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Volume - I

Current Affairs for Prelims 2026
(April 2025- September 2025)



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PREFACE

Concise Prelims Current Affairs 2026

Current Affairs-Sine Qua Non of UPSC Preparation

Proficiency in Current affairs is sine non qua for UPSC preparation. It is the basic foundation of any aspirant 's preparation. Knowledge and skill to relate current news with UPSC syllabus is quintessential part of the preparation.

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Sir Chettur Sankaran Nair

Why in News?

Sir Chettur Sankaran Nair is in news as PM Modi recalled his courtroom battle against British atrocities post-Jallianwala Bagh massacre; also, a film adaptation on his life is upcoming.

Description:

Personal Background:

- **Born:** 1857, in Mankara village, Palakkad district, Malabar (Kerala).
- **Profession:** Lawyer, Judge, Nationalist, Social Reformer.

Legal and Political Career:

- **Education:** Graduated from Presidency College, Madras; degree in law.
- **Judge:** Appointed as a permanent judge of the Madras High Court in 1908.
- **President of INC:** Became the youngest President of the Indian National Congress in 1897.
- **Viceroy's Council:** Member; resigned in 1919 in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

Reformer and Judgments:

- Known for **progressive judgments**:
 - **Budasna v. Fatima (1914):** Rules that converts to Hinduism should not be treated as outcasts.
 - Supported **inter-caste and inter-religious marriages** in various rulings.

Role in Jallianwala Bagh Case:

- Published "**Gandhi and Anarchy**" (1922) – criticized Gandhi's non-violent methods.
- Accused **Michael O'Dwyer**, then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, of policies leading to the 1919 massacre.
- Was sued for defamation by O'Dwyer in England.

The Defamation Trial:

- Held in King's Bench, London.
- Lasted **5.5 weeks** – the longest civil case at that time.
- Jury verdict: 11-1 in favor of O'Dwyer.
 - **Harold Laski**, the lone dissenter.
- Nair was fined £500, but **refused to apologize**.
- **Exposed British judicial bias**, galvanized Indian nationalism.

Death:

- Died in 1934, aged 77.

Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan

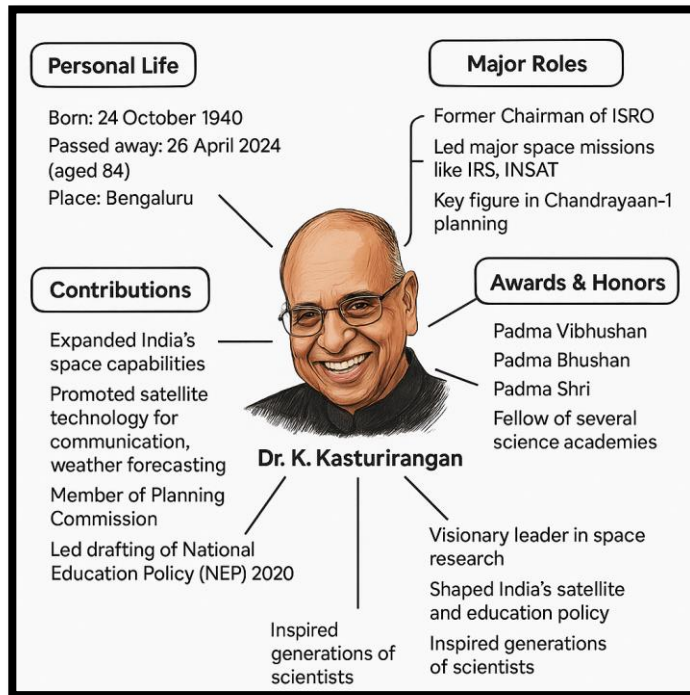
Why in News?

Former ISRO Chairman Dr. K. Kasturirangan passed away at the age of 84 in Bengaluru. He was a key figure in India's space program and scientific community.

Description:

- **ISRO Chairman (1994–2003):** He led ISRO for over 9 years, during which India achieved major milestones like the successful launch of PSLV and the first flight test of GSLV.
- **Pioneer in Satellite Development:** As Director of ISRO Satellite Centre, he played a key role in the development of INSAT-2, IRS-1A & 1B, and BHASKARA-I & II.
- **Renowned Astrophysicist:** He earned his Ph.D. in Experimental High Energy Astronomy and contributed significantly to research in X-ray and gamma-ray astronomy.

- **Recipient of Prestigious Awards:** He has been honored with **Padma Shri**, **Padma Bhushan**, and **Padma Vibhushan**, along with several scientific awards like the **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award**.
- **Key International Roles:** He chaired international committees like **CEOS** and served on the **UN-CSSTE Governing Board**, contributing to global space cooperation.

Space for Notes:


Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar

Why in News?

Ahilyabai Holkar is in the news as UP CM Yogi Adityanath credited her principles of self-defence as inspiration for Operation Sindoor and praised her legacy during the 300th birth anniversary celebrations, highlighting her cultural and military contributions.

Description:

- **Born:** 31 May 1725
- **Died:** 13 August 1795 (aged 70)
- **Dynasty:** Holkar dynasty of the Maratha Confederacy
- **Reign:** 1767–1795
- **Capital:** Maheshwar (also ruled from Indore)

Titles:

- **Punyashlok** – “One as Pure as the Sacred Chants”
- **The Philosopher Queen** – Title given by British historian John Keay

Military Contributions:

- Trained in military affairs under her father-in-law, **Malhar Rao Holkar**
- Personally led armies into battle
- Appointed **Tukoji Rao Holkar** (Malhar Rao's adopted son) as commander of the Holkar army
- In 1792, engaged Frenchman **Chevalier Dudrenec** to modernize her army and raise four battalions

Administrative Contributions:

- Known for fair and impartial justice
- Sentenced her own son to death for a capital offense
- Established courts for justice and arbitration
- Repealed the law confiscating property from childless widows
- Held daily audiences; was accessible to all subjects
- Did not observe **purdah**, breaking a major social norm of the time

Cultural Contributions:

- Patronized poets and scholars:
 - **Marathi poet Moropant**
 - **Shahir Ananta Gandhi**
 - **Sanskrit scholar Khushali Ram**
- Made **Maheshwar** a hub of art, music, and literature
- Provided employment to artists, craftsmen, and sculptors
- Built and renovated hundreds of Hindu temples and **Dharmashalas** across India
- Renovated the **Kashi Vishwanath Temple** in 1780
- Constructed forts, roads, wells, and rest houses

Economic & Industrial Contributions:

- Promoted textile craft in Maheshwar
- Established the **Maheshwar textile industry**, known today for **Maheshwari sarees**

Succession:

- Succeeded by **Tukoji Rao Holkar** after her death
- Tukoji abdicated in favor of his son **Jaswant Rao Holkar** in 1797
- **Jaswant Rao Holkar** was the last independent Holkar ruler until 1804

Humayun (1508–1556)
Why in News?

