DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 20-03-2025

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1. **Kamba Ramayana**

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2. **Five Eyes Alliance**

GS-3

3. **Creator economy**
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5. **IUCN GREEN LIST**

Kamba Ramayana

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

Context

- The culture ministry is set to embark on a comprehensive initiative to preserve and promote the 'Kamba Ramayana', one of the most significant works in Tamil literature.
- It has planned a week-long immersive festival to be held at KambarMedu, the birthplace of Kambar in Theraazhundur.

About

- The **Kamba Ramayana** is a Tamil epic written by the poet **Kamban** in the **12th century CE**.
- It is one of the most revered retellings of Valmiki's **Ramayana** and holds immense significance in Tamil literature and Indian cultural traditions.

Key Features of Kamba Ramayana

1. **Language and Composition**
    - Written in **Tamil** in the **Viruttam** and **Santham** poetic meters.
    - It consists of **12,000 verses** divided into **six kandams** (instead of seven in Valmiki's version).
    - The style is **highly poetic**, filled with metaphors and rhetorical beauty.
2. **Differences from Valmiki Ramayana**
    - **Bhakti Influence**: Kamban's version is deeply influenced by Tamil Bhakti traditions, particularly Shaivism and Vaishnavism.
    - **More Heroic Rama**: In Kamba Ramayana, Rama is portrayed as an incarnation of Vishnu right from the beginning.
    - **Greater Role of Hanuman**: Hanuman's devotion and role in the war are more elaborated.
    - **More Romantic and Emotional Elements**: The love between Rama and Sita is depicted more vividly.
3. **Religious and Philosophical Themes**
    - Strong **Vaishnavite** influence, emphasizing **Rama as a divine being** rather than just a dharmic king.
    - Incorporates **Tamil Sangam poetry styles** and blends Tamil cultural elements into the narrative.
    - Draws upon **Advaita Vedanta** and **Bhakti movement philosophies**.
4. **Impact and Legacy**

- Highly regarded in **Tamil Nadu** and among Tamil-speaking communities worldwide.
- Influenced later Tamil literature, including **Kannadasan's renditions and devotional songs**.
- Revered in South Indian temples, where parts of the epic are recited during **religious discourses**.

Five Eyes Alliance

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – Security Alliances

Context:

Intelligence officials from several countries gathered in Delhi on March 16, including three representatives from the Five Eyes (FVEY) alliance.

Five Eyes (FVEY) Intelligence Alliance

Introduction

- Five Eyes (FVEY) is the world's oldest and most exclusive intelligence-sharing network, formed in **1946**.
- It consists of **five member countries**: **United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Australia, and New Zealand**.
- The alliance has been involved in shaping international conflicts and intelligence operations, including:
  - Vietnam War
  - Gulf War
  - War on Terror
  - Russian invasion of Ukraine
  - Overthrow of democratically elected governments in **Iran (1953) and Chile (1973)**
  - Global surveillance programs

Origins of Five Eyes

- Traces back to **February 1941**, when Scottish codebreaker **Alastair Denniston** noted the arrival of American intelligence officials.
- UK and US collaborated on **breaking the German Enigma code** and **Japanese Purple code** during World War II.

- **1946**: Formal intelligence-sharing began between UK and US after concerns over **Soviet Union's espionage on nuclear programs**.
- Described as a **"marriage contract"** based on **honesty, openness, and a no-spy agreement**.
- Over the next decade, the alliance expanded to include:
  - **Australia** – South and East Asia
  - **New Zealand** – Pacific region
  - **Canada** – Latin America, Eastern Russia, and North Atlantic
- The alliance remained **secret until 2010**, when it was revealed through a heavily redacted document.

Disputes Among Five Eyes Members

- **Cold War-era tensions**:
  - **Cambridge Five spy ring** raised US doubts about UK intelligence reliability.
  - Canada was excluded temporarily after a naval officer was caught spying for Russia.
- **Political disagreements leading to intelligence cut-offs**:
  - **Canada** was cut off for refusing to join the **2003 Iraq invasion**.
  - **New Zealand** faced partial exclusion for over 20 years due to its **anti-nuclear stance**.
  - **UK faced restrictions in 1973** when **Richard Nixon** and **Henry Kissinger** disagreed with **Edward Heath's pro-European policies**.
- **US dominance in the alliance**:
  - US **withheld key information** from allies, including details about **Edward Snowden's leaks**.
  - During **Donald Trump's presidency**, discussions arose about **expelling Canada** from the alliance.

