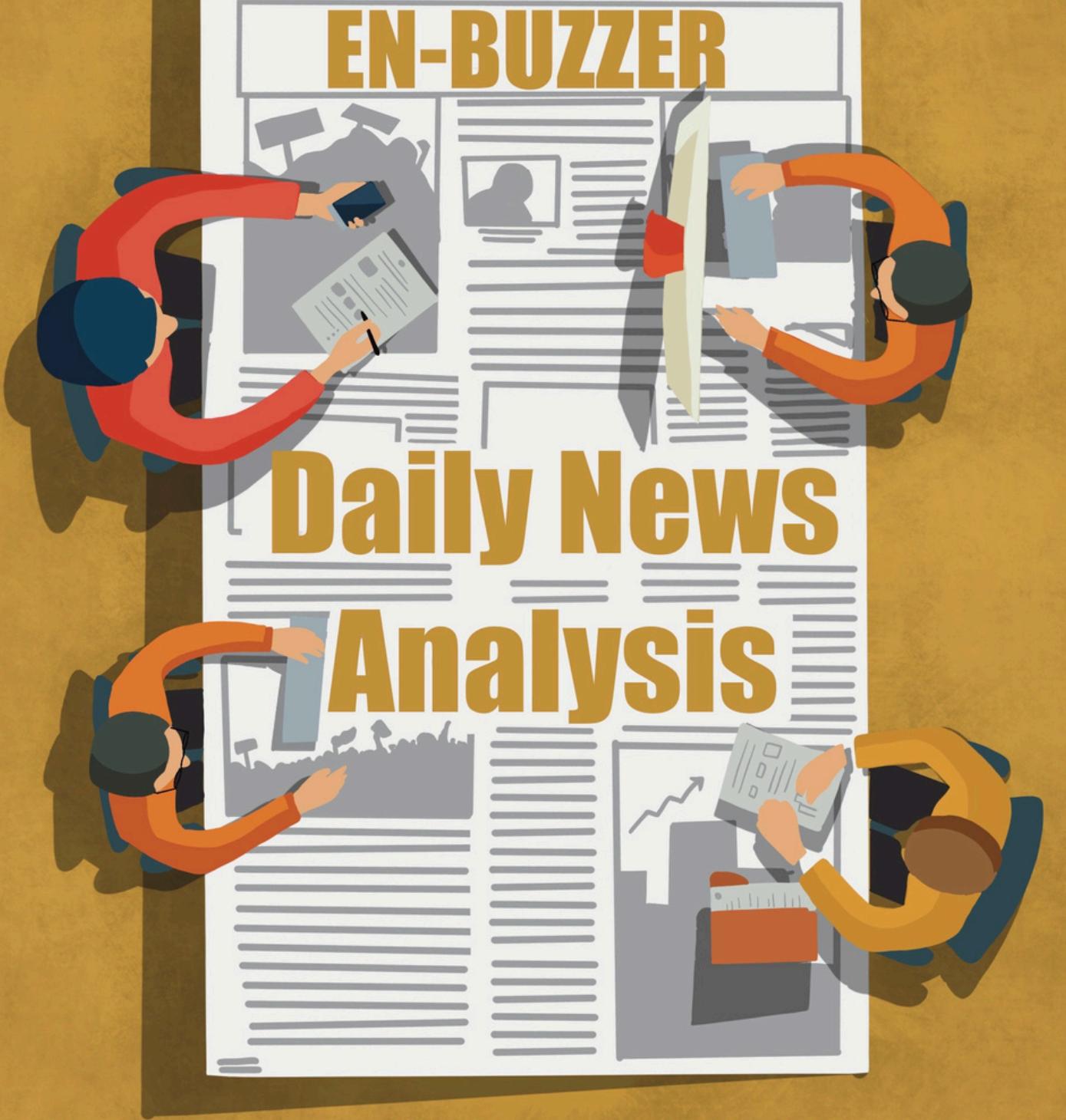




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3 NOVEMBER 2025

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1. Nauradehi Sanctuary and Project Cheetah

- **Prelims** - Nauradehi Sanctuary and Project Cheetah
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Environment

Why in the news?