Six persons died and five others were injured after a wall and roof of the Patte Shah Dargah Masjid, near Humayun's Tomb, collapsed in Delhi. ASI clarified the damaged mosque structure was not part of the Humayun's Tomb complex.

Description:

- Full name: **Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Humayun**.
- Born: **6 March 1508, Kabul**.
- Son of **Babur**, founder of Mughal Empire.
- **Reign:**
 - **First reign:** 1530–1540
 - **Second reign:** 1555–1556
- Brothers: **Kamran, Askari, Hindal**.
- Mistake: **Division of empire** among brothers → weakened authority.

Challenges & Rivals:

1. **Afghan Threat** – Rise of **Sher Khan (later Sher Shah Suri)** in Bihar & Bengal.
2. **Bahadur Shah of Gujarat** – Expansionist, clashed with Humayun.
3. **Brothers' Rivalry** – Kamran in Punjab & Kabul; Askari & Hindal's rebellions.
4. **Financial Weakness** – Struggled to maintain large armies.

Major Battles of Humayun

1. **Battle of Daurah (1532):**
2. **Battle of Chausa (1539):**
3. **Battle of Kanauj (1540):**
4. **Battle of Sirhind (1555):**

Death:

- Died: **January 1556, Delhi**.
- Cause: **Fall from the staircase** of his library at **Purana Qila**.
- Successor: **Akbar (13 years old)**.

Humayun's Tomb:

- Built by: **Empress Bega Begum (Haji Begum)** in 1569–70.
- Architects: **Mirak Mirza Ghiyas & Sayyid Muhammad (Persians)**.
- Features:
 - **First garden-tomb** in the Indian subcontinent.
 - Built in **red sandstone** at large scale.
 - **Octagonal plan**, double dome, Charbagh layout.
- UNESCO World Heritage Site: **1993**.
- Called "**Dormitory of the Mughals**" → 150+ royal burials inside.

Space for Notes:

Shibu Soren

Space for Notes:

Why in News?

Shibu Soren, legendary Jharkhand leader and JMM founder, passed away on August 4, 2025. A key architect of the Jharkhand movement, he redefined Adivasi politics, blending radical activism with parliamentary strategy to achieve statehood for Jharkhand in 2000.

Description:

- **Popularly Known as:** Dishom Guruji
- **Community:** Belonged to the Santhal tribal community

Political Legacy:

- **Founder of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)** in 1972
- **Key figure in the Jharkhand statehood movement**
- **Led JMM for over 38 years**, shaping tribal and regional politics
- **Chief Minister of Jharkhand:** 3 times
 - First term: 2005
 - Second term: 2008
 - Third term: 2009–2010
- **Successor:**
 - **Hemant Soren** – current Chief Minister of Jharkhand (2025) and JMM President

Political Career and Struggles:

- **JMM Co-Founder** along with A.K. Roy and Binod Bihari Mahato
 - Aimed at achieving a **separate tribal state** for Jharkhandis
- **Key leader in the formation of Jharkhand in 2000**
- **Elected to Lok Sabha 8 times**
- **Served 3 terms in Rajya Sabha**
- **Union Minister for Coal:** Held the position in **three separate terms**

Art & Culture

Space for Notes:

Sarhul Festival

Why in News?

Sarhul Festival 2025 was celebrated across Jharkhand and Chhotanagpur, highlighting Adivasi identity, cultural preservation, and demands for Sarna religion recognition in India's caste census.

Description:

Meaning & Significance

- Sarhul means “worship of the Sal tree” and symbolizes the union of the Sun and Earth.
- Celebrated by Adivasi communities in Jharkhand and the Chotanagpur region.
- Marks the arrival of spring and the new year.

Rituals & Celebration (Three-Day Festival):

- **Day 1:** Preparations – Homes and Sarna Sthals (Sacred Groves) are cleaned, Sal flowers gathered, and the village priest (Pahan) observes a fast.
- **Day 2:** Main rituals at Sarna Sthals – Sacrifices, prayers for prosperity, and cultural performances.
- **Day 3:** Community feast – Includes Handia (rice beer), ceremonial fishing, and traditional Adivasi cuisine.

Regional Spread & Evolution:

- Celebrated by Oraon, Munda, Santal, Khadia, and Ho tribes.
- Once a hunting festival, it evolved into an agricultural celebration (Sarat Chandra Roy, 1928).
- Due to migration, Sarhul is now observed in Assam, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan.

Political & Cultural Significance:

- **1960s:** Baba Karthik Oraon initiated Sarhul processions in Ranchi, advocating for tribal rights.
- **Modern Day:** Processions symbolize Adivasi identity, with demands for Sarna religion recognition.
- **Debate:** Some groups claim Adivasis are part of Sanatan Dharma, while others seek a distinct identity.

Sacred Groves & Environmental Role:

- **Sarna Sthals (Sacred Groves):** Protected forest patches with religious & ecological importance.
- **Restrictions:** Hunting & deforestation prohibited; sustainable activities like honey collection allowed.
- **Similar Sacred Groves Across India:**
 - Jharkhand, Bihar: Sarna
 - Himachal Pradesh: Dev Van
 - Karnataka: Devarakadu
 - Kerala: Kavu/Sarpa Kavu
 - Maharashtra: Devrai/Deorai
 - Meghalaya: LawKyntang/Asong Khosi
 - Rajasthan: Oran

Successful Example – Piplantri Village, Rajasthan:

- 111 trees planted for every girl child born.
- Resulted in higher income, reduced female foeticide, and women empowerment.

Pohela Boishakh

Why in News?

Bangladesh has celebrated Pohela Boishakh on April 14 annually since 1987, due to its revised, fixed Bengali calendar system.

