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— Converting Possibilities into Reality —

KAVISH INFORMIX

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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TODAY'S DATE



31 JULY 2026

---FRIDAY---



Kolkata Topper

VAISHNA BISWAS

AIR - 367 | CSE 2025

★ OUR PROVEN LEGACY ★

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

Converting Possibilities into Reality

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EXAM ORIENTED
ANALYSIS



SMART NOTES &
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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS-

1. SHANTI Framework (Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity)
2. Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026
3. NAKSHA (National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations)
4. Proposal to Appoint a Polar Ambassador & Seek Arctic Council Membership
5. Proposal to Appoint a Polar Ambassador & Seek Arctic Council Membership

1.SHANTI Framework (Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity)

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

External Affairs Minister **Dr. S. Jaishankar** unveiled the **SHANTI (Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity)** framework to strengthen maritime cooperation in the **Bay of Bengal**, coinciding with India's campaign for a **UN Security Council (UNSC) non-permanent seat (2028–29)**.

Key Highlights

Aspect	Details
Initiative	SHANTI (Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity)
Launched by	External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar
Focus Region	Bay of Bengal
Builds Upon	SAGAR and MAHASAGAR
Objective	Promote a rules-based, resilient and cooperative maritime order

Objectives

- Promote a **rules-based maritime order** founded on international norms.
- Enhance **trust and cooperation** among Bay of Bengal littoral countries.
- Strengthen **maritime security**, disaster resilience and regional connectivity.
- Shift maritime governance from **deterrence to resilience** and from **competition to cooperation**.

Key Pillars

- **Norms:** Upholding international law and responsible maritime conduct.
- **Trust:** Building confidence through transparent and demand-driven cooperation.
- **Integrity:** Ensuring responsible governance of maritime commons and emerging technologies.

Significance for the Bay of Bengal

- Strengthens India's **Act East Policy** by enhancing connectivity with ASEAN.
- Supports secure Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) leading to the **Malacca Strait**.
- Addresses non-traditional security threats such as:
 - Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
 - Climate-induced disasters.
 - Maritime pollution.
 - Supply chain disruptions.
- Encourages coordinated **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** and maritime law enforcement.

Recent Developments

- **BIMSTEC National Security Advisers' Meeting (2026)** adopted common principles for:
 - Maritime law enforcement.
 - Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).
- BIMSTEC also agreed to conduct its **first Joint Maritime Security Exercise** in the **Bay of Bengal**.

UPSC Value Addition

- **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region):** India's maritime vision announced in **2015** for ensuring collective security and sustainable development in the Indian Ocean Region.
- **MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions):** Expanded maritime cooperation framework emphasizing inclusive regional growth and security.
- **BIMSTEC:** Regional organization comprising **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand**, promoting cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region.

UPSC Prelims MCQ

Q. With reference to the SHANTI framework, consider the following statements:

1. SHANTI stands for **Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity**.
2. It seeks to strengthen maritime cooperation in the **Bay of Bengal**.
3. The framework builds upon India's **SAGAR** and **MAHASAGAR** initiatives.

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 SHANTI framework in strengthening maritime governance in the Bay of Bengal. How does it complement India's broader Indo-Pacific and neighbourhood maritime strategy?

2.Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026

[Source: The Hindu](#)

Why in News?

Parliament has passed the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, extending statutory protection to **Vande Mataram (National Song)** by making its intentional insult or obstruction during singing a punishable offence.

Key Highlights

Aspect	Details
Legislation	Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026*
Amends	Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971
Status	Passed by both Houses of Parliament
Key Provision	Extends legal protection to Vande Mataram

Amendment	Section 3 of the 1971 Act amended
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Key Provisions

- Makes **intentional obstruction or disturbance** during the singing of **Vande Mataram** a punishable offence.
- Extends the **same legal protection** available to the **National Anthem (Jana Gana Mana)** to the **National Song**.
- Punishment:
 - Up to **3 years' imprisonment**, or
 - Fine, or
 - Both.
- Repeat offenders are liable to a **minimum imprisonment of one year**.

Background

The **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** was enacted to provide a legal backbone to the **Fundamental Duty** (Article 51A) of respecting the National Flag, Anthem, and Constitution. While the Flag Code of India provides guidelines, this Act provides the actual **penal consequences** for disrespect.

Key Provisions

- **Section 2 (Insults to Flag and Constitution):** It prohibits burning, mutilating, defacing, defiling, destroying, or trampling upon the **Indian National Flag** or the **Constitution of India** in any public place or within public view.
- **Section 3 (National Anthem):** It penalizes anyone who intentionally prevents the singing of the **National Anthem** or causes disturbance to any assembly engaged in such singing.
- **Section 3A (Enhanced Penalty):** If a person is convicted for a second or subsequent time under Section 2 or 3, they face a mandatory minimum imprisonment of **one year**.

★ Key Fact

The Act prescribes a maximum punishment of 3 years imprisonment, or fine, or both for first-time offenders.

