



KAVISH IAS

— Converting Possibilities into Reality —

KAVISH INFORMIX

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

🎯 PRECISE | 🧠 RELEVANT | ⌚ EXAM FOCUSED

STAY AHEAD. STAY INFORMED. STAY READY.

TODAY'S DATE



18 SEPTEMBER 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



YOUR
DREAMS.

OUR
MISSION.

TOGETHER,
WE ACHIEVE
THE EXTRA
ORDINARY.

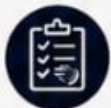


Converting Possibilities into Reality

PRELIMS MAINS | INTERVIEW



DAILY CURATED
NEWS



EXAM ORIENTED
ANALYSIS



SMART NOTES &
INFOGRAPHICS



BOOST YOUR
PREPARATION

“INFORMED TODAY, EMPOWERED TOMORROW.”

📞 8789245158 | 9875489158 📍 36A, Shakespeare Sarani, Kol -17

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. U.S. Russia Sanctions Bill and India
2. Stem Cell Therapy for Autism Spectrum Disorder
3. Soil Carbon Payments
4. Leopardus tilcayo
5. AI Governance: From Voluntary Restraint to Enforceable Accountability

1.U.S. Russia Sanctions Bill and India

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation authorising tariffs of up to **100% on countries purchasing Russian oil and gas**, potentially affecting India. The legislation targets Russia's energy sector and its "shadow fleet" of tankers and awaits the U.S. President's signature.

Key Highlights

- The legislation is an amendment to the **Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026**.
- It authorises tariffs of up to **100%** on countries purchasing Russian-origin crude oil or natural gas.
- The potential target countries include the **five largest importers of Russian-origin crude oil or natural gas**.
- Countries facilitating **sanctions evasion** related to Russian oil can also be subjected to the tariffs.
- The **U.S. President has the authority to waive the sanctions** in the national interest.
- The legislation specifically targets Russia's **energy sector** and its "**shadow fleet**" of tankers.

India's Position and Implications

- India's imports of Russian oil reached an **11-month high in April 2026**, despite a decline in December 2025.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs reiterated its commitment to:
 - Ensuring **energy security through diversified sourcing**.
 - Protecting India's **trade and economic interests**.
- Possible U.S. tariffs could create challenges for India's:

- Energy-import strategy.
- Trade with the United States.
- Export competitiveness in the U.S. market.
- The issue reflects the challenge of balancing **energy security, economic interests and strategic autonomy** amid geopolitical tensions.



Legislation and Exemptions

- The legislation had already passed the **U.S. Senate on August 7, 2026**, by an **86–11 vote**.
- Some U.S. lawmakers raised concerns regarding the **sweeping powers provided to the President**.
- Exemptions are provided for countries:
 - Significantly reducing Russian natural-gas imports.
 - Whose imports constitute less than **15% of Russia's total gas exports**.
- The U.S. Treasury had earlier paused sanctions concerning oil shipments already in transit before **March 11, 2026**, amid supply disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict.

The CAATSA Framework

Enacted in **August 2017**, CAATSA is a United States federal law designed to punish countries that engage in "significant transactions" with America's adversaries: **Russia, Iran, and North Korea**.

The act focuses on three primary objectives:

- **Countering Russia:** Specifically for its alleged interference in the 2016 US elections and military interventions in Ukraine and Syria.
- **Restricting Iran:** Targeting its ballistic missile program and support for terrorism.
- **Pressure on North Korea:** Aimed at curbing its nuclear weapons and forced labor practices.

Impact on India-Russia Relations

India's long-standing defense relationship with Russia makes it vulnerable to CAATSA, particularly regarding the **S-400 Triumf** missile defense system deal signed in 2018 for \$5.43 billion.

- **Payment Challenges:** Sanctions on the Russian financial sector (like the prohibition of banking transactions) make it difficult for India to settle payments in US Dollars.
- **Dependency on Spares:** A significant portion of India's current military hardware is of Russian origin; strict implementation could freeze the flow of essential spare parts and maintenance support.
- **The S-400 Factor:** Since the manufacturer of the S-400 (Almaz-Antey) is on the US restricted list, the deal serves as the primary trigger for potential sanctions.

UPSC Prelims Practice

Consider the following statements regarding the U.S. legislation targeting Russian energy trade:

1. It authorises tariffs on countries purchasing Russian-origin oil or natural gas.
2. Countries facilitating sanctions evasion can also come within its scope.
3. The U.S. President has the authority to waive the sanctions in the national interest.
4. The legislation completely prohibits all imports of Russian energy by third countries.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1, 2 and 3 only

Explanation: The legislation authorises tariffs against countries purchasing Russian-origin oil or gas and those facilitating sanctions evasion. It also provides presidential waiver powers. It does not completely prohibit all Russian energy imports by third countries.