- The Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary, which spans the districts of Narasinghpur, Damoh, and Sagar in Madhya Pradesh, is set to become India's third habitat for cheetahs.

Nauradehi Sanctuary

- **Location:** Madhya Pradesh
- **Terrain & physiography:**
 - Located on upper Vindhyan plateau
 - Forms part of Deccan Peninsular biogeographic region
 - It spans two major river basins- the Ganga (Yamuna tributary) basin and the Narmada basin.
- **Vegetation & habitat type:** Tropical dry deciduous forest predominates, with teak being a major species.
- **Fauna:** Home to various species including tigers, leopards, sloth bears, wild dogs, and the Indian wolf.

Project Cheetah

- **What is it?:** Project Cheetah is an initiative by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change in coordination with National Tiger Conservation Authority
- **Aim:** To reintroduce the cheetah, a species that went extinct in India in 1952
- **Features:**
 - The cheetahs being used are African subspecies (southern/eastern African cheetahs) sourced from countries such as Namibia, South Africa etc.
 - The project was formally kick-started in September 2022 with the first batch of cheetahs arriving in India to India's first site.
 - **Site selection:** Choose large protected areas with adequate prey base, minimal human-disturbance, connectivity possibilities and appropriate habitat for open-terrain carnivores (cheetah prefers open/grassland/woodland mosaic).

- **Genetic diversity:** Use cheetahs from multiple source populations to maintain genetic health of the reintroduced population.
- **Monitoring & management:** Use collars, field monitoring, prey base augmentation, habitat management, community involvement.
- **Phased expansion:** After initial pilot site(s), plan other sites and scale up to create a metapopulation structure (i.e., multiple sites connected via corridors).
- **Significance:**
 - **Biodiversity significance:** Re-establishing a lost apex predator, which has ecological ramifications (grassland health, trophic cascades, open-land ecosystems).
 - **Policy & governance:** Illustrates India's willingness to engage in large-scale species reintroduction (unprecedented for cheetah). Relates to global conservation commitments.
 - **Socio-economic dimension:** Potential for eco-tourism, local employment (guides, support services), community engagement; also raises questions of land use, human-wildlife interface, resettlement/compensation.
 - **Strategic dimension:** In India's larger wildlife-conservation architecture (e.g., Tiger + Lion + Cheetah triad), signalling of open-grassland ecosystems often neglected in favour of forest/ tiger landscapes.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Deaths in early phase:** Some of the cheetahs imported died due to medical issues, stress, possibly insufficient preparation.
 - **Human-wildlife conflict & resettlement:** Introducing large carnivores demands very stringent habitat/prey conditions and minimal human interface; relocation of villages or community support cannot be ignored.
 - **Genetic/behavioural adaptation:** African cheetahs into Indian ecosystem requires behavioural adaptation, predator-prey dynamics, diseases, climate may differ; thus long-term monitoring is crucial.
 - Open-grassland ecosystems (which cheetahs favour) have often been degraded, fragmented, under-valued compared to forested ecosystems, which necessitates habitat revival as a prerequisite for reintroduction.

2. UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

- **Prelims** - UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Art and Culture

Why in the news?

- Lucknow has been officially designated as a UNESCO ‘Creative City of Gastronomy’ during the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference in Uzbekistan.

UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

- **What is it?:**
 - The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was launched in 2004 to promote cooperation among cities that identify creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
 - It encourages cities to **share best practices, strengthen cultural industries, and integrate culture and creativity** into local development plans.
- **Objectives:**
 - Promote creativity as a driver for sustainable urban development.
 - Enhance international cooperation among creative cities.
 - Integrate culture into public policies and urban planning.
 - Support innovation and entrepreneurship in cultural sectors.
 - Facilitate the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and resources among cities.
- **Creative Fields:** Member cities are designated based on excellence in one or more of the following seven creative fields- Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music.
- **Representations from India:** As of 2025, 15 Indian cities are part of the UCCN
 - Jaipur (Rajasthan): Crafts and Folks
 - Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh): Music
 - Chennai (Tamil Nadu): Music
 - Mumbai (Maharashtra): Film
 - Hyderabad (Telangana): Gastronomy
 - Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir): Crafts and Folk art
 - Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh): Gastronomy

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- Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh): Literature
- Kolkata (West Bengal): Literature
- Jaipur (Rajasthan): Crafts and Folk art
- Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh): Music
- Kozhikode (Kerala): Literature
- Indore (Madhya Pradesh): Gastronomy
- Chandigarh (UT): Design
- Ahmedabad (Gujarat): Design
- **Significance:**
 - Promotes SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by linking culture and creativity to local development.
 - Boosts tourism and global branding of Indian cities.
 - Encourages public-private partnerships in creative industries.
 - Strengthens cultural diplomacy and soft power.

3. CMS-03 Satellite and LVM-3

- **Prelims** - CMS-03 Satellite and LVM-3
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Science and Technology

Why in the news?

- ISRO successfully launched the Indian Navy's advanced communication satellite GSAT-7R (CMS-03) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

CMS-03 Satellite (GSAT-7R)

- **What is it?:**
 - CMS-03 is a multi-band communication satellite developed by ISRO (in collaboration with the Indian Navy) primarily for naval/maritime communications and maritime command & control.
 - It is also referred to as GSAT-7R in defence/official usage: the “R” stands for “Replacement” of GSAT-7 (Rukmini) which served the Navy earlier.
- **Technical Specifications:**
 - **Launch mass:** approximately 4,410 kg.
 - **Orbit:** Geostationary/Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) insertion.
 - **Payload:** Multi-band transponders supporting voice, video and data links across bands (UHF, S, C, Ku) between ships, submarines, aircraft and shore command centres of the Indian Navy, covering the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and extended maritime zones.
 - **Designed lifetime:** at least ~15 years for strategic services.
- **Significance:**
 - **Strategic & security dimension:** Enhances India's maritime domain awareness, blue-water navy communications, network-centric warfare capability in the Indian Ocean Region. In an era of Indo-Pacific geostrategy, this boosts India's posture.
 - **Technology & self-reliance:** The satellite represents India's growing capability in heavy communication satellites and multi-band military communications, contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat in space.
 - **Space infrastructure and diplomacy:** The launch via Indian rocket (LVM3) (see next section) points to reducing dependence on foreign launchers for

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heavy satellites, thereby improving autonomy and commercial competitiveness.

- **Dual use / civil capability spill-over:** While dedicated to the Navy, capabilities such as multi-band communication, secure links, high-throughput may spill over into civilian infra (remote connectivity, island territories, disaster management).
- **Links to broader themes:** India's maritime strategy, digital connectivity, islands and maritime zones, space governance (military satellites), strategic corridors (like IOR security), emerging space economy.

Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM-3)

- **What is it?:**
 - The LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3), formerly known as GSLV Mk III, is a three-stage medium-to-heavy-lift launch vehicle developed by ISRO.
 - Designed primarily to launch communication satellites into geostationary orbits (GTO) and to carry future human spaceflight missions under India's human spaceflight programme.
- **Technical Specifications:**
 - Height: ~43.4 m.
 - Launch-mass: around 629 tonnes (~640 000 kg).
 - Payload capacity: ~4,400 kg to GTO (often quoted ~4,000-5,000 kg) and up to ~10,000 kg to LEO.
 - Stage configuration:
 - ★ Two solid strap-on boosters (S200)
 - ★ A liquid core stage (L110)
 - ★ Cryogenic upper stage (C25) using indigenous CE-20 engine.
- **Significance:**
 - **Heavy-lift capability:** LVM3 lifts India's capacity for heavier satellites/domestic launches; reduces reliance on foreign rockets (e.g., Ariane) for >3-4 t class satellites.
 - **Foundation for crewed missions:** It is expected to carry India's human spaceflight capsule under the Gaganyaan programme.

