



# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## Guru Nanak Jayanti

Syllabus: GS1/ Important Personalities, Modern Indian History

### Context

- Recently, the 554th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak was celebrated across India.

### About

- Guru Nanak is the **founder of Sikhism** and the **first of the ten Sikh Gurus**.
- He lived in the 15th century and was the contemporary of the **Mughal Emperor - Babur**.
- His teachings are encapsulated in the **Guru Granth Sahib** (the holy scripture of Sikhism), and continue to hold great relevance in contemporary times.

### Key teachings of Guru Nanak and their relevance in contemporary times

- **Religious Tolerance:** In an era marked by religious diversity, Guru Nanak's emphasis on the unity of all people under one divine force encourages mutual respect and harmony.
  - This teaching promotes religious tolerance and understanding, which is especially relevant in today's globalized and diverse world.

- **Equality and Social Justice:** Guru Nanak strongly advocated for social equality, rejecting caste-based discrimination and promoting the idea that all individuals are equal.
  - This teaching remains relevant in the contemporary context where issues of social justice, discrimination, and inequality persist.
- **Service to Humanity:** The concept of "seva" or selfless service is central to Sikhism. Guru Nanak encouraged his followers to engage in acts of kindness and service to humanity.
  - This teaching is relevant in addressing the challenges of poverty, inequality, and humanitarian crises that persist in the modern world.
  - He set up rules for **congregational worship (Sangat)** involving collective recitation.
- **Honest Livelihood:** Guru Nanak emphasized the importance of earning an honest living through hard work and ethical means.
  - In the contemporary world, where issues of corruption, dishonesty, and unethical practices are prevalent, Guru Nanak's teachings encourage individuals to maintain integrity in their professional and personal lives.
- **Spiritual Unity:** Guru Nanak's teachings underscore the idea of spiritual unity and the importance of recognizing the divine in all aspects of life. He advocated the '**Nirguna**' (**devotion to and worship of formless divine**) form of bhakti.
  - This teaching encourages individuals to find commonalities and connections between different faiths and traditions, fostering a sense of unity and shared humanity.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Guru Nanak's teachings emphasize the interconnectedness of all creation and the importance of respecting and preserving the environment.
  - In the face of contemporary environmental challenges, these teachings inspire a sense of responsibility towards nature and sustainable living.

### Steps in his honour

- **Nankana Sahib:** A Gurudwara was built at his birthplace in the city now known as Nankana Sahib. It is located in the Punjab province of Pakistan.
- **Kartarpur corridor:** The corridor was built to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev in November 2019.
  - It is one of the holiest places for Sikhs where Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji settled and preached for the last 18 years of his life.

### Sikhism

- Founded by **Guru Nanak** in the **15<sup>th</sup> century** in **Punjab**, influenced by the **Bhakti** movement.
- Sikh means 'learner' & faith is called **Gurmat** (Guru's way).
- **It is based on Monotheistic** (One God, **Ek Onkar**) and Internal religious state of individual & remembrance of God (**Simran**).
  - **Condemns** rituals & rejects idol worship.
- **Gurdwara** is the place of worship.
- **Guru Granth Sahib (Adi Granth)** is considered a living Guru.

- Guru Gobind Singh recreated the **Khalsa** (military group of men & women) in **1699**.
  - They have to wear **Panj Kakka**: Kada, Kachera, Kirpan, Kesh & Kangha.

Source: [IE](#)

## Ayushman Arogya Mandir

**Syllabus: GS2/Health**

### In News

- The Union Government has decided to rename the existing **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)** as '**Ayushman Arogya Mandir**' with the tag-line '**Arogyam Parmam Dhanam**'.

### Ayushman Bharat

- It was launched as recommended by the **National Health Policy 2017**, to achieve the vision of **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**.
- It is designed to meet **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and its underlying commitment, which is to "**leave no one behind.**"
- It is an attempt to move from a **sectoral and segmented approach** of health service delivery to a **comprehensive need-based health care service**.
- Ayushman Bharat adopts a continuum of care approach, comprising of **two interrelated components**-
  - Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)
  - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

### Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs)

- In 2018, the Government announced the creation of 1,50,000 Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) by transforming the existing Sub Centres and Primary Health Centres.
- These centres are to deliver Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) bringing healthcare closer to the homes of people.
- They cover both, maternal and child health services and non-communicable diseases, including free essential drugs and diagnostic services.

### Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

- The scheme was launched in 2018.
- It is the **largest health assurance scheme** in the world which aims at providing a **health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family** per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization **to over 12 crores poor and vulnerable families** that form the **bottom 40% of the Indian population**.
- The households included are based on the **deprivation and occupational criteria** of Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 (SECC 2011) for rural and urban areas respectively.
- PM-JAY was earlier known as the **National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS)** before being rechristened.
- It subsumed the then existing **Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)** which had been launched in 2008.

- The coverage mentioned under PM-JAY also includes families that were covered in RSBY but are not present in the SECC 2011 database.
- PM-JAY is **fully funded by the Government** and **cost of implementation is shared between the Central and State Governments.**

Source: [TH](#)

## Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

**Syllabus: GS3/Indian Economy**

### In News

- **The social Audit** for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) **was conducted.**

### What is Social Audit?

- Social Audit is the examination and assessment of a programme/scheme for **comparing official records with actual ground realities.**
- Section 17 of the MGNREGA has mandated Social audit of all Works executed under the MGNREGA.

### Findings

- Out of the 34 States and union territories **only six have completed social audit** of works done under the MGNREGS in more than 50% of gram panchayats.
- **Kerala is the only State to cover 100% gram panchayats.**
- Other than Kerala the only States to cross the 50% mark are Bihar (64.4%), Gujarat (58.8%), Jammu and Kashmir (64.1%), Odisha (60.42%) and Uttar Pradesh (54.97%).

### Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

- It is an employment generation programme, implemented with the enforcement of the **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA).**
- It was introduced in **2005** with the aim of **providing livelihood and employment security in rural areas.**
- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, funded on the basis of 90:10 by the Union and State Government respectively.

### Features:

- **Employment Guarantee:** The scheme guarantees at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- **Demand-Driven:** The demand for employment under MGNREGS is expected to come from the rural households, and the government is obligated to provide employment within 15 days of the demand being made.
- **Unemployment Allowance:** If the government fails to give employment within 15 days, the person is entitled to receive unemployment allowances at the rate of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the daily wage for the first 30 days and thence  $\frac{1}{2}$  per day beyond that.
- **Wage Payments:** The wages are usually paid on a weekly basis and directly credited to the workers' bank accounts.

- **Worksite Facilities:** The scheme emphasizes the provision of worksite facilities such as drinking water, shade, and first aid to ensure the well-being of the workers.
- **Women Empowerment:** MGNREGS places special emphasis on the participation of women in the workforce, also at least one-third of beneficiaries have to be women.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** The scheme promotes transparency and accountability through the use of technology, including the use of Management Information Systems (MIS).

### **Challenges of the MGNREGS**

- **Delayed Wage Payments:** One of the persistent issues with MGNREGS has been the delay in wage payments to the workers.
- **Corruption and Leakages:** There have been instances of corruption and leakages at various levels of implementation, including fake muster rolls, ghost workers, and misappropriation of funds.
- **Inadequate Awareness:** Lack of awareness and information about the rights and entitlements under MGNREGS can limit the effective participation of the rural population.
- **Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation:** In some cases, there have been challenges in monitoring the implementation of MGNREGS, which can lead to the mismanagement of resources.
- **Unequal Distribution of Work:** There have been instances where work under MGNREGS is not distributed equitably, leading to certain groups or individuals having better access to job opportunities than others.
  - This can be influenced by factors such as caste, gender, and political considerations.
- **Limited Skill Development:** MGNREGS primarily focuses on providing unskilled manual labor, and there is a lack of emphasis on skill development. This can limit the long-term impact of the program on improving the employability of the rural workforce.
- **Seasonal Nature of Work:** The demand for work under MGNREGS is often seasonal, and the program faces challenges in providing continuous employment throughout the year.
- **Administrative Capacity:** The effective implementation of MGNREGS requires a robust administrative infrastructure at the grassroots level. There have been challenges related to the capacity and capability of local administrative bodies to implement the scheme effectively.

### **Way Ahead**

- The Centre has reminded the States that if the social audits are not conducted regularly, then the funds under the MGNREGS will be withheld.
- The States complain that the audit is delayed because the Centre does not release the funds for the social audit units, which work independent of the State governments.
- Efforts have been made by the government to address these challenges, including the use of technology for transparency, improvements in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and awareness campaigns.

- Despite the challenges, MGNREGS continues to be an important social welfare program in India.

