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By- Nandan Sir

January 2nd Week 2026

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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JANUARY 2ND Week 2026

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas - 18th edition

Syllabus: GS2/IR

Context

- The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated once in two years on 9th January.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

- **Objective** - It is a significant event that honors the contributions of the Indian diaspora to their homeland.
- **Objective** - It symbolises Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915.
- **Organised by** - Ministry of External Affairs. Since 2015, it has evolved into a biennale event.

Indian Diaspora

- The diaspora encompasses a group of people who can either trace their origins to India or who are Indian citizens living abroad, either temporarily or permanently.
- As per the Indian Ministry of External Affairs [2024], the global Indian diaspora numbers approximately 35.42 million, consisting of 15.85 million non-resident Indians (NRIs) and 19.57 million people of Indian origin (PIOs).
- **Top 5 countries where the Indian diaspora resides:** United States of America (USA): 5.4Mn, United Arab Emirates (UAE): 3.6Mn, Malaysia: 2.9Mn, Canada: 2.8Mn and Saudi Arabia: 2.4Mn.
- **India is the origin of the largest number of international migrants in the world, touching nearly 18 million, according to the UN World Migration Report 2024.**

Importance of the Diaspora

- **Remittances:** In 2024, India received an estimated \$129.1 billion worth of remittances, the highest ever for a country in any year.
- **India's share in global remittances was 14.3% in 2025**, the highest such share since the turn of the millennium for any country.
- These contribute significantly to foreign exchange reserves and rural household incomes.
- **Investment & Trade:** NRIs and PIOs invest in Indian real estate, startups, and infrastructure, and act as trade facilitators between India and their countries of residence.
- **Tech & Innovation:** Indian-origin professionals in Silicon Valley, academia, and global corporations contribute to knowledge transfer, mentorship, and innovation linkages.
- **Cultural Ambassadors:** The diaspora promotes Indian languages, yoga, cuisine, Cinema, and festivals globally.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Diaspora communities often influence foreign policy decisions in host countries in favor of India.
- **Citizen Diplomacy:** Diaspora involvement helps India manage relations during bilateral tensions or negative media coverage.
- **Global Recognition:** Their achievements enhance India's image as a land of talent and opportunity.

PANKHUDI Portal

Syllabus: GSI/Women Empowerment



In News

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development launched PANKHUDI Portal.

PANKHUDI Portal

- It is an integrated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and partnership facilitation digital portal.
- Objective - It is aimed at strengthening coordination, transparency, and structured stakeholder participation in initiatives for women and child development.

Features

- It is developed as a single-window digital platform that brings together individuals, Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributors, corporate entities, and government agencies working in the domain of women and child development.
- It supports and strengthens the implementation of the Ministry's flagship missions—Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0, Mission Vatsalya, and Mission Shakti—through a structured and transparent digital mechanism.

Additional Information - Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0

- This is an integrated nutrition support program focused on combating malnutrition

and improving early childhood development.

- Target Beneficiaries: Children (0–6 years), adolescent girls (14–18 years), and pregnant/lactating women.

Mission Vatsalya

- This mission focuses on child protection and the welfare of children in difficult circumstances, aiming to ensure "No Child is Left Behind".
- Objectives: To secure a healthy, happy childhood for every child through better implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act (2015) and POCSO Act (2012).

Mission Shakti

- This umbrella scheme is dedicated to the safety, security, and economic empowerment of women. It is divided into two sub-schemes:

Sambal (Safety and Security):

- One Stop Centres (OSC): Integrated support for victims of violence.
- Women Helpline (181): 24/7 emergency assistance.
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP): Prevention of gender-biased sex selection and promotion of girls' education.
- Nari Adalats: Community-level alternative dispute resolution forums.

Samarthya (Empowerment):

- Shakti Sadan: Rehabilitation homes (merging former Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala schemes).
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY): Maternity benefit scheme.
- Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW): Facilitating access to government services.

Graham-Blumenthal Sanctions Bill

Syllabus: GS2/IR

Context

- U.S. President Donald Trump has given his nod to the **Graham-Blumenthal sanctions bill** that will authorise the US President to levy **up to 500% tariffs on nations** that knowingly purchase Russian oil or uranium.

