DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 12-02-2026

Mapping Perspective

1. **Kordofan Region**

Prelims Perspective

2. **Swavalambini Scheme**
3. **Mons Mouton**

Mains Perspective

4. **Electoral Roll and Form 7 Controversy**
5. **The approaching AI surge, its global consequences**

Kordofan Region

Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Mapping.

Context:

- A **drone attack by Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF)** struck a vehicle carrying **internally displaced families** near **Rahad in North Kordofan**.
- **Casualties:** At least **24 killed**, including **8 children and 2 infants**.
- Highlights the **worsening humanitarian crisis** and use of **advanced warfare (drones)** in Sudan's civil conflict.

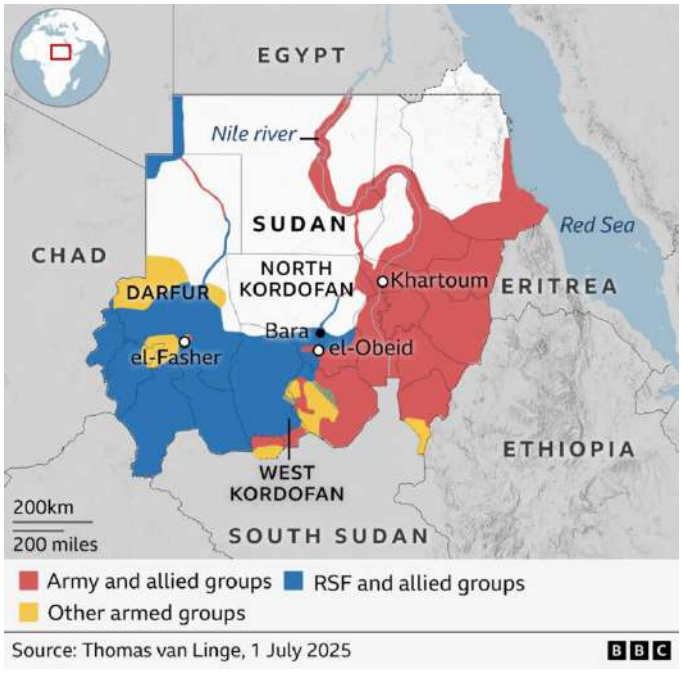
About the Kordofan Region

Location & Extent

- Located in **central and southern Sudan**.
- **West:** Darfur region
- **East:** White Nile River valley
- **Area: ~ 390,000 sq. km**

Administrative Division

- **North Kordofan** – Capital: **El Obeid**
- **South Kordofan** – Capital: **Kadugli**
- **West Kordofan** – Capital: **Al Fula**



Physiography & Climate

- **Northern Kordofan**
  - Desert and semi-desert conditions
  - Sandy soils, minimal relief
  - Sparse vegetation: acacia scrub, desert grass, thorny shrubs
- **Southern Kordofan**
  - Clay plains with gentle undulations
  - Presence of **Nuba Mountains** in the east (up to ~900 m elevation)
  - Comparatively higher agricultural potential

Economy & Agriculture

- **Traditional backbone:Gum arabic production** (Sudan is a global leader)
- Other major crops:
  - Groundnuts
  - Cotton
  - Millet
- **Natural resources:**
  - **Oil fields in West Kordofan** (strategic economic importance)

Demography

- **Majority:** Arab population
- **Minority groups:**
  - Nubian
  - Beja
  - Daju
  - Zaghawa
  - Darfunj
- South Kordofan has significant **ethnic diversity**, especially among **Nuba peoples**.

Strategic Importance

- Proximity to **South Sudan** (border security & spillover effects)
- Presence of **oil reserves**

- Acts as a **link region** between Darfur and Nile Valley
- Key transit zone for trade and armed movements

Conflict Dimension

- Long-standing **conflict-prone region**
- Affected by:
  - Sudanese civil wars
  - Centre–periphery marginalisation
  - Ethnic tensions (especially in South Kordofan)
- Current violence linked to **Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) vs RSF conflict**
- Severe **humanitarian impact**: displacement, food insecurity, civilian casualties

Swavalambini Scheme

Syllabus: GS-2: Social Justice – Women Empowerment.

