DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 06-01-2026

Mapping Perspective

1. **Chilika Lake**

Prelims Perspective

2. **Typhoid**
3. **Double-Humped Bactrian Camel**

Mains Perspective

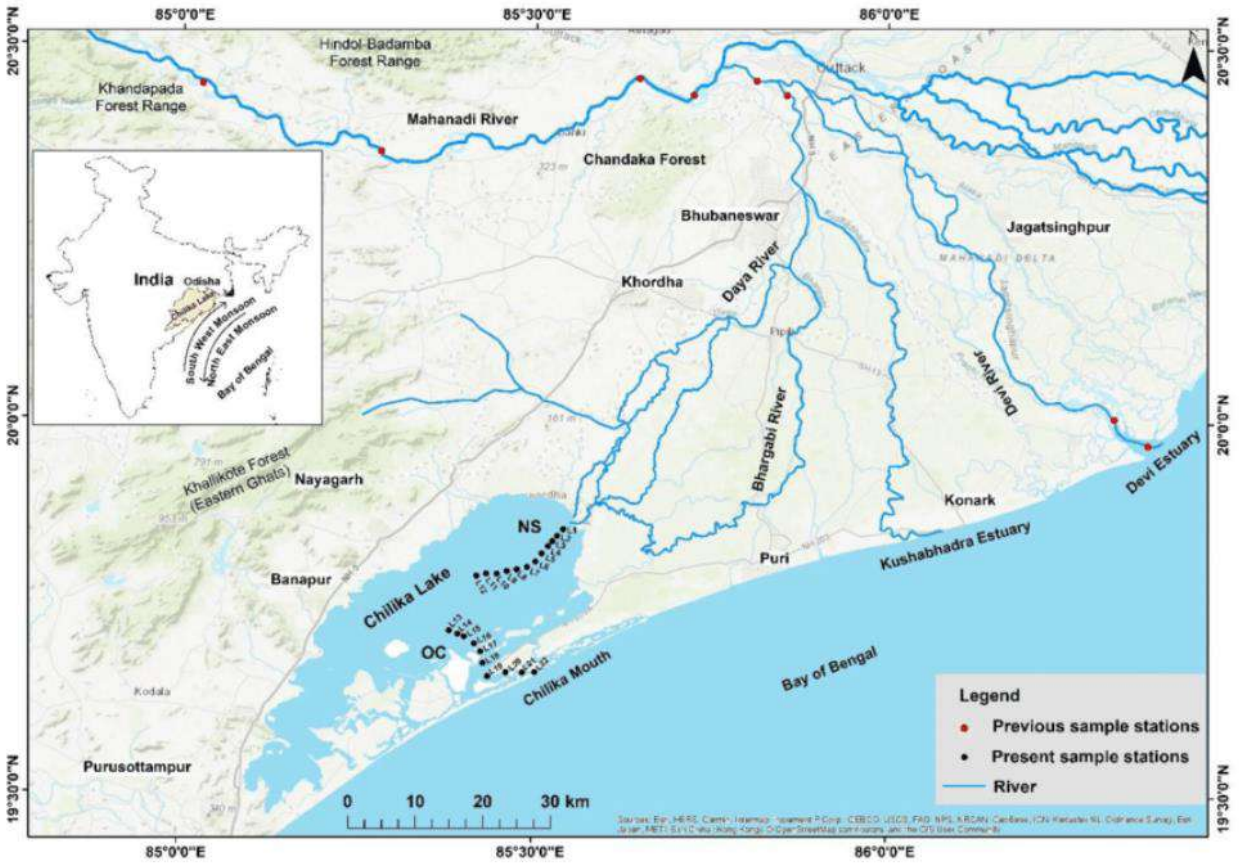
4. **How language issue led to one of Assam's most volatile conflicts**
5. **Transforming a waste-ridden urban India**

Chilika Lake

Syllabus: GS -1; Geography , GS-3; Environment & Ecology

Context:

The Odisha government is preparing a new action plan to conserve **Chilika Lake's biodiversity** and ensure sustainable development in surrounding areas.



About Chilika Lake

- A **brackish water lagoon with estuarine character** spread across **Puri, Khurda, and Ganjam districts** of Odisha.
- **Asia's largest brackish water lake**.
- Second-largest brackish water lagoon in the world, after the **New Caledonian barrier reef**.
- Located at the mouth of the **Daya River**.
- **Area variation:**
    - ~900 sq. km (summer)

  - ~1165 sq. km (monsoon)
- Connected to the **Bay of Bengal** through a **32 km long channel**, separated by a narrow sand spit.