Important Legal Nuances

1. **Freedom of Speech vs. Disrespect:** Explanation 1 of the Act clarifies that lawful criticism or a desire to amend the Constitution or alter the Flag through legal means does **not** constitute an offence.

2. **National Song (Vande Mataram):** Until recently, the Act did not cover the National Song. However, the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026** was passed (Rajya Sabha on July 29, 2026, and Lok Sabha on July 30, 2026) to extend these protections to **Vande Mataram**, placing it on par with the National Anthem regarding criminal penalties for obstruction or disturbance.
3. **Flag Code of India (2002) Linkage:** While the 1971 Act is the law, the Flag Code (amended in 2021 and 2022) governs the display. For instance, the 2022 amendment now allows the flag to be flown **day and night** if displayed in the open or on a house.

Recent Status (As of July 31, 2026)

- The legislative landscape has just shifted significantly with the **2026 Amendment**, which specifically criminalizes the intentional prevention of singing or causing disturbance to the **National Song (Vande Mataram)**. This marks a major change from the original 1971 framework that focused strictly on the Anthem, Flag, and Constitution.
- This evolution reflects the judiciary's and parliament's ongoing effort to balance individual liberties with the "constitutional morality" required toward national symbols. To deepen your preparation, you might want to look into the **Fundamental Duties (Article 51A)** and how they differ from Fundamental Rights in terms of enforceability.

UPSC Prelims MCQ

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

1. It extends statutory protection to **Vande Mataram** by amending the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**.
2. It amends **Section 3** of the 1971 Act.
3. The Act provides the same punishment for intentional insult to the National Song as for the National Anthem.

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 key provisions of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026. Examine its significance in protecting national symbols while balancing constitutional freedom

3.NAKSHA (National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations)

Source: PIB

Why in News?

The **NAKSHA** pilot has been launched in **Margao, Panaji and Cuncolim (Goa)** to create accurate digital urban land maps, while assuring citizens that the exercise **will not alter land ownership, acquire land or increase property taxes.**

Key Highlights

Aspect	Details
Initiative	NAKSHA (National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations)
Launched	2025 (Pilot under DILRMP)
Nodal Ministry	Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development
Funding	100% Centrally Funded
Technical Partner	Survey of India (SoI)
Goa Pilot	Margao, Panaji & Cuncolim

Objectives and scope

- **Scale of Pilot:** The initiative covers **152 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** across 26 states and 3 Union Territories. It focuses on towns with an area of less than **35 sq km** and a population of less than **2 lakhs**.
- **Modernization:** Shifting from outdated, manual, paper-based records to a real-time, technology-driven digital ecosystem.

- **Conflict Resolution:** Aiming to reduce the approximately **66% of civil cases** in India that are land/property-related by providing transparent, tamper-proof records.
- **Scaling Up:** After the one-year pilot, the government plans to scale the initiative to cover all **4,912 ULBs** in the country over the next five years

Technological Framework

The program uses a "Three-Stage Survey Process" to ensure the highest level of accuracy:

1. **Aerial Survey (Drone-Based):** High-resolution drones (5 cm resolution) and LiDAR sensors are used to create 2D and 3D digital maps.
2. **Field Verification (Ground-Truthing):** Joint teams of survey, revenue, and municipality officials verify the digital maps against actual ground conditions.
3. **Public Review & Finalization:** Draft land ownership details are published for public scrutiny, allowing owners to raise objections and ensure their legal rights are protected before finalization.

★ Key Fact

Survey of India (Sol) is the primary technical partner for conducting these aerial surveys.

Key Features

- Uses **GIS, drone surveys, LiDAR and satellite-based mapping** for accurate land parcel mapping.
- Multi-stage verification involving **survey, revenue and municipal authorities**.
- Public verification of draft records before finalization.
- Existing **ownership rights, title records and legal disputes remain unaffected**.
- Property owners can verify records through a formal inquiry process.

UPSC Prelims MCQ

Q. With reference to the NAKSHA initiative, consider the following statements:

1. It is a GIS-based urban land parcel mapping initiative under the **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)**.
2. It is implemented by the **Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development**.

3. The initiative is intended to alter existing land ownership records and facilitate land acquisition.

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 significance of the NAKSHA initiative in modernizing urban land governance in India. How can geospatial technologies improve transparency, reduce land disputes and support sustainable urban planning?

4. Proposal to Appoint a Polar Ambassador & Seek Arctic Council Membership

Source: Indian Express

Why in News?

A **Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs** has recommended that India appoint a **Polar Ambassador** and actively pursue **full membership in the Arctic Council** to strengthen its polar diplomacy, scientific research and strategic engagement.

Key Highlights

Aspect	Details
Recommendation	Appoint a dedicated Polar Ambassador
India's Status	Observer in Arctic Council (since 2013)
Objective	Strengthen Arctic diplomacy, scientific research and strategic engagement
Additional Recommendation	Enhance collaboration with Russian Arctic research stations

Why are these Recommendations Important?

- **Observer status** limits India's role in Arctic Council decision-making.