Graham-Blumenthal Sanctions Bill

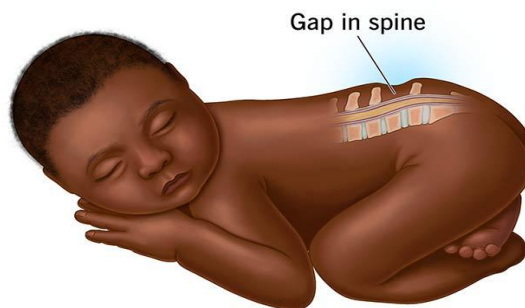
- Objective** - This Bill would give the US tremendous leverage against countries like **China, India, and Brazil** to incentivise them to stop buying the cheap Russian oil.
- In 2018, under similar pressure from the previous Trump administration, India had “zeroed out” its oil imports from Iran and Venezuela as well.
- Tariffs on India:** The United States has imposed high tariffs on Indian goods, up to 50%.
- Part of this tariff is connected to India’s continued purchase of Russian oil.
- India’s Stand:** India says the decision to buy oil from Russia is based on national interest. It wants to ensure energy security and keep fuel prices affordable for its people.

Spina Bifida

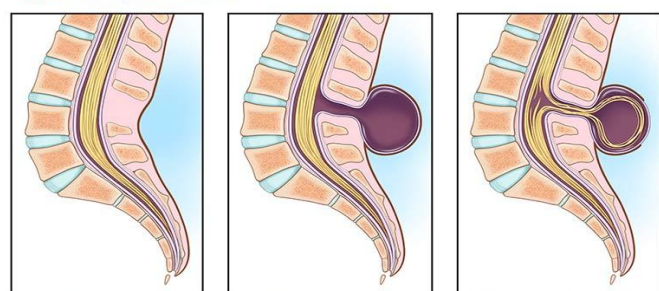
Syllabus: GS2/ Health

Spina bifida

Birth defect where the two sides of a fetus’s spine do not join as they should, leaving a gap.



Types of spina bifida



Occulta

Gap with no opening

Meningocele

Sac of fluid through gap

Myelomeningocele

Sac of fluid with a damaged spinal cord

 Cleveland Clinic ©2023

Context

- Many countries launched national awareness campaigns and programs to prevent spina bifida through folic acid supplementation.

Spina Bifida

- It is a congenital defect of the spinal cord caused by improper closure of the neural tube during early pregnancy.
- The condition results in varying degrees of paralysis, ranging from mild weakness of the feet to complete paralysis of the lower limbs.
- Many affected children also suffer from hydrocephalus, urinary and bowel incontinence, and orthopaedic deformities such as clubfoot.

- **Role of Folic Acid in Prevention:** Periconceptional folic acid intake prevents over 70% of Spina Bifida cases.
- Folic acid is a B-complex vitamin that supports neural tube development in the embryo.

U.S. Withdraw From International Solar Alliance **Syllabus: GS2/International Relations**

Context

- The United States has announced its withdrawal from the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

International Solar Alliance

- **Started** - The ISA, is an Indian initiative that was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris.
- **Solar powered countries** - It is an initiative with 124 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn.
- **Objective** - To collectively address key common challenges to the scaling up of solar energy in ISA member countries.
- **Headquarter** - National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) campus, Gurugram.
- **Members:** Member Countries are countries which have signed and ratified the Framework Agreement of the ISA.
- At present, 120 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement.

Satellite Tagging of Sea Turtles Aims to Aid Conservation

Syllabus: GS3/Species In News

Context

- In a **first-of-its-kind initiative**, Olive Ridley sea turtles nesting on Chennai's coast have been **satellite-tagged** and released as part of a two-year telemetry study (2025–27) to strengthen conservation efforts.

- It will track turtle movements, nesting behaviour, migratory routes, and interactions with fishing activities across key sites.

