



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

### **GS-2**

1. Notary Portal
2. India–Philippines Strategic Partnership

### **GS-3**

3. Hepatitis D
4. Sunflower Sea Stars Fish
5. Nilgiri Tahr Population Sees 21% Rise

## **Notary Portal**

**Syllabus: GS-2: E-Governance.**

### **Context:**

- The Ministry of Law and Justice informed the Rajya Sabha about the operational status of the Notary Portal.

### **About**

- **Launched by:** Government of India.
- **Legal Basis:** Works under Notaries Act, 1952 and Notaries Rules, 1956.
- **Nature:** Dedicated online platform for services related to notarial work.

### **Objectives & Functions**

- To provide a **faceless, paperless, transparent, and efficient** system between Central Government-appointed notaries and the Government of India.
- Key services:
  - Submission of applications for **appointment as Notaries**.
  - **Verification** of eligibility for appointment.
  - **Issuance of digitally signed Certificate of Practice** as a Notary.
  - **Renewal** of certificate of practice.
  - Change of practice area.
  - Submission of **annual return**.

### **Current Status**

- Live modules:
  - Verification of documents & eligibility.
  - Issuance of digitally signed Certificate of Practice to newly appointed Notaries.

## **India-Philippines Strategic Partnership**

**Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – Bilateral Relations.**

### **Context:**

India-Philippines Strategic Partnership Plan of Action (2025–29) Signed During Philippines President's Visit to India.

### **India-Philippines Relations – 2025**

#### **Historical Context**

- **Diplomatic Relations Established:** 1949 (75 years in 2024–25).
- Strengthened through:
  - **Look East Policy** – 1992.
  - **Act East Policy** – 2014.

#### **Key Highlights of Recent Visit**

- **Agreements Signed:**
  - Mutual Legal Assistance.
  - Transfer of Sentenced Persons.
  - Cooperation in Science, Space, and Tourism.
- **New Initiatives:**
  - India to support pilot project for **Philippines' Sovereign Data Cloud Infrastructure**.
  - Invitation to join **Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)**.

#### **Key Dimensions of Bilateral Relations**

##### **Defence Cooperation**

- **BrahMos Missiles:** Philippines – first foreign buyer.
- **Track-1 Maritime Dialogue:** First held in Manila, 2024.
- Focus: Maritime security, Indo-Pacific cooperation.

##### **Economic Engagement**

- **Bilateral Trade:** \$3.5 billion (2023–24).
- Supported by **ASEAN–India Free Trade Agreement**.
- Negotiations for a **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)**.

### Capacity Building

- **Philippines:** Major beneficiary of **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** programme.

### People-to-People Ties

- **Cultural Exchange Programme:** Renewed for 2019–2023.
- **Indian Diaspora:** ~70,000 in the Philippines.

### Significance of Deepening Strategic Relations

#### Shared Indo-Pacific Vision

- Commitment to a **free, open, rules-based Indo-Pacific**.
- Philippines' role in India's **MAHASAGAR Vision**.

#### Countering China's Assertiveness

- **2016 Arbitration Ruling:** Upheld Philippines' EEZ in the South China Sea; rejected China's "historic rights" (UNCLOS).
- India: Credible balancing partner for maritime security.

#### Reforming Global Governance

- Joint push for reforms in:
  - UNSC & multilateral institutions.
  - Addressing climate change, technological challenges, and inequality.

## Hepatitis D

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

#### Context:

- WHO has **reclassified Hepatitis D Virus (HDV)** as carcinogenic.
- HDV, when combined with Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), significantly raises the risk of **liver cancer** and **severe liver disease**.
- This will likely intensify **surveillance, prevention, and research efforts**.

#### Hepatitis Overview

Type	Transmission	Nature of Infection	Vaccine Availability
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Type	Transmission	Nature of Infection	Vaccine Availability
<b>A</b>	Faecal-oral	Acute	Yes
<b>B</b>	Blood & body fluids	Chronic possible	Yes
<b>C</b>	Blood exposure	Chronic	No
<b>D</b>	Requires HBV co-infection	Chronic, severe	Indirect via HBV vaccine
<b>E</b>	Contaminated food/water	Acute (severe in pregnancy)	Limited

### Hepatitis D – Key Facts

- **Defective virus** → needs **HBV** to replicate.
- **Co-infection / Superinfection** with HBV → worsens prognosis.
- **Cancer Risk:** 2–6× higher liver cancer incidence vs. HBV alone.
- **Cirrhosis:** ~75% develop within 15 years.
- **Mechanism:** Enhances HBV's carcinogenic effect by promoting severe inflammation and fibrosis.

### Modes of Transmission (same as HBV/HCV)

- Unsafe injections, unsterilised medical equipment.
- Blood transfusions without screening.
- Mother-to-child during childbirth.
- Unprotected sexual contact.
- High-risk: IV drug users, chronic HBV patients.

### Diagnosis

- **Blood tests:** HDV RNA detection / HDV antibodies.
- Always screen **HBV-positive** patients for HDV.