Five Eyes Covert Operations

Overthrow of Chilean Government (1973)

- **US (CIA) and Australia (ASIS) aided coup against President Salvador Allende**.
- US conducted a **"spoiling operation"** to influence elections, but Allende won.
- **September 11, 1973**: **Chilean military coup led by Augusto Pinochet**, resulting in:

- Over **3,000 political murders**
- **38,000 arrests** and cases of torture

Iran Coup (1953) and Middle East Interventions

- **US (CIA) and UK (MI6) overthrew Iranian PM Mohammad Mosaddegh** over oil disputes.
- **1956**: Attempted coup in **Syria** to curb Soviet influence.
- **2002**: US-UK intelligence aided Libya's Gaddafi in kidnapping and torturing dissidents.
- **2003 Iraq invasion**:
  - Five Eyes' intelligence falsely claimed **Saddam Hussein had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)**.
  - Whistleblower **Katharine Gun leaked NSA memo** revealing US-UK espionage on UN delegates to push for war.

Five Eyes and Global Surveillance

Historic Context

- **1919**: US Army and State Department created **The Black Chamber** for decrypting diplomatic communications.
- **1980s–2000s**: Five Eyes expanded its reach into global communications monitoring.

Spying on Allies

- **Timor-Leste (2004)**:
  - **Australia's intelligence (ASIS) bugged Timor-Leste's government offices** to gain advantage in oil negotiations.
  - The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** ruled against Australia in **2014**, marking the first legal challenge to a Five Eyes member.
- **NSA tapped German Chancellor Angela Merkel's phone**, straining US-Germany relations.
- **Brazil, Spain, France, and South Africa** also reported Five Eyes surveillance programs.

Edward Snowden's Leaks (2013)

- Revealed **Five Eyes' large-scale surveillance**, including:
  - Spying on **Indonesian President's phone** (Australia).
  - Canada's intelligence (CSE) aiding NSA in spying on 20 high-priority nations.

- New Zealand monitoring Pacific allies and sharing intelligence with Five Eyes partners.

- **Legal loophole exploitation**:
  - UK asked the US to **spy on British citizens** to bypass domestic surveillance laws.

Conclusion

- **Five Eyes remains the most powerful intelligence-sharing network** but has been criticized for:
  - Violating national sovereignty of allies.
  - Conducting surveillance on civilians.
  - Influencing global conflicts and regime changes.
- While some nations have pushed back, **US and UK dominance ensures minimal accountability** for its actions.

Creator economy

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy

Context

- India's government is giving a $1 billion boost to the local creator economy

About

- The **creator economy** refers to the digital ecosystem where independent content creators generate revenue through online platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Substack, Patreon, and more.
- It is driven by individuals leveraging digital tools to monetize their skills, creativity, and influence without traditional intermediaries like media houses or record labels.

Significance of the Creator Economy

- It represents a shift from traditional employment to **self-employment and entrepreneurship**.
- Empowers individuals to earn from their **content, skills, and intellectual property**.
- Contributes significantly to the **gig economy and digital economy**.

- Supported by **advancements in AI, Web3, and blockchain** technologies.

Key Components of the Creator Economy

- **Platforms:** YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, Medium, Patreon, etc.
- **Monetization Models:**
  - Advertisements & sponsorships
  - Subscription-based models (e.g., Patreon, Substack)
  - Direct sales (merchandise, online courses, e-books)
  - Crowdfunding and donations
  - Affiliate marketing
- **Technology Enablers:**
  - AI-driven content recommendation
  - Blockchain-based ownership (NFTs, smart contracts)
  - Virtual & augmented reality (Metaverse economy)

Growth & Economic Impact

- **India's creator economy** is estimated to be over **₹1,000 crore ($120 million) and growing rapidly**.
- Platforms like YouTube and Instagram contribute significantly to employment, with **millions of content creators monetizing their content**.
- Indian government initiatives like **Digital India, Startup India, and Skill India** are supporting digital entrepreneurship.