- A **Polar Ambassador** would provide dedicated diplomatic coordination on **Arctic and Antarctic affairs**.
- Strengthens India's implementation of the **Arctic Policy (2022)**.
- Facilitates greater international cooperation in climate research and polar governance.

Why is the Arctic Important for India?

The Arctic Council is the preeminent high-level intergovernmental forum for the Arctic region. Established in **1996** through the **Ottawa Declaration**, it focuses on environmental protection and sustainable development while explicitly excluding matters of military security.

★ Key Fact

The Arctic Council was established by the Ottawa Declaration (1996) and its secretariat is located in Tromsø, Norway.

1. Membership & Governance Structure

The Council is unique because it integrates sovereign states with indigenous organizations on an almost equal footing in discussions, though decision-making power remains with the states.

- **Member States (8)**: Only countries with territory in the Arctic are members: Canada, Kingdom of Denmark (including Greenland & Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States.
- **Permanent Participants (6)**: These are organizations representing **Arctic Indigenous Peoples**. They have full consultation rights during negotiations and decisions.
- **Observers (38+)**: This category includes non-Arctic states (like **India**, China, and Japan), intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs. Observers can attend meetings and contribute to working groups but have **no voting rights**.

2. Operational Framework

The Council does not have a fixed budget; projects are funded by member states. Its work is primarily carried out through **six Working Groups** focusing on areas like biodiversity (CAFF), emergency response (EPPR), and monitoring pollutants (AMAP).

- **Chairmanship**: Rotates every two years. As of July 2026, the **Kingdom of Denmark** (2025–2027) holds the Chairship, having taken over from Norway.
- **Decision-making**: All decisions require **consensus** among the eight member states.
- **Current Status (2026)**: Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, high-level political cooperation was paused. However, by early 2026, the Council has seen a gradual resumption of technical and working-level activities under a "soft-restart" to address urgent climate and scientific issues.

3. India and the Arctic Council

India's involvement is driven by the "**Third Pole**" connection—the scientific link between Arctic ice melt and the Indian Monsoon.

- **Status:** India has been an **Observer** since 2013 (renewed in 2019).
- **Infrastructure:** India operates the **Himadri** research station (Svalbard, Norway) and the **IndARC** multi-sensor moored observatory.
- **Recent Development (July 2026):** The Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs recently recommended that India should seek "**full-fledged membership**" to have a greater say in decision-making and appoint a dedicated "**Polar Ambassador**" to manage Arctic diplomacy.

Significance

- Strengthens India's role in global polar governance.
- Enhances climate science and environmental monitoring.
- Supports India's strategic and economic interests in emerging Arctic sea routes.
- Reinforces India's image as a responsible stakeholder in global commons.

UPSC Prelims MCQ

Q. With reference to India's engagement in the Arctic, consider the following statements:

1. India has held **Observer Status** in the Arctic Council since **2013**.
2. **Himadri** is India's permanent research station located in **Svalbard, Norway**.
3. The Arctic Council deals with environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic region.

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 strategic importance of the Arctic for India. Examine how greater engagement with Arctic governance can advance India's climate, scientific and geopolitical interests.

5. Proposal to Appoint a Polar Ambassador & Seek Arctic Council Membership

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

CERC's controversial market coupling plan for power exchanges threatens India's renewable energy growth by centralizing control, hindering innovation and efficient grid integration.

Key Highlights:

- India's solar capacity expanded to **162 GW** by June 2026, driven by falling module prices and government policy.
- Over two billion units of solar electricity were curtailed between May and December last year due to grid absorption issues.
- The **Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)** proposed making **Grid-India** the sole **Market Coupling Operator (MCO)** for power exchanges.
- **Grid-India**, a government utility, is primarily designed for managing transmission systems, not commercial market decisions.
- The proposal aims to create a uniform national price by pooling bids from exchanges like **IEX**, **PXIL**, and **HPX**.

Detailed Insights:

- The rapid growth in renewable energy necessitates flexible market products, transmission investments, battery storage, and flexible power plants.
- A robust electricity market is crucial to manage surplus generation in one region and shortages in another, using price signals.
- CERC's** proposal, made in July 2025 and January 2026, suggests a centralized clearing algorithm under **Grid-India**.
- The stated rationale for the **MCO** is market fragmentation, but **IEX** already handles 80-85% of trading volumes.
- CERC's** own shadow pilot indicated a minimal welfare improvement of only 0.3% over four months from market coupling.
- There are no documented allegations of excessive fees or predatory pricing against **IEX**, questioning the problem **CERC** is addressing.
- CERC** previously ordered the discontinuation of user-defined hourly contracts in the **Term-Ahead Market (TAM)**, hindering market innovation.
- Grid-India** itself, in a June 8 submission, urged **CERC** to reconsider and suggested a round-robin system for the **MCO** role.
- Centralizing the clearing algorithm under a public utility could slow down market innovation and product development.
- The renewable sector requires a market architecture that rewards flexible capacity and enables competitive markets for services like frequency regulation.

