

## SANSKRITI IAS DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

23-08-2026

### Golconda Fort

NDTV

#### 'Structure Is Chamber': Archaeological Survey Debunks Golconda Tunnel Claim

The chamber is constructed of granite stone, with rough stone masonry forming an internal wall-like structure.



**Why in News:** The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** clarified that a structure discovered near **Golconda Fort, Hyderabad**, is a small rectangular granite chamber rather than a tunnel.

#### Historical Evolution

- **Golconda Fort** is located on the western outskirts of **Hyderabad, Telangana**, with its name derived from the Telugu words “**Golla Konda**”, meaning Shepherd’s Hill.
- The fort was originally erected in **1143 under the Kakatiya Dynasty**.
- It rose to prominence under the **Qutb Shahi Dynasty** after **Quli Qutb Shah** declared independence from the Bahmani Sultanate in **1518**.
- Golconda served as the Qutb Shahi capital from **1518 to 1591**, before the capital shifted to Hyderabad.

#### Architectural Features

- The fort stands on a **granite hill about 400 feet high** and has a circumference of around **7 km**.
- Its fortifications include **8 gates and 87 bastions**, with three successive defensive walls.
- **Fateh Darwaza** is the main gate and is noted for its distinctive **acoustical effects**.
- The **Qutb Shahi royal tombs** are located about **1 km north** of the outer fort wall.

#### Mughal Expansion and Diamond Trade

- **Aurangzeb** finally breached the fort in **1687** after a prolonged nine-month siege, bringing Golconda into the Mughal Empire.
- The Golconda region was historically famous for its **diamond mines**, associated with diamonds such as the **Koh-i-Noor, Hope Diamond and Nassak Diamond**.

## United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO)

**TNIE** The New Indian Express

### 22 Indian seafarers reportedly safe after two vessels hijacked off Somalia, Gulf of Aden, says centre

India takes up crew safety with Somali authorities after armed pirates seize the two commercial vessels in separate incidents.



**Why in News:** A tanker was reportedly boarded by six armed people and diverted towards Somalia, prompting attention to the role of **UKMTO** in maritime security.

### Institutional Role

- **UKMTO** is a **British Royal Navy-sponsored organisation** established in **2001** to handle distress calls during maritime security threats.
- Its office was shifted from **Dubai to Portsmouth, UK, in 2014**.
- It acts as the primary contact between **commercial vessels and military forces** in the region.



### Operational Framework

- UKMTO operates across **West Asia and the Indian Ocean Region** through an information framework agreement.
- It runs a **Voluntary Reporting Scheme (VRS)** within the **Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA)**.
- The VRA covers nearly **2.5 million sq. miles**, including the **Red Sea, Arabian Sea, northwestern Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf**.

### Maritime Security Significance

- Ship masters submit an **initial report on entering**, **daily reports during transit**, and a **final report after exiting** the VRA or reaching port.
- UKMTO issues **Warnings, Advisories, Reports** and records of **Maritime Information Exchange Meetings**.
- It maintains **24/7 emergency communication channels** and coordinates rescue responses.

## Narwhal

### Why in News:

Scientists found that opposing twists in the inner and outer **collagen fibril layers**

of the narwhal tusk generate internal tension that helps keep it straight.

**bl.** BusinessLine

### From unicorn horn to scientific marvel: Narwhal tusk's double spiral decoded

In the Middle Ages, narwhal tusks were sold as unicorn horns blessed with magical powers such as neutralizing poisons and curing diseases...



### Taxonomic Profile

- The **Narwhal** (*Monodon monoceros*) is a medium-sized toothed whale belonging to the family **Monodontidae**.
- The only other living member of this family is the **beluga whale**.

### Habitat and Distribution

- Narwhals primarily inhabit the **Arctic Ocean**, especially its Atlantic sector, with some records from the Pacific sector.
- Major populations occur around **Canada, Greenland and eastern Russia**.
- They migrate seasonally between **ice-covered areas, inshore waters and coastal waters**.