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- **Commercial & global competitiveness:** By enabling heavier payloads and building in privatisation, it positions India in the global launch market for moderate-heavy lift.
- **Technology demonstrator for future launchers:** Many of the technologies (large solid boosters, cryogenic upper stage, modular core) feed into future plans (e.g., semi-cryogenic, reusable launchers).

4. Axial Seamount

- **Prelims** - Axial Seamount
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Geography

Why in the news?

- The Axial Seamount underwater volcano near the Oregon coast could erupt soon, scientists have warned, following the detection of more earthquakes in the region.

Axial Seamount

- **Type:** Submarine volcano (seamount)
- **Location:** On the Juan de Fuca Ridge, about 480 km off the coast of Oregon, USA, in the northeast Pacific Ocean.
- **Depth:** Summit lies about 1,400 meters below sea level.
- **Nature:** One of the most active and best-studied underwater volcanoes in the world.
- **Geological Background:**
 - ➔ Lies on a divergent plate boundary between the Juan de Fuca and Pacific plates.
 - ➔ Continuous seafloor spreading causes magma to rise through fissures, creating new oceanic crust.
 - ➔ It is also the site of a mid-ocean ridge hydrothermal system, with vents emitting superheated, mineral-rich fluids.

5. Uzbekistan

- **Prelims** - Location of Uzbekistan
- **Mains** - GS 2 - International Relations

Uzbekistan

Why in news?

- UNESCO 43rd General Conference held at Samarkand (Uzbekistan).

Uzbekistan

- **Location:** Uzbekistan is a doubly landlocked country located in Central Asia.
- **Capital:** Tashkent
- **Border Countries:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan.
- **Bordering Waterbodies:** Aral Sea
- **Geography:** Part of Eurasian Steppe or Great Steppe.
- **Climatic Type:** Continental Climate
- **International Groupings** - Member of Commonwealth of Independent States, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Uzbekistan is also a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and hosts the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent. Uzbekistan joined the new Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO) in 2002, Central Asian Union

UZBEKISTAN



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6. Nigeria

- **Prelims** - Location of Nigeria
- **Mains** - GS 2 - International Relations

Nigeria

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Why in news?

- US President has stated that the US forces will be mobilized to Nigeria if the Nigerian Govt fails to take appropriate actions to prevent the persecution faced by Christians in Nigeria by the terrorists.

Nigeria

- **Location:** Nigeria is a West African country located in between Sahel to the north and the Gulf of Guinea to the south in the Atlantic Ocean.
- **Capital:** Abuja
- **Bordering Countries:** Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Benin.
- **Major Rivers:** Niger and Benue
- **Bordering Waterbody:** Nigeria shares border with endocrine lake called Lake Chad.
- **Climatic:** Tropical rainforest climate, savannah and desert climate.
- **International Cooperation**
 - Nigeria is a founding member of the African Union.
 - Other Organisation - United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, NAM, the Economic Community of West African States, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and OPEC.



7. Sambhar Lake

- **Prelims** - Sambhar Lake
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Environment

Why in the news?

- Sambhar Lake is witnessing an extraordinary influx of migratory birds this winter — a rise of nearly 40% compared to last year.

Sambhar Lake

- **Location:** Situated in Nagaur and Jaipur districts, Rajasthan.
- **Largest saltwater lake:** India's biggest inland saline lake.
- **Shape and feed:** Elliptical, fed by ephemeral streams like Mendha and Runpangarh.
- **Ramsar site:** Designated as a Ramsar site in 1990.
- **Migratory birds:** Key winter habitat for flamingos, pelicans, and various migratory birds, especially during winter.
- **Salt production:** Produces approximately 210,000 tonnes of salt annually, making Rajasthan one of India's top salt-producing states.