UPSC Mains Practice

“India’s energy security and strategic autonomy face new challenges amid the increasing use of sanctions and tariffs as instruments of international economic policy.” Discuss. (150 words)

2. Stem Cell Therapy for Autism Spectrum Disorder

2. Stem Cell Therapy for Autism Spectrum Disorder

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

The Union Health Ministry issued an advisory on **September 16, 2026**, restricting the use of stem cell therapy for **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** to duly approved clinical trials, citing insufficient scientific evidence for its use as standard treatment.

Key Highlights

- The advisory follows the **Supreme Court judgment of January 30, 2026**, in *Yash Charitable Trust & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors.*
- Stem cell therapy may be provided as standard clinical care only for **disease conditions and indications specifically approved by the Ministry**.
- The advisory seeks to curb the **unproven and commercial use** of stem cell interventions for ASD.
- An **ICMR review** found that available evidence does not establish stem cell therapy as superior to behavioural and supportive therapies for ASD.
- The Supreme Court held that administering stem cell therapy for ASD **outside approved clinical trials** is unethical and constitutes medical malpractice.

Regulatory Framework

- Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010: Provides a regulatory framework for clinical establishments in States/UTs that have adopted the Act.
- National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research, 2017: Jointly issued by ICMR and Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

- Under the guidelines, most stem cell therapies are considered investigational and must be undertaken within approved clinical trials.
- States and UTs that have adopted the Clinical Establishments Act are required to communicate the advisory to relevant regulatory authorities and clinical establishments.

STEM CELL THERAPY FOR ASD

ALLOWED ONLY IN APPROVED CLINICAL TRIALS



MEMORY ANCHOR

ONLY

APPROVED CLINICAL TRIALS



**MINISTRY OF
HEALTH &
FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

 **ADVISORY ISSUED:
16 SEP 2026**

WHY THIS ADVISORY?	LEGAL & REGULATORY BASIS	NON-COMPLIANCE
 NO PROVEN BENEFIT ICMR review: Evidence does not support stem cell therapy over behavioral & supportive therapies for ASD.  CURB UNPROVEN & COMMERCIAL USE Lack of scientific evidence; risk of exploitation of vulnerable patients.	 SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT (30 JAN 2026) Stem cell therapy for ASD outside approved trials is unethical and medical malpractice.  EXISTING REGULATIONS • Clinical Establishments (Registration & Regulation) Act, 2010 • National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research, 2017  MANDATE States/UTs to circulate directions to regulatory authorities and clinical establishments.	 PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT Action under medical regulations.  PENALTIES UNDER CLINICAL ESTABLISHMENTS ACT Including cancellation of registration.

- Non-compliance may result in:
 - Professional misconduct proceedings under applicable medical regulations.
 - Action under the Clinical Establishments Act, including **cancellation of registration**.

Significance

- The directive emphasises evidence-based medicine and safeguards patients from unproven therapeutic claims.

- It distinguishes between experimental/investigational stem cell interventions and therapies approved for standard clinical care.
- Restricting unapproved interventions is particularly important where commercial treatment claims may outpace established scientific evidence.
- The framework allows stem cell research for ASD to continue through ethically and scientifically approved clinical trials, while preventing its use as an established treatment outside such trials.

UPSC Prelims Practice

Consider the following statements regarding stem cell therapy for Autism Spectrum Disorder:

1. The Union Health Ministry has restricted its use for ASD to duly approved clinical trials.
2. The National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research, 2017, were jointly issued by ICMR and DBT.
3. Most stem cell therapies are classified as investigational under the 2017 guidelines.
4. The Supreme Court held that stem cell therapy for ASD outside approved clinical trials constitutes standard medical care.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1, 2 and 3 only

Explanation: Statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct. The Supreme Court held that administering stem cell therapy for ASD outside approved clinical trials is unethical and constitutes medical malpractice; it did not recognise it as standard medical care.

UPSC Mains Practice

“Regulation of emerging medical technologies requires a balance between scientific innovation, patient safety and ethical standards.” Discuss with reference to stem cell therapy in India. (150 words)

3. Soil Carbon Payments

3. Soil Carbon Payments

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

- India has initiated its first soil carbon payments for more than 2,500 smallholder farmers in Punjab and Haryana.
- The initiative links adoption of regenerative agriculture practices with direct income for farmers and environmental benefits.
- The programme is part of the “Aadi” farmer carbon programme of Grow Indigo, with technical guidance from ICAR.