### Distinctive Adaptations

- Its characteristic tusk is a **long, spiralled tooth**, usually developed by males, though females may occasionally possess one.
- The tusk can reach about **3 metres** and weigh more than **10 kg**.
- Narwhals can dive deeply and hold their breath for around **25–30 minutes**.

### Ecological Status

- They feed mainly on **fish, squid and shrimp** and use sound for communication, navigation and hunting.
- The **IUCN Red List** classifies the narwhal as **Least Concern**.

## Thiksey Monastery

DD India

### US Ambassador Sergio Gor visits Thiksey Monastery in Ladakh

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor visited the historic Thiksey Monastery in Ladakh on Friday during his ongoing visit to the Union Territory...



**Why in News:** US Ambassador to India **Sergio Gor** recently visited the historic **Thiksey Monastery** in Ladakh.

### Historical and Religious Significance

- Thiksey Monastery** is one of the largest and most prominent monastic complexes in **central Ladakh**.
- Founded in **1433**, it belongs to the **Gelug sect** of Tibetan Buddhism.
- It was founded by **Spon Palden Sherab** with his master **Jangsem Sherab Zang**.

### Architectural Features

- The **12-storey complex** resembles the **Potala Palace of Lhasa, Tibet**.
- It houses a **15-metre-high Maitreya Buddha statue**, installed during the 1980s.



- The monastery contains **stupas, statues, thangkas, wall paintings and ancient artefacts**.

### Cultural Role

- The annual **Gustor ritual** is held from the **17th to 19th day of the ninth month of the Tibetan calendar**, generally during October–November.
- Thiksey serves as an important centre for **monastic education and spiritual training** in Ladakh.

## Squint Eye (Strabismus)

THE Hindu

### All you need to know about: squint eye

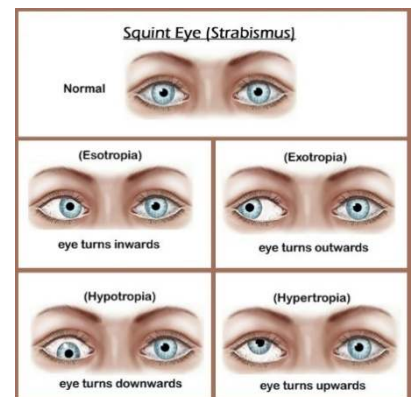
Learn about squint eye (strabismus), its causes, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment options for children and adults.



**Why in News:** A recent study estimated that **horizontal strabismus affects about 1.81% of the global population**, or approximately **138.5 million people**.

### Medical Profile

- Strabismus** is a condition in which the two eyes do not align properly.
- The affected eye may turn inward (**esotropia**), outward (**exotropia**), upward or downward while the other eye remains focused.



### Causes and Risk Factors

- Genetic factors and certain **neurological or developmental conditions** can increase the risk in children.
- Prematurity and low birth weight** are recognised childhood risk factors.
- In adults, causes may include **diabetes, thyroid eye disease, stroke, neurological disorders and trauma**.

### Symptoms and Complications

- Children may show abnormal eye positioning, head tilting, difficulty judging distances or closing one eye in bright light.
- Adults may experience **double vision, blurred vision, eye strain, headaches and impaired depth perception**.
- Untreated childhood strabismus can interfere with normal visual development and cause **amblyopia**.

### Treatment

- Glasses** are often the first treatment when refractive error contributes to misalignment.

- **Surgery** may be required when glasses and other treatments do not adequately correct the condition.

## Terrier Cyber Quest 2026 (TCQ 3.0)

 News On AIR

### Territorial Army launches national-level hackathon 'Terrier Cyber Quest 2026'

The Territorial Army has launched a national-level hackathon, Terrier Cyber Quest 2026, aimed at developing innovative solutions to emerging...



**Why in News:** The **Territorial Army**, in collaboration with **CyberPeace**, launched the third edition of **Terrier Cyber Quest 2026**, a national-level hackathon on cybersecurity and national security.

#### Key Features

- The hackathon brings together participants from **educational institutions, industry, research organisations, government bodies and the Armed Forces**.
- It seeks technology-based solutions to emerging **cybersecurity, defence and digital threats**.

