies of two school students recovered from Puzhal Lake

Two 14-year-old boys drowned at Puzhal Lake; bodies recovered after 17 hours of search by police, divers, and rescue teams.



- The bodies of two 14-year-old schoolboys who drowned in **Puzhal Lake** near Murugambedu were recently recovered.

Geographical and Hydrological Features

- **Puzhal Lake**, also known as **Red Hills Lake**, is a man-made freshwater lake located in Red Hills, **Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu**.
- It was constructed during the **19th century under British rule**.
- The lake has an approximate storage capacity of **3,300 million cubic feet**.

Role in Urban Water Security

- Puzhal Lake is one of the three major rain-fed reservoirs supplying water to **Chennai**, along with **Chembarambakkam Lake and Porur Lake**.
- Its stored water is treated and distributed to households and businesses across Chennai.
- The **Jone Tower**, built in **1881**, is used to measure the lake's water level.

Ecological Significance

- The lake provides a habitat for resident waterbirds and migratory avifauna.
- During autumn and winter, migratory birds arrive through the **Central Asian Flyway (CAF)** in search of open water and feeding grounds.

Nanjарayan Bird Sanctuary

TH The Hindu

Four years after notification, Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary yet to get through transformation befitting Ramsar Site

Nanjарayan Bird Sanctuary awaits Ramsar-grade transformation, awaiting ₹7.5 crore funding and infrastructure to boost eco-tourism and...



Why in News?

- More than four years after its notification, **Nanjарayan Bird Sanctuary** was reported to remain short of the ecological transformation expected of a Ramsar site.

Location and Wetland Characteristics

- The sanctuary is a shallow freshwater wetland in the north-eastern part of **Uthukuli Taluk, Tiruppur district, Tamil Nadu**.
- The wetland is centred on **Nanjarayan Lake**, which is fed by the **Nallar River**, a tributary of the **Noyyal River**.
- The lake is associated with the historical restoration efforts of **King Nanjarayan**.

Conservation and International Significance

- It is the **17th bird sanctuary of Tamil Nadu** and is recognised as a **Ramsar site of international importance**.
- The wetland lies along the **Central Asian Flyway (CAF)** and serves as a breeding and feeding ground for resident and migratory birds.

Biodiversity Profile

- Approximately **191 bird species** have been recorded in and around the lake.
- The recorded biodiversity also includes **87 butterfly species, 7 amphibian species, 21 reptile species, 11 small mammal species and 77 plant species**.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)



Wild animals, free-ranging dogs and cats could face painful laboratory experiments under proposed rules, PETA warns

PETA India warns that proposed rules could subject wild animals, free-ranging dogs, and cats to painful experiments, including electric...



Why in News?

- **PETA India** called for the withdrawal of the Centre's proposed rules on animal experimentation, arguing that they could weaken existing animal protections.

Institutional Background

- **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)** is a non-governmental organisation working to prevent animal abuse and promote consideration of animal interests.
- It was founded in **1980 by Ingrid Newkirk and Alex Pacheco**, influenced by Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation* (1975).
- Its headquarters are located in **Norfolk, Virginia, United States**.
- PETA describes itself as the world's largest animal rights organisation.



Core Principles and Areas of Focus

- PETA advocates freedom from harm for both human and non-human animals and opposes **speciesism**, or discrimination based on species.

- Its major areas of focus include animal use in **laboratories, the food industry, the clothing trade and the entertainment industry**.
- It also addresses cruelty towards domesticated animals and animals considered pests.

Methods and Policy Engagement

- PETA works through **public education, investigations, research, animal rescue, legislative advocacy, protests and negotiations**.
- It promotes alternatives to animal experimentation that are enabled by technological advancements.
- Its activities include engagement with companies and regulatory agencies on animal welfare issues.

Cheer Pheasant

TOI The Times of India

Himachal Pradesh raises the survival rate of reintroduced cheer pheasants from 11.11% in 2019-20 to 100%

Himachal Pradesh raises cheer pheasant survival rate from 11% to 100%; how parent-rearing and tracking helped the rare bird In 2019-20,...



Why in News?

- Himachal Pradesh reportedly increased the survival rate of reintroduced **Cheer Pheasants** from **11.11% in 2019–20 to 100% in 2024–25**.

