



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 04-04-2026**

### **Mapping Perspective**

1. Algeria

### **Prelims Perspective**

2. E20 fuel
3. Rice's Whale

### **Mains Perspective**

4. Samprati and Jainism
5. FCRA Amendment Bill

## Algeria

### Syllabus: GS-1: World Geography – Mapping.

#### Context:

- Recently, the **7th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Algeria** was held in **Algiers** → reflects strengthening bilateral engagement and diplomatic coordination.

#### About Algeria

##### Location

- Located in the **Maghreb region of North Africa** → strategic position linking Africa, Mediterranean, and Europe.

##### Borders

- Bordered by **seven countries**:
  - Tunisia (NE), Libya (E), Niger (SE)
  - Mali, Mauritania, Western Sahara (SW)
  - Morocco (W)



### Maritime Boundary

- Has a **coastline on the Mediterranean Sea (North)** → important for trade, energy exports, and geopolitics.

### Capital City

- Algiers

### Geographical Features of Algeria

#### Climate

- Predominantly **Mediterranean climate** → *warm, dry summers and mild, rainy winters.*

#### Major Rivers

- Djedi River, Chelif River

#### Highest Point

- Mount Tahat

#### Mountain Ranges

- Includes: **Atlas Mountains, Saharan Atlas, Tell Atlas, Hoggar Mountains, Tassilin'Ajjer Mountains**

#### Natural Resources

- Abundant resources: **oil, gas, solar energy, iron, zinc, lead, silicon, helium** → significant for energy security and export economy.

#### Relevance (Analytical Link)

- **International Relations:** India–Algeria consultations → energy cooperation, Africa outreach.
- **Geography:** Maghreb region, Mediterranean interface, desert–mountain interactions.
- **Economy:** Hydrocarbon-rich nation with diversification potential (solar energy).

## **E20 fuel**

### Syllabus: GS-3: Energy Security.

#### Context:

- The Central government has implemented a new fuel mandate for petrol pumps to supply **E20 fuel** with a minimum octane rating of **95 RON**

### About E20 Fuel

- It is a blend of **20 per cent ethanol and 80 per cent petrol**
- Ethanol is a **biofuel derived from crops such as sugarcane, maize, and grains**

### Advantages

- It offers a **higher octane rating and potentially cleaner combustion**, making it a more advanced alternative
- Regular petrol in India typically has an octane rating of around **91-92 RON**, whereas E20 fuel has a **minimum rating of 95 RON**
- This higher octane helps in **smoother combustion**

### Ethanol - Definition & Properties

- Ethanol, also known as **ethyl alcohol**, is a type of alcohol used in various applications
- It is a **clear, colourless liquid** with a characteristic odour and taste
- Chemical formula: **C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>OH** (composed of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen atoms)
- Pure ethanol is **nontoxic and biodegradable**, and if spilled, it breaks down into harmless substances
- However, **fuel ethanol contains denaturants** to make it undrinkable

### Sources of Ethanol

- Produced from **renewable resources** such as crops like **corn, sugarcane, barley, and wheat**
- Also produced from **cellulosic materials** like agricultural residues and wood

### Relevance

- Promotes **energy security** by reducing dependence on fossil fuels
- Supports **farm income diversification** through crop-based biofuel production
- Contributes to **cleaner combustion and reduced emissions**, aligning with climate goals

## Rice's Whale

Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Species in news.