#### Three Competition Tracks

- **Bug Hunting** focuses on identifying vulnerabilities in simulated critical infrastructure through a **Capture-the-Flag** round followed by a live final.
- **AI Kavach** focuses on using **AI and machine learning** for threat detection, anomaly identification and cyber defence.
- **Creators Challenge** focuses on digital campaigns addressing **deepfakes, phishing, online scams and misinformation**.

#### Territorial Army

- The **Territorial Army (TA)** is a volunteer component of the Indian Army whose members retain civilian employment while undertaking military service.
- It is often described as the **"Second Line of Defence"** and assists the regular Army, civil administration and disaster-response efforts.
- Its motto is **"Savdhani Va Shoorta" (Vigilance and Valour)**.

#### Eligibility

- Eligible candidates include **Indian citizens, men and women, aged 18–42 years**, who are graduates, gainfully employed and physically and medically fit.
- Serving personnel of the **Regular Armed Forces, Police, GREF, paramilitary and similar forces** are not eligible.

## Other Important News of the day

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| <b>Places in News</b> | <b>Mauritius</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                       | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">  Outlook Business         </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p><u><a href="#">IOC Signs 5-Year Mauritius Fuel Deal: Why It Matters For Energy Security</a></u></p> <p>Indian Oil has signed a five-year fuel supply agreement with Mauritius, covering petrol, diesel, marine gas oil and aviation fuel, as India...</p> </div> <div style="flex: 0.2; text-align: center;">  </div> </div> <p><b>Why in News:</b> India and Mauritius signed a <b>long-term fuel supply agreement</b> through <b>Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOC)</b> covering Mauritius's entire import requirement of petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel.</p> <p><b>Geographical Profile</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mauritius</b> is an island country in the <b>Indian Ocean</b>, off the southeast coast of Africa, with <b>Port Louis</b> as its capital.</li> <li>• It forms part of the <b>Mascarene Islands</b>, which were created through volcanic activity.</li> <li>• The main island is volcanic and was formed around <b>8 million years ago</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Regional Linkages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mauritius is a member of the <b>Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)</b> and the <b>Southern African Development Community (SADC)</b>.</li> <li>• The headquarters of both the <b>Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)</b> and the <b>Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)</b> are located in Mauritius.</li> </ul> <p><b>Physical Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important islands include <b>Ambre, Est, Cerfs and Benitiers</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Lake Vacoas</b> is an important water source, while <b>Grand River South East</b> and <b>Black River</b> are major rivers.</li> <li>• The island has a <b>maritime subtropical climate</b> with relatively uniform temperatures throughout the year.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Environment</b>    | <p><b>Long-Tailed Marmot</b></p> <p><b>Why in News:</b> The <b>Amarnath Yatra</b> brings large numbers of pilgrims into a fragile Himalayan ecosystem inhabited by the long-tailed marmot.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|                       | <p><b>Species Profile</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Long-tailed Marmot</b> (<i>Marmota caudata</i>), also called the <b>golden marmot</b>, belongs to the family <b>Sciuridae</b>.</li> <li>It is a <b>herbivorous, diurnal and social rodent</b> adapted to high-altitude environments.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Habitat and Distribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It inhabits <b>alpine meadows and rocky slopes</b> where vegetation availability varies seasonally.</li> <li>Its range includes parts of <b>Central and South Asia</b>, including Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and northwestern India.</li> <li>In India, it occurs in <b>Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh</b>, generally at <b>3,200–4,850 m</b> altitude.</li> </ul> <p><b>Adaptations and Conservation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has golden-brown fur, a robust body and a relatively long tail.</li> <li>It <b>hibernates from September to April/May</b> to survive harsh alpine winters.</li> <li>The <b>IUCN Red List</b> categorises it as <b>Least Concern</b>.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Defence</b></p> | <p><b>KN-30 Missile</b></p> <p><b>Why in News:</b> Russia reportedly received the <b>KN-30 ballistic missile</b> from North Korea for the first time, according to Ukraine's defence intelligence directorate.</p> <p><b>Identification and Classification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>KN-30</b> is the Western designation for North Korea's <b>Hwasong-11C</b>, also known as <b>Hwasong-11Da</b>.</li> <li>It is an enlarged member of the <b>Hwasong-11 family</b> and is classified as a <b>short-range ballistic missile (SRBM)</b>.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Technical Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The missile is approximately <b>10.1–10.2 m long</b> and <b>1.26 m in diameter</b>.</li> <li>It uses a <b>solid-fuel engine</b> and is launched from a <b>mobile ground-based launcher</b>.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Its estimated range is <b>600–900 km</b>, with a claimed warhead mass of up to <b>2,500 kg</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solid fuel enables <b>faster response, longer storage and simpler deployment</b> compared with liquid-fuel systems.</li> <li>The missile reportedly reaches approximately <b>Mach 5–6</b>.</li> <li>Its low <b>quasi-ballistic trajectory</b>, at around <b>50 km altitude</b>, can reduce the engagement window for defensive systems.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>Science and Technology</b></p> | <p><b>Endoscopic Camera</b></p> <div> <p> The Indian Express</p> </div> <div> <p><u>Professor used endoscope camera, needle to leak agriculture exam paper in Chhattisgarh</u></p> </div> <div> <p>Yogesh Sonkesariya, professor at Bharti Agriculture College in Durg, allegedly sold Entomology paper to students for Rs 11000 a day before...</p> </div> <div>  </div> <p><b>Why in News:</b> An <b>endoscopic camera</b> was reportedly used in a case involving the alleged leakage of an entomology examination in Chhattisgarh.</p> <p><b>Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An endoscopic camera enables visualisation, image capture and video recording inside <b>small or hard-to-reach areas</b>.</li> <li>Modern systems commonly use <b>“chip-on-tip” technology</b>, where the lens and imaging electronics are integrated at the tip.</li> </ul> <div>  </div> <p><b>Medical Applications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Cystoscope</b> examines the bladder, urethra and urinary tract.</li> <li><b>Laryngoscope</b> examines the larynx, while an <b>otoscope</b> examines the ear canal and eardrum.</li> <li><b>Gastroscope</b> examines the upper digestive tract, including the oesophagus and stomach.</li> <li><b>Laparoscope</b> is used to examine abdominal and pelvic organs through a small incision.</li> <li><b>Arthroscope</b> examines joints, while a <b>duodenoscope</b> reaches the duodenum.</li> </ul> |

