



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 25-07-2025**

### **GS-1**

1. Chola Gangam Lake
2. Khasi community

### **GS-3**

3. Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)
4. India- UK Trade Pact
5. Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)

## **Chola Gangam Lake**

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

### **Context**

- Tamil Nadu government to develop 1000-year-old Chola Gangam lake in Gangaikonda Cholapuram at ₹20 crore.



### **About**

#### **Historical and Cultural Significance**

- **Chola Gangam Lake**, also known as **Ponneri Lake**, is located near **Gangaikonda Cholapuram** in Nagapattinam district, Tamil Nadu.
- It was excavated around **1025 CE by Rajendra Chola I** to commemorate his victorious campaign up to the **Ganga River**.
- The lake symbolized the **liquid pillar of victory** and was integral to the functioning of **Gangaikonda Cholapuram**, the Chola capital.
- Named “Chola Gangam” after water brought from the Ganges to fill the temple tank, showcasing Chola **ritualistic and hydraulic ingenuity**.

#### **Engineering Marvel of the Cholas**

- Spread across **700 acres** originally, the lake featured:

- A **16-mile-long bund**
- **Laterite stone embankments**
- **Four sluice gates**
- Sediment traps and a canal network linked to **Veeranam Lake** and **Kollidam River**
- Demonstrated advanced **Chola-era tank irrigation** and **water conservation** practices still relevant today.

### Decline and Challenges

- Over the centuries, the lake faced **neglect, encroachments, and siltation**.
- Canals became defunct, causing:
  - Seasonal dependency for water
  - **Groundwater depletion**
  - **Agricultural distress** and disruption to **bird migratory routes**
- Currently, the lake spans only about **5 km in circumference** compared to its original expanse.

### Restoration Impact

- **Irrigation benefits** for over **1,374 acres** across **7 villages**
- **Improved groundwater recharge**
- Boost to **heritage tourism** and **rural livelihoods**
- Promotion of **Chola history and cultural heritage**

## Khasi community

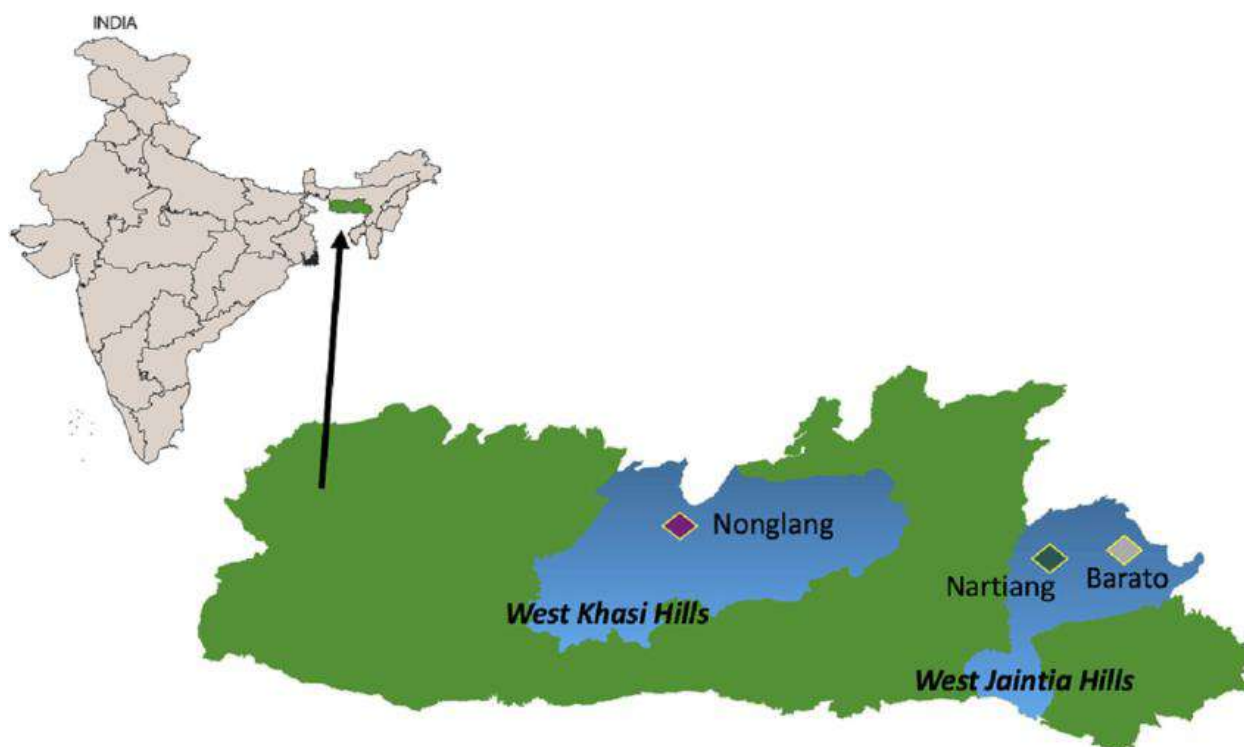
### Syllabus: GS-1; Society

#### Context

- Meghalaya High Court seeks response on challenge to Khasi Lineage Act.