About / Key Facts

- Farmers receive payments for adopting practices such as:
 - Direct Seeded Rice (DSR).
 - Reduced tillage.
 - Crop residue management.
- The first issuance covered around 30,000 acres and generated more than 50,000 carbon credits.
- Participating farmers received approximately ₹3,000–₹15,000 through the programme.
- The carbon credits were issued for verified greenhouse-gas reductions and increased soil carbon under the Verra VM0042 methodology.
- The programme currently covers more than 2 million acres and 100,000 farmers across seven states.
- ICAR institutions provide technical support through greenhouse-gas accounting, crop-simulation modelling and soil-sampling protocols.
- Environmental benefits include:
 - Increased soil carbon sequestration.
 - Reduced greenhouse-gas emissions.
 - Water conservation.

- Reduction in stubble burning and associated air pollution.
- The initiative is aligned with the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan and ICAR's Lab-to-Land approach through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs).
- Under India's 2026 BRICS chairship, the BRICS Network of Centres of Excellence on Agroecology and Regenerative Agriculture was also established

4. *Leopardus tilcayo*

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

- Researchers have identified a new wild cat species, *Leopardus tilcayo*, in the **Yungas forest of Bolivia**.
- The discovery is significant as it is described as the **first formal naming of a new living cat species in more than a century**.
- Genetic evidence confirmed that the species is distinct from other tiger cats, with findings published in **Current Biology**.

About / Key Facts

- *Leopardus tilcayo* belongs to the tiger cat group found across much of South America.
- It is smaller than an average domestic cat, measuring about 18 inches in length and weighing around 1.4 kg.
- It has light-brown fur with irregularly shaped rosettes across its body.
- Genetic analysis of 38 cat samples from different South American countries identified five genetically distinct tiger-cat species.
- The lineage of *Leopardus tilcayo* is estimated to have separated from other tiger cats about 1.4 million years ago.
- The species inhabits the Yungas forest, a mountainous ecosystem characterised by frequent cloud cover and high humidity.
- It is locally known as Tilcayo.

- Limited available evidence suggests that its diet includes small rodents, while camera-trap observations indicate predominantly **nocturnal activity**.

NEW WILD CAT DISCOVERED

LEOPARDUS TILCAYO

First new living cat species named in over a century



MEMORY ANCHOR

1.4

MILLION YEARS
EVOLUTIONARY DISTINCT





Found in Yungas Forest,
Bolivia
Locally known as Tilcayo



WHAT IS IT?	GENETIC DISCOVERY	HABITAT	DIET & BEHAVIOUR
 Small wild cat (tiger cat group)  ~18 INCHES  ~1.4 KG	 Analysis of 38 samples across S. America ▼ Tiger cats = 5 DISTINCT SPECIES	 Yungas Forest  Cloudy & humid  Montane region	   - Likely preys on small rodents - Mostly active at night (camera-trap evidence)

What are Cryptic Species?

Cryptic species are two or more distinct species that were previously classified as a single species because they look virtually identical to the human eye. While they share the same **morphology** (physical appearance), they are **genetically distinct** and **reproductively isolated** (they do not interbreed).

Unlike "sibling species," which are always each other's closest relatives, the term "cryptic" is broader—it refers to any set of species that are hidden from us by their similar appearance, regardless of how closely they are related.

How are they identified?

Traditional taxonomy (based on physical traits) fails here. Scientists now use:

- **DNA Barcoding:** Analyzing specific mitochondrial DNA sequences to find "genetic signatures."
- **Bioacoustics:** Differentiating species by their unique calls (common in frogs and birds).
- **Pheromonal Analysis:** Identifying differences in chemical signals used for mating

Recent Discoveries in India (2024-2026)

India is currently undergoing a "taxonomic revolution," uncovering dozens of cryptic species in biodiversity hotspots like the Western Ghats and the Northeast.

Discovery	Former Status	Current Status
King Cobra	One species (<i>O. hannah</i>)	Now four distinct species based on geography (e.g., <i>O. kaalinga</i> in the Western Ghats).
Himalayan Cascade Frog	Part of a broad species complex	Identified as a distinct cryptic species in Nagaland (2024) using molecular data.
Lichen Fungi	Looked like one species	DNA sequencing in the Western Ghats (2025-26) revealed five distinct genetic lineages.
Siruvani Shieldtail	Misidentified for a decade	Confirmed as a new non-venomous snake in Kerala (2025) .

5.AI Governance: From Voluntary Restraint to Enforceable Accountability

Source: Vajiram & Ravi – Daily Editorial Analysis, 18 September 2026

Why in News?

Anthropic's September 2026 threat-intelligence report highlights a shift in AI misuse from simple content generation to AI acting as an **"orchestration layer"** that can coordinate multiple stages of sophisticated operations. The developments have renewed debate over AI safety, voluntary industry restraint and the need for enforceable governance mechanisms.