Olive ridley turtles (Lepidochelys olivacea)

- They are the **smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles in the world.**
- **Distribution** - They get their name from the olive green colour of their heart-shaped shell, and inhabit warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans.
- These are carnivores and feed mainly on jellyfish, shrimp etc.
- These turtles are best known for their **unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where **thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.**
- Major nesting sites in India are **Rushikulya rookery coast (Odisha), Gahirmatha beach (Bhitarkanika National park) and the mouth of the Debi River.**
- **Odisha is the largest mass nesting site for Olive Ridelys in the world.**

Conservation status

- Protection status: IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
- CITES: Appendix I

US President Signs Order Withdrawing US from 66 International Organisations

Syllabus: GS2/ International Relations

In News

- The US has withdrawn from 66 international organizations, including 31 UN entities and 35 non-UN bodies.
- The entities include climate/energy/science forums such as the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, the **International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)**, and the **International Solar Alliance (ISA).**

US Withdrawing

- **Sovereignty Concerns:** Resistance to binding international rules perceived to constrain domestic policy autonomy.
- **Perceived Institutional Bias:** Allegations of politicisation, inefficiency, and bias against US or allied interests.
- **Domestic Political Pressures:** Multilateral commitments viewed as costly with limited direct electoral benefits.
- **Burden-Sharing Argument:** Claim that the US contributes disproportionately to global institutions.
- **Strategic Reorientation:** Preference for bilateral or minilateral arrangements over universal institutions.
- **Strategic Competition:** Desire to limit platforms where rival powers gain influence.

Potential Impacts

- **Climate Change Setback:** Weakens global efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions and provides other countries an excuse to delay climate commitments and finance pledges.
- **Fragmentation of Multilateralism:** Further erodes international governance, intensifies power rivalries, and accelerates a shift towards protectionism and smaller ad-hoc regional blocs.
- **Development & Humanitarian Slowdown:** US funding cuts worsen already declining international development and humanitarian aid, affecting health, education, food security, and SDG progress.
- **Global Peace & Security Risks:** Reduced US support to bodies like the UN Peacebuilding Commission hampers peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, especially in conflict-prone regions such as Africa and the Caribbean.
- **Weakening of Global Norms:** Encourages selective compliance with international law and treaty obligations by other states.

- **Leadership Vacuum:** Creates space for other major powers to shape global rules and institutions.

Doomsday Glacier

Syllabus: GS1/Geography; GS3/Environment



Context

- A new study published in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface explains recent **structural changes in the Thwaites Glacier region and shows how other Antarctic ice shelves may collapse in the future.**

Doomsday Glacier (Thwaites Glacier)

- It is an outflow glacier of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS), flowing into the Amundsen Sea.
- The West Antarctic Ice Sheet is one of the 16 climate tipping elements on the planet.
- It is nicknamed 'Doomsday Glacier' due to its potential to cause major sea-level rise.
- According to the authors of the study, about two-thirds of the detected earthquakes, 245 out of 362, occurred near the marine end of the Thwaites Glacier.
- The complete destruction of the Doomsday Glacier could lead to a global sea level rise of 3 meters.

Additional Information -

Madhav Gadgil**Syllabus: GS3/Environment; Personality in News****Context**

- **Noted ecologist Madhav Gadgil, known for his work on the conservation of Western Ghats, has passed away.**

Major Contributions

- In 2010, the **Ministry of Environment and Forests appointed Madhav Gadgil to chair the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP)**, known as the Gadgil Commission.
- His 2011 report recommended classifying 64% of the 1,40,000 sq km Ghats, spanning six states, as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in three tiers: ESZ-1 (no mining, dams or large projects), ESZ-2 (restricted activities) and ESZ-3 (regulated development).
- It led to debate and discussion on the significance of the Western Ghats as an ecological hotspot and the efforts to conserve them.
- He played a key role in declaring the Nilgiris as India's first biosphere reserve in 1986.
- He later helped shape the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, and Forest Rights Act 2006, introducing the concept of People's Biodiversity Registers to document and protect local ecological knowledge.
- He served on the Prime Minister's Scientific Advisory Council and the National Tiger Authority, successfully bridging academic research with grassroots environmental activism.
- His contributions were widely recognised with major honours, including the Padma Shri (1992), Padma Bhushan (2006), the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement (2015) and the UNEP Champions of the Earth award (2024).
- The annual Champions of the Earth award is the U.N.'s highest environmental honour awarded for his seminal work in the Western Ghats.
- Source: TH