Islands in Chilika

- **Nalabana Island:** Bird Sanctuary (1987)
- **Kalijai Island:** Kalijai Temple
- Other islands include **Honeymoon Island, Breakfast Island, Beacon Island, Satpada Island**.

International Recognition

- India's **first Ramsar Wetland of International Importance** (1981).

Biodiversity Significance

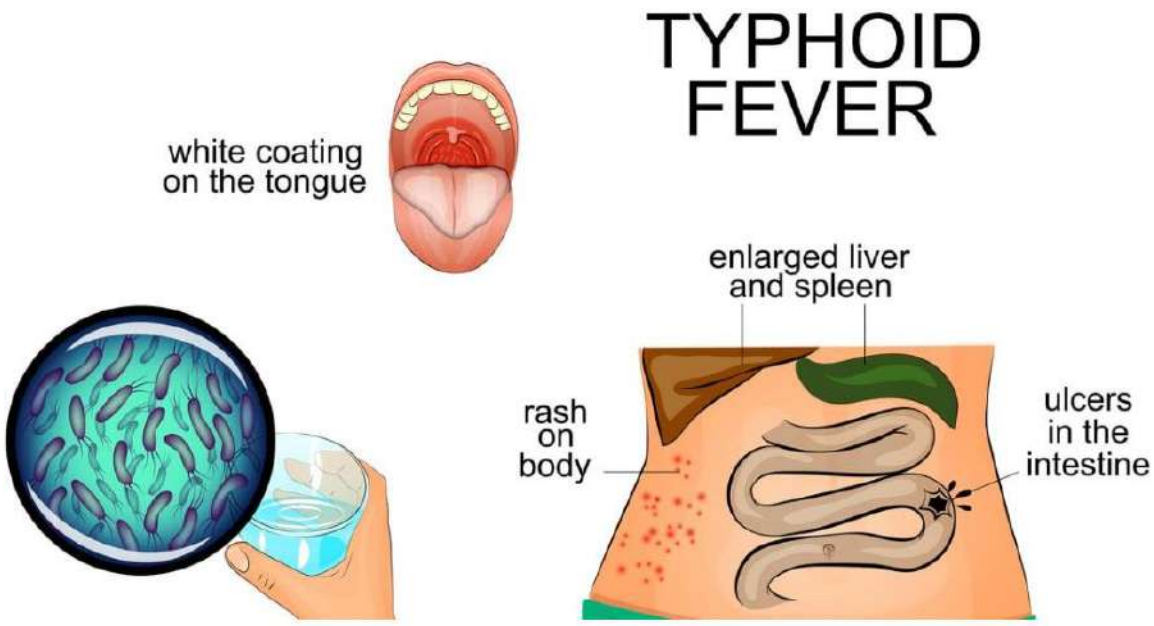
- Largest **wintering ground for migratory birds** in the Indian subcontinent.
- Birds migrate from **Caspian Sea, Lake Baikal, Aral Sea, Central & Southeast Asia, Ladakh, and Himalayas**.
- Notable species: **Flamingos, Graylag Geese, White-bellied Sea Eagles, Herons, Jacanas, Purple Moorhens**.
- Hosts one of the **world's largest flamingo breeding colonies**.
- Faunal diversity includes **Blackbuck, Golden Jackal, Spotted Deer, and Hyena**.
- Known for **Irrawaddy dolphins**.

Typhoid

Syllabus: GS-2; Governance, Health, Public Health

Context:

Gandhinagar is witnessing a surge in typhoid cases due to contaminated drinking water, highlighting serious flaws in the city's newly laid water supply infrastructure.



About Typhoid

- Typhoid is a **life-threatening bacterial infection** caused by *Salmonella enterica* serovar **Typhi**.
- **Transmission:**
  - A **human-only disease** with no animal reservoir.
  - Spread through **contaminated food and drinking water**.
  - Bacteria multiply in the intestines and **enter the bloodstream**.
  - Excreted through **stools and urine** of infected individuals.
- **Epidemiology:**
  - More common in regions with **poor sanitation and hygiene**.
  - High prevalence in **South Asia, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa**.
- **Symptoms:**
  - Prolonged high fever, fatigue, headache, abdominal pain, nausea.
  - Constipation or diarrhoea; rash in some cases.
  - Some individuals remain **asymptomatic carriers**.
- **Complications & Relapse:**
  - Severe cases may cause intestinal perforation or death.
  - Disease may **recur** even after recovery.
- **Treatment:**
  - Treated using **antibiotics**.
  - Rising **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)** poses a major challenge.

Double-Humped Bactrian Camel

Syllabus: GS -3; Environment, Biodiversity and Conservation

Context:

Ladakh's indigenous double-humped Bactrian camels are set to participate for the first time in the **77th Republic Day Parade**.