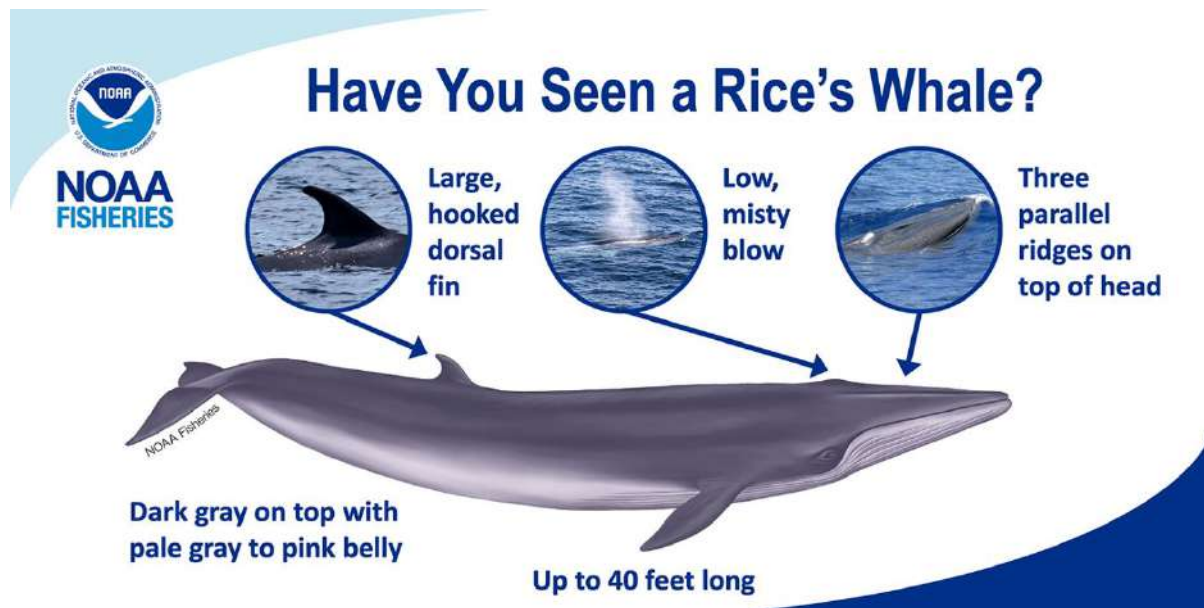
Context:

- Scientists fear that the USA administration's plan to expand oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico will push Rice's Whales to extinction.

About Rice's Whale

Taxonomy & Classification

- Rice's whales are members of the baleen whale family **Balaenopteridae**.
- These are most closely related to **Bryde's whales**.
- In 2021, the Rice's whale was recognized as a new species, evolutionarily distinct from other Bryde's whales around the world.



Physical Appearance

- They have three prominent ridges in front of their blowhole; body is sleek; pectoral fins are slender and pointed.
- Rice's whales are uniformly dark gray on top with a pale to pink belly.

Habitat & Distribution

- It is a medium-sized whale sighted year-round in the northern Gulf of America (previously known as Gulf of Mexico).
- Most sightings are concentrated in 100–400 meter (m) depths of the northeastern region.

- **Distribution:** It is the only whale species that lives year-round in the Gulf of America.

### Ecology & Biology

**Diet:** They are mainly dependent on **silver-rag driftfish**.

### Reproduction

- Rice's whales are likely able to reproduce every 2 to 3 years.
- They reach sexual maturity at age nine.

### Threats

- Vessel strikes
- Noise pollution
- Oil spills
- Climate change

**Conservation Status: IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered

### Analytical Note

- Highlights conflict between **energy security (oil drilling)** and **marine biodiversity conservation**.
- Important example of **endemic species vulnerability** and **anthropogenic pressures in semi-enclosed seas**.

## **Samprati and Jainism**

**Syllabus: GS-1: Indian History – Jainism.**

### Context:

- On **Mahavir Jayanti (March 31)**, PM Modi inaugurated the **Samrat Samprati Museum** in Koba, Gandhinagar, dedicated to Jain history and **Samrat Samprati**, grandson of Emperor Ashoka.
- While **Ashoka** is known for spreading Buddhism, **Samprati** is remembered for promoting Jainism across India and beyond, expanding the faith's influence.

### Mauryan Legacy Beyond Ashoka

- The **Mauryan Empire (3rd century BCE)** is best known for **Emperor Ashoka (c. 269–232 BCE)**, who expanded the empire and promoted a moral order based on Buddhist principles.

- His model of **ethical kingship** influenced regions beyond India, especially **Buddhist Southeast Asia**.



### Jainism Within the Mauryan Era

- Despite Buddhism's prominence, **Jainism also remained significant** during this period.
- Ashoka's first wife **Padmavati** is believed to have been a Jain; his grandfather **Chandragupta Maurya** is said (Jain traditions) to have embraced Jainism, migrated south during famine, and died in meditation at **Shravanabelagola**.
- Chandragupta is central to **Digambara tradition**, while **Shvetambara texts** highlight **Samprati** as a key figure.
- After Ashoka's death (232 BCE), the empire may have been divided between **Dasharatha and Samprati**.
- Samprati, son of **Kunala**, is portrayed as a devoted follower who spread Jainism by promoting and distributing **images of the Jinas**.

### Samprati: The Jain Counterpart to Ashoka

- Samprati (c. 230–220 BCE) emerges in **Shvetambara Jain texts** as a major royal patron of Jainism.

- Later works like **Samprati Nripa Charitra** expanded his legacy, portraying him as a central figure in Jain religious history.

