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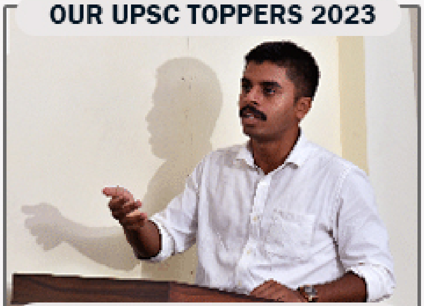
OUR UPSC TOPPERS 2023



IPS LAXMAN PRATAP
RANK - 597
FORMER ASST. COMMANDANT IN BSF
CITY COLLEGE KOLKATA

OUR UPSC TOPPERS 2024

IRS SARLA JAKHER
AIR 593
CITY COLLEGE KOLKATA

IRS TANMAY
AIR 346
IIT KHARAGPUR

- DAILY CURATED NEWS
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Daily Current Affairs

1. DAANVEER Initiative
2. Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026
3. Nepal's Tiger Population Census 2026
4. Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026
5. Trial in Absentia under Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023

1.DAANVEER Initiative

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** has launched the **DAANVEER Initiative**, a citizen participation platform to strengthen the **digital infrastructure of Gram Panchayats** through voluntary contributions from individuals and organizations.

Key Highlights

Aspect	Details
Initiative	DAANVEER
Launched by	Ministry of Panchayati Raj
Developed with	National Informatics Centre (NIC) & DigiHaat
Platform	Meri Panchayat App integrated with DigiHaat
Objective	Bridge digital infrastructure gaps in Gram Panchayats

Objectives

- Equip Gram Panchayats with essential digital infrastructure.
- Institutionalize citizen participation in strengthening local governance.
- Improve transparency, accountability and efficiency in Panchayat administration.
- Support digitally enabled service delivery under the **Viksit Bharat** vision.

Key Features

- End-to-end **digital, transparent and verifiable** donation platform.
- Citizens, institutions and the Indian diaspora can contribute **standardized computer bundles**.
- Integration of **Meri Panchayat** mobile application with the **DigiHaat** marketplace.
- Real-time tracking of contributions and their utilization.

- Computer bundles are **quality-verified** and mapped to State-specific technical requirements.

Digital Governance Ecosystem

The initiative complements existing Panchayati Raj digital platforms such as:

- **e-GramSwaraj** – Planning, budgeting and accounting of Panchayats.
- **AuditOnline** – Online audit of Panchayat accounts.
- **Gram Manchitra** – GIS-based planning and asset mapping.

Significance

- Bridges the digital divide at the grassroots level.
- Enhances transparency and accountability in Panchayat functioning.
- Enables faster delivery of citizen-centric services.
- Strengthens participatory governance through citizen and community involvement.
- Accelerates digital transformation of local self-government institutions.

UPSC Value Addition

- **Gram Panchayat:** Basic unit of **Rural Local Self-Government** established under the **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 (Part IX of the Constitution)**.
- **DigiHaat:** Digital marketplace developed to facilitate transparent procurement and digital transactions for rural institutions.

UPSC Prelims MCQ

Q. With reference to the DAANVEER Initiative, consider the following statements:

1. It is a citizen participation platform launched by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
2. It enables voluntary contributions to strengthen the digital infrastructure of Gram Panchayats.
3. The initiative integrates the Meri Panchayat mobile application with DigiHaat for transparent tracking of contributions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

UPSC Mains Question (10 Marks)

Discuss the significance of the DAANVEER Initiative in strengthening digital governance and citizen participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

2.Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026

Why in News?

The **Rajya Sabha** has passed the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, which seeks to extend statutory protection to **Vande Mataram (National Song)** by criminalising intentional obstruction or disrespect during its singing.

Key Highlights

Aspect	Details
Bill	Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026
Amends	Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971
Objective	Extend legal protection to **Vande Mataram**
Status	Passed by Rajya Sabha; pending consideration in Lok Sabha
Key Provision	Penalises intentional obstruction or disturbance during the singing of **Vande Mataram**

Background

- The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 currently protects:
  - National Flag.
  - Constitution of India.
  - National Anthem (*Jana Gana Mana*).
- The amendment seeks to provide similar statutory protection to the National Song (Vande Mataram).

About Vande Mataram

- Written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1875.

- Originally appeared in the novel Anandamath (1882).
- The first two stanzas were adopted as the National Song in 1937.
- The amendment coincides with the 150th anniversary of *Vande Mataram*.