Source: [TH](#)

## Mandatory blending of Compressed Biogas

Syllabus: **GS3/Environment**

### News

- The National Biofuels Coordination Committee (NBCC) gave its nod to mandatory blending of CBG with compressed natural gas (CNG) for transportation and piped natural gas (PNG) for households starting 2025-26 (FY26).

### About

- **Obligations:** The compulsory blending obligation will be **1 percent of total CNG** and domestic PNG consumption for FY26, **3 percent** for FY27, and **4 percent** for FY28. The obligation mandates 5 per cent blending from FY29.
- **A Central Repository Body (CRB)** will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the blending mandate.
- **Objective:** The key objectives of the CBO (compulsory blending obligation) are to stimulate demand for CBG in the CGD sector, import substitution for liquefied natural gas (LNG), saving in forex, promoting circular economy and to assist in achieving the target of net-zero emission.

### What is Biogas?

- **Biogas** is an energy-rich gas produced by **anaerobic decomposition** of biomass.
- **Raw material:** It is produced from sources like agriculture residue, cattle dung, sugarcane press mud, municipal solid waste, and sewage treatment plant waste, among others.
- **Composition:** Raw biogas typically consists of **methane (50–75%)**, **carbon dioxide (25–50%)**, and smaller amounts of **nitrogen (2–8%)**. Trace levels of hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, hydrogen, and various volatile organic compounds are also present in biogas depending on the feedstock.
- **Use:** It can be burned directly as a fuel, or purified and upgraded by removing carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, and then compressed to make CBG.

### Government steps

- **SATAT scheme:** Under the Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme, 5,000 CBG plants were envisaged by 2023 to produce 15 million tonnes of CBG.
  - The scheme's objective was to encourage entrepreneurs to set up CBG plants across the country and supply the gas to public sector oil companies.
- **GOBARDhan scheme:** Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARDhan) is an umbrella initiative aims to build a robust ecosystem for setting up Biogas/Compressed Biogas (CBG)/ Bio-Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) plants to drive sustainable economic growth and promote a circular economy.

Source: [IE](#)

# Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)

## Syllabus: GS3/ Environment

### In News

- Experts have recently voiced a concern that the newly established biodiversity framework fund lacks a tangible financial commitment to fulfill conservation objectives.

### About

- **Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)** has been designed to mobilize and accelerate investment in the conservation and sustainability of wild species and ecosystems, whose health is under threat from wildfires, flooding, extreme weather, and human activity including urban sprawl.
- It has received approval through the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, which is designed to assist in achieving the objectives of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** by 2030.
- The fund was established at the **7th Assembly** of the Global Environment Facility in **Vancouver, Canada**.
- It will help countries to achieve the 23 targets set under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).
- It will be **managed** by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and will raise funds through private, philanthropic and government investments.
  - It will also have access to funds earmarked for biodiversity conservation under GEF.
  - The facility has a cumulative budget of **\$5.25 billion** for 2022-26, of which **36 per cent is earmarked for biodiversity**. The remaining budget is for projects on climate change, pollution, land and ocean health.
- The **GBF Fund Council** will be open to representation by the following members, with more developing country representation compared to developed countries:
  - 16 Members from developing countries
  - 14 Members from developed countries
  - 2 Members from the countries of central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.
- Decisions of the GBF Fund Council are to be taken by **consensus**.
- **Financial management under framework**
  - 20% will be allocated to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs).
  - 25% to GEF agencies.
  - 36% to SIDS (Small Island Developing States).
  - 3% to LDCs (Least Developed Countries).

### Global Environment Facility (GEF)

- It was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.
- It serves as an international financial institution that funds projects to address global environmental challenges, including biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation, and pollution.



- It provides financial support to several international environmental conventions like-
  - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
  - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
  - Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
  - Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
  - United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

**Source: DTE**

## 15 years of 26/11 Terror Attack

**Syllabus: GS2/ Government Policies & Interventions; GS3/ Science & Technology, Challenges to Internal Security**

### In Context

- India went through the trauma of the Mumbai attacks fifteen years ago in 2008 (known as 26/11).

### More about the attack

- The three-day-long incident that India battled is more commonly known as the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.
- India had witnessed many terror attacks over the years but the one that rocked Mumbai in 2008 was **a turning point**.
- It fundamentally transformed **India's strategy and relationships in the world**.