Taxonomy and Geographical Distribution

- The **Cheer Pheasant**, also called **Wallich's pheasant or chir pheasant**, belongs to the family **Phasianidae**.
- It is primarily found in the **Western Himalayas**, extending from northern Pakistan through Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand to central Nepal.
- It inhabits steep, rocky hillsides with scrub, stunted trees and grassy slopes at elevations of approximately **1,200–3,350 metres**.

Conservation Status

- The **IUCN Red List** classifies the Cheer Pheasant as **Vulnerable**.
- It is listed under **Appendix I of CITES** and **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, according to the source material.

Ecological Characteristics

- The species builds a simple nest on the ground, generally sheltered by vegetation or rocks.

- It exhibits **natal philopatry**, meaning that individuals tend to return to or remain near their birthplace for breeding.
- It depends on early-successional grasslands maintained partly by traditional grass cutting and burning practices.
- Its diet includes **roots, tubers, bulbs, buried seeds and potentially insect larvae and earthworms**.

International Energy Agency (IEA)

TH The Hindu

IEA chief sees little chance of oil market 'normalisation' next year

The head of the International Energy Agency said on Tuesday (October 20, 2026) that he saw little chance of a return to normal oil market...



Why in News?

- The head of the **International Energy Agency (IEA)** warned that global oil markets might not return to normal conditions in the following year because of the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

Institutional Background and Mandate

- The IEA is an autonomous intergovernmental organisation operating within the framework of the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**.
- It was established in **1974** following the **1973–1974 oil crisis** to help member countries respond to major oil-supply disruptions.
- Its mandate includes analysing global energy trends, promoting sound energy policies and facilitating international cooperation in energy technologies.

Membership and India's Association

- The source material reports **32 member countries** and **14 association countries**.
- Full membership requires a country to be a member of the **OECD**.
- **India became an IEA Associate country in 2017.**

Priority Areas and Major Reports

- The IEA focuses on **energy security, economic development, environmental awareness and global engagement**.
- Its major publications include the **World Energy Outlook, World Energy Balances, Energy Technology Perspectives, World Energy Statistics** and **Net Zero by 2050**.
- The agency is headquartered in **Paris, France**.

Baltic Sea

M Modern Diplomacy

Undersea Cable Security in the Baltic and Red Sea

Digital world breathes on fiber optic cables that lay underneath the sea. Every click, call, and coin runs through these cables,...



Why in News?

- The **Nordic Council Committee for a Sustainable Nordic Region** announced an initiative to combat pollution and protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea.

Geographical Characteristics

- The Baltic Sea is a **semi-enclosed inland sea of the Atlantic Ocean** located in Northern Europe.
- It is widely described as the world's largest **brackish inland water body** and is considered one of the youngest seas, developing approximately **10,000–15,000 years ago** after the last Ice Age.
- Its salinity is lower than that of the open oceans because of freshwater inflows from surrounding land and its restricted connection to the ocean.



Coastal Countries and Important Features

- The Baltic Sea is bordered by **Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Denmark and Russia**.
- Its major gulfs include the **Gulf of Bothnia, Gulf of Finland and Gulf of Riga**.
- The **Baltic Proper** forms its central-southern basin, while the Danish straits connect it to the North Sea.
- **Gotland**, located off the coast of Sweden, is the largest island in the Baltic Sea.

Environmental Concerns

- **Harmful algal blooms** are among the major ecological problems affecting the Baltic Sea.
- Pollution control and marine ecosystem protection are important for the environmental sustainability of the region.
- The sea's semi-enclosed character and limited water exchange make pollution management particularly important.

Other Important News of the day

Environment

European Bee-Eater

TH The Hindu

European bee-eater at Broken Bridge

This marks the first recorded sighting of a European Bee-eater in Chennai -- a migratory species typically wintering in and around...



Why in News?

- The **European Bee-eater** was recently recorded in Chennai for the first time, according to the source material.

Taxonomy and Identification

- The European Bee-eater is a near-passerine bird belonging to the family **Meropidae**.
- It is also known as the **Golden Bee-eater** because of its colourful appearance.
- It has a dark, thick and slightly downward-curved bill.



Habitat and Ecological Behaviour

- The species inhabits **forests, savannas, shrublands, grasslands, agricultural areas and regions near freshwater systems**.
- It is a **diurnal and migratory bird** that spends much of its time searching for food.
- Its diet mainly consists of flying insects, particularly **bees, wasps and hornets**.