Description:

- **Pohela Boishakh marks the Bengali New Year** and is celebrated on **April 14 in Bangladesh and April 14 or 15 in India**, depending on solar calculations.
- The Bengali calendar (Bangabda) is believed to have originated during the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar, who commissioned a calendar reform combining the Hijri lunar calendar and the Hindu solar calendar, called the Fasli (harvest) calendar.
- In Bangladesh, the calendar was officially revised in 1987 based on recommendations by a 1966 Bangla Academy committee (headed by Muhammad Shahidullah) to standardize the number of days in each month, fixing Pohela Boishakh on April 14 every year.
- In West Bengal and other parts of India, the traditional Bengali calendar is still followed, where month lengths vary according to the actual solar motion through the zodiac, so Pohela Boishakh may fall on April 14 or 15.
- Pohela Boishakh is a secular and cultural festival in Bangladesh, celebrated with processions (Mangal Shobhajatra), fairs, music, and traditional food, and it marks the start of the fiscal year for businesses in both Bangladesh and parts of India.

Antiquity Survey

Why in News?

Karnataka is set to become the first Indian state to complete a village-level antiquities survey, documenting heritage items across 119 taluks to create a comprehensive antiquity inventory and ensure protection.

Description:

- **Purpose:** It generally means a systematic study or documentation of historical artifacts, monuments, and cultural heritage items. To **identify, record, classify, and preserve** antiquities—objects of historical, artistic, or archaeological value.
- **Authority Involved:** In India, the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** and the **National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA)** are the primary bodies conducting antiquity surveys.
- **What is Surveyed:**
 - Coins, sculptures, manuscripts
 - Temples, inscriptions, ancient tools
 - Paintings, epigraphs, and traditional art objects
- **Registration Requirement:** Under the **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972**, owners of antiquities must **register** them and obtain a **certificate** to help prevent illegal sale or export.
- **National Effort:** The NMMA, launched in 2007, has documented over **16.7 lakh antiquities**, but only about **3.52 lakh** have been officially registered—showing the huge scope for further survey and documentation.

World Heritage Sites

Why in News?

Manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Natya Shastra were added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, marking a proud moment for India's civilisational and documentary heritage.

Space for Notes:

Description:

- **Definition of World Heritage Sites:** A World Heritage Site is a landmark or area recognized by UNESCO for its cultural, historical, scientific, or natural significance, considered to have **Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)** to humanity.
- **World Heritage Convention (1972):** The foundation for protecting such sites was laid by the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which binds countries to safeguard heritage of global importance.
- **Site Selection Criteria:** A site must meet at least one of ten criteria (6 cultural and 4 natural) to be listed. These criteria assess aspects like architecture, cultural traditions, ecological processes, and biodiversity.
- **India and UNESCO:** India signed the World Heritage Convention on 14 November 1977. As of December 2024, India has 43 World Heritage Sites (35 Cultural, 7 Natural, and 1 Mixed site).
- **Legal Status and Responsibility:** While World Heritage Sites remain under the sovereignty of their respective countries, member states are obligated to protect, conserve, and report on these sites, with support from the World Heritage Committee and Fund when needed.

Space for Notes:


National Archives of India (NAI)

Space for Notes:

Why in News?

The National Archives of India acquired former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's private papers, including personal documents and lectures, were donated by his family to preserve his legacy.

Description:

- The **National Archives of India (NAI)** functions under the **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India.
- It is the **repository of all non-current government records**, available for administrators and scholars.
- Acts as the **custodian of records of enduring value** of the Government of India.
- It is the **largest archival repository in South Asia**.

Historical Background:

- Established as the **Imperial Record Department** on **11 March 1891** in **Kolkata (Calcutta)**.
- Transferred to **New Delhi** in **1911**.
- The present building, designed by **Sir Edwin Lutyens**, was completed in **1926**.
- The complete transfer of records from Calcutta to New Delhi was finalized in **1937**.

Legal and Administrative Role:

- NAI is the **nodal agency** for implementing the **Public Records Act, 1993** and the **Public Record Rules, 1997**.
- Access to records is governed by the **Public Records Rules, 1997**.
- It **does not receive classified documents**.

Collections:

- Holds over **34 crore pages** of public records.
- Collections include **files, volumes, maps, treaties, rare manuscripts, cartographic records, parliamentary debates, censuses, travel accounts, proscribed literature, and government gazettes**.
- Many oriental records are in **Sanskrit, Persian, Odia**, and other regional languages.

Infrastructure:

- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
- **Regional Office:** Bhopal.
- **Records Centers:** Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, and Puducherry.

Abhilekh PATAL (Portal for Access to Archives and Learning):

- A **digital initiative** by NAI to provide online access to archival records.
- A **full-featured web portal** to access reference media and digitized collections.
- Contains **more than 2.7 million files**.
- Over **71,792 digitized records** are available for online access.

Jagannath Temple

Why in News?

Puri temple servitors raised concerns over rituals at a Jagannath temple replica in Digha, warning against copying original traditions and objecting to the use of "Dham" in promotions.

Description:

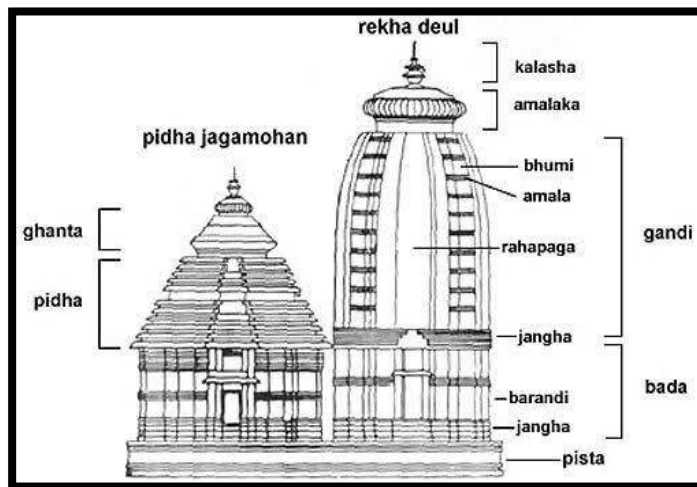
- Located in **Puri, Odisha**.
- Dedicated to **Lord Jagannath**, a form of **Lord Vishnu**.
- Built during the reign of **King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva** (Eastern Ganga dynasty) in the **12th century**.
- Completed in **1230 AD** by **Anangbheema Deva III**, who installed the deities.

