



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 08-04-2025**

### **GS-1**

1. Ionian Islands

### **GS-2**

2. World Health Day 2025
3. Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)

### **GS-3**

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5. Kancha Gachibowli forest destruction

## **Ionian Islands**

### **Syllabus: GS-1; Geography-Mapping**

#### **Context**

- Groundbreaking Archaeological Discovery in Lefkada

#### **Know more**

- A major archaeological find in **Lefkada, Greece**, has revealed the first-ever ancient Greek theater discovered in the Ionian Islands.
- This discovery sheds new light on the cultural and historical significance of the region, which was previously thought to have fewer ancient structures compared to mainland Greece.



### About the Ionian Islands

- Location: Off the western coast of Greece in the Ionian Sea.
- Total Area: 2,306.94 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Major Islands (Heptanese/Seven Islands):
  - **Kerkyra (Corfu)** – Most popular for tourism.
  - **Paxi (Paxos)** – Known for its scenic beauty.
  - **Lefkada** – Connected to the mainland by a bridge.
  - **Ithaki (Ithaca)** – Legendary home of Odysseus.
  - **Kefalonia (Cephalonia)** – Largest island, famous for beaches & caves.
  - **Zakynthos (Zante)** – Home of Navagio (Shipwreck) Beach.
  - **Kythira** – Located south of the Peloponnese.
  - **Highest Point:** Mount Ainos (1,628 m) in Kefalonia.

### Historical Background

- 15th–16th centuries: Controlled by Venice.
- 1799: Briefly taken by Russian & Turkish forces.
- 1815 (Treaty of Paris): Came under British rule.
- 1864: Ceded to Greece.

## World Health Day 2025

### Syllabus: GS-2; Health

#### Context

- World Health Day is celebrated every year on **April 7**.

#### What is the theme for World Health Day 2025?

- The theme is "**Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures**", focusing on maternal and newborn health.



### Why is this year's theme important?

The campaign aims to:

- Reduce preventable **maternal and newborn deaths**.
- Improve long-term **health for women and babies**.
- Promote **safe pregnancies, births, and postnatal care** globally.

### Who organizes World Health Day?

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** leads the campaign, but governments, NGOs, and healthcare providers worldwide participate.

### How can I participate?

- Share awareness about maternal and child health.
- Support local health initiatives.
- Engage in discussions on social media using #WorldHealthDay and #HealthyBeginnings.

### How long has World Health Day been celebrated?

- **Since 1950**, marking the founding of WHO in 1948.

## Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)

**Syllabus: GS-2; Government policies and Interventions, GS-3; Infrastructure Development**

### Context

- The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II) as a fully funded Central Sector Scheme to develop villages along India's international land borders.
- This initiative aligns with the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 by enhancing security and improving living standards in border regions.

### About

- The **Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)** is an initiative launched by the **Government of India** to enhance the development of remote and sparsely populated villages located in **border areas**.

- The program is part of a strategic effort to improve infrastructure, connectivity, and livelihood opportunities in villages that lie along **India's international borders**, especially those in areas adjacent to **China, Pakistan, and Myanmar**.

### Key Objectives of the Vibrant Villages Programme:

1. **Comprehensive Development:** Improve infrastructure and provide basic amenities in border villages to make them self-sufficient and vibrant.
2. **Security and Strategic Importance:** Strengthen India's border areas by ensuring a stable and settled population, which contributes to national security.
3. **Reverse Migration:** Encourage people to remain in or return to border villages by improving quality of life and economic opportunities.
4. **Promote Tourism and Culture:** Highlight local culture, heritage, and natural beauty to boost tourism in remote regions.

### Salient Features:

- **Launched in:** 2023
- **Implementing Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
- **Focus Areas:** Villages in states like **Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh**, along the **northern border**.
- **Key Components:**
  - Road and telecom connectivity
  - Drinking water and sanitation
  - Health and education
  - Renewable energy sources (e.g., solar)
  - Skill development and livelihood generation
  - E-governance and digital services

### Phase 1 Highlights:

- **663 villages** identified for development across the border states in Phase 1.
- Priority on areas with low population density, lack of infrastructure, and strategic importance.