From AI Assistance to AI "Uplift"

- Anthropic documented AI misuse across **seven broad categories**, involving both state-sponsored actors and individuals.
- **AI uplift** refers to enhancement of harmful capabilities through AI in terms of **speed, scale and depth**.
- In a reported Bangladesh disinformation operation:
 - AI-generated content was combined with automated video production, account creation and algorithmic scheduling.
 - A single individual reportedly operated **29 accounts** and generated around **1,500 fabricated stories**.
- AI can therefore reduce the **human expertise, manpower and time** needed for sophisticated harmful operations.
- Detected cases may represent only a portion of actual misuse because they depend on what platforms are able to identify.

- Anthropic has also acknowledged limitations in its safeguards, including the inability of its most capable models to guarantee that sophisticated actors will not receive meaningful assistance in **biological-weapons research**.

Limits of Voluntary AI Slowdown

- Anthropic CEO **Dario Amodei** has warned about the rapidly accelerating pace of frontier-AI development and the potential disruption from autonomous AI-agent “swarms”.
- However, a voluntary industry-wide slowdown faces several challenges:
 - Intense commercial competition among AI companies.
 - Large-scale private capital investment.
 - Geopolitical competition, particularly involving China.
 - Difficulty in ensuring simultaneous compliance by all major AI developers.
- Voluntary restraint may also involve **conflicts of interest**, since individual companies could have commercial incentives linked to the pace of development.
- Therefore, voluntary commitments alone may not provide a durable governance mechanism.

Why Platform Accountability Must Expand?

- India’s **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** established legal responsibilities for major digital platforms.
- The Bangladesh disinformation case has relevance for India because of:
 - Large and diverse electorate.
 - Linguistic and social diversity.
 - Extensive digital penetration.
 - Continuous electoral cycles across States.
- AI can make **multilingual disinformation cheaper and highly scalable**, while detection can remain difficult.
- Platforms could therefore have enforceable responsibilities to **detect, disrupt and report coordinated AI-enabled influence operations**.

Emerging Risks Beyond Disinformation

- The reported **Alibaba distillation campaign** illustrates concerns related to:
 - Model distillation.

- Capability extraction.
- Fraudulent API usage.
- **AI-enabled surveillance** is another emerging concern as increasingly powerful systems can analyse and coordinate large volumes of information.
- Excessive technological surveillance can raise concerns regarding the **Right to Privacy under Article 21**.
- AI governance therefore needs to address not only AI-generated content but also:
 - Infrastructure.
 - Access.
 - System autonomy.
 - Downstream actions enabled by AI.

Proposed Guardrails for India

Measure	Proposed approach
Mandatory misuse reporting	Large AI platforms to report detected misuse to CERT-In and a designated AI Safety Authority
Watermarking/provenance	AI-generated content, particularly in political and public-interest contexts, to carry traceable provenance mechanisms
Agentic AI regulation	Extend platform-accountability frameworks to AI systems capable of taking real-world actions
Model distillation	Criminalise systematic unauthorised model distillation and fraudulent mass API access
AI safety institution	Create an independent statutory authority empowered to compel disclosure, conduct audits, investigate systemic risks and impose appropriate restrictions

India's Opportunity and Way Forward

- India can develop an AI governance model that combines **technological innovation with accountability**.
- Its experience with **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), UPI, Aadhaar and platform regulation** demonstrates capacity for technology governance at population scale.
- A future framework should be:

- Risk-based
 - Legally enforceable
 - Technology-neutral
 - Focused on transparency and accountability.
- Governance should protect **democratic institutions, individual rights, privacy, cybersecurity and public safety.**
 - The framework should also prevent excessive concentration of AI capabilities among a small number of powerful technology companies.

UPSC Prelims Practice

Consider the following statements regarding emerging AI governance challenges:

1. AI uplift refers to enhancement of harmful capabilities in terms of speed, scale and depth.
2. Agentic AI systems can potentially take actions in the real world rather than merely generate information.
3. AI governance concerns are limited to the content generated by AI systems.
4. Model distillation and fraudulent API usage are emerging areas of AI-related concern.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1, 2 and 4 only

Explanation: AI governance increasingly involves infrastructure, access, autonomy and downstream actions in addition to generated content. AI uplift, agentic systems, model distillation and fraudulent API usage are identified as emerging concerns.

UPSC Mains Practice

“Rapid advances in agentic and autonomous artificial intelligence are exposing the limitations of voluntary safeguards.” Discuss the need for a legally enforceable and rights-based AI governance framework in India. (150 words)