Challenges in the Creator Economy

- **Lack of regulation and taxation clarity** on digital earnings.
- **Monetization challenges** for new creators due to high competition.
- **Algorithm dependence**, leading to content being controlled by platform policies.
- **Digital divide** in rural India limiting opportunities.
- **Intellectual property rights** issues and content theft.

Government Initiatives Supporting Digital Creators

- **Digital India Programme:** Aims to provide digital access to all citizens.
- **Startup India & Standup India:** Encourages entrepreneurship, including digital content creation.
- **Skill India & Atmanirbhar Bharat:** Focus on digital skills development.
- **National Policy on Software Products (NPSP) 2019:** Supports content and app developers.

Way Forward

- **Regulatory clarity** on taxation and content ownership.
- **Incentives for digital startups and creators** in India.
- **Improved internet penetration** and **digital literacy** to enable more people to participate.
- **AI and Blockchain adoption** to provide more transparency and monetization opportunities.

Conclusion

The creator economy is a transformative force in India's digital landscape, empowering millions with economic opportunities. With proper policy support and infrastructure development, it can play a key role in India's **vision of becoming a $5 trillion economy** and enhancing **digital self-reliance**.

White Hydrogen

Syllabus: GS-3; Science & Tech, Environment and Ecology

Context

- France has discovered the world's largest white hydrogen deposit in the Moselle region, estimated at 46 million tons, valued at $92 trillion.

About

- White hydrogen, also known as **natural hydrogen**, is a newly emerging energy source found naturally beneath the Earth's surface.
- Unlike **green hydrogen** (produced using renewable energy) or **grey hydrogen** (produced from fossil fuels), white hydrogen is extracted directly from underground deposits without requiring energy-intensive production processes.

Key Aspects of White Hydrogen

1. Formation and Occurrence

- Found in geological formations such as **serpentinization zones**, where water reacts with iron-rich minerals to produce hydrogen gas.
- Present in **deep underground reservoirs, fault lines, and under-sea beds**.
- Detected in regions like **France, the US, Australia, Mali, and Russia**.

2. Advantages of White Hydrogen

- **Naturally Occurring:** No need for energy-intensive production.
- **Low Carbon Footprint:** Does not emit CO_2 during extraction.
- **Cost-Effective:** If extraction is feasible, it could be cheaper than artificially produced hydrogen.
- **Renewable Potential:** Some natural processes continuously generate hydrogen.

3. Challenges and Concerns

- **Exploration & Extraction:** Still in early stages; requires advanced technology.
- **Storage & Transport:** Hydrogen is a volatile gas and needs special handling.
- **Scalability:** Economic feasibility and sustainability of large-scale extraction are uncertain.
- **Regulatory and Environmental Issues:** Extracting underground hydrogen may pose ecological risks.

4. India's Perspective on White Hydrogen

- India aims to become a **global hub for hydrogen production**, primarily through **Green Hydrogen Mission**.
- **Potential for white hydrogen reserves** needs to be explored in geologically suitable locations.
- Could play a role in India's **net-zero goals** if extraction technology is developed.

Comparison with Other Types of Hydrogen

Type	Source	Carbon Emissions	Cost	Key Challenges
White Hydrogen	Naturally occurring underground	Near-zero	Potentially low	Limited knowledge & extraction feasibility
Green Hydrogen	Electrolysis using renewable energy	Zero	High	Energy-intensive process
Blue Hydrogen	Fossil fuels with Carbon Capture (CCS)	Low	Medium	Requires CCS infrastructure

Type	Source	Carbon Emissions	Cost	Key Challenges
Grey Hydrogen	Fossil fuels (coal, natural gas)	High	Low	High carbon footprint

IUCN GREEN LIST

Syllabus: GS-3: Wildlife Conservation Organisations.

Context:

- The IUCN Green List has started 2025 with new additions and renewals, marking progress in area-based conservation.