#### Ethnic and Geographic Identity

- **Indigenous to Meghalaya**, primarily in the **Khasi Hills**.
- Also found in parts of **Assam and Sylhet (Bangladesh)**.
- Belong to the **Austroasiatic language** family (Mon-Khmer group).
- Speak the **Khasi language**, one of the few Austroasiatic languages spoken in India.



### Matrilineal Society

- Follow a unique matrilineal system
  - Property and clan lineage pass through the **mother's line**
  - The **youngest daughter (Ka Khadduh)** inherits the ancestral property
  - Children carry the **mother's surname**
  - The maternal uncle plays a significant role in family affairs

### Religion and Beliefs

- Traditionally animists — worship of nature, spirits, and ancestors
- Many have converted to Christianity (especially Presbyterians and Catholics)
- A section still adheres to the **Niam Khasi or Niam Tre indigenous faith**

### Cultural Aspects

- Rich oral traditions, folktales, and musical heritage
- Popular festivals
  - **Shad Suk Mynsiem** – thanksgiving dance
  - **Ka Pom-Blang Nongkrem** – a religious and cultural festival
- Skilled in weaving, archery, and indigenous music

## Political Organization

- Traditional governance by tribal chieftains (Syiem)
- Administered today under the **Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC)** under the **Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution**

## Khasi Lineage Act Controversy (2025)

### Background

- **The Khasi Hills Autonomous District (Khasi Social Custom of Lineage) Act, 1997**, amended in 2013 and 2023, governs clan membership and identity certification
- Traditionally, only those adopting the mother's surname could be registered as Khasi and receive Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificates

### High Court PIL Challenge (2025)

- A PIL filed by Syngkhong Rympei Thymmai (SRT), a men's rights group, challenged this interpretation
- The Meghalaya High Court has admitted the petition and sought responses from the Advocate General and the District Council Affairs Department

### Petitioners' Argument

- Claim that surname choice (father's or husband's) should not affect the issuance of ST certificates if lineage by blood can be proven
- Criticized the withdrawal of a 2020 government communication that earlier allowed such flexibility

### Court Observations

- The bench questioned how merely adopting the father's or husband's surname could disqualify an individual from being Khasi under the law
- Scheduled next hearing for August 7, 2025, to receive further submissions

## **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)**

### **Syllabus: GS-3; Economy**

#### **Context**

- CBDT chief highlights tax dept's digital transformation on 166th Income Tax Day in Odisha.

#### **About**

- **CBDT** is the **apex body** under the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**, responsible for administering **direct taxes** in India.
- It is a **statutory authority** under the **Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963**.

#### **Functions**

- **Formulates policies** related to direct taxes (e.g., Income Tax, Corporate Tax).
- Oversees **administration and implementation** of tax laws through the **Income Tax Department**.
- Deals with **tax investigation, prevention of tax evasion, and international taxation** issues.
- Advises the government on **tax reforms, double taxation avoidance agreements (DTAAs)**, and tax treaties.

#### **Structure**

- Headed by a **Chairman** and includes **six Members**:
  - Member (Income Tax)
  - Member (Legislation)
  - Member (Revenue)
  - Member (Investigation)
  - Member (Audit & Judicial)
  - Member (TPS & Systems)

#### **Significance**

- Plays a key role in **tax administration transparency, policy reforms, and revenue collection**.
- Vital for **curbing black money** and implementing laws such as **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act**.

## Recent Reforms/Developments

- Implementation of **faceless assessment and appeal scheme** to improve efficiency and reduce corruption.
- Adoption of **digital infrastructure** for faster grievance redressal and better taxpayer services.
- Increasing emphasis on **AI and data analytics** for tax compliance and fraud detection.

## India- UK Trade Pact

**Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Trade Agreement.**

### Context:

India and the United Kingdom signed a landmark Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the U.K.