### Implications on attack for India

- **Pakistan & terrorism:**
  - The attack put the spotlight on Pakistan's record on terrorism.
  - India was now able to portray, with evidence, that Pakistan's ISI and military was plotting and perpetrating terrorist attacks on India.
  - After 26/11 attacks by **Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives**, and the assassination of **Osama bin Laden** in the Pakistani cantonment city of Abbottabad, "Pakistan could do little to protest that it was not a **breeding ground for jihadi terrorism**."
- **US and the West on India's side:**
  - **Every G7 country had a victim**, with six Americans killed, in the 26/11 attacks.
  - This was a major factor behind the **sympathy India gained from the western world**.
  - The US not only provided **real time information during the attacks**, but also a lot of prosecutable evidence through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that helped India nail Pakistan's culpability and embarrass it internationally.
  - After the 9/11 attacks, the US was forced to undertake a dramatic shift in its **policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan**, 26/11 brought it closer to India.
- **Pakistan in FATF grey list:**
  - It was also this spirit of cooperation and global understanding on the need to deal with Pak-sponsored terrorism that helped put **Pakistan in the**



**Financial Action Task Force's (FATF's) grey list** in 2018, forcing the country to take action against the terror infrastructure of the LeT and Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM).

### India's 'No' response to Counter terror

- The decision-makers concluded that **more was to be gained** from not attacking Pakistan than from attacking it
  - The real success was in organising the international community, in isolating Pakistan.
- In addition, the global **financial crisis had just hit**, with the collapse of the Lehman Brothers.
  - In India too, the stock market crashed by 41% between June and December. **A war would have been disastrous.**
  - The result of a war would have been not just reprimanding from the international community, but also the **loss of international money.**
- India began to get unprecedented cooperation from Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf countries.

### India's security infrastructure

- **The Lacunae:**
  - The ease with which the **10 Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) gunmen** sailed across the Arabian Sea, from Karachi to Mumbai, and went on the rampage in the city for four long days, exposed
    - the gaping holes in **India's maritime security,**
    - the gaps in its **internal security grid,** and
    - the inadequacy of its **counter-terrorism infrastructure** and **local police.**
- **Changes in India's security front:**
  - Soon after the attacks, some key decisions on the security front were taken by the government. These included
    - tightening of maritime security,
    - fixing of loopholes in the intelligence grid,
    - strengthening of the legal framework to deal with terrorism, and
    - creation of special agencies to probe terror cases.
- **Maritime security revamp**
  - Post 26/11, the **Indian Navy** was given overall charge of maritime security,
  - The **Indian Coast Guard** was given the responsibility for territorial waters and to coordinate with hundreds of new **marine police stations** that came up along India's coastline.
  - The government also made it mandatory for all vessels longer than 20 metres to have an **Automatic Identification System (AIS)** that transmits its identification and other information.
    - In addition to the **international regulation** under which AIS is compulsory for any vessel heavier than 300 gross tonnage.
- **Intelligence coordination**
  - The **Intelligence Bureau's (IB's) Multi-Agency Centre (MAC)** was strengthened, whose primary job is to coordinate the exchange of

intelligence between central agencies, the armed forces, and the state police.

- Subsidiary MACs that had gone defunct were re-invigorated.
- Regular meetings were made mandatory for real-time exchange of information and analysis.
- **Change in laws: UAPA and NIA Act**
  - The **Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)** was amended to expand the definition of terrorism, and the **National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act** was passed by Parliament to create the first truly federal investigation agency in the country.
- **Modernisation of police forces**
  - Given the spectacular failure of local police despite the exemplary bravery shown by some police officers and men, the Centre trained its focus on modernisation of state police forces.
  - **More funds were allocated by the MHA** to state governments
    - to make their **police stations state-of-the-art**, equip them with **modern technology**,
    - train their policemen to deal with challenges of modern day policing that included terrorism, and
    - to give them better weapons.
  - Apart from this, emphasis was given on the **creation of crack commando teams** among all police forces. And the **National Security Guard (NSG)** established four regional hubs nationwide.

### **Challenges that remain**

- Despite these successes, gaps in the security grid remain.
- State police forces continue to remain **ill-equipped** and **poorly trained** with continued **political interference**.
- On maritime security, there are **limited options to track ships** that do not transmit AIS signals.
- Also, many of India's smaller shipping vessels have **no transponders**.
- An official from the security establishment said that of the 2.9 lakh fishing vessels in India, around 60% are smaller than 20 m, and most of them are without transponders.

