



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 02-04-2025

GS-1

1. Teesta River

GS-2

2. Section 44(3) of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act
3. India's geopolitical vision should be larger
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GS-3

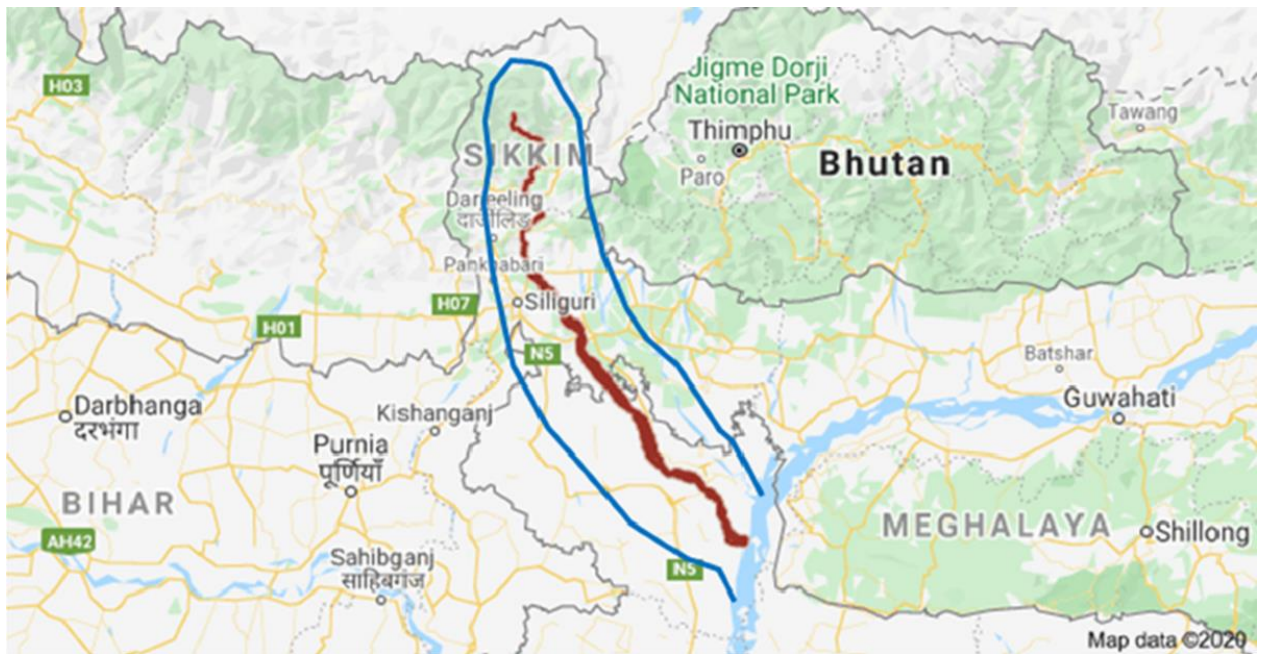
5. Kasampatty Sacred Grove

Teesta River

Syllabus: GS-1; Geography- Rivers

Context

- Bangladesh officially invited China to assist in the **Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project**.



More about the news

1. China's Role in Bangladesh's Teesta Project

- Bangladesh officially invited China to assist in the **Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project**.
- China proposed **dredging, embankment construction, and water management** to address floods and irrigation.
- **India's Concern:** Views third-party involvement cautiously due to geopolitical sensitivities.

2. India-Bangladesh Water-Sharing Dispute

- **Pending Treaty:** A fair water-sharing agreement remains unresolved (West Bengal opposes current terms).
- Bangladesh seeks **higher dry-season flow** (currently gets only ~20%).
- Recent diplomatic talks show **progress but no breakthrough**.

3. Environmental Issues

- **2023 Sikkim GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood)** damaged the upper Teesta basin.
- Protests in Bangladesh over **reduced water flow** affecting agriculture.