### Working and Wider Uses

- **Fiber optics or LEDs** provide illumination at the tip, while the image signal is transmitted through an electrical cable.
- Endoscopic technology has expanded beyond medicine into **industry, research and security** applications.

## Uttar Pradesh in News

**India's First Indigenised AK-203 "Sher" Rifle**

 Organiser

## India's first 100 percent indigenous AK-203 Sher rifle completes test

India's first 100% indigenous AK-203 'Sher' rifle has completed firing tests. Here is what the milestone means for defence production.



**Why in News:** Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) has manufactured and test-fired India's first **100% indigenised AK-203 assault rifle**, named **Sher**, at the **Korwa ordnance facility in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh**.

### Indigenisation Milestone

- The prototype uses **only Indian components and raw materials**, marking a shift from licensed assembly to **end-to-end domestic production**.
- The bilateral AK-203 programme with Russia began in **2018**.
- **IRRPL** is a joint venture associated with India's AK-203 rifle production programme with Russian collaboration.

### Technical Profile

- The **AK-203** belongs to the **Kalashnikov family** and uses the **7.62×39 mm cartridge**.
- It has **gas operation**, a **30-round magazine**, an effective range of up to **800 metres**, and a firing rate of about **700 rounds per minute**.

### Defence Manufacturing Significance

- IRRPL plans to provide fully indigenised prototypes to the **Indian Army** for formal user trials beginning in **September 2026**.
- The Indian Army's requirement is around **6 lakh AK-203 rifles**.
- The Korwa facility is being upgraded to achieve a production rate of **one rifle every 100 seconds**.
- The delivery schedule has reportedly been advanced to **late 2030 from 2032** due to improvements in local production.