Religious Significance:

- Famous for the **Ratha Yatra** (Chariot Festival).
- One of the **Chaar Dhaams** (four sacred Hindu pilgrimage sites).
- Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Architecture – Kalinga Style:

- Exemplifies **Kalinga architecture**, unique to Odisha.
- The temple complex includes **shrines, gardens, and sacred tanks**.
- Main temple is at the **center of the inner courtyard on a raised platform**.
- **No shadow** of the temple falls on the ground at any time of the day.
- The **Garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum)** houses the idols of **Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra**.
- A **20-foot-high chakra (wheel)** at the temple's pinnacle is visible from any part of Puri city.


Shirui Lily Festival
Why in News?

The Shirui Lily festival in Manipur, paused for two years due to ethnic conflict, resumed on May 20, 2025. It promotes eco-tourism and cultural unity in Ukhrul amidst ongoing tensions between Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities under President's Rule.

Description:

- **Location:** Celebrated in **Manipur**, especially in **Ukhrul district**.
- **Started:** 2017.
- **Organised by:** Shirui Lily Festival Organising Committee under Department of Tourism, Manipur.
- **Purpose:**
 - Promote awareness about the **Shirui Lily**.
 - Encourage **sustainable and responsible tourism**.

Facts About Shirui Lily:

- **Scientific Name:** *Lilium mackliniae*.
- **Discovered by:** Frank Kingdon-Ward in **1946**.
- **Endemic to:** **Shirui Hills, Ukhrul** (Elevation: **5,568 – 8,500 ft**).
- **Local Name (Tangkhul):** Kashong Timrawon.
- **Mythology:** Linked to goddess **Philava**.
- **Physical Features:**
 - **Height:** Up to **3 feet**.
 - **Color:** **Bluish-pink**, bell-shaped flower.

- **State Flower of Manipur:** Declared in 1989.
- **Conservation Status:** Endangered. **Threats:** Tourism pressure, invasive bamboo species.
- **Shirui National Park Proposal:** Initiated in 1982, still pending.
- **International Recognition:** Won Merit Prize at 1948 Royal Horticultural Society Flower Show, London.
- **Festival Timing:** Held during peak blooming season of Shirui Lily.

Beej Utsav

Why in News?

The 'Beej Utsav' was held across the tribal belt of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat to promote indigenous seed conservation. Over 9,400 tribal participants pledged to rebuild community-led seed systems for agricultural sustainability and climate resilience.

Description:

- **Definition:** Beej Utsav, meaning Seed Festival, is a grassroots initiative celebrating and preserving **indigenous seed varieties** in tribal-dominated regions of southern Rajasthan.

Objectives:

- Preserve indigenous seeds that are at risk of extinction.
- Promote **crop diversity** and **climate resilience**.
- Encourage **traditional knowledge systems** in agriculture.

Key Features:

- **When Held:** Last week of June annually.
- **Where:** Tribal belt at the tri-junction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat.
- **Participation:**
 - ~90 seed festivals across the region.
 - Thousands of tribal farmers from ~1,000 villages and hamlets.

Activities at Beej Utsavs:

- Learning techniques to **store and preserve indigenous seeds**.
- **Exchange of seeds** among farmers.
- Spreading awareness in villages.
- **Pledges** to protect and regularly use traditional seeds.

Key Locations & Tribes:

- **Example:** Sera Nagla village, **Banswara district**.
- **Tribe Involved:** Predominantly **Bheel** community.

Organizers:

- **Lead:** Vaagdhara – a Banswara-based voluntary group.
- **Support Groups:**
 - Krishi Evum Adivasi Swaraj Sangathan
 - Gram Swaraj Samooh
 - Saksham Samooh
 - Baal Swaraj

Benefits of Indigenous Seeds:

- **Local Compatibility:** Well-suited to local agro-climatic conditions.
- **Economic Sustainability:** Reduce dependence on **multinational seed companies**.
- **Environmental Resilience:** Support sustainable farming.
- **Diversity:** Over 50 seed varieties displayed – including millets, pulses, and vegetables.

Recognition & Motivation:

- **Awards:**
 - Beej Mitra (Seed Friends)
 - Beej Mata (Seed Mothers)
- Honours awarded to farmers who actively preserve and promote indigenous seeds.

Kolhapuri Chappal

Why in News?

Kolhapuri chappal manufacturers protested against Italian brand Prada for allegedly copying their GI-tagged traditional design in its Spring/Summer 2026 collection without credit. They plan legal action, calling it cultural theft, to protect artisans' rights and Maharashtra's heritage.

Description:

- The Controller General of Patents, Designs and TradeMarks (CGPDTM) has granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Kolhapuri chappals.
- GI tag covers **8 districts**:
 - Maharashtra: Kolhapur, Sangli, Solapur, Satara
 - Karnataka: Belgaum, Dharwad, Bagalkot, Bijapur

Uniqueness:

- Sturdy, hand-crafted leather chappals.
- Tanned using **vegetable dyes**.
- Craft passed down **generationally**.

History:

- Traces to the 12th century during the rule of King Bijjal in Bidar (Karnataka).
- Vishwaguru Basavanna sought a **casteless society**, encouraging the cobbler community to embrace Lingayat faith and produce footwear.
- 'Kolhapuri' as a **brand** emerged in the early 20th century when traded in Kolhapur (Maharashtra).
- Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj promoted production; 29 tanning centres were opened in Kolhapur during his rule.

Benefits of GI Tag:

- Legal protection against unauthorised use or copying.
- Helps artisans export Kolhapuris.
- Enables tie-ups with **e-commerce platforms** (e.g., Flipkart, Amazon).

Significance of GI Tag:

- Opens large **domestic and international markets**.
- Only chappals produced in these 8 districts can be marketed as 'Kolhapuri'.

What is a Geographical Indication (GI)?

- A GI is used on products with **specific geographical origin**.
- Possess **qualities, reputation, distinctiveness** attributable to that locality.
- Ensures authenticity and preserves **traditional knowledge**.

Validity:

- GI tag is valid for **10 years**.
- Renewable after expiry.