### Difference from Border Area Development Programme (BADP):

Aspect	VVP	BADP
Focus	Holistic village development	Infrastructure near border
Target	Specific border villages (remote, sparsely	Border blocks, broader area

**Aspect VVP**

populated)

Objective Strategic habitation and self-sufficiency

**BADP**

Infrastructure & security support

**Recent Developments (as of 2024–25):**

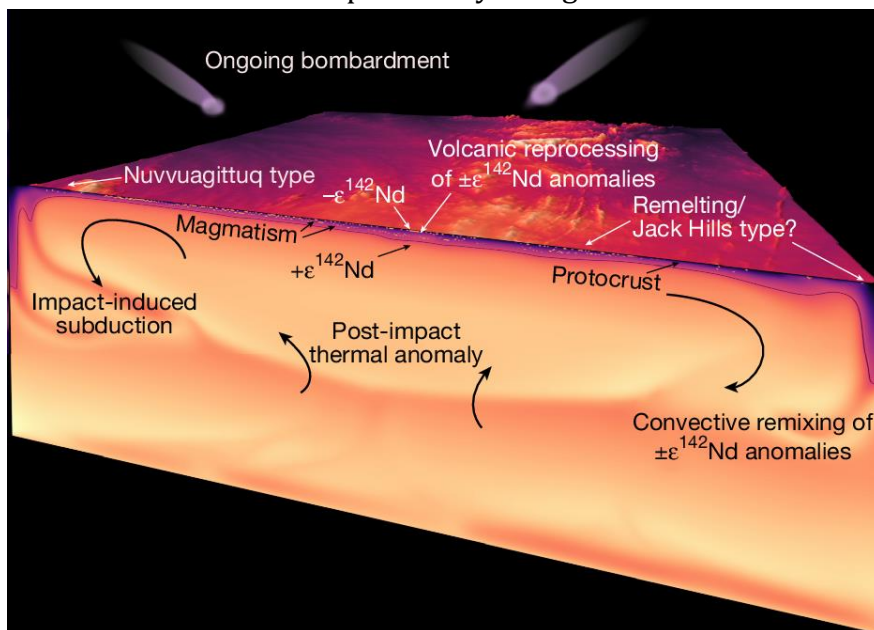
- Villages like **Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh** and **Turtuk in Ladakh** have seen significant improvements under VVP.
- Cultural and tourism festivals are being organized to promote border tourism.
- Model villages are being developed with modern amenities and eco-friendly features.

## **Hadean Protocrust**

**Syllabus: GS-3; Science & Technology**

**Context**

- A 2024 study led by **Macquarie University (Australia)** found that **chemical signatures linked to plate tectonics** were already present in **Earth's Hadean protocrust (4.6–4 billion years ago)**. This suggests tectonic-like processes may have started earlier than previously thought.



### What is the Hadean protocrust?

- The earliest solid crust of Earth, formed during the Hadean eon (~4.6–4 billion years ago).
- Named after **Hades (Greek god of the underworld)** due to extreme heat, volcanic activity, and meteorite bombardment.
- Composed of unstable, flaky fragments that later evolved into proto-continents.

### How did the Hadean crust form?

- Earth's surface was initially a magma ocean (molten rock).
- As it cooled, thin, unstable crustal fragments solidified and broke apart repeatedly.
- Thicker sections eventually formed proto-continents, floating on the semi-fluid asthenospheric mantle.

### Did plate tectonics exist in the Hadean?

- **New evidence:** Chemical traces in ancient zircons (minerals) suggest early subduction or crustal recycling—key processes in plate tectonics.
- **Debate:** Some scientists argue these were localized events, not full-fledged plate tectonics as seen today.

### Why is this discovery important?

- Challenges the traditional view that plate tectonics began ~3 billion years ago.
- Suggests Earth's crust was more dynamic in its infancy than assumed.
- Helps explain how continental crust differentiated from the mantle so early.

### What were conditions like in the Hadean eon?

- **Surface:** Partially molten, with intense volcanic eruptions.
- **Atmosphere:** Toxic (methane, ammonia, CO<sub>2</sub>), no free oxygen.
- **Bombardment:** Frequent meteorite impacts (e.g., Late Heavy Bombardment ~4.1–3.8 billion years ago).