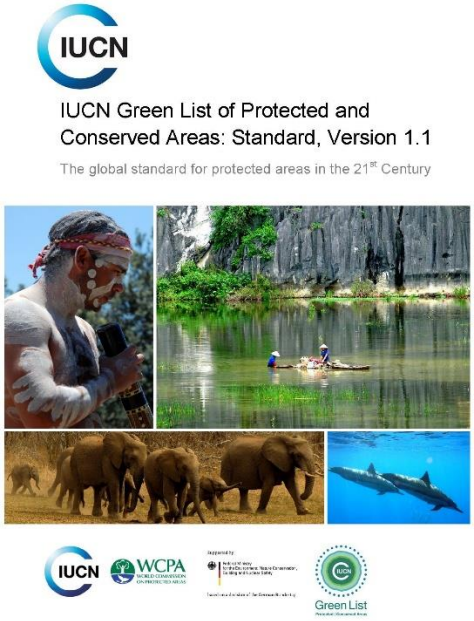
IUCN Green List: Promoting Effective Conservation

What is the IUCN Green List?

- **IUCN**: International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- **Objective**: To promote successful nature conservation through recognized global standards.
- **Standard**: Based on the **Green List Sustainability Standard**, which sets a benchmark for conservation effectiveness.
- **Implementation**: IUCN collaborates with partners like **UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre** and **WWF**.

Achievements of the IUCN Green List (Country-wise)

- **Italy**: Restarted the Green List process and trained an **Expert Assessment Group (EAGL)**.
- **Spain**: Resumed Green List activities with trained EAGL members.
- **France**: Implementing since 2013; has **15 sites** listed.
    - Includes **Cerbere-Banyuls National Nature Reserve**&**Blue Coast Marine Park** (Mediterranean marine protected areas).



Why is the Green List Important?

- Provides **expert guidance** to improve conservation management.
- Supports **biodiversity, wildlife survival, and local communities**.
- Aligns with global goals:
  - **Aichi Target 11** (Protected Areas)
  - **SDG 15** ("Life on Land")

Criteria for a Green Listed Site

- **Respect for Local Communities** – Engages stakeholders fairly.
- **Effective Planning** – Identifies key conservation needs.
- **Strong Management** – Monitors and protects natural resources.
- **Successful Conservation** – Benefits both people and nature.
- **Contribution to Global Goals** – Supports sustainability and climate action.

New Additions and Renewals (2025)

New Additions

- **Sharaan Nature Reserve (Saudi Arabia)** – First fully protected area in AlUla; rich biodiversity and cultural heritage.
- **King Abdulaziz Royal Nature Reserve (Saudi Arabia)** – Government-supported, home to **Sand gazelles & Arabian oryx**; successful reintroduction program.

- **Aqaba Marine Reserve (Jordan)** – 90th listing; resilient **coral reefs**, a national priority.
- **Sir Bu Nair Protected Area (UAE)** – Rich **marine biodiversity**, including turtles and migratory birds; significant **cultural heritage (pearl diving & fishing)**.

Renewals

1. **Champ du Feu Managed Biological Reserve (France)** – Key **tourist & socio-cultural site** with traditional farming practices.
2. **Hochfeld Managed Biological Reserve (France)** – Small but **ecologically rich**, preserving **open areas & high-altitude forests**.
3. **Al Shouf Cedars Nature Reserve (Lebanon)** – Among **West Asia's first Green Listed sites**; known for **Lebanese cedar trees**; strong **community involvement**.

IUCN Red List vs. IUCN Green List

Feature	IUCN Red List	IUCN Green List
Focus	Conservation status of species, risk of extinction	Effective management of protected areas
Unit of Assessment	Individual species (flora & fauna)	Protected and conserved areas
Goal	Identify species at risk and inform conservation actions	Recognize and encourage best conservation practices
Outcome	Categorization (Critically Endangered, Vulnerable, etc.)	Certification of effective conservation areas
Criteria	Population size, range, threats	Management, governance, planning, and conservation success
Purpose	Highlight threats, guide policy, and conservation efforts	Benchmark for conservation success, inspire improvement
Approach	Primarily highlights risks	Emphasizes conservation success and best practices