GI in India:

- India's GI Act: Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- Enacted to comply with WTO's **TRIPS Agreement**.
- First GI-tagged product in India: **Darjeeling Tea (2004)**.
- The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry has launched a **logo and tagline** for Indian GIs.

Piprahwa Gems

Why in News?

Global concern: Buddhist scholars and monks from around the world have raised concerns over the auction of the ancient Piprahwa Gems, believed to be associated with the Buddha.

They argue that the gems are sacred relics, imbued with the spiritual presence of the Buddha, and should not be sold commercially.

Space for Notes:

Description:

1. **Location:** Discovered in **Piprahwa**, in present-day **Uttar Pradesh**, India.
2. **Discovery:**
 - Excavated in **1898** by **William Claxton Peppe**, a British colonial engineer.
 - Found in a **stupa (burial monument)** on his estate.
3. **Significance:**
 - An **inscription** on a reliquary identified the contents as the **relics of the Buddha**, including **cremated remains**.
 - The site became the **first credible modern discovery** of the Buddha's relics.
4. **Contents:**
 - The cache included **1,800 items**, comprising:
 - **Gems:** Amethysts, coral, garnets, pearls, rock crystals.
 - **Other items:** Shells, gold (in pendants, beads, ornaments, or raw form).
5. **Legal Status:**
 - The British crown claimed the find under the **Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878**.
 - **Bone and ash fragments** were later **gifted** to **King Chulalongkorn** of **Siam (Thailand)** by the British.
6. **Current Distribution:**
 - **Majority** of the gems are in the **Indian Museum, Kolkata**.
 - **William Peppe** was allowed to **retain about one-fifth**, labelled as “**duplicates**” by colonial officials.

Kanwar Yatra
Why in News?

A truck carrying Kanwar Yatra pilgrims overturned in Tehri district, Uttarakhand, killing 3 and injuring 18. The pilgrims were from Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh. Rescue teams responded swiftly, and the Chief Minister directed officials to aid the injured.

Description:

- An **annual Hindu pilgrimage** undertaken by devotees of **Lord Shiva**, known as **Kanvarias** or **Bhole**.
- **Timing:** Takes place during the **month of Sawan (Shravan)**, typically in **July–August** according to the Hindu calendar.
- **Meaning of 'Kanwar':** The word '**Kanwar**' refers to a **bamboo pole** used to carry containers of **Ganga jal (holy water)** at either end.

Pilgrimage Route & Rituals:

- **Source of Water:** Devotees collect holy Ganga water from places like:
 - **Haridwar, Gangotri, Gaumukh** (Uttarakhand)
 - **Sultanganj** (Bihar)
 - **Prayagraj, Varanasi, Ayodhya** (Uttar Pradesh)
- **Destination & Offering:**
 - Water is carried back and offered to **Shiva temples** as part of the **Jal Abhishek** ritual.
 - Major temples include:
 - **Kashi Vishwanath** (Varanasi)
 - **Baba Baidyanath Dham** (Deoghar, Jharkhand)
 - **Pura Mahadev Mandir and Augharnath Temple** (Uttar Pradesh)
 - **The 12 Jyotirlingas** across India
- **Mode of Travel:**
 - Many **walk barefoot**, some even complete the yatra by **lying flat on the ground** (called **Dandavat yatra**).
 - **Saffron clothing** is commonly worn by Kanvarias.

Space for Notes:

Beliefs & Practices:

- **Respect for Holy Water:**
 - Once the pot is filled with Ganga water, it **must not touch the ground**.
- **Spiritual Observance:**
 - Many observe **fasts**, with restricted consumption of **food, water, and salt**.
- **Final Offering:**
 - Some carry the water back to **local Shiva temples** in their own towns/villages.


Devadasi System
Why in News?

Karnataka is drafting the Karnataka Devadasi (Prevention, Prohibition, Relief and Rehabilitation) Bill to replace the 1982 law. The new law aims to strengthen the fight against the Devadasi system by allowing paternity tests and granting property rights to Devadasi children.

Description:
Definition:

- Devadasi means "female servant of God."
- A girl is **dedicated to a deity in a temple** through a ritual similar to marriage, known as 'Pottukattu'.
- Practised traditionally in **southern and western India**, especially in **Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu**.

Historical Background:

- Dates back to the **6th century CE**.
- Girls were married to a deity and served as **temple caretakers**, performing rituals, **dance (Bharatanatyam, Odissi)**, and music.
- Held **high social status** as art and devotion were integral to temple worship.

Decline and Exploitation:

- Status declined during **Mughal and British periods**.
- Temples were destroyed; many Devadasis were **pushed into prostitution and exploitation**.
- The system **persisted under religious and social pressure**, especially among **economically weaker families**.

Present Scenario:

- Though **legally banned**, the Devadasi practice **continues illegally** in parts of **Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, etc.**
- Often tied to **superstition, poverty, and lack of awareness**.

Key Terminology:

- **Pottukattu:** The ritual marriage of a girl to a deity.
- **Flying Coffins:** Term used for MiG-21 jets due to frequent crashes – not related to Devadasi but often asked in current affairs.

Space for Notes:

Laws to Abolish Devadasi System:

1. Bombay Devadasi Protection Act, 1934
2. Madras Devadasi (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947
3. Karnataka Devadasi (Prohibition of Dedication) Act, 1982
4. Andhra Pradesh Devadasi (Prohibition of Dedication) Act, 1988
5. Maharashtra Devadasi (Abolition of Dedication) Act, 2006
6. Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956
7. Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015
8. Trafficking of Persons Bill, 2018

Challenges in Abolition:

- Superstition & religious beliefs
- Lack of awareness & education
- Social stigma
- Inadequate law enforcement
- Non-reporting by victims

Way Forward:

- Surveys by Women and Child Development departments
- Awareness campaigns
- Rehabilitation and employment for Devadasis
- Education for children of affected women
- Inclusion under IPC & stronger legal action



Daruma Doll

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was presented a Daruma doll by Reverend Seishi Hirose, chief priest of Shorinzan Daruma-ji temple, during his Japan visit. The Daruma, symbolising perseverance and good luck, traces its origins to Bodhidharma, the 5th-century Indian monk from Kanchipuram.

