



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 24-10-2025

GS-1

1. Somnath Temple
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GS-2

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Somnath Temple

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

Context

- The President of India, during a three-day visit to Gujarat, offered prayers at the historic **Somnath Mahadev Temple** in **Gir Somnath district**.



About Somnath Temple

- **Deity:** Dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.
- **Location:** **Prabhas Patan**, near **Veraval** in **Saurashtra**, Gujarat.
- **Religious Significance:**
 - It is the **first of the 12 Jyotirlinga shrines** of Lord Shiva.

- The site is also known for the **Triveni Sangam** — confluence of **Kapila, Hiran, and Saraswati rivers**.
- **Historical Background:**
 - The temple's existence dates back to **at least 649 BCE**, though believed to be even older.
 - It has been **destroyed and rebuilt several times** due to repeated invasions, notably the **attack by Mahmud of Ghazni (1025 CE)**.
- **Reconstruction:**
 - The **present structure** was rebuilt in the **Chalukya style** of temple architecture.
 - Reconstruction was completed in **May 1951**, spearheaded by **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**.
- **Architectural Style:**
 - Follows the **Kalika-style (Chalukyan)** — symbolizing skill, strength, and devotion in stone.

Kerala will officially be first State 'free of extreme poverty'

Syllabus: GS-1 & 2: Poverty and Related concepts

Context:

- Kerala is set to be declared free from **extreme poverty on November 1, 2025 (Kerala Piravi Day)**.
- It will become the **first Indian state** and one of the few regions globally to achieve this milestone.
- According to NITI Aayog's **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2021**, Kerala had the **lowest poverty rate in India (0.7%)**.
- Extreme poverty is defined as the inability to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, health, and education—often linked to living below US \$2.15 per day.

Significance:

- Reflects the success of Kerala's welfare-oriented development model.
- Strengthens India's progress toward **SDG 1: No Poverty**.
- Provides a **replicable model** for other Indian states and developing countries.

Securing future

Through the Extreme Poverty Eradication Project launched in 2021, the Kerala government prepared micro-plans for every family

■ **1,03,099** individuals from **64,006** families identified as extremely poor

■ **21,263** families received essential documents

■ **3,913** families were provided **new houses**

■ **1,338** families were allotted land



■ **5,651** families received up to ₹2 lakh each for house renovation

■ **3,822** families got livelihood assistance

The Initiative: Process and Components

Identification and Survey:

- A statewide survey in 2021 identified **64,006 families** living in extreme poverty.
- After verification, the final target list included **59,277 families**.

Micro-Planning Approach:

- Each family received an individual **micro-plan** based on its specific needs.
- Key interventions included:
 - Provision of **housing** for the homeless.
 - Allocation of **land** to landless families.
 - **Renovation assistance** for uninhabitable houses.
 - Ensuring **access to identity and entitlement documents**.
 - **Health, education, and livelihood** support through local bodies and Kudumbashree.

Governance and Coordination:

- Implemented through **Local Self-Governments (Panchayats, Municipalities)** with coordination among state departments.
- Declared a **priority mission** by the Kerala government in 2021.

Key Statistics and Indicators

- Kerala's MPI: **0.7% (2021)** — lowest in India.
- Out of 64,006 identified families:
 - 4,421 were deceased,
 - 261 untraceable,
 - 4,729 duplicate or invalid entries.
 - Net families assisted: **59,277**.
- In Thiruvananthapuram district, 94.8% of identified families were lifted out of extreme poverty.

Factors Behind Kerala's Success

- Long tradition of **social welfare and human development** (high literacy, health outcomes).
- Strong **decentralized governance system**.
- Active **community participation** through Kudumbashree and local bodies.
- Recognition of poverty as **multi-dimensional**, not merely income-based.
- Strong **political will** and administrative continuity.
- **Data-driven micro-planning** enabling targeted, household-specific solutions.

Challenges and Sustainability Issues

- Preventing **relapse into poverty**; need for ongoing monitoring and support.
- Reaching **migrant and untraceable families**.
- Ensuring **objective verification** of "poverty-free" claims.
- Difficulty in **replicating** Kerala's model in other states with weaker institutions.
- Sustaining long-term **livelihood generation** beyond welfare assistance.
- Building robust **monitoring and evaluation** systems for continued assessment.

Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021

Syllabus: GS-2: Governance –Rules and Regulations.

Context:

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has notified the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2025**.
- These amendments modify **Rule 3(1)(d)** of the **IT Rules, 2021**, to enhance **transparency, proportionality, and accountability** in the **removal of unlawful online content**.
- Effective from **15 November 2025**.