### India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

#### Key Features of the FTA:

- **99% of Indian exports** to the UK now **duty-free**
- **90% of UK tariff lines reduced**, 85% duty-free in 10 years
- **Covers goods, services, labour mobility, and innovation**

#### Sector-Wise Highlights:

##### Market Access

- Labour-intensive exports (textiles, marine, food) gain.
- **Processed food tariffs** cut from 70% to 0%.

##### Agriculture

- **95%+ tariff lines zero-duty**
- Export potential: +20% in 3 years
- Focus: Millets, spices, fruits, organic products
- Sensitive products (dairy, apples, edible oils) protected

##### Marine Products

- Tariffs eliminated on shrimp, tuna, fishmeal



- Expected growth in India's 2.25% UK share

### Textiles & Apparel

- **1,143 categories** duty-free
- Projected 5% increase in market share

### Engineering Goods

- Duties (up to 18%) scrapped
- Exports may grow from \$4.3B to \$7.5B by 2030

### Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices

- Tariff-free access for generic drugs, ECG, X-ray, surgical tools
- UK imports \$30B pharma; India's current share is \$1B

### Chemicals & Plastics

- Chemical exports may rise 30–40%
- Plastics (films, kitchenware) to grow by 15%

### Gems, Jewellery, Toys & Sports Goods

- Jewellery exports may **double in 2–3 years**
- Competitive edge over China & Vietnam

### Leather & Footwear

- 16% tariff removed
- Target: \$900M+ in exports
- MSME hubs: Agra, Kanpur, Kolhapur, Chennai to benefit

### Services & Mobility Provisions:

- 75,000 Indian workers exempt from UK social security (3 yrs)
- **36 services sectors opened**, no Economic Needs Test
- Indians can work in 35 UK sectors for 2 years
- Cultural visa: 1,800 chefs, yoga trainers, artists per year

### Strategic & Economic Impact:

- **India's export sectors** get expanded UK market access
- **UK Exports** (whisky, cars, electronics) to gain from Indian tariff cuts
- **Bilateral Trade** to grow by **39%**, adding **£25.5 billion/year**



- **UK exports to India** may rise **60% by 2040**

#### Strategic Significance:

- Supports India's shift to Western trade blocs post **RCEP exit**
- Aligns with India's **\$1 Trillion export target** by 2030
- Highlights India's readiness for **high-standard FTAs**

#### Vision 2035 (India-UK)

- Strategic roadmap for cooperation in:
  - Trade, technology, defence, climate, education
  - Clean energy and global innovation leadership

#### Conclusion:

The India–UK FTA 2025 is a **landmark agreement** for India's export strategy and global trade integration. It fosters economic gains, deeper diplomatic ties, and a roadmap for strategic partnership till 2035.

## **Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)**

### Syllabus: GS-3: General Science – diseases.

#### Context:

Lumpy skin disease outbreak in Pune: District administration steps up preventive measures.

#### Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)

##### Causative Agent

- **Virus:** Lumpy Skin Disease Virus (LSDV)
- **Family:** *Poxviridae*
- **Genus:** *Capripoxvirus* (Same family as smallpox and monkeypox viruses)

**Note:** LSDV is **not zoonotic** – humans **cannot** get infected.

##### Geographical Presence

- **Endemic:** Africa, Middle East
- **Spread:** Increasing in Europe and Southeast Asia

##### Seasonal & Environmental Factors

- Most common in **wet summer** and **fall months**
- High prevalence in **low-lying** areas near **water bodies**
- May also occur during **dry seasons**

### Hosts & Impact

- **Primary Hosts:** Cattle (more severely affected)
- **Secondary Hosts:** Water buffalo (less affected)
- **Nature:** Highly **host-specific**

### Economic Impact

- ↓ Milk production
- Temporary/permanent **sterility in bulls**
- Damaged hides
- Occasional **death**

**High economic losses**, especially for dairy and livestock farmers.

### Transmission

- **Vectors:** Blood-feeding insects(e.g., mosquitoes, ticks, and flies)
- **Indirect:** Contaminated **fodder, water, or feed troughs**
- **Direct:** Contact with **infected secretions** (oral/nasal)

### Symptoms

- High **fever**
- **Enlarged superficial lymph nodes**
- Multiple **nodules/lumps** on skin
- Can result in **death**, especially in naive or immuno-compromised animals

### Treatment & Prevention

- **No specific antiviral treatment**
- **Prevention: Vaccination** (most effective control method)
- **Supportive care:**
  - Antibiotics (for secondary infections)
  - Painkillers
  - Wound care (sprays, topical antiseptics)