Description:

- **Type:** Hollow, round, papier-mâché Japanese doll.
- **Origin:** Modeled on **Bodhidharma** (Indian monk, founder of Zen Buddhism).
- **Popular Symbolism:** Good luck, perseverance, resilience (Nanakorobi Yaoki → "Fall 7 times, rise 8").
- **Commercial Use:** Talisman for success, gifted as encouragement.

History:

- **Edo Period (17th–18th century):** Developed in Takasaki (Gunma Prefecture) → Shōrinzan Daruma Temple.
- Initially **New Year charms**; later peasants made **papier-mâché self-righting dolls** using temple molds.
- By the 19th century → fused with **tumbler dolls (Okiagari-koboshi)**.
- **Annual Daruma Festival (Daruma-ichi):** Held in Takasaki → attracts ~4 lakh visitors.
- **Production:** Takasaki makes ~80% of Japan's Daruma dolls.

Physical Features & Symbolism:

1. **Shape:**
 - Round, weighted at bottom → always stands up (resilience).
 - Linked to Bodhidharma's 9-year meditation → limbless form.
2. **Color:**
 - Traditional = **Red** (linked to Buddhist priest robes + protection from smallpox).
 - Now: Also Gold (wealth), Black, White, Blue, Yellow → called **Goshiki Daruma** (5-colored set).

Space for Notes:

3. Eyes:

- Sold blank.
- Left eye painted when making a wish/goal.
- Right eye filled when goal is achieved → phrase: "Both Eyes Open".
- Used by politicians during elections.

4. Facial Hair:

- Eyebrows shaped like crane + cheek hair like tortoise shell → longevity (Crane 1,000 yrs, Tortoise 10,000 yrs).

Link to India:

- Bodhidharma (South Indian origin, 5th–6th century CE).
- Brought Zen (Chan) Buddhism to China → Japan.
- 2025: PM Modi receives a sacred Daruma doll in Japan as a symbol of India–Japan cultural link.

Sylheti Language

Why in News?

A Delhi Police letter allegedly called Bengali the "Bangladeshi national language," sparking outrage in Assam's Barak Valley. BJP's Amit Malviya defended the remark, citing Sylheti as nearly incomprehensible to Indian Bengalis, igniting a debate over dialect, identity, and migration.

Description:

Feature	Description
Name	Sylheti
Language Family	Indo-European → Indo-Iranian → Indo-Aryan → Eastern Group
Closely Related To	Bengali (but distinct in phonology and vocabulary)
Script Used	Bengali script (historically, also Sylheti Nagri)
Region Spoken	- Sylhet Division (Bangladesh) - Barak Valley (Assam, India)
Number of Speakers	Approx. 15 million globally

Cultural & Literary Aspects:

- Sylheti has a rich oral and literary tradition, including poetry, prose, and drama.
- Spoken actively by diaspora communities in the UK, Middle East, and USA.

Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

Why in News?

China's Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, stated that the revival of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra could inject new momentum into India-China ties. He also indicated China's willingness to refine border management rules and improve ties post the four-year-long military standoff at the LAC.

Description:

Geographical Significance:

- **Lake Mansarovar:** A high-altitude freshwater lake (Mapam Yumtso) in Tibet Autonomous Region near Mount Kailash.
- Situated near the origins of major rivers:
 - Indus, Sutlej, Brahmaputra, Karnali.
- Lies close to the India–Nepal–China trijunction, making it strategically important.

Yatra Routes:

1. Lipulekh Pass Route (Uttarakhand)

- Altitude: 5,115 m
- Managed by: Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN)
- Most direct and ancient route (50 km to Mansarovar).
- New Lipulekh Link Road (2020) built by BRO reduces trek time.

Space for Notes:

2. Nathu La Pass Route (Sikkim)

- Altitude: 4,310 m
- Managed by: Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation
- Motorable; suitable for senior citizens
- Longer route (~1,500 km).

3. Via Nepal (Kerung Route)

- Entry: Kathmandu → Kerung → Kyirong → Saga → Mansarovar → Darchen
- Used mostly by private operators and Nepalese pilgrims.

Religious & Cultural Significance:

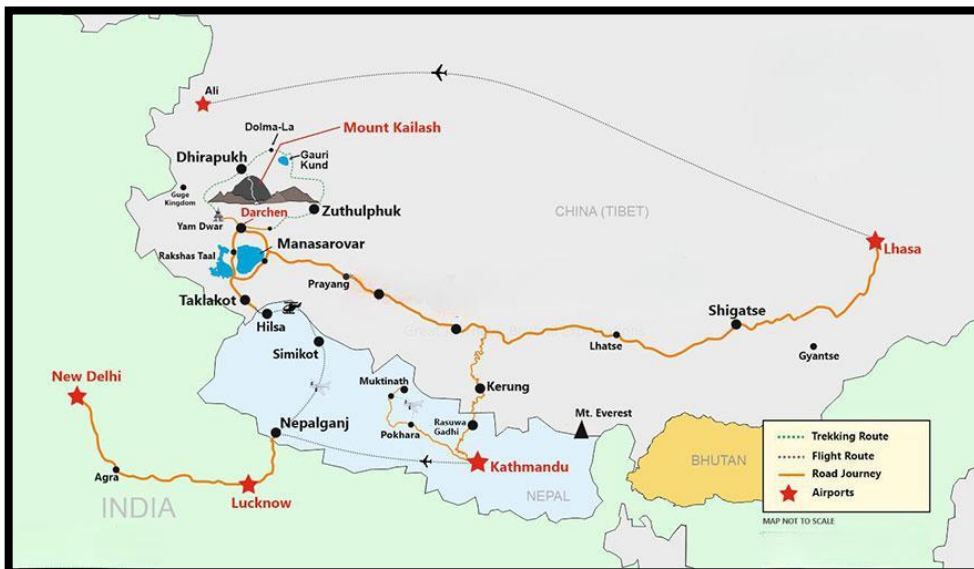
- Sacred to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Bon religion:
 - **Hinduism:** Abode of Lord Shiva, bathing in Mansarovar believed to cleanse sins.
 - **Buddhism:** Home of Buddha's Sambhogakaya form.
 - **Jainism:** Ashtapada, moksha place of Rishabhdev, the 1st Tirthankara.
 - **Bon:** Abode of the sky goddess Sipaimen.
- Parikrama of Mount Kailash and dip in Mansarovar are key rituals.
- Symbol of India-Tibet-Central Asia spiritual connection.