### How do scientists study the Hadean crust?

- **Zircon crystals:** Tiny, durable minerals (found in Australia's Jack Hills) preserve chemical clues from 4.4 billion years ago.
- **Isotope analysis:** Reveals crustal recycling and mantle interactions.

## **Kancha Gachibowli forest destruction**

### **Syllabus: GS-3: Environment - Deforestation**

#### **Context:**

- Destruction in Kancha Gachibowli 'forest' area depicts an 'alarming picture', says SC.

### **Kancha Gachibowli Forest Destruction:**

#### **Background**

- **Location:** Kancha Gachibowli, an urban forest area near the University of Hyderabad (UoH), Telangana, spanning approximately 400 acres in Ranga Reddy district.
- **Significance:** Known as Hyderabad's "green lungs," it supports rich biodiversity and regulates the city's climate.
- **Issue:** Large-scale deforestation began in late March 2025 to clear land for an IT park, sparking protests and legal interventions.

#### **Ecological Importance**

- **Biodiversity:**
  - Home to over 734 flowering plant species, 233 bird species (including peacocks), 10 mammal species (e.g., deer), 15 reptile species, and unique species like the Hyderabad tree trunk spider (*Murriciahyderabadensis*).
  - Contains 72 tree species and over 40,000 trees.
- **Ecosystem Services:**
  - Regulates air quality, reduces urban temperatures (potential 1-4°C rise if destroyed), and recharges groundwater in the Manjira basin.
  - Acts as a water sink in a heavily concretized area, preventing floods and sustaining freshwater lakes.
- **Geological Value:** Features ancient rock formations (e.g., Mushroom Rock) aged over 2 billion years.

#### **Cause of Destruction**

- **Development Plan:** Telangana government aimed to auction 400 acres for an IT park, projecting ₹50,000 crore investment and 5 lakh jobs.



➤ **Execution:**

- Deforestation started on March 30, 2025, with 50+ earthmovers deployed.
- Satellite imagery shows ~2 sq km of vegetation cleared between March 30 and April 2, 2025.

- **Government Stance:** Claims the land is “revenue land” (Kancha Poramboke - grazing/waste land), not notified as forest land in revenue or forest records.

### Protests and Public Response

- **Stakeholders:** UoH students, faculty, environmentalists, and civil society groups like Save City Forest.

➤ **Actions:**

- Protests began March 30, 2025; students detained, two arrested for rioting.
- Hunger strikes and class boycotts by students; slogans like “Police go back” raised.

- **Social Media:** Viral videos of peacocks crying and satellite images fueled outrage on platforms like X.

- **Political Angle:** Opposition (BRS) vowed to reclaim the land for an eco-park if returned to power.

### Legal Interventions

➤ **Supreme Court (SC):**

- Took suo motu cognizance on April 3, 2025, halting tree felling until April 7, 2025.
- Ordered Telangana High Court Registrar to inspect and report; described the situation as an “alarming picture.”
- Held Chief Secretary accountable for further violations, citing the TN Godavarman (1996) judgment defining “deemed forests.”

➤ **Telangana High Court:**

- Hearing two PILs (by Vata Foundation and scientist Babu Rao) challenging the deforestation as a violation of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.
- Ordered a temporary halt on April 2, 2025, extended by SC.

- **Central Government:** Environment Ministry sought a factual report from Telangana on alleged illegal felling.

### Key Issues and Controversies

- **Land Ownership:** Dispute between UoH (claims historical ownership) and Telangana government (asserts it's revenue land under TGIIC).
- **Environmental Clearance:** Questions over lack of prior assessment; critics argue it's a "deemed forest" needing protection.
- **Development vs. Conservation:** Balancing economic growth (IT park) with ecological sustainability (urban forest).

### Implications

- **Environmental:** Loss of biodiversity, increased pollution, temperature rise, and water scarcity in Hyderabad.
- **Social:** Displacement of wildlife and loss of a community space for students and residents.
- **Policy:** Highlights gaps in forest identification (committee formed only on March 15, 2025) and enforcement of conservation laws.

### Way Forward (Potential Solutions)

- Declare Kancha Gachibowli a bio-heritage reserve or conservation reserve.
- Conduct a transparent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- Integrate green spaces into urban development plans (e.g., eco-park proposal).
- Strengthen enforcement of the Forest Conservation Act and expedite forest land surveys.