Background

- **Original Rules:** IT Rules, 2021 notified on **25 February 2021**, amended in **October 2022** and **April 2023**.
- Aim: To prescribe **due diligence obligations** on intermediaries (social media platforms, online entities) under the **Information Technology Act, 2000**.
- Under **Rule 3(1)(d)** – intermediaries must remove unlawful information after receiving:
 - A **court order**, or
 - A **notification from the Appropriate Government**.
- MeitY's review indicated a need for:
 - Senior-level accountability,
 - Precise specification of unlawful content, and
 - Periodic review of directions.

Key Features of the 2025 Amendments



The Information Technology Rules 2021

(Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code)

Senior-level Authorisation

- Only **senior officers** can now issue removal intimations:
 - **Central/State Government:** Officer **not below the rank of Joint Secretary** (or equivalent).
 - **Authorised agency:** May act through a **single corresponding officer**.
 - **Police authorities:** Only **Deputy Inspector General (DIG)** or above, when specially authorised, can issue such intimations.
- Ensures **responsibility and traceability** in decision-making.

Reasoned Intimation with Specific Details

- Each intimation must:
 - **Specify the legal basis** (statutory provision invoked).
 - **Describe the nature of the unlawful act.**
 - **Identify the exact URL or content identifier** to be removed.
- The earlier term "*notification*" is replaced with "*reasoned intimation*"—aligning with the '**actual knowledge**' requirement under **Section 79(3)(b)** of the IT Act.
- Promotes **clarity and precision** in government communication to intermediaries.

Periodic Review Mechanism

- All intimations issued under Rule 3(1)(d) will undergo a **monthly review** by:
 - An officer **not below the rank of Secretary** of the Appropriate Government.
- Purpose:

- Ensure that removal actions are **necessary, proportionate, and legally consistent**.
- Adds an **oversight layer** to prevent misuse or overreach.

Balance of Rights and Responsibilities

- The amendments aim to:
 - **Protect citizens' constitutional rights** (especially freedom of expression under Article 19).
 - Ensure **legitimate regulation** of unlawful online content.
 - Prevent **arbitrary restrictions** by enforcing transparency in enforcement mechanisms.

Expected Impact

Aspect	Expected Outcome
Transparency & Accountability	Clear designation of authorised officers and a review mechanism ensures proper checks and balances.
Clarity for Intermediaries	Detailed and reasoned intimations help intermediaries comply without over-censorship.
Proportionality & Safeguards	Ensures lawful, limited, and justified interventions — aligned with principles of natural justice .
Citizen Protection	Reduces risk of arbitrary takedown orders, maintaining trust and openness in digital governance.

Conclusion

The **2025 amendments to Rule 3(1)(d)** of the IT Rules, 2021 mark a significant step toward **responsible digital governance** in India.

By ensuring **senior-level authorisation, reasoned directions, and periodic review**, the government strengthens the **transparency, proportionality, and accountability** of online content regulation — balancing **citizen rights with state responsibility** in the digital ecosystem.

Afghanistan

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – Conflicts in South Asia.

Context:

- Recently, in **October 2025**, Pakistan launched air and drone strikes inside **Afghanistan's Khost and Paktika provinces**, claiming to target **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)** militants allegedly sheltered by the Afghan Taliban regime.

Background

- **Historical Dispute:** Rooted in disagreement over the **Durand Line (1893)** — a colonial-era boundary never officially recognised by Afghanistan.
- **Ethnic & Tribal Links:** Pashtun tribes straddle the border, making control and policing difficult.
- **Pakistan's Policy of 'Strategic Depth':** Since the 1980s, Pakistan has sought to influence Afghanistan to prevent Indian strategic presence.
- **Rise of TTP:** After 2007, Pakistan faced repeated attacks by TTP militants who often took refuge in Afghanistan's eastern provinces.



Reasons Behind Pakistan's Attacks

Factor	Explanation
Counter-Terrorism	Pakistan accuses the Taliban of harbouring TTP militants responsible for attacks inside Pakistan.
Security Assertion	To reassert control along the porous border and deter cross-border attacks.
Domestic Pressure	Rising militant attacks within Pakistan led to political and military pressure for a strong response.
Strategic Signalling	Intended to remind the Afghan Taliban of Pakistan's leverage and military capability.
Diplomatic Frustration	Collapse of Pakistan-Taliban coordination on border management and intelligence sharing.