### Conversion and Religious Commitment

- Some traditions claim he was Jain from birth, but most highlight **conversion under monk Suhastin in Ujjain**.
- Adopted **Jain lay practices** (daily icon worship) and showed **deep personal commitment to Jain dharma**, not merely political patronage.

### Expansion of Jainism Across Regions

- Actively spread Jainism by **sending monks, building/renovating temples, installing icons**.
- Consolidated Jainism across **Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Malwa, Rajputana**.
- Traditions extend influence to **China, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Central & West Asia**.

### Temple Building and Religious Infrastructure

- Institutionalised Jain religious culture similar to Ashoka's stupa-building.
- Traditions credit: **125,000 temples built, 36,000 renovated, millions of icons consecrated, 700 charitable centres established**.

### Legacy in Jain Tradition

- In western India, many ancient temples/icons without clear records are attributed to **Samprati**.
- Seen as **parallel to Ashoka in Buddhism**—a ruler who spread teachings and embedded religious practices across regions.

### Historical Sources and Death

- Documented in texts like **Sampratikatha, Parishistaparva, Prabhavakcharita**.
- Ruled ~**50 years**, died around **190 BCE**, leaving a lasting legacy as a champion of Jainism.

### Conclusion

- The **Samprati and Jainism spread** highlights Ashoka's grandson's crucial role in expanding Jainism through **missionary activity, temple-building, and icon installation**.
- It represents a **defining chapter in ancient Indian religious history**, paralleling Ashoka's Buddhist expansion.

## **FCRA Amendment Bill**

**Syllabus: GS-2: Governance – Laws and Policies & NGOs.**

### **Context:**

- Union government has **deferred discussion** on the FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026 introduced in Lok Sabha
- Bill aims to regulate foreign funds to ensure they do not harm **national interest, public order, or security**
- Triggered controversy; Opposition alleges adverse impact on **minority institutions (especially Christian organisations)**
- Issue has gained political significance ahead of **Kerala Assembly elections**

### **About FCRA**

- **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)** regulates acceptance and use of foreign funds by individuals, NGOs, associations
- Objective → ensure foreign funds do not affect **national interest**
- Introduced in **1976** amid concerns of foreign influence on internal affairs
- Amended in **2016, 2018, 2020**; 2020 amendment increased government control and scrutiny

### **FCRA 2010: Consolidated Framework**

- **Objective** → consolidate regulations and prevent misuse harmful to national interest
- **Registration Requirement** → mandatory registration/prior permission for receiving foreign contribution
- **Permitted Uses** → Cultural; Economic; Educational; Social; Religious purposes

### **Scale of Foreign Funding**

- Around **16,000 organisations** registered under FCRA
- Annual inflow ≈ **₹22,000 crore**

### **Need for Amendment**

- Lack of comprehensive framework for handling **assets when registration lapses**
- Key issues:
  - Multiple investigations and **inconsistent penalties**
  - No clear timelines for **utilisation of funds**

- Ambiguity in **handling assets during suspension**
- Lack of clarity on **cessation of registration**

### FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026 – Key Provisions

- Introduction of “**Designated Authority**” appointed by Union government replacing Section 15
- Authority to **take over, supervise, and manage assets/funds** when registration is:
  - Cancelled
  - Surrendered
  - Expired / not renewed
- **Deemed Expiry of Registration:**
  - No renewal application filed
  - Renewal denied
  - Renewal not obtained before expiry

### Asset Management Provisions

- **Return of Assets** → if registration is renewed/reissued, unutilised funds/assets may be returned
- **Permanent Takeover** if:
  - Registration not restored within specified period
  - Organisation becomes defunct
- **Disposal Mechanism:**
  - Transfer to Centre/State/local bodies
  - Sale or disposal through prescribed process
- **Special Provision (Clause 16A(7)):**
  - For **places of worship**, management may be assigned to another person while preserving religious character

### Controversy and Debate

#### Government’s Justification

- Address **legal and operational gaps** in asset handling
- Target entities with “**ill intentions**”, including misuse for forced religious conversions

#### Opposition’s Concerns

- Risk of **asset takeover** due to delay/rejection of renewal
- Fear of **excessive government control**, reducing NGO autonomy

### **Kerala Factor**

- Issue intensified due to **Kerala Assembly elections (April 9)**
- Christians (~61 lakh; second-largest minority) form a **significant voter base**

### **Analytical Takeaway**

- Balances **national security vs civil society autonomy**
- Raises concerns of **federalism, minority rights, NGO regulation**
- Important for **Polity + Governance + Internal Security** linkage