U.S. Takeover of Greenland would Mark End of NATO: Denmark**Syllabus: GS2/Regional Groupings****Context**

- **The Prime Minister of Denmark said that if Trump took over Greenland that would mark an end of the Nato military alliance.**

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- NATO, also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an **intergovernmental military alliance**.
- **Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium**
- **Background:** It was established by 12 countries from Europe and North America with the signing of the **North Atlantic Treaty (also known as Washington Treaty) in 1949 in Washington, D.C** to provide collective security against the Soviet Union attack in the aftermath of World War II.
- **Collective Defense:** According to **Article 5, NATO works on the principle of collective defense**, where an attack on any NATO member is considered an attack on all NATO members, So far, **Article 5 has been invoked once - in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001.**
- **Members:** It comprises **31 member states** – two North American countries (USA and Canada) 28 European countries and one eurasian country (Turkey). **Finland became the 31st member in 2023.**

Global Minimum Tax**Syllabus: GS3/Economy****Context**

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) has finalized an agreement to exempt US-based multinationals from 15% global minimum tax.
- About
- Under the agreement, other countries would be effectively blocked from imposing additional taxes on foreign subsidiaries of US

multinationals to compensate for profits that are under-taxed in other jurisdictions.

- Minimum Tax Rules: The global minimum tax was created to prevent multinational companies from dodging tax bills by locating operations and booking income in low-tax countries.
- Aim: To curb tax avoidance by multinational enterprises (MNEs) shifting profits to low- or no-tax jurisdictions.
- It sets a global minimum effective corporate tax rate of 15%.
- It applies to large MNEs with annual global turnover \geq €750 million.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD)
- The OECD is an intergovernmental organisation that promotes economic development, policy coordination, and global cooperation.
- Motto: “Better Policies for Better Lives.”
- Established in 1961, succeeding the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC).
- Headquarters: Paris, France.
- Membership: 38 member countries (mainly developed economies) and India is not a member.
- Source: TH

OPEC+

Syllabus: GS2/IR

- Context
- OPEC+ has agreed in principle to maintain steady oil output despite rising political tensions among key members and widening geopolitical uncertainty.
- About OPEC
-
- – The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, established in 1960 at the Baghdad Conference by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

- – Currently, it has 12 members, viz. Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.
- – Headquartered in Vienna, Austria (a non-member state), its objective is to co-ordinate and unify petroleum policies among Member Countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers.
- OPEC+ (OPEC Plus)
- OPEC+ has 22 members, made up of 10 major oil producing countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Brunei, Bahrain, Mexico, Oman, South Sudan, Sudan and Malaysia), along with the 12 OPEC members.
- The OPEC+ was formed in 2016 following the adoption of the Algiers Accord by OPEC members and the signing of the Vienna Agreement between OPEC and other major oil-exporting countries.
- The move was largely a response to sharply falling oil prices caused by a surge in U.S. shale oil production.
- Source: AIR

Biohappiness

Syllabus: GS3/Economy/Environment

In News

- **The M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation has begun work on a project on Biohappiness in Keyi Panyor district of Arunachal Pradesh.**

Do you know?

- **Keyi Panyor became Arunachal Pradesh’s 26th district, with its headquarters at Ter Gapin-Sam Sarth, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the Nyishi community.**

BioHappiness

- It is a term coined by late agricultural scientist Dr. M.S. Swaminathan.
- It is a state of well-being and fulfillment achieved by conserving and using biodiversity to improve human health, nutrition, and

livelihoods, fostering harmony between people and nature, as explained in his book In Search of Biohappiness: Biodiversity and Food, Health and Livelihood Security.

- The new Biohappiness Project in Keyi Panyor district of Arunachal Pradesh would look at the livelihoods of the residents, the agrobiodiversity of the district, and other ecological aspects within its boundaries.
- Source :TH

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