Nature of the Conflict

- **Cross-border Airstrikes:** Pakistan Air Force targeted alleged militant camps inside Afghan territory.
- **Ground Clashes:** Intense exchange of fire along the **Kurram, North Waziristan, and Paktika sectors**.
- **Retaliation:** Afghan Taliban forces claimed to have destroyed several Pakistani outposts.
- **Ceasefire and Talks:** Qatar and China reportedly facilitated temporary truce negotiations.

Legal and Diplomatic Dimensions

- **Violation of Sovereignty:** Afghanistan termed the strikes a breach of international law and its territorial integrity.
- **Pakistan's Justification:** Claimed "self-defence" under **Article 51 of the UN Charter**, citing failure of the Taliban to restrain militants.
- **International Response:**
 - **UN & OIC** urged restraint and dialogue.
 - **China** called for "calm and stability" as both nations are part of its **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** framework.

- **India** maintained silence but closely monitored developments due to regional security implications.

Implications

(a) Regional Stability

- Escalation risks destabilising South Asia and undermines regional counter-terrorism efforts.
- Could push militants deeper into ungoverned Afghan territories, worsening the humanitarian crisis.

(b) Afghanistan's Internal Politics

- Taliban under pressure to appear sovereign and strong.
- Anti-Pakistan sentiment among Afghans intensifies, weakening Pakistan's traditional influence.

(c) Pakistan's Domestic Security

- Short-term tactical gains but possible blowback from militant reprisals.
- Economic strain from border closures and halted trade.

(d) For India

- India gains **strategic space** as Pakistan–Taliban relations deteriorate.
- Opens avenues for **soft diplomacy and humanitarian engagement** with Afghanistan.
- However, any regional instability can spill over to **India's western front** and affect trade via Central Asia.

Challenges Ahead

- **Porous Border Control:** Difficult terrain allows militants to regroup.
- **Intelligence Cooperation:** Virtually collapsed since Taliban takeover in 2021.
- **Civilian Impact:** Airstrikes caused civilian casualties, deepening mistrust.
- **Economic Fallout:** Closure of key crossings halted transit trade affecting both economies.
- **Diplomatic Isolation:** Pakistan risks international criticism for unilateral military actions.

Way Forward

- **Revival of Bilateral Security Mechanism:** Re-establish a Joint Border Commission to handle cross-border threats.
- **Third-party Mediation:** Qatar, China, or SCO could facilitate dialogue.
- **Confidence-Building Measures:** Humanitarian cooperation, refugee assistance, and trade resumption.
- **Regional Counter-terrorism Strategy:** Through **SCO and SAARC mechanisms** to ensure collective stability.
- **Respect for Sovereignty:** Both nations must commit to international norms and cease unilateral strikes.

Conclusion

The 2025 Pakistan–Afghanistan border conflict underscores the fragility of post-2021 South Asian geopolitics. While Pakistan's security concerns are legitimate, unilateral military actions risk prolonging instability. Constructive dialogue, cross-border intelligence cooperation, and regional diplomacy are essential to prevent another cycle of conflict that could destabilise the entire region.

Sundarbans National Park

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

- Recently, the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** revealed that **Sundarbans National Park** has experienced a **deterioration in its conservation outlook status** — moving from '**Good with Some Concerns**' to '**Significant Concerns**' over the last five years.

About Sundarbans National Park

Location:

- Situated in the **southeastern region of West Bengal**, near **Kolkata**.
- Forms part of the **Gangetic Delta**, one of the largest delta regions in the world.

Overview:

- Part of the larger **Sundarbans mangrove forest**, the **largest mangrove forest in the world**.
- Established in **1973** under **India's Project Tiger** to protect the **endangered Royal Bengal Tiger**.
- Designated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site (1987)** for its unique natural ecosystem and tiger habitat.
- Declared a **Biosphere Reserve (1989)** by the Government of India.
- Included in the **UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves (2001)** for its role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- Recognized as a **Ramsar Site (2019)**, emphasizing its significance for **migratory birds** and **wetland conservation**.

Rivers:

- The **Sundarbans delta** is formed by the confluence of **three major rivers** — **Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna**.

Flora:

- Prominent mangrove and coastal vegetation species include:
 - **Sundari tree (Heritiera fomes)** – dominant species giving the region its name.
 - **Golpati, Champa, Dhundul, Genwa, and Hatal**.

Fauna:

- **Mammals:** Royal Bengal Tiger, fishing cats, macaques, leopard cats, Indian grey mongoose, wild boar, flying fox, and pangolin.
- The park also supports a rich diversity of **reptiles, amphibians, and birdlife**, making it an essential ecological zone.