Distribution and Conservation Status

- The species has a broad distribution across much of **Europe and Africa**.
- Its conservation status on the **IUCN Red List is Least Concern**.

Science and Technology

GSAT-7B

WION

Skyborne sentinels: How GSAT-7B gives the Indian Army its own eye in orbit

GSAT-7B is one piece of a larger plan. The Navy received its new satellite, GSAT-7R, last November, when ISRO launched it to replace the...



Why in News?

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is expected to launch **GSAT-7B**, the Indian Army's first dedicated communications satellite, around mid-2028.

Technical and Operational Features

- GSAT-7B belongs to the **GSAT-7 series** of defence communication satellites developed by ISRO.
- It is planned to operate in **geostationary orbit** and is expected to weigh approximately **5 tonnes (5,000 kg)**.
- The satellite is designed to provide **beyond-line-of-sight communication** for troops, military formations, weapon systems and airborne platforms.

Strategic Significance

- GSAT-7B is intended to provide secure, round-the-clock connectivity across remote border regions and difficult terrain.
- It will strengthen battlefield **command and control**, military coordination and communication with mission-critical assets.
- Dedicated satellite connectivity will improve the Indian Army's ability to conduct operations in areas with limited terrestrial communication infrastructure.

GSAT-7 Series: Important Facts

- **GSAT-7 (Rukmini)** was launched in August 2013 aboard an **Ariane 5 ECA rocket** from Kourou, French Guiana, and primarily serves the Indian Navy.
- **GSAT-7A**, launched on **19 December 2018**, primarily supports the Indian Air Force and satellite-controlled operations of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).
- **GSAT-7R (CMS-03)** was launched on **2 November 2025**, according to the source material, as a replacement for Rukmini and supports secure communications among naval platforms and maritime operations centres.

Uttar Pradesh in News

UPERC Approves Solar Power Projects under PM-KUSUM in Uttar Pradesh

CW Construction World

Uttar Pradesh to Procure Solar Power at Rs. 2.91 per Unit

UPERC Approves 10 PPAs Covering 19.7 MW Under PM-KUSUM.



Why in News?

- The **Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (UPERC)** approved **10 Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)** for a combined solar power capacity of **19.7 MW** under **PM-KUSUM**.

Regulatory Approval and Project Details

- The approved projects carry tariffs ranging from ₹2.91 to ₹2.99 per unit of electricity.
- **Bhaskar Renewable Energy** received approval for a **1.7 MW project in Chitrakoot** at ₹2.91 per unit, the lowest reported tariff.
- **APS Developers** received approval for a **2.3 MW project in Mathura** at ₹2.93 per unit.
- **Shakti Renew** received approval for a **1.3 MW project in Kanpur Nagar** at ₹2.95 per unit.
- Other projects in districts including **Hapur, Amroha, Mathura and Saharanpur** were approved at ₹2.99 per unit.
- The projects involve grid-connected **solar photovoltaic (PV) plants**, with **UPNEDA** and **UPPCL** serving as implementing agencies.

PM-KUSUM: Objectives and Institutional Framework

- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM)** was launched in **2019** by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.
- The scheme aims to improve farmers' energy security, promote renewable energy and reduce dependence on conventional electricity and diesel-powered irrigation.
- It promotes decentralised solar power generation closer to agricultural electricity demand.
- **Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA)** facilitates renewable energy projects and implements state-level solar programmes.
- **Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL)** coordinates electricity procurement and distribution-related arrangements.

Component C-2 and the RESCO Model

- **Component C** of PM-KUSUM supports the solarisation of grid-connected agricultural pumps and associated agricultural electricity infrastructure.
- Under the **feeder-level solarisation approach**, decentralised solar plants supply electricity through designated agricultural feeders connected to the distribution network.
- Under the **Renewable Energy Service Company (RESCO) model**, developers establish and operate solar plants and sell the generated electricity to the purchasing utility through a **Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)**.

Expansion and Energy-Security Implications

- The projects form part of a wider solar tender initially floated for **3,205 MW**, which was subsequently revised to **2,553.5 MW**.

- Project capacities were adjusted according to the revised requirements of identified substations and agricultural feeders.
- Distributed solar plants can support local electricity supply, reduce dependence on centralised generation and strengthen renewable energy integration into agricultural power distribution.