### Prevention

- **Universal HBV vaccination** (also prevents HDV).
- Safe injection & transfusion practices.
- Safe sex awareness.
- Screening high-risk populations.
- New treatment: **Bulevirtide** (antiviral for chronic HDV).

### Hepatitis B Vaccination Schedules

- **Infants:** Birth + 6 weeks + 14 weeks OR Birth + 1 month + 6 months.
- **Adults (high risk):** 0, 1, 6 months schedule.

### Public Health Implications

- WHO classification = **HDV as Group 1 carcinogen.**
- Push for:
  - Increased HBV vaccine coverage.
  - Strengthened blood safety protocols.
  - Research funding for antivirals & vaccines.
  - Targeted awareness campaigns.

## Sunflower Sea Stars Fish

### Syllabus: GS-3: Wildlife – species in news

#### Context:

- Scientists have identified **Vibrio pectenicida** bacterium as the cause of the **Sea Star Wasting Syndrome (SSWS)** that has killed over **5 billion sunflower starfish** since 2013.
- The disease causes lesions, tissue decay, and disintegration of body parts.



### About

- **One of the largest and fastest** sea stars in the world.
- **Body symmetry:** Radially symmetrical.
- **Arms:** 15–24 (most sea stars have 5–14).
- **Notable trait:** Capable of regenerating lost arms; if a detached arm includes part of the central disk, a new individual can grow.

### Habitat & Distribution

- Found on **mud, sand, gravel, boulders, and rock** substrates.
- **Depth range:** Intertidal coastal waters to 435 m (mostly within 120 m).
- **Geographic range:** Pacific coast of North America.

### Reproduction

- No sexual dimorphism.
- **External fertilization** through broadcast spawning.
- Breeding season: **March to July**.

### Feeding Habits

- **Carnivorous** – feeds on mussels, sea urchins, fish, crustaceans.
- **Opportunistic hunters** of diverse marine invertebrates.

### Ecological Importance

- **Keystone predator** – regulates prey populations like sea urchins.
- Indirectly **maintains kelp forest health** by controlling urchin grazing.

### Threats

- **Sea Star Wasting Syndrome (SSWS)** – mass mortality due to *Vibrio pectenicida*.
- **Climate change** – warming waters may accelerate bacterial growth.
- **Habitat changes** due to pollution and ocean acidification.

### Conservation Status

- Listed as **Critically Endangered** by the **IUCN Red List (2020)**.

## **Nilgiri Tahr Population Sees 21% Rise**

**Syllabus: GS-3; Wildlife Conservation**

### **Context:**

- Tamil Nadu's state animal — **Nilgiri Tahr** — showed a **21% population increase** compared to 2024.
- Data from a **synchronized bi-annual survey** in Tamil Nadu & Kerala.

### **Survey Details**

- **Purpose:** Assess population trends across habitat range.
- **Conducted by:** Forest Departments of **Tamil Nadu & Kerala**.
- **Methodology:**
  - 786 frontline staff.
  - Covered **3,126 km** on foot across **177 blocks** in 14 forest divisions.
  - Use of **drones, radio-collaring**, and **community participation**.
- **Part of:** Nilgiri Tahr Recovery Project (launched 2022).

### **Key Findings**

Year	Population
2024	1,031
2025	1,303

- **Major hotspots:**
  - **Akkamalai Grass Hills (Anamalai Tiger Reserve)** – 334 individuals.
  - **Mukurthi National Park** – 282 individuals (~50% of Tamil Nadu population).

### **About Nilgiri Tahr**

- **Scientific name:** Nilgiritragus hylocrius
- **Common names:** Varaiadu (Tamil), Varayadu (Malayalam)
- **IUCN Status:** Endangered
- **Legal Protection:** Schedule I, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972

### **Habitat**

- **Endemic** to Southern Western Ghats (Tamil Nadu & Kerala).



- **Altitude range:** 1,200 – 2,600 m.
- Prefers **steep montane grasslands & shola forest edges**.
- Current distribution: ~400 km stretch from Nilgiris to Kanyakumari.



#### Physical & Biological Features

- **Build:** Stocky, short coarse fur; males have a **silver saddle patch**.
- **Adaptations:** Sure-footed cliff climbers.
- **Closest relatives:** Himalayan & Arabian tahrs (but adapted to tropical wet climates).
- **Gestation:** ~180 days; births in Jan–Feb.
- **Lifespan:** 3–3.5 years in wild (up to 9 years).
- **Sexual maturity:** ~3 years.
- **Activity:** Diurnal grazers, active in mornings & evenings.

#### Conservation Significance

- Acts as a **flagship species** for the montane grassland ecosystem of the Western Ghats.
- Recovery reflects effective anti-poaching, habitat protection, and community engagement.
- **Challenges:** Habitat fragmentation, invasive plant species (*Acacia mearnsii*, *Eucalyptus*), climate change, and human disturbance.