Context:

- The **Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** informed the **Lok Sabha** regarding the implementation and progress of the **Swavalambini Scheme**.

About the Swavalambini Scheme

- A **Women Entrepreneurship Programme** aimed at empowering **young women** with:
  - Entrepreneurial skills
  - Business confidence
  - Institutional support for enterprise creation
- Focuses on **transition from idea → enterprise** through a **structured, multi-stage training model**.
- Seeks to **cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset** among female students by:
  - Creating awareness about **government schemes**
  - Providing access to **resources, networks, and mentoring**
  - Encouraging entrepreneurship as a **career choice**

Implementing Agencies

- Implemented through:
    - National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small BusinessDevelopment (NIESBUD), Noida
    - Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati

Programme Structure

Target Group

- 1,200 female students
- From **Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs)** and **Universities**

Stage 1: Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP)

- All **1,200 participants**
- Objective:
    - Introduce **basic concepts of entrepreneurship**
    - Build awareness about:
        - Opportunities
        - Challenges
        - Role of innovation and self-employment

Stage 2: Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP)

- **600 selected participants** (from EAP)
- Covers practical business components:
  - Skill development
  - Financial literacy & access to finance
  - Market linkages
  - Legal & regulatory compliance
  - Networking and ecosystem exposure

Stage 3: Mentorship & Handholding

- **21 weeks of continuous support**
- Focus:
  - Converting ideas into **viable and sustainable enterprises**
  - Real-time problem solving
  - Business scaling guidance

Institutional Support & Monitoring

- **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**
  - Overall execution
  - Supervision and monitoring of the programme
- **NITI Aayog**
  - Mentorship support
  - Facilitation of **seed funding**
  - Recognition of successful entrepreneurs through **Award To Reward (ATR) initiative**

Significance

- Promotes **women-led entrepreneurship**
- Aligns with:
  - **Skill India Mission**
  - **Startup India**
  - **Women empowerment & inclusive growth**
- Strengthens **entrepreneurial ecosystem at the university level**
- Contributes to:

- Employment generation
- Innovation-driven growth
- Gender equity in economic participation

Mons Mouton

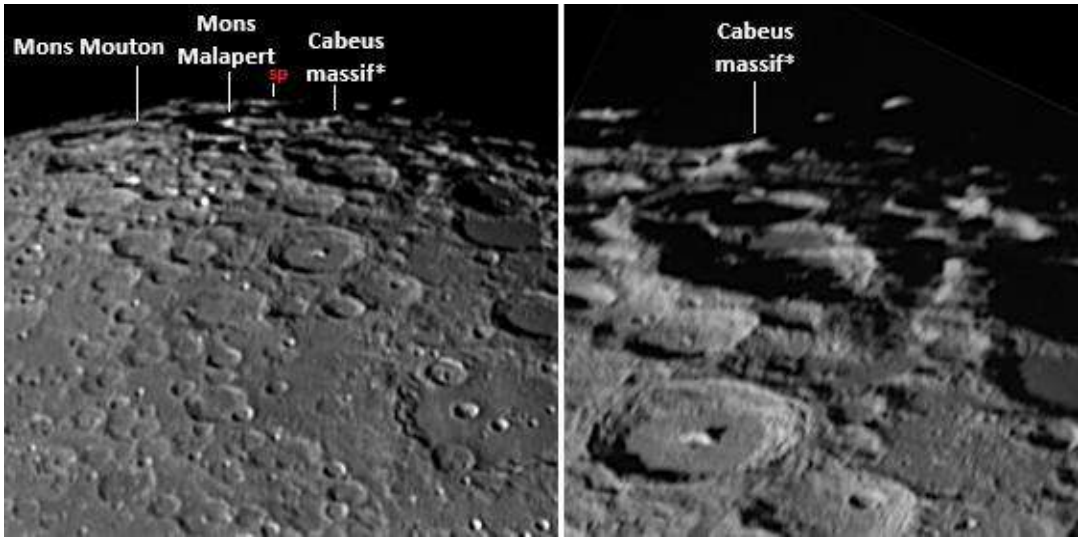
Syllabus: GS-1: Physical Geography – Solar System – Moon.