Key Facts About the Teesta River

Geography

- **Origin:** Tso Lhamo Lake (Sikkim, India) at 5,280 meters.
- **Other Sources:** Pahunri Glacier, Khangse Glacier, Chho Lhamo Lake.
- **Length:** 414 km (83% in India, 17% in Bangladesh).
- **Mouth:** Joins Brahmaputra (Jamuna River) in Bangladesh.

Tributaries

- **Left Bank:** Lachung Chhu, Rangpo Chhu, Rani Khola.
- **Right Bank:** Zemu Chhu, Rangit River.

Dams & Barrages

- **India:**
 - **Hydropower:** Teesta-V (510 MW), Teesta-III (1,200 MW).
 - **Irrigation:** Gajoldoba Barrage (West Bengal).
- **Bangladesh:**
 - Duani & Barakhata Barrages (irrigation).

Section 44(3) of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act

Syllabus: GS-2: Data Protection Act & Freedom of Speech.

Context:

- Why activists are worried about Section 44(3) of new data protection law.

Impact of Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act on the Right to Information Act

About Section 44(3) of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023

What is Section 44(3)?

- Amends **Section 8(1)(j)** of the **Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005** to impose broader restrictions on disclosing personal information.
- Removes earlier safeguards, such as **public interest tests** and **legislative access exceptions**.

Key Features of Section 44(3):

- Replaces the original provision with a **broader exemption clause**:
 - **New Clause:** *“(j) information which relates to personal information.”*
- Eliminates provisions that:
 - Balanced privacy rights with **public interest considerations**.
 - Allowed disclosure if the information was relevant to a **public activity**.
 - Ensured citizens had access to information that was not denied to **Parliament or State Legislatures**.

Why is Section 44(3) Controversial?

- Expands the **scope of denial** under RTI, making it easier to reject requests citing personal information.

About Section 8(1)(j) of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005

What is Section 8?

- Lists **exemptions** under which public authorities can **refuse disclosure** of information.

Key Exemptions under Section 8(1):

- National security & sovereignty – Clause (a)
- Judicial restrictions or contempt of court – Clause (b)
- Parliamentary privilege – Clause (c)
- Commercial confidence & intellectual property (IP) – Clause (d)
- Fiduciary relationships – Clause (e)
- Foreign government communications – Clause (f)
- Threat to life or safety of informants – Clause (g)
- Ongoing investigations – Clause (h)

- Cabinet deliberations – Clause (i)
- Personal information (with public interest override) – Clause (j)

How Section 44(3) Affects Section 8(1)(j)?

- Previously, **personal information** could be disclosed if:
 - It served a larger public interest.
 - It was linked to **public activity or official conduct**.

Impact of DPDP Act's Section 44(3) on RTI Act's Section 8(1)(j)

1. Weakens Transparency & Public Accountability

- Removes **public interest override**, making it easier to withhold information on:
 - **Public officials' assets & salaries.**
 - **Cases of misconduct or corruption.**
 - **Government decision-making processes.**

2. Overrides Judicial Precedents

- Courts have **interpreted Section 8(1)(j)** to favour public disclosure in cases of:
 - Corruption and maladministration.
 - Elected representatives' financial disclosures.
- The amendment **nullifies** these precedents.

3. Risk of Blanket Denials of Information

- Could be **misused** by authorities to reject legitimate RTI requests.
- Hampers **investigative journalism, activism, and citizen oversight.**

4. Weakens Democratic Accountability

- **Transparency in governance** is compromised.
- **Reduces public trust** in institutions by limiting access to crucial information.

Conclusion

- **Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act** significantly **dilutes the RTI Act's transparency provisions.**
- It shifts the balance **in favour of privacy** but at the cost of **public accountability.**

- The move has raised concerns among activists and opposition leaders, who argue it could be **misused to shield officials from scrutiny**.

India's geopolitical vision should be larger

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – Geopolitics.

Context:

This article is based on the editorial published in The Hindu – 'India's geopolitical vision should be larger'.