Strategic and Geopolitical Importance:

- **India-China Relations:**
 - Reflects improving ties post Galwan 2020.
 - Boosts bilateral diplomacy after Modi-Xi talks (Kazan, 2024) and WMCC meetings (2025).
- **Border Infrastructure:** Lipulekh Road by BRO improves military logistics and civilian access.
- **Economic Angle:** Enhances the local tourism economy and fosters bilateral trade links.
- **Soft Power:** Promotes people-to-people ties, counters China's narrative in Tibet.

Challenges:

- **High Altitude:** Up to 5,630 m at Dolma La Pass, causing Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS).
- **Tough Terrain:** 8–19 km daily trekking in harsh conditions.
- **Logistics Issues:** Permit delays, healthcare access, waste management.



Nankana Sahib

Why in News?

The Centre has asked States not to process applications for Sikh pilgrims' visit to Nankana Sahib, Pakistan, for Guru Nanak's birth anniversary in November, citing security concerns. Punjab leaders and Sikh bodies criticised the move, urging the government to reconsider its decision.

Description:

- **Location:** City in Punjab province, Pakistan.
- **Significance:** Birthplace of **Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469)** – founder of Sikhism.
- **Main Shrine:** **Gurdwara Janam Asthan (Nankana Sahib Gurdwara)** – built over Guru Nanak's birthplace.
- **Builder:** Constructed by **Maharaja Ranjit Singh** after visiting the site in 1818–19 (returning from Battle of Multan).
- **Other Major Shrines:**
 - Gurdwara Patti Sahib, Gurdwara Bal Leela, Gurdwara Mal Ji Sahib, Gurdwara Kiara Sahib, & Gurdwara Tambu Sahib.
- **Associated Gurus:**
 - Gurdwara in memory of **Guru Arjan Dev (5th Guru)**.
 - **Guru Hargobind (6th Guru)** paid homage in 1621–22.
- **Importance:** One of the holiest Sikh pilgrimage sites; central to events in Guru Nanak's early life.

Motok Community (Assam)
Why in News?

Around 30,000 Motok community members staged a torchlight rally in Sadiya (Assam) demanding ST status and Sixth Schedule protection for their autonomous council.

Description:
Who are the Motoks?

- An indigenous community of Assam.
- Originally followers of the **Vaishnavite reformist movement** started by **Aniruddhadeva** in the 16th century.
- Historically associated with the **Motok Kingdom** (17th–18th century) that challenged Ahom rule.
- Concentrated mainly in **Upper Assam** (Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar districts).

Current Demands:

- **Scheduled Tribe (ST) status** → Pending for many years.
- **Upgradation of Motok Autonomous Council** to the **Sixth Schedule** framework for constitutional protection and greater autonomy.
- These demands were part of the **2014 BJP electoral promises** to six indigenous Assamese communities.

Related Communities Also Demanding ST Status:

1. Moran
2. Motok
3. Chutia
4. Tai-Ahom
5. Koch-Rajbongshi
6. Tea Tribes

Political & Constitutional Context:

- **Sixth Schedule (Articles 244 & 275)** → Special provisions for tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram.
- Motok Autonomous Council currently exists under **state legislation**, not under Sixth Schedule → less protection & powers.
- ST recognition would ensure **reservation benefits** in education, jobs, political representation.

Hindi Diwas
Why in News?

On Hindi Divas, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said Hindi and other Indian languages complement rather than compete, urging respect for all tongues. He highlighted efforts like the Sarathi system and Shabd Sindhu dictionary to promote translation and pride in every Indian language.

Space for Notes:

Description:

- **Date:** Celebrated every year on **14 September**.
- **Occasion (2025):** 76th anniversary of Hindi's adoption as one of the **official languages** of India (14 Sept 1949).
- **Introduced by:** Constituent Assembly decision; first observed in **1953**.
- **Purpose:**
 - Promote Hindi as a means of national integration.
 - Encourage its use in official work and everyday life.
 - Celebrate Hindi's literary & cultural contribution.

Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 343(1):** Hindi in **Devanagari script** shall be the Official Language of the Union.
- **Article 351:** Directive to promote the spread of Hindi and develop it as a medium of expression for all elements of India's composite culture.
- **8th Schedule:** Lists Hindi among 22 scheduled languages.
- **Status:** Along with **English**, Hindi is an official language of the Union.

Significance of Hindi:

- **Most spoken language in India** (~44% as per Census 2011).
- **Global presence:** Spoken in Mauritius, Nepal, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, etc.
- Serves as a **linguistic bridge** among diverse communities.
- Rich heritage: Originates from Sanskrit → Prakrit → Apabhramsha → Hindi.

States/UTs with Hindi as Official Language:

- **Primary:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh.
- **Secondary/Additional:** Delhi, Chandigarh.

Government Initiatives:

- **Hindi Pakhwada:** 1–15 Sept – promotes Hindi in govt offices.
- **Rajbhasha Awards:** Rajbhasha Gaurav Puraskar, Rajbhasha Kirti Puraskar.
- **Hindi Sahitya Sammelan Act, 1956:** Encourages literature, events, authors.
- **Central Hindi Training Institute (CHTI):** Courses for officials.
- **World Hindi Secretariat (India–Mauritius, 1999):** International promotion.
- Digital initiatives: Unicode, Hindi content on govt portals/apps.

Theme (2025):

"Hindi: The Strength of National Unity and Global Identity".

Importance of Hindi Diwas:

- Reinforces **cultural pride** and **national unity**.
- Motivates increased use of Hindi in administration & education.
- Preserves and spreads India's literary heritage.

Harappan Script: Attempts to Decipher
Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Culture, through IGNCA, is hosting a three-day international conference (Sept 11–13, 2025) in New Delhi to discuss new research and attempts to decipher the undeciphered Harappan script, with PM Modi and HM Amit Shah attending.

Description:
Harappan Script:

- **Origin:** Associated with the **Indus Valley Civilization (2600–1900 BCE)**.
- **Form:** **Pictographic/Logo-syllabic** – symbols represent objects, ideas, or sounds.
- **Medium:** Found on **seals, pottery, copper plates, tools, terracotta tablets**, etc.
- **Direction of Writing:** Usually **right to left**, sometimes **boustrophedon** (alternate lines in opposite directions).

