DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 30-03-2026

Mapping Perspective

1. **Honshu Island**

Prelims Perspective

2. **Lyme Disease**
3. **Shaurya Squdrons**

Mains Perspective

4. **Expanding Lok Sabha Seats & Constitutional Roadblocks**
5. **Social Media Addiction Trail**

Honshu Island

Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Mapping.

Context:

- An earthquake measuring magnitude **6.2** struck off the **east coast of Japan's largest island, Honshu**, recently.

Honshu Island

Location & Extent

- Honshu, historically known as **Akitsushima**, is the **largest of the four main islands of Japan**.
- Lies between the **Pacific Ocean (east)** and the **Sea of Japan (west)**.
- Forms a **northeast–southwest arc (~1,287 km)** and varies greatly in width.

Area & Ranking

- Area: **227,898 sq. km → world's seventh-largest island**.

Population

- Population: **~104 million → more than 80% of Japan's population**.
- **Second-most populous island** in the world after **Java (Indonesia)**.

Major Urban Centres

- Contains main cities of Japan: **Tokyo (capital), Osaka, Hiroshima, Nagoya, Kyoto, Yokohama**.

Physical Geography

Relief & Structure

- Dominated by **Central Trough** → central mountainous spine with most of Japan's highest peaks.

Important Landforms

- **Mount Fuji** → highest mountain, **active stratovolcano**.
- **Lake Biwa** → largest lake in Japan.

Seismic Activity

- **Frequent earthquakes** due to presence of **multiple tectonic plates**.
- Located in the **Pacific Ring of Fire** → high seismic and volcanic activity.

Exam-Oriented Takeaways

- Largest, most populous, and most economically significant island of Japan.
- Combination of **dense population + active tectonics** → high disaster vulnerability.
- Key static facts: **Mount Fuji, Lake Biwa, Central Trough, major cities**.

Lyme Disease

Syllabus: GS-3: General Science – diseases.

Context:

- The U.S. drugmaker **Pfizer** and France's **Valneva**: experimental Lyme disease vaccine showed **>70% efficacy in a late-stage trial**

About Lyme Disease

- **Lyme disease (Lyme borreliosis)**: infectious illness caused by bacteria **Borrelia burgdorferi**
- **Affects**: skin, nervous system, heart, and joints
- **Origin of name**: town of **Lyme, Connecticut (USA)**, first identified in children in 1976
- **Geographical distribution**: most commonly reported in **North America, Europe, and some parts of Asia**

Transmission of Lyme Disease

- **Mode**: transmitted to humans through **tick bite**
- **Vector specificity**: only **deer ticks (black-legged ticks)** can spread the bacteria
- **Habitat of ticks**: grassy, wooded, or bushy areas; attach to skin unnoticed
- **Pathogenesis**: bacteria enter bloodstream → spread to different body parts → wide range of symptoms
- **Non-transmission**:
    - Not spread between humans or from pets to humans
    - Not transmitted through air, food, or water
    - **Lice, mosquitoes, fleas, and flies** do not transmit

Symptoms of Lyme Disease

- **Stage-wise disease**: occurs in stages; symptoms may overlap
- **Early sign**: red circular rash (bull's-eye appearance) at bite site

- **Other early symptoms**: fever, body aches, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes
- **If untreated**: severe arthritis + damage to heart and nervous system

Treatment of Lyme Disease

- **Treatment**: most cases treatable with **antibiotics**
- **Recovery**: may take time, especially if not diagnosed early
- **Post-treatment**: some symptoms may persist even after treatment

Shaurya Squdrons

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology – Defence Technology.

Context:

- The Indian Army recently began fielding **Shaurya Squadrons**, dedicated drone sub-units embedded within armoured regiments

About Shaurya Squadrons

Definition & Deployment

- Shaurya Squadrons are **dedicated drone sub-units** being inducted into the Indian Army's armoured regiments
- Five Army commands have already inducted these units, with plans to equip **all 67 armoured regiments** to ensure each has a dedicated drone wing

Composition & Structure

- Each squadron comprises **20–30 personnel** trained in drone and counter-drone operations
- The Shaurya Squadron draws from prior deployment of **Ashni Platoons** within infantry battalions

Equipment & Capabilities

- Operate a mix of **surveillance drones, attack drones, swarm drones, FPV (first-person view) drones, and loitering munitions**
- FPV drones can **strike enemy armour and logistics nodes**, enabling action without routing requests up the chain of command

Operational Significance

- Provide tank commanders **real-time surveillance and precision-strike capability at the unit level**

- Aim to **compress the sensor-to-shooter cycle** and push drone capability down to the unit level for faster targeting and engagement

Sensor-to-Shooter Cycle

- Refers to the **time between detecting a target and destroying it**, which Shaurya Squadrons directly address
- The Army intends to **compress this gap from minutes to seconds**

Link with Ashni Platoons

- Ashni units are **25–30 personnel strong** and carry a similar blend of **surveillance drones, attack drones, and loitering munitions**
- They are now an **integral part of all infantry battalions**, forming the conceptual basis for Shaurya Squadrons

Expanding Lok Sabha Seats & Constitutional Roadblocks

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity – Parliament.