### India's Action Plan at UNSC

- In January 2021, at the **20th anniversary of the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1373**, India presented an **eight-point action plan to deal with the scourge of terrorism**.
  - Summoning the political will to unhesitatingly combat terrorism.
  - Decrying double standards in the fight against terrorism.
  - Reform of the working methods of the Committees dealing with Sanctions and Counter-Terrorism.
  - Firmly discouraging exclusivist thinking that divides the world and harms the social fabric.
  - Enlisting and delisting individuals and entities under the UN sanctions regimes objectively not for political or religious considerations.
  - Fully recognising and addressing the link between terrorism and transnational organized crime.
  - Combating terrorist financing.
  - Immediate attention to adequate funding to UN Counter-Terrorism bodies from the UN regular budget.

### Way ahead

- There is no question of raging machismo given that India and Pakistan are nuclear powers.
- All nations worldwide must keep up with their counter-terrorism efforts and address real or perceived grievances that make radicalisation possible.

Source: TH

## Facts In News Booker Prize 2023

### Syllabus: Miscellaneous

#### In News

- Irish author Paul Lynch's "**Prophet Song**" was named the **winner of the Booker Prize 2023**, beating author Chetna Maroo's debut novel "**Western Lane**".

#### About

- The "**Prophet Song**" is based on the unrest in western democracies, refugee crisis and impact of this modern chaos.
- It tells about the terrifying plight of a woman seeking to protect her family in an Ireland descending into totalitarianism.
- Last year, Shehan Karunatilaka won the Booker prize for **The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida**.

#### About Booker Prize

- It is a literary award conferred each year for the best novel written in the English language, which was published in the United Kingdom and Ireland.
- **Founded in the UK in 1969**, it initially awarded Commonwealth writers and now spans the globe and it is open to anyone regardless of origin.

- The selected book is not only expected to resonate with contemporary themes but also possess enduring qualities that place it among the esteemed works of literature.

**Source: TH**

## Measles Disease

**Syllabus: GS2/ Health**

### Context

- Recently, a report of the World Health Organization(WHO) stated that around 1.1 million infants in India missed their first dose of measles.

### About

- Measles is a contagious disease caused by a virus, spreading through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- **Symptoms:** Cough, runny nose, red eyes, fever, and a rash of tiny red spots.
- **Prevention:** Measles can be prevented with the **MMR(Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine.**
  - Two doses of the MMR vaccine can prevent about 97% cases.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** The COVID-19 pandemic has led to setbacks in global surveillance and immunization efforts, leaving many children vulnerable to diseases like measles.
- **Measles Cases Globally:**
  - Measles cases in 2022 have increased by 18% globally.
  - Deaths due to measles have risen by 43% compared to 2021.
  - The estimated number of measles cases is nine million, with 1,36,000 deaths, mostly among children.
  - Measles vaccination averted 56 million deaths between 2000 and 2021.

### Universal Immunization Programme in India

- It is a comprehensive public health initiative aimed at providing vaccination coverage to all eligible individuals.
- It targets approximately 2.67 crore newborns and 2.9 crore pregnant women annually.
- **Objective:** To protect infants and pregnant women against 12 vaccine preventable diseases.
- **Scope:** The program covers a wide range of vaccines to protect against diseases such as polio, measles, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), hepatitis B, tuberculosis, and more.

Source: TH

## National Cadet Corps (NCC)

**Syllabus: Miscellaneous**

### Context

- NCC celebrated its 75th Anniversary on November 26, 2023.

### About

- **Formation:** The NCC was raised in 1948(recommended by H. N. Kunzru Committee,1946), making it the largest uniformed youth organization in the world.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Defence.
- **Training:** It registers cadets at both high school and college levels, and upon the successful completion of different stages, it confers certificates.
- **Principles:** The NCC focuses on instilling core principles such as discipline, leadership, and patriotism among youth.
- **Diverse Initiatives:** NCC engages in various initiatives, including social development, disaster relief, environmental conservation, and community services.
  - For example: Swachhata Hi Sewa' pan-India cleanliness and awareness drive.

Source: [PIB](#)

## Green leaf volatiles (GLVs)

Syllabus: **GS3/Biotechnology**

### In News

- For the first time, scientists were able to visualise **green leaf volatiles (GLVs) in Plants.**

### What are Green leaf volatiles (GLVs)?

- Green leaf volatiles (GLVs) are a group of **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)** that are released by plants, particularly **in response to mechanical damage or herbivore attack.**
- These compounds play a **significant role in plant signaling and defense mechanisms.**
- **Significance:** Scientists are considering harnessing this process **to fight agricultural pests without having to use pesticides.**

Source: [TH](#)