Space for Notes:

- **Number of Symbols:** About **400–600** distinct signs identified.
- **Undeciphered:** Script remains undeciphered; no bilingual inscriptions discovered (like the Rosetta Stone for Egyptian).
- **Phonetic Value:** Uncertain; some scholars suggest it was not alphabetic but **logo-syllabic** (signs = word + sound).
- **Length of Inscriptions:** Short (most have **3–20** characters), indicating it was not used for long texts.
- **Purpose:** Believed to be used for **administrative, commercial, and ritual purposes**.
- **Decline:** Script disappeared with the decline of Harappan Civilization around **1900 BCE**.
- **Conference:** Union Ministry of Culture hosting meet (Sept 11–13, 2025).

The Conference:

- Organised by **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**.
- IGNCA is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture (1987).
- Headquarters: New Delhi., Works on art, culture, manuscripts, digitization.
- Attendees: archaeologists, cancer specialist, aerospace engineer, govt officials! (Diverse expertise).

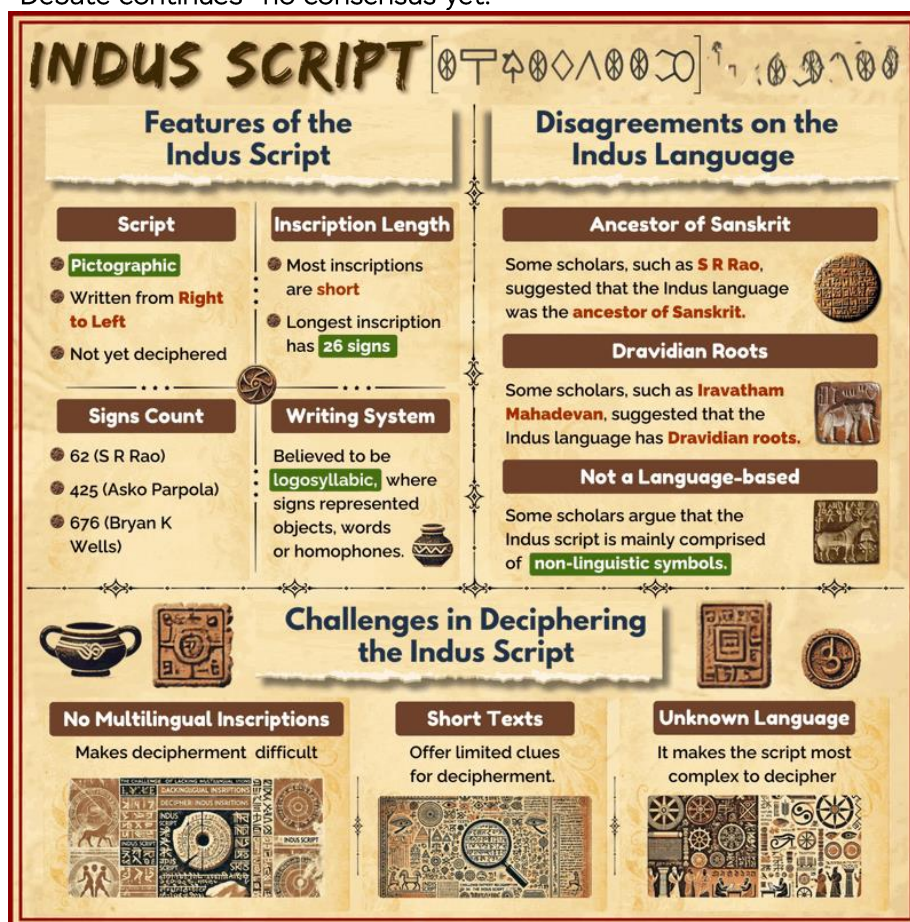
Different Theories:

- **Sanskrit link** (Indic roots)
- **Dravidian language link** (Proto-Dravidian)
- **Tribal/Adiwasi link** (Santali, Gondi)
- **Challenge:** No bilingual text (like Rosetta Stone for Egyptian hieroglyphs).

So far, the Harappan script remains **unreadable**.

- Understanding Harappan language = unlocking India's **earliest civilization's thought system**.
- Connects **Archaeology + Linguistics + Culture**.
- Current Research Highlight:
 - Prakash N. Salame claims **90% of symbols decoded** using Proto-Dravidian link.
 - Debate continues—no consensus yet.

Space for Notes:



Sushila Karki

Space for Notes:

Why in News?

Former Chief Justice **Sushila Karki** was sworn in on **12 September 2025** as Nepal's first **woman interim Prime Minister** after Gen-Z led protests over a social-media ban toppled PM K.P. Sharma Oli, marking an unprecedented shift from judiciary to executive leadership.

Description:

- Born: **1952**, Bhojpur district, eastern Nepal
- Profession: **Jurist, academic, politician**
- Distinction: **First woman Chief Justice of Nepal & first woman Prime Minister (interim)**

Education:

- **B.A.** – Mahendra Morang Campus, 1972
- **M.A. (Political Science)** – Banaras Hindu University, 1975
- **LL.B.** – Tribhuvan University, 1978

Career Path:

- Lecturer at Mahendra Multiple Campus, Dharan (briefly)
- Practised law in Biratnagar; led the **Koshi Zonal Bar** (1988–90) and **Biratnagar Appellate Bar** (2002–04)
- Recognised as **Senior Advocate** (2004)
- Appointed **Temporary Justice of the Supreme Court** (2009) → Permanent (2010)
- Became **Chief Justice** in July 2016 – first woman to hold the post
- Retired in June 2017 after brief suspension over an impeachment motion

Major Contributions & Cases:

- Known for **zero tolerance on corruption**
- Presided over key rulings, including conviction of Information Minister J.P. Gupta in a corruption scandal
- Authored her autobiography *Nyaya* (“Justice”) in 2018

Political Role:

- Sworn in as **Nepal's Interim Prime Minister** (Sept 12, 2025) after Gen-Z led protests ousted PM K.P. Sharma Oli
- Appointment brokered by Nepal's President, protest leaders, and Army chief

Significance:

- First woman to lead **two branches of state** in Nepal (Judiciary & Executive)
- Embodies integrity, reform, and public trust in times of political turmoil
- Her rise reflects growing space for **women in South Asian leadership**.



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