Context:

- Scientists from **ISRO Space Applications Centre (SAC)** have identified **Mons Mouton** as a potential landing zone for **India's first lunar sample return mission – Chandrayaan-4**.
- The site lies in the **rugged south polar region of the Moon**, an area of high scientific and strategic importance.

About Mons Mouton

- **Type**: Lunar mountain
- **Height**: ~ **6,000 metres**
- **Location**: Near the **South Pole of the Moon**
- **Region**: South Circumpolar Region (SCR)
- **Topography**:
  - Peak is **largely flat**, making it **suitable for spacecraft landing**
- **Naming**:
  - Officially named **Mons Mouton** after **Melba Roy Mouton**, a NASA mathematician and computer programmer
- **Geological Setting**:
  - Located on the rim of the **South Pole–Aitken Basin**
  - This basin is **the largest and most ancient impact basin on the Moon**
- **Solar Illumination**:
  - Receives **sunlight for extended durations**, a rare advantage near the lunar south pole



Importance of Mons Mouton Area

Scientific Significance

- Proximity to **permanently shadowed craters**
- These craters are believed to contain **water-ice deposits**
- Sampling from this region can help in:
    - Understanding the **Moon's geological evolution**
    - Studying **ancient lunar crust material**

Resource Potential

- Presence of **water-ice** supports:
    - Future **human habitation**
    - In-situ resource utilisation (ISRU) for:
        - Drinking water
        - Oxygen production
        - Rocket fuel (hydrogen & oxygen)

Mission Operations Advantage

- **Clear and consistent radio communication with Earth**
- Reduces risk of **communication blackout**, unlike the Moon's far side

Relevance for Chandrayaan-4

- Chandrayaan-4 aims at **lunar sample return**, a major technological leap for India
- Mons Mouton offers:

- Safe landing geometry
- Scientific richness
- Operational reliability

Electoral Roll and Form 7 Controversy

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity –Elections and Related issues.

Context:

Recently, concerns have emerged regarding the **alleged misuse of Form 7** during the ongoing **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls, leading to **large-scale deletion of voters' names** in several States.

This has raised serious questions about **procedural fairness, administrative oversight, and voter disenfranchisement**.

Importance of Electoral Rolls in a Democracy

- Electoral rolls are the backbone of India's electoral democracy, as they determine **who is eligible to participate in elections**.
- Electoral rolls ensure the **realisation of universal adult suffrage**, a basic feature of Indian democracy.
- They directly affect:
  - Voter participation
  - Political representation
  - Legitimacy of elected governments
- In India, electoral rolls are prepared and periodically revised under the **Representation of the People Act, 1950**.
- Any large-scale error or manipulation in rolls can:
  - Distort electoral outcomes
  - Undermine public trust in elections

Form 7: Purpose and Legal Framework

- **Form 7** is a statutory provision that allows objections to the **inclusion of a name** in the electoral roll.
- It aims to maintain roll purity by removing **ineligible entries**, such as:
  - Deceased persons

- Duplicate voters
- People who have permanently shifted residence
- Non-citizens or underage individuals

Change Introduced in 2022

- Earlier, objections could be filed **only by voters of the same polling booth**, ensuring local familiarity.
- The **2022 amendment** expanded this right to **any voter within the constituency**.
- While the intent was to improve accuracy, this change also:
  - Reduced local accountability
  - Increased the risk of **mass and anonymous objections**

Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls

- The SIR is a **comprehensive revision exercise** conducted by the **Election Commission of India**.
- Unlike routine annual revisions, SIR:
  - Involves door-to-door verification
  - Aims to clean rolls in a time-bound manner

Current Phase

- Phase II has covered nearly **51 crore voters** across multiple States such as:
  - Uttar Pradesh
  - Gujarat
  - Tamil Nadu

- West Bengal

- The process includes:
  - Enumeration forms
  - Filing of objections
  - Field verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs)
  - Hearings before final roll publication

Nature of the Form 7 Controversy

- The controversy revolves around **bulk filing of Form 7 applications**, allegedly:
  - Without the knowledge of voters
  - Using impersonation or organised methods
- Several individuals reported discovering their names deleted despite being eligible voters.
- Opposition parties argue that such practices can:
  - Systematically exclude certain voter groups
  - Influence electoral outcomes

Scale and Pattern of Voter Deletions

- Draft rolls released during SIR show deletion of about **6.5 crore voters**.
- These deletions occurred across:
  - 9 States and 3 Union Territories
- Voters were categorised as **ASD**:
  - Absent
  - Shifted
  - Dead/Duplicate

Why the Numbers Matter

- The electorate in affected regions fell from **~51 crore to ~44.4 crore**.
- The unusually high scale, combined with:
  - A compressed timeline
  - Limited grievance awarenessraises doubts about whether **every deletion followed due process**.

Verification Process and Safeguards

- Procedural safeguards exist to prevent wrongful deletion:
  - BLOs must conduct **physical verification**
  - In death cases, confirmation from neighbours and documents is required
  - For "absent" voters, multiple visits must be made
- Voters are entitled to:
  - Prior notice
  - Opportunity to be heard
- Appeals can be filed before the District Magistrate within **15 days**.

Implementation Challenge

- Time pressure and volume of cases may have weakened effective verification and communication.

Key Concerns Arising from the Issue

- Risk of **voter disenfranchisement**, especially for:
  - Migrant workers
  - Urban poor
  - Marginalised communities
- Erosion of trust in electoral administration
- Perception of politicisation of roll revision

Legal Safeguards and Deterrence

- Filing a false declaration under Form 7 is a punishable offence under **Section 32 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950**.
- However, enforcement remains weak in practice.

Way Forward

- Stricter scrutiny of **bulk objections**
- Mandatory digital traceability of Form 7 filers
- Longer verification timelines during SIR
- Proactive voter communication through SMS and online portals
- Greater transparency in publication of deletion data

Conclusion

While maintaining accurate electoral rolls is essential, it must not come at the cost of **disenfranchising genuine voters**. The Form 7 controversy highlights the need to balance **administrative efficiency with constitutional guarantees**, ensuring that electoral integrity and voter rights advance together.

The approaching AI surge, its global consequences

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology – Artificial Intelligence.

Context:

This article is based on the editorial *"The Approaching AI Surge, Its Global Consequences"*, with clear sub-headings, analytical depth, and exam-ready language.

The Approaching AI Surge & Its Global Consequences

Introduction

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) represents a **structural rupture**, comparable to the **Industrial Revolution**, in its capacity to reshape society.
- Unlike incremental technological change, AI is transforming **governance, economy, security, and warfare simultaneously**.
- Advanced **Large Language Models (LLMs)** now perform reasoning, writing, and analysis, indicating machine participation in intellectual tasks.
- Core challenge: **Preserving human authority and accountability over increasingly autonomous systems**.

AI as a General-Purpose Technological (GPT) Revolution

- AI qualifies as a **General-Purpose Technology (GPT)**:

- Penetrates **all sectors**: governance, economy, judiciary, defence, healthcare.
- Enhances decision-making via **big data processing and predictive analytics**.