Context:

- Government proposes increasing Lok Sabha seats from **543 to 816 (≈50% rise)** to implement **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023**
- **273 seats reserved for women (33%)** of total seats
- Delimitation proposed based on **2011 Census (not upcoming Census)**
- Existing **proportional representation among states to be maintained**
- Similar increase proposed for **State Assemblies**

Rationale for Using 2011 Census

- Women's Reservation Act links **reservation → delimitation → fresh Census**
- Using 2011 Census aims to **fast-track implementation**
- Avoids **politically sensitive redistribution of seats** favouring high-population northern states over southern states

Constitutional Provisions

Article 81 (Lok Sabha Representation)

- **Art 81(2)(a):** Seat-population ratio across states to be **as far as practicable equal**
- **Art 81(2)(b):** Uniform population-seat ratio within each state (constituencies)

- Exception: **Small states (<6 million)** allowed disproportionate representation

Article 82 (Delimitation)

- After every Census:
  - Allocation of seats among states
  - Division into constituencies

Delimitation Freeze (Since 1971)

- **1976 Amendment:** Froze seat allocation based on **1971 Census (for 25 years)**
- **2001 Amendment:** Extended freeze till **post-2026 Census publication**

Reason for Freeze

- Southern states: **effective population control → lower growth**
- Northern states: **higher population growth**
- Pure population-based delimitation would **reduce southern representation**
- Hence, freeze = **political compromise to avoid penalising demographic success**

Delimitation Process (Post-2026)

- Census conducted → data published
- Parliament passes **Delimitation Act (Art 82)**
- Centre constitutes **Delimitation Commission**
- Commission redraws constituencies

Last Exercise

- Based on **2001 Census (Delimitation Act, 2002)**
- Only **intra-state boundary changes**, not inter-state seat redistribution

Core Constitutional Constraint

- Article 81 enforces **"one person, one vote, one value"** principle
- Any delimitation using 2011 data must maintain **population equality across constituencies**
- Arbitrary 50% increase in seats per state **not permissible without amendment**

Possible Legal Routes

Route 1: Amend Nari Shakti Vandan Act

- Delink reservation from **Census & delimitation**
- No need for Delimitation Commission

- Reservation can be **implemented immediately (simpler route)**

Route 2: Amend Articles 81 & 82

- Enable delimitation using 2011 data
- Opens scope for **judicial challenges**

Constitutional Challenges

- **Violation of Equality (Art 14):** Weakening "one vote, one value" may violate **Basic Structure**
- **Reasonable Classification Test:** Hard to justify special protection for better-performing southern states
- **Judicial Review:** Delimitation Commission decisions subject to **court scrutiny**

Suggested Way Forward

- Adoption of **"Compensatory Principle"**
  - Provide safeguards to southern states
  - Balance **representation vs demographic equity**

Analytical Takeaway

- Issue reflects tension between:
  - Demographic federalism vs political equity
  - Equality principle vs regional balance
- Any reform requires balancing:
  - Constitutional morality (Art 14, Basic Structure)
  - Political consensus across states
  - Gender justice (33% reservation)

Social Media Addiction Trail

Syllabus: GS-2: Health Sector – Mental Health

Context:

- A U.S. jury in Los Angeles found **Meta and YouTube guilty** of designing addictive platforms that harmed a young user.

- Companies deemed **negligent; accused of malice and fraud**; damages of **$6 million awarded**—Meta liable for **70%**, YouTube **30%**.

Background: Landmark Case Linking Social Media Design to Harm

- Case highlights allegations that **Meta (Facebook, Instagram) and YouTube intentionally designed addictive platforms** harming young users.
- A **20-year-old plaintiff** argued early exposure led to **anxiety, depression, body dysmorphia**.
- Lawsuit treats social media as a **product**, comparing its design to **"digital casinos" exploiting dopamine-driven engagement**.

Overcoming Section 230: Legal Shift in Liability

- **Section 230 (Communications Decency Act)** earlier protected platforms from liability for **user-generated content**, causing past lawsuits to fail.
- Plaintiffs **bypassed Section 230** by focusing on **product design (feeds, engagement mechanisms)** rather than content.
- Jury examined whether harm arose from **platform architecture** and applied negligence criteria:
    - **Duty of care, breach, causation, harm**
- Applied **"substantial factor" test**, concluding platform design **significantly contributed to harm**.
- Evidence showed **conscious disregard for user safety**, with internal research indicating awareness of risks but continuation of harmful design practices.

Parallel Verdict (New Mexico Case)

- A **New Mexico jury found Meta liable** under consumer protection law for **misleading users about platform safety**, awarding **$375 million damages**.
- Focus on decisions like **expanding end-to-end encryption despite warnings on child exploitation risks**.
- Together with Los Angeles verdict, signals **shift towards holding platforms accountable for design choices and safety practices**, not just content.

India's Regulatory Framework for Children on Internet

Legal Provisions

- **Information Technology Act, 2000**
    - Prohibits **harmful and explicit content involving children**
    - Mandates **quick removal (2–3 hours)** of unlawful content

- Requires reporting under laws like **POCSO**

- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**
  - Requires **verifiable parental consent** for children's data
  - Prohibits **tracking, behavioural monitoring, targeted advertising**
- **SPDI Rules, 2011**
  - Data collected for **specific purposes with consent**
  - Restricts **disclosure of sensitive personal data**

Awareness and Capacity Building

- **CERT-In Initiatives**: safety advisories, awareness campaigns, cybersecurity guidance
- **ISEA Programme**: workshops covering lakhs; training **teachers, police, volunteers** as cybersecurity trainers

Technical and Enforcement Measures

- **Blocking of CSAM** using global databases
- Collaboration with international agencies like **NCMEC (USA)**
- Promotion of **parental control filters and cyber safety awareness**

Overall Significance (Analytical)

- Marks a **paradigm shift**: from content liability → **design accountability of platforms**.
- Strengthens discourse on **ethical technology design and child protection**.
- Reinforces need for **global regulatory convergence** on digital safety.
- India's approach reflects a **multi-layered framework**: legal + regulatory + awareness + institutional mechanisms to mitigate risks in the digital ecosystem.