India's Limited Political Role in Global Conflicts

- Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked Indian PM Narendra Modi for India's diplomatic efforts in the Russia-Ukraine war.
- Despite its past active interventions in regional conflicts, India has refrained from playing a larger role in global disputes.
- India has historically played a crucial role in:
 - **Bangladesh Liberation War (1971):** Supported the birth of a new nation and stopped genocide.
 - **Maldives (1988):** Prevented an armed coup attempt.
 - **Sri Lanka (2009):** Assisted in defeating the LTTE.
 - **Maritime Security:** Combating piracy in the region.
- India has contributed to global public goods through:
 - **Vaccine Maitri** during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Establishing the **International Solar Alliance** for climate action.
 - Sharing **Digital Public Infrastructure** globally.
 - Acting as a **first responder** in natural disasters.

Reasons for India's Reticence in Global Conflicts

- **Economic Prioritization:**
 - Since the early 2000s, successive governments have focused on economic growth, making India the world's 5th largest economy.
 - Fear that political involvement in conflicts might disrupt economic progress.

➤ **Maintaining Strong Bilateral Relations:**

- Avoiding conflicts ensures strong ties with multiple countries.
- India avoids being more proactive in regions like West Asia, where Gulf nations themselves remain neutral.

➤ **Geopolitical Pragmatism:**

- India follows a **multi-alignment** strategy rather than taking a firm stance in conflicts.
- While non-alignment was for the **Global South**, multi-alignment benefits India directly.

➤ **Rising Global Expectations from India:**

- As a large economy and democracy aspiring for a **UNSC permanent seat**, India is expected to play a larger role in global affairs.

India's Role in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

➤ **Balanced Approach:**

- India abstained from UNSC votes against Russia despite international pressure.
- PM Modi stated, "**This is not an era of war**," urging restraint from Russia.

➤ **Diplomatic Influence:**

- India's neutral stance influenced other developing nations to adopt a balanced position.
- Putin's recent gratitude signals an expectation for India to assume a greater diplomatic role.

Emerging Global Geopolitical Reset

➤ **Changing Global Power Dynamics:**

- India risks losing geopolitical influence if it remains passive, allowing countries like **Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar** to mediate major conflicts.
- Example: Türkiye facilitated Ukraine-Russia peace talks in 2022, while Saudi Arabia hosted U.S.-Russia and U.S.-Ukraine discussions.

➤ **Shifting U.S. Priorities:**

- The U.S. could **downsize** its engagements in Europe and Asia under a Trump 2.0 presidency.
- Rising **protectionism** and trade fragmentation require India to expand its global partnerships.
- **China's Growing Influence:**
 - India's adversarial ties with China continue, with an increasing trade deficit.
 - U.S.-China deals could lead to a division of global power, sidelining the Quad (India, Japan, Australia, U.S.).

The Need for a Strategic Shift

- **Regional Policies:**
 - India's global role should go beyond strong bilateral ties.
 - Example: While India has built close relations with **Central Asia**, it reduced engagement in the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
 - India needs **enhanced attention to East Asia**, especially after rejecting the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**.
- **Stronger Engagement with Europe:**
 - With Europe under pressure, India must strengthen its economic and strategic ties.
 - Internal reforms are needed to boost competitiveness and secure a bilateral trade deal with the U.S.
- **Active Role in Global Conflicts:**
 - India has previously played a significant role in conflicts like:
 - **Korean War (1951-52):** Chaired the **Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission** despite being an impoverished nation.
 - **UNSC Stint (2021-22):** Served as a bridge between conflicting views.
 - Future participation should go beyond mediation and focus on shaping global peace and security.

Conclusion: India's Geopolitical Vision

- In a fragmented world order, India must balance **economic growth with strategic assertiveness**.

- Multi-alignment should be expanded beyond economic partnerships to active political engagement.
- A proactive global stance will help India emerge as a **major pole in a multipolar world**.

INSV Tarini

Syllabus: GS-3; Science & Tech.