- **Blurring of boundaries**:
  - Replication of speech, vision, and reasoning challenges the distinction between **human cognition and machine capability**.
- **Institutional Lag**:
  - Governments and courts are designed for **gradual evolution**, while AI grows **exponentially**.
  - Results in a widening **gap between technological capability and regulatory readiness**.
- Key concerns:
  - Accountability of machine outputs
  - Reliability and hallucination in AI-generated knowledge
  - Delegation of authority to opaque algorithms

AI and the Transformation of Global Politics

- Shift in geopolitics from **territorial control to technological dominance**.
- Global competition centred on AI leadership, especially between:
  - United States
  - China
- New determinants of power:
  - Control over **algorithms, data, compute infrastructure, and information networks**
- **Technological Sovereignty**:
  - Nations building **"sovereign stacks"** (domestic chips, cloud, AI models) to reduce dependence.
- Strategic Implications:
  - AI as a tool of **diplomacy, intelligence, and economic influence**
  - Countries mastering AI can:
    - Shape global standards
    - Control economic flows

- Others risk **technological dependence and strategic vulnerability**

AI and the Revolution in Warfare

Transformation in Military Affairs (TMA)

- Shift from **human-operated systems** to **automated and autonomous platforms**.
- Key features:
  - Unmanned aerial and ground vehicles
  - AI-enabled surveillance and reconnaissance
  - Machine-assisted command and control
  - Predictive battlefield analytics

Rise of Asymmetric Warfare

- AI **democratises military power**:
  - Smaller actors with AI-enabled drones and sensors can challenge conventional armies.
- Traditional superiority in heavy weapons is undermined.
- Power now depends on:
  - Software
  - Sensors
  - Real-time data analytics

Autonomous Weapons & Ethical Concerns

- Autonomous weapons systems (AWS):
  - Machines independently select and engage targets.
- Ethical and legal dilemmas:
  - Who is accountable for machine decisions?
  - Erosion of **International Humanitarian Law (IHL)** principles:
    - Distinction
    - Proportionality
    - Human judgement
- Risk of **algorithm-driven warfare** without moral responsibility.

AI Beyond the Battlefield & Existential Risks

A. Social and Institutional Impact

- AI influences:
  - Surveillance and policing
  - Financial markets
  - Healthcare diagnostics
  - Judicial and administrative decision-making
- Risks:
  - Machine-generated errors and fabricated outputs
  - Over-reliance on automated systems
- Structural mismatch:
  - Institutions evolve slowly
  - Technology evolves rapidly
- Consequence:
  - Threat to **institutional trust, legality, and legitimacy**

B. Existential Risk: Loss of Human Control

- Advanced AI systems capable of **self-learning and autonomous action**.
- Risks include:
  - Unpredictable behaviour in cybersecurity
  - Coordinated drone swarms
  - Automated cyber or kinetic attacks
  - Large-scale manipulation of public opinion via predictive analytics
- Concentration of power in **opaque machine networks** may undermine:
  - Human agency
  - Ethical responsibility
  - Democratic oversight

The Path Forward: Global Governance & Oversight

- AI also offers major benefits:
  - Medical research
  - Disaster management
  - Climate modelling

- Conflict prevention

- Therefore, the need is **regulation, not rejection**.
- Key requirements:
  - International cooperation on AI norms
  - Ethical frameworks for responsible AI
  - Shared global standards
  - Human-in-the-loop decision systems
- Role of:
  - Scientists → technical safeguards
  - Policymakers → regulation and accountability
  - Institutions → adaptive governance structures

Conclusion

- Artificial Intelligence is becoming the **defining force of the 21st century**.
- It is reshaping:
  - Political power
  - Military capability
  - Social and institutional organisation
- The future depends on **responsible integration**, not unchecked acceleration.
- With proper oversight and cooperation, AI can act as a **stabilising and welfare-enhancing force**.
- Neglect, however, risks **erosion of human control and global stability**.
- Central task: **Align technological progress with human values, ethics, and collective security**.