Key Provisions of the Amendment

- Criminalises **intentional obstruction or disturbance** during the singing of **Vande Mataram**.
- Extends penal provisions similar to those applicable to the National Anthem.
- Retains the requirement that the act must be **intentional** to constitute an offence.

Significance

- Provides statutory recognition and protection to the National Song.
- Reinforces respect for national symbols and constitutional values.
- Promotes national unity and cultural heritage.
- Brings the National Song under a legal framework similar to other national symbols.

UPSC Prelims MCQ

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

1. It seeks to extend statutory protection to **Vande Mataram**.
2. It proposes to amend the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**.
3. The Bill has already become law after receiving the President's assent.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (a)

UPSC Mains Question (10 Marks)

Discuss the key provisions of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026. Examine the need to balance respect for national symbols with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech and expression.

3.Nepal's Tiger Population Census 2026

Why in News?

Nepal's latest tiger census has estimated **429 wild tigers**, marking an **approximately 20% increase** over the 2022 count and reaffirming the country's success in tiger conservation under the **Tx2 Global Tiger Recovery Programme**.

Key Highlights

Aspect	Details
Latest Tiger Population	**429**
Increase Since 2022	~20% (from 355 to 429)
Census Method	Camera trap-based nationwide survey
Conservation Landscape	Terai Arc Landscape (TAL)
Lead Agency	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Nepal)

Key Findings

- Tiger population increased from **355 (2022)** to **429 (2026)**.
- Nepal has more than **tripled** its tiger population since **2009 (121 tigers)**.
- Census was conducted across protected areas in the **Terai Arc Landscape (TAL)**.
- Conservation gains have been accompanied by increasing **human-tiger conflicts** in buffer areas.

Challenges

- Rising **human-wildlife conflict**, particularly in buffer zones.
- Livestock depredation and occasional human fatalities.
- Need to maintain wildlife corridors amid habitat fragmentation.
- Balancing conservation with local livelihood needs.

Significance

- Demonstrates the effectiveness of landscape-level conservation.
- Strengthens transboundary conservation between **India and Nepal**.
- Contributes significantly to global tiger conservation efforts.
- Provides a model for integrating community participation with wildlife protection.

UPSC Value Addition

- **Tx2 Goal:** Global commitment adopted at the **2010 St. Petersburg Tiger Summit** by **13 Tiger Range Countries** to **double the global wild tiger population by 2022**.
- **Terai Arc Landscape (TAL):** A transboundary conservation landscape spanning **India and Nepal**, connecting **16 protected areas** and facilitating movement of tigers, elephants and other wildlife.

UPSC Prelims MCQ

Q. With reference to Nepal's tiger conservation efforts, consider the following statements:

1. Nepal has achieved the global **Tx2** target by more than tripling its tiger population since 2009.
2. The latest tiger census was conducted using **camera traps**.
3. The **Terai Arc Landscape** is a transboundary conservation landscape shared by India and Nepal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

UPSC Mains Question (10 Marks)

Nepal's success in tiger conservation highlights the importance of landscape-level conservation and community participation. Discuss the lessons India can draw for balancing wildlife conservation with human-wildlife coexistence.

4.Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026

Why in News?

The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026** is listed for consideration during the **Monsoon Session of Parliament**. The Bill proposes significant changes to the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA)**, particularly regarding the management of assets created through foreign contributions.

Key Highlights

Aspect	Details
Bill	Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026
Amends	Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
Key Provision	Vesting of foreign-funded assets in a designated authority upon cancellation or surrender of FCRA registration
Status	Listed for consideration in Parliament

Major Provisions

- If an NGO's **FCRA registration is cancelled**, foreign contributions and assets created wholly or partly from such funds will **provisionally vest** in a designated authority.
- If registration is not restored or renewed, the authority may **transfer or dispose of the assets**, with proceeds credited to the **Consolidated Fund of India**.
- Similar vesting provisions apply where an organization **voluntarily surrenders** its FCRA registration.
- Retains **"public interest"** as a ground for cancellation of registration.
- Empowers the Central Government to **exempt specified organizations** from the provisions of the Act.

Concerns Raised

- Broad grounds such as **"public interest"** may allow discretionary cancellation of registrations.
- Asset vesting provisions may adversely affect the functioning and autonomy of civil society organizations.
- Exemption powers may raise concerns regarding **equality before law (Article 14)**.
- May discourage foreign-funded activities in education, health, environment and charitable sectors.