Context:

Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini, crewed by women officers Lt Cdr Dilna K. and Lt Cdr Roopa A., arrived at Cape Town, South Africa, Recently.

Overview

- **Mission:** All-women crew (Lt Cdr Dilna K. & Lt Cdr Roopa A.) circumnavigating the globe.
- **Flag-off:** October 2024 from **Goa** by CNS Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi.
- **Objective:** Cover **23,400+ nautical miles** across 3 oceans, rounding 3 Capes in **8 months**.
- **Vessel:** Indigenously built **56-foot INSV Tarini** (commissioned in **2017**).

Key Stopovers

- **Fremantle, Australia**
- **Lyttelton, New Zealand**
- **Port Stanley, Falkland Islands (UK)**
- **Cape Town, South Africa** (Final stopover; arrived April 2025).

Challenges Faced

- **Weather:** Stormy seas, **50+ knot winds (93 km/h)**, **7-meter-high waves**.
- **Temperature:** Extremely cold conditions during Southern Ocean transit.

Significance of Cape Town Visit

- **Reception:** Welcomed by **Indian Consul General, SA Navy officials**, and naval band.
- **Activities:**
 - **Maintenance:** 2-week docking at Royal Cape Yacht Club.
 - **Engagements:** Interactions with **SA Navy** at Simon's Town & Gordon's Bay.
 - **Community Outreach:** Public events to promote maritime awareness.
- **Departure:** Scheduled for **April 15, 2025** (final leg to India).

Strategic Context

- **India-SA Naval Ties:**
 - **Oct 2024: Exercise IBSAMAR-VIII** (INS Talwar participated).
 - **Jan 2025:** INS Tushil's port call at Durban.

Broader Implications

- **Gender Empowerment:** Highlights women's role in maritime expeditions.
- **Indigenous Capabilities:** Showcases India's shipbuilding prowess.
- **Diplomacy:** Strengthens ties with host nations through naval diplomacy.

Kasampatty Sacred Grove

Syllabus: GS-3: Biodiversity Conservation – Sacred Groves.

Context:

- Kasampatty sacred grove in Dindigul declared T.N.'s second biodiversity heritage site.

Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)

Definition:

- Ecologically fragile areas with **rich biodiversity, endemism, and cultural significance**, often **conserved by local communities**.

Declared Under:

- **Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.**

Criteria for Declaration:

- Presence of:
 - **High species diversity** (wild & domesticated)
 - **Endemic or rare species**
 - **Cultural or sacred importance** (e.g., sacred groves)
 - **Ecological corridors** supporting threatened species

Procedure for Declaration:

- **Suggestions** invited by **State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs)** via **Panchayats or Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)**.
- **Ecological & cultural studies** conducted with local community consultation.
- **Public consultation** before **Government Gazette notification** by the State.
- **Management plan** implemented by local bodies, monitored by SBBs.

Kasampatty Sacred Grove (Veera Kovil Grove) – Tamil Nadu's 2nd BHS

Location & Area:

- **Village:**Kasampatty, near **Alagarmalai Reserve Forest**, Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu
- **Total Area:** 4.97 hectares

Tamil Nadu's First BHS:

- **Arittapatti village, Madurai district** (Declared in **2022**)

Key Features of Kasampatty Grove:

1. Cultural Significance:

- **Veera Kovil Temple** – Worship of deity **Veeranan** by locals.

2. Ecological Importance:

- Acts as an **ecological bridge** enhancing **pollination** and **soil fertility** in **mango plantations**.
- Aids in **local climate stability** and **wildlife connectivity**.

3. Community-Led Conservation:

- **Protected after a resolution by Reddiyapatty Panchayat Council.**

- **Supported by:** Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board & District Collector.

Significance of BHS in Conservation Efforts:

- **Strengthens community-based conservation** of ecologically & culturally significant sites.
- **Supports sustainable land-use practices** while preserving biodiversity.
- **Boosts traditional ecological knowledge** & strengthens **local governance** in biodiversity management.