About Double-Humped Bactrian Camel

- **Scientific name:** *Camelus bactrianus*
- Large **even-toed ungulate**, popularly known as Ladakh's **"silent warriors."**

Distribution

- Native to **cold and arid regions of Central Asia**.

- Found from **Afghanistan to China**, especially in the **Mongolian steppes and Gobi Desert**.
- Small populations exist in **Nubra Valley, Ladakh**.

Key Characteristics

- **Two humps** store fat, convertible into water and energy.
- **Thick, shaggy coat** enables survival at temperatures as low as **–40°C**.
- **Sealable nostrils** protect against dust and snow.
- **Broad feet** act as natural snowshoes.
- Can survive by **eating snow** for hydration.
- **Diet:** Primarily herbivorous.

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered**

How language issue led to one of Assam's most volatile conflicts

Syllabus: GS-1: Cultural Pluralism

Context:

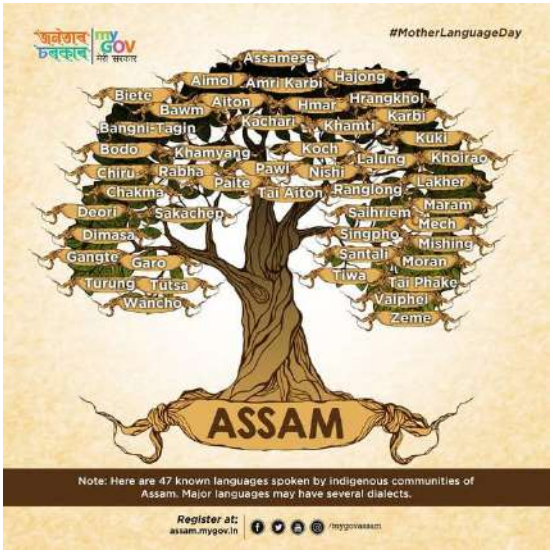
This article is based on an article published in The Hindu paper titled "How language became a battleground in Assam".

Background: Linguistic Diversity in Assam

- Assam is one of India's most **linguistically diverse states**, with:
  - Assamese speakers
  - Bengali speakers (especially in Barak Valley)
  - Numerous tribal languages (Bodo, Karbi, Mishing, etc.)
- Language in Assam has historically been linked to:
  - **Cultural identity**
  - **Political power**
  - **Access to education and employment**

Colonial Roots

- In **1836**, the British administration imposed**Bengali** as the language of courts and education in Assam.
- Assamese was marginalised for decades, creating long-term resentment.
- Revival of Assamese language later became central to Assamese nationalism.



Post-Independence Language Politics

Assam Official Language Movement (1960–61)

- Demand emerged to declare **Assamese as the sole official language** of the state.
- Led to enactment of the **Assam Official Language Act, 1960**.
- Objective:
  - Consolidate Assamese identity
  - Protect indigenous culture and administration

Barak Valley Opposition

- Bengali speakers, concentrated in **Barak Valley**, opposed the imposition.
- Feared loss of linguistic rights and administrative exclusion.

Silchar Incident (1961)

- On **19 May 1961**, police firing on protesters at Silchar railway station led to the death of **11 Bengali language activists**.
- Turning point in Assam's linguistic history.

Outcome

- Bengali was accorded **official language status in Barak Valley districts**.
- Established **region-specific language accommodation** in Assam.

Language and Education Conflicts

- Attempts to make **Assamese compulsory** as the medium of instruction in higher education (1970s) triggered protests.
- Concerns raised by:
  - Bengali speakers
  - Minority linguistic groups
- Resulted in rollback and moderation of language policies.

Language, Identity and Ethnic Politics

- Language debates in Assam are inseparable from:
  - Indigenous vs migrant identity
  - Demographic anxieties
  - Citizenship and migration concerns
- Assamese language became a symbol of:
  - Indigenous assertion
  - Cultural survival
- Bengali language often became associated (rightly or wrongly) with:
  - Migration from erstwhile East Pakistan / Bangladesh
  - Political marginalisation of Assamese speakers

Language and Social Conflict

Major Episodes Linked to Linguistic Identity

- **Bongal Kheda Movement (1960s)**:
  - Targeted Bengali Hindus in government employment
  - Language used as a marker of "outsiders"
- **Ethnic riots and violence** at different points intensified mistrust between communities.
- Language often acted as a **mobilising tool**, not the sole cause.