Key Provisions and Latest Updates (2020–2026)

1. The "FCRA 2.0" Rules (June 2022 & June 2026)

The Ministry of Home Affairs notified the **FCRA Amendment Rules 2026** on June 22, 2026, introducing highly specific compliance norms:

- **Activity-Specific Registration:** NGOs can no longer register under broad labels like "social." They must select from **105 approved activities**. Existing NGOs have until **June 21, 2027**, to transition.
- **Exclusion of Proselytisation:** While religious activities (worship, community kitchens) are allowed, the new rules explicitly bar foreign funds from being used for **proselytisation** (religious conversion).
- **Active Status Rule:** To renew a license, an NGO must now prove it has spent at least **₹10 lakh** on core activities over the previous two financial years.
- **Relativism Limit:** The 2022 rules raised the limit for receiving money from relatives abroad to **₹10 lakh per year** (up from ₹1 lakh) without prior notification to the government.

2. The FCRA Amendment Bill 2026

This Bill, introduced in March 2026, addresses what happens to assets after an NGO's license is cancelled:

- **Designated Authority:** A new body will be empowered to **seize, manage, and dispose of assets** (property, equipment, funds) created using foreign contributions if a license is revoked or surrendered.
- **Asset Vesting:** Assets would provisionally vest in this authority and could be permanently liquidated for "public purposes" if registration is not restored.

3. Structural Constraints (The 2020 Pivot)

- **Centralised Banking:** All foreign funds must be received in a designated **"FCRA Account"** at the **SBI, New Delhi Main Branch**.
- **Ban on Sub-granting:** NGOs cannot transfer foreign funds to other NGOs, even if the recipient is also FCRA-registered.
- **Administrative Cap:** Spending on administrative costs (salaries, rent) is capped at **20%** of the total foreign funds (down from 50%).

UPSC Prelims MCQ

Q. With reference to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It proposes vesting of assets created from foreign contributions in a designated authority upon cancellation or surrender of FCRA registration.
2. The Bill seeks to amend the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010**.
3. The Act is administered by the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

UPSC Mains Question (10 Marks)

Examine the key provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026. Discuss its implications for transparency, national security and the functioning of civil society organisations in India.

5.Trial in Absentia under Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023

Why in News?

A Delhi court has commenced **India's first trial in absentia** against absconding gangster **Kapil Sangwan** under **Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023**, marking the first use of this provision since the new criminal laws came into force.

Key Highlights

Aspect	**Details**
Provision	Section 356, BNSS, 2023
First Case	Trial against absconding gangster Kapil Sangwan
Applicable To	Proclaimed offenders absconding to evade trial
Objective	Prevent delay of justice due to absconding accused
Previous Law	No provision for full-fledged trial in absentia under CrPC, 1973

Conditions for Trial in Absentia

A court may conduct a trial in absentia when:

- The accused has been declared a **Proclaimed Offender (PO)**.
- The accused has **absconded to evade trial**.
- There is **no immediate prospect of arrest**.

- The court is satisfied that all reasonable efforts have been made to secure the accused's presence.

Procedural Safeguards

- Issuance of at least **two Non-Bailable Warrants (NBWs)** with a minimum **one-month interval**.
- Publication of notice in a **national newspaper**.
- Notice served to the accused's **family or relatives**, wherever possible.
- Provision of **legal aid counsel** to represent the accused.
- Conviction in absentia has the **same legal effect** as a regular conviction.

Significance

- Prevents absconding accused from frustrating the judicial process.
- Strengthens the **speedy trial** objective under the new criminal justice framework.
- Deters organized crime, terrorism and economic offenders who flee abroad.
- Improves efficiency in disposal of long-pending criminal cases.

UPSC Value Addition

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023

- Replaced the **Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973** with effect from **1 July 2024**.
- Contains **531 Sections** (CrPC had 484).
- Key reforms include:
  - **Trial in absentia** for proclaimed offenders.
  - **e-FIR** and **Zero FIR**.
  - Mandatory **forensic investigation** for offences punishable with **7 years or more**.
  - **Audio-video recording** of search, seizure and investigation.
  - Time-bound investigation and trial.

UPSC Prelims MCQ

Q. With reference to the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, consider the following statements:

1. It permits trial in absentia of a proclaimed offender who has absconded to evade trial.
2. The accused must be declared a proclaimed offender before such a trial can commence.
3. A conviction in absentia has the same legal force as a conviction after the accused's physical presence in court.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) **1, 2 and 3**

Answer: (d)

UPSC Mains Question (10 Marks)

The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 introduces 'trial in absentia' as a significant procedural reform. Discuss its objectives, safeguards and implications for the criminal justice system in India.