



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS-

- 1. Ladakh's Giant 'Rivers of Ice' Are Slowing as the Mountains Warm**
- 2. Vande Mataram Bill Gets President's Assent, Becomes Law**
- 3. Launch Of Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel**
- 4. Declare Cancer A Notifiable Disease: SC To 19 States, U.T.s**

1.Ladakh's Giant 'Rivers of Ice' Are Slowing as the Mountains Warm

Source: The Cryosphere

Why in News?

A study published in The Cryosphere has found that glaciers in Ladakh's Zaskar region have slowed significantly and are thinning rapidly, highlighting a long-term threat to water security in the Indus basin.

Key Findings

- The Zaskar glaciers slowed by an average of 2.4 metres per year per decade between 1992 and 2023.
- The rate of glacier surface thinning increased from 0.22 metres per year during 2000–2005 to 0.57 metres per year during 2015–2020.
- The study links the changes primarily to climate warming, which is causing glaciers to lose mass and altering their movement.

Why Are the Glaciers Slowing?

- A glacier's movement depends partly on the driving stress generated by the weight of its ice.

- As warming causes the glacier to thin, its driving stress decreases, reducing the movement of ice from higher elevations towards lower parts of the glacier.
- The reduced ice transport means that lower sections receive less replenishment, which can further accelerate glacier shrinkage.
- The finding is important because glacier slowdown is not merely a consequence of ice loss; it can also reinforce the process of glacier retreat.



Current Status (2025–2026 Update)

According to reports released by **ICIMOD** (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) in **March 2026**, the rate of ice loss in the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) has **doubled** since the year 2000.

- **Massive Volume Loss:** The region has lost up to **27 metres** of ice thickness since 1975. Between 1990 and 2020 alone, glaciers lost about **12%** of their total area.
- **Regional Variation:**
 - **Eastern & Central Himalayas (Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan):** Melting most rapidly; could lose **75% to 80%** of their ice by 2100 if global warming reaches 3°C–4°C.
 - **Karakoram Range:** Historically stable (the "Karakoram Anomaly"), but now showing signs of minor retreat and fragmentation.
- **Small Glaciers:** Glaciers smaller than **0.5 sq km** are shrinking the fastest and are most vulnerable to complete disappearance.

Emerging Threats: GLOFs

As glaciers retreat, they leave behind depressions that fill with meltwater, dammed by unstable ice or loose debris (**moraine**). These are **Glacial Lakes**, and their sudden breach causes **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)**.

- **Recent Disasters:**
 - **South Lhonak Lake (Sikkim, 2023):** Destroyed the Chungthang Dam and killed dozens.
 - **Thyanbo/Thame GLOF (Nepal, August 2024):** A chain reaction of two small lakes bursting destroyed a village.
 - **Limi Valley GLOF (May 2025):** Triggered destructive floods and landslides in NW Nepal.
- **Monitoring Gap:** An ISRO study in 2024-2025 identified that **676 glacial lakes** in Indian river basins have notably expanded since 1984, with 89% of them growing more than twice their size.

Impact on Water Security

- The Zaskar glaciers act as freshwater reservoirs in an otherwise arid region and support rivers, agriculture and local communities.
- The glaciers receive much of their winter snowfall from mid-latitude westerly disturbances.
- Continued thinning can initially increase meltwater runoff, a phenomenon associated with the concept of peak water.
- Over the longer term, however, declining glacier storage can reduce the amount of water available from glacier melt, creating risks for the Indus basin.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q. With reference to glaciers in the Zaskar region, consider the following statements:

1. Glacier thinning can reduce the driving stress responsible for ice movement.
2. Reduced ice movement can decrease the replenishment of lower glacier sections.
3. Initial glacier melting can temporarily increase downstream runoff before long-term water availability declines.
4. The Zaskar glaciers are important for the water security of the Indus basin.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (d)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. Glacier thinning and changing glacier dynamics in the Himalayan region pose a long-term challenge to water security. Discuss with reference to the Indus basin. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

2.Vande Mataram Bill Gets President's Assent, Becomes Law

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

President Droupadi Murmu has given assent to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, making it law and extending statutory protection under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 to Vande Mataram.

The **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026** is a significant recent legislative development that fills a long-standing legal gap regarding India's national song. On **August 11, 2026**, President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to this bill, officially making it law.

Key Provisions

- The amendment makes intentional disruption of or obstruction to the singing of Vande Mataram a punishable offence.
- The amendment incorporates Vande Mataram into the existing legal framework of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.
- The legislation gives the National Song legal protection comparable to that already provided to the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana.
- The Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on July 29 and by the Lok Sabha on July 30 before receiving Presidential assent.