Policy Responses and Present Scenario

- Assam follows a **differentiated language policy**:

- Assamese as official language in most districts
- Bengali as official language in Barak Valley

- Recent debates (census, administration, education) continue to revive language anxieties.
- State leadership reiterates protection of Assamese while maintaining constitutional safeguards for minorities.

Conclusion

- Language in Assam has functioned not merely as a communication tool but as a **political and cultural weapon**.
- The Assam experience highlights:
  - Importance of **inclusive federalism**
  - Need for **dialogue-based linguistic accommodation**
  - Risks of politicising language in diverse societies

Practice Qs:

Q. "Language has acted both as a unifying force and a source of conflict in Assam." Critically examine how linguistic identity has shaped politics, society, and governance in Assam. (15 marks, 250 words)

Transforming a waste-ridden urban India

Syllabus: GS-1; Urbanisation and associated issue & GS-3: Climate Change.

Context:

- Urban India is facing a mounting **solid waste management (SWM) crisis**, affecting:
  - Public health
  - Environmental sustainability
  - Quality of urban life
- Waste is increasingly recognised as a **resource** rather than merely a liability, in line with **global climate and sustainability discourse**.

Urbanisation and Waste Crisis

Scale of the Problem

- Rapid urbanisation, rising consumption, and lifestyle changes have led to:
  - Exponential growth in municipal solid waste.
- Urban population projected to reach ~814 million by 2050, sharply increasing waste generation.

Core Challenges

- **Poor source segregation** of wet and dry waste.
- Overdependence on **landfills and open dumps**.
- Inadequate processing capacity for:
  - Plastics and dry waste
  - Construction and demolition waste
- Weak municipal capacity and fragmented governance.
- Environmental impacts:
  - Methane emissions from landfills
  - Soil and groundwater contamination
  - Urban air pollution

Existing Policy and Institutional Framework

Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)

- Focus areas:
  - Door-to-door waste collection
  - Source segregation

- Scientific processing and disposal

- SBM-U 2.0 aims at:
  - Dump-free cities
  - Legacy waste remediation
  - Circular economy integration

Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016

- Mandates:
  - Waste segregation at source
  - Responsibility of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)
  - Scientific processing and disposal
- Emphasises decentralised waste management.

Need for a Paradigm Shift

From Linear to Circular Economy

- Move away from:
  - *Take–Make–Dispose* model
- Adopt:
  - Reduce
  - Reuse
  - Recycle
  - Resource recovery
- Waste to be treated as:
  - Economic input
  - Energy source
  - Secondary raw material

Waste as a Climate Issue

- Landfills are major contributors to:
  - Methane emissions (a potent greenhouse gas)
- Effective waste management supports:
  - Climate mitigation

- India's environmental commitments

Key Strategic Solutions

Behavioural Change

- Citizen participation is central:
  - Household-level segregation
  - Reduced waste generation
- Lessons from sanitation campaigns show behavioural shifts are achievable at scale.

Decentralised Waste Management

- Localised solutions such as:
  - Community composting
  - Ward-level processing units
- Reduces burden on landfills and transport costs.

Institutional Coordination

- Integrated action among:
  - Urban Local Bodies
  - State governments
  - Private sector
  - Community organisations
- Particularly critical for:
  - Faecal sludge management
  - Construction waste
  - Plastic waste

Technology and Innovation

- Use of digital platforms for:
  - Waste tracking
  - Monitoring segregation compliance
  - Improving accountability
- Enables data-driven urban governance.

Benefits of Transforming Urban Waste Management

Public Health

- Reduction in disease burden
- Cleaner air, water, and living conditions

Environmental Gains

- Lower greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced soil and groundwater pollution
- Improved urban ecosystems

Economic Opportunities

- Job creation in:
  - Recycling
  - Composting
  - Waste-to-energy
- Growth of circular economy–based enterprises

Persistent Challenges

- Weak enforcement of segregation norms
- Large volumes of legacy waste at dumpsites
- Financial and technical constraints of ULBs
- Lack of sustained citizen engagement

Way Forward

- Strengthen **municipal capacity and accountability**
- Institutionalise **source segregation as a non-negotiable norm**
- Promote **circular economy-based urban planning**
- Encourage **community-driven and decentralised models**
- Integrate waste management with **climate action and urban resilience strategies**

Conclusion

Transforming waste-ridden urban India requires a **systemic shift**—from viewing waste as a problem to recognising it as a **resource**. With effective governance, behavioural change, decentralisation, and circular economy principles, Indian cities can become cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable.

Practice Qs:

Q. "India's urban waste crisis is not merely a problem of disposal, but of governance, behaviour, and economic design."In this context, examine the challenges of solid waste management in urban India and discuss how a circular economy approach can help transform waste into a resource. (250 words, 15 marks)