Core Objective of the 2026 Amendment

The primary purpose of the amendment is to extend the same statutory protection to the **National Song (Vande Mataram)** that was previously reserved only for the **National Anthem (Jana Gana Mana)**.

While the original 1971 Act protected the National Flag, the Constitution, and the National Anthem, the National Song lacked specific penal provisions against its disruption or insult.

Key Changes under the Amended Act

The amendment specifically targets **Section 3** of the original 1971 Act to include the National Song within its ambit.

- **Prohibited Acts:** It is now a criminal offence to:
 1. **Intentionally prevent** the singing of the National Song (*Vande Mataram*).
 2. **Cause disturbance** to any assembly engaged in singing the National Song.
- **Punishment:** The penalties are aligned with those for insulting the National Anthem:
 - **Imprisonment** for a term that may extend to **three years**.
 - Or a **fine**, or **both**.
- **Repeat Offenders:** Under Section 3A, a second or subsequent conviction under these sections carries a mandatory minimum imprisonment of **one year**.

Significance

- Vande Mataram has historical significance as a major rallying cry during India's freedom struggle and was composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.
- The legislation represents an attempt to provide explicit statutory protection to the National Song and reinforce respect for national symbols through penal provisions.

Concerns

- Critics have questioned the practical implementation of the provision, particularly at official events where the duration of Vande Mataram is considerably longer than that of Jana Gana Mana.
- The debate also raises a broader question about the extent to which respect for national symbols should be enforced through criminal law.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q. With reference to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It extends statutory protection under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 to Vande Mataram.
2. It criminalises intentional disruption or prevention of the singing of Vande Mataram.
3. It replaces the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the constitutional and legal dimensions of protecting national symbols through penal legislation, with reference to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

3.Launch Of Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel

Source: PIB

Why in News?

GRSE Kolkata launches 'Shruti', a Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel, for Indian Navy, strengthening maritime security and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

Key Highlights:

- **Yard 3037 (Shruti)**, a **Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV)**, was launched at **GRSE**, Kolkata.
- The launch took place on 11 August 2026, in the presence of Vice Admiral Sanjay Sadhu, Controller of Warship Production & Acquisition.
- These **NGOPVs** are being built concurrently at **GSL**, Goa, and **GRSE**, Kolkata.
- The vessels are designed for multi-domain operations, including maritime surveillance, search and rescue, and anti-piracy missions.
- This launch marks a significant milestone in indigenous shipbuilding, aligning with **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and **Make in India** initiatives.

Detailed Insights:

- The **NGOPVs** will augment the existing fleet of **Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs)** for enhanced maritime security capabilities.
- Their operational roles also include protection of offshore assets and **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**.
- The ship **Shruti** is named after India's rich heritage, specifically referring to the four Vedas.
- The vessel's crest design depicts the constellation of Ursa Major and a distinctive red & white lighthouse.

- The indigenous design and construction underscore the government's commitment to self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

4.Declare Cancer A Notifiable Disease: SC To 19 States, U.T.s

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Supreme Court directs 19 States/UTs to declare cancer a notifiable disease for early detection and patient care, questioning Centre's lack of uniform guidelines.

Key Highlights:

- The Supreme Court has directed 19 States and Union Territories to declare cancer a "**notifiable disease**" to ensure early detection and proper patient care.
- A Bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant issued the order after noting that 17 of the 36 States and UTs had already notified cancer.
- The directive aligns with recommendations from a **Parliamentary Standing Committee** report on cancer care.
- The Court questioned the Central government on the lack of uniform mandatory guidelines for all States and UTs.
- The ruling stemmed from a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** filed by Dr. Anurag Srivastava.

Detailed Insights:

- The Supreme Court's order was passed on August 11, 2026, emphasizing the need for a uniform policy across the country.
- The **PIL** highlighted that the absence of mandatory reporting leads to fragmented data, poor surveillance, and "policy paralysis" in addressing India's cancer burden.

- The petition also advocated for a unified, real-time digital cancer registry, drawing parallels with the **CoWIN** platform used during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- While health is primarily a State subject, both the Centre and States possess concurrent authority to notify diseases.
- The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare**, in its 139th Report titled "Cancer Care Plan and Management: Prevention, Diagnosis, Research & Affordability of Cancer Treatment," had recommended classifying cancer as a notifiable disease.
- The committee observed that the lack of mandatory notification contributed to under-reporting of cancer deaths and hindered accurate data collection.
- Declaring cancer a notifiable disease is expected to facilitate the creation of a robust database, aid in analyzing risk factors, support the implementation of screening programs, and optimize resource allocation for cancer care.
- The **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS)** already stresses early diagnosis and reporting, but its implementation has been inconsistent across states.

