



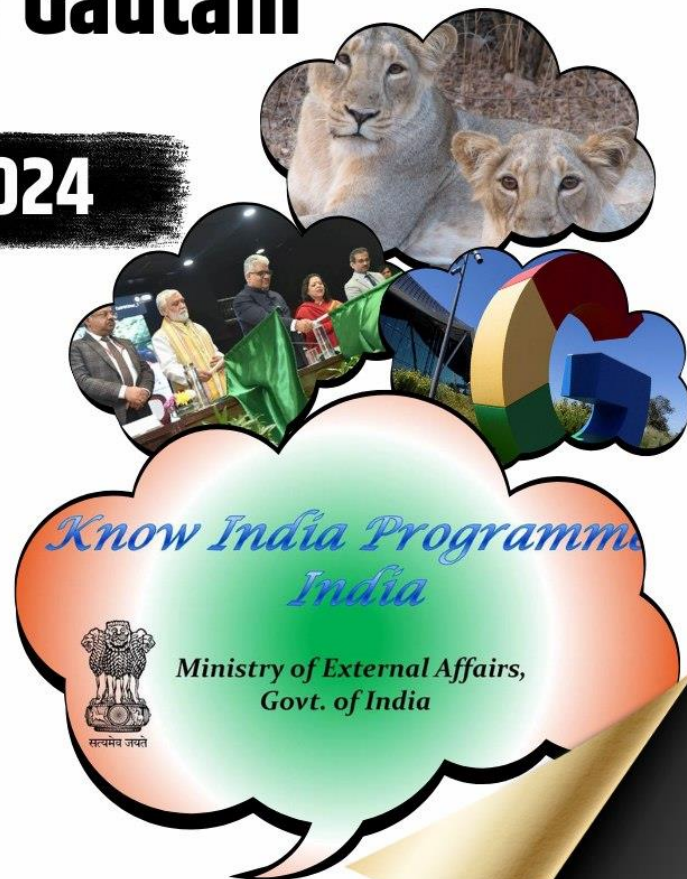
# Daily Current Affairs



## To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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## 1 CCI Investigates Google for Alleged Anti-Competitive Practices in Real Money Gaming

**Context:** The CCI has initiated a probe into **Google** following a complaint by **Winzo**, an RMG platform. The complaint alleges **discrimination** and **market distortion** through Google's **selective policies** on its Play Store.

**Online Gaming in India:**

**Types of Online Games:**

1. **E-Sports**
  - **Competitive video gaming** where players compete in tournaments at various levels.
  - Examples: **PUBG Mobile, Call of Duty, Dota 2, Free Fire.**
2. **Fantasy Sports**
  - Players create teams of **real-life athletes** and earn points based on their actual performances.
  - Examples: **Dream11, MPL Fantasy, MyTeam11.**
3. **Games of Skill**
  - Outcomes depend primarily on the **player's skills** and decisions.
  - Examples: **Rummy, Poker, Chess, Carrom.**
4. **Games of Chance**
  - Outcomes are determined mostly by **luck**, with minimal skill involved.
  - Examples: **Roulette, Slot Machines, Lottery.**



**Regulations for Online Gaming in India:**

**Key Principles**

- Only "**games of skill**" are permitted, while **games of chance** are often deemed **gambling** and are prohibited.
- Lack of a **clear definition** for "games of skill" complicates enforcement.

**State-Specific Rules:**

- **Gaming is a state subject**, allowing individual states to define their own laws.

**Role of Self-Regulatory Bodies (SRBs):**

- Platforms register with **SRBs**, which ensure compliance and resolve complaints.
- **Non-monetary games** are exempt from regulatory approval.

**Key Guidelines:**

- Platforms must implement **KYC (Know Your Customer)** for user verification.
- The **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)** is the nodal authority for online gaming.
- **E-sports** fall under the Department of Sports, part of the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.**

**Challenges Facing India's Online Gaming Industry:**

- **Lack of a Comprehensive Regulatory Framework:** Absence of clear rules governing online gaming.
- **Distinguishing Legitimate Platforms:** Users face difficulty differentiating **genuine platforms** from illegal gambling sites.
- **National Security and Money Laundering:** Growth of **offshore illegal gambling** exacerbates these risks.

**CCI's Investigation into Google:**

**What Prompted the Probe?**

- **Winzo** alleged that Google's policies unfairly favor certain apps like **Dream11** under its **pilot program**.
- The **CCI** raised concerns about Google's **dominant position** and its potential abuse in the **RMG ecosystem**.

**Key Allegations Against Google**

**2022 Policy and Pilot Program**

- Google's **pilot program** allowed only **Daily Fantasy Sports (DFS)** and **rummy apps** on the Play Store.

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- **Winzo** criticized this move as **discriminatory**, benefiting specific competitors like **Dream11**.
- Example: Dream11 reportedly gained **1.7 crore users** within two months of the program launch.

#### Advertising Restrictions:

- Google's **ad policies** limited promotions to DFS and rummy apps, blocking others from advertising on its platform.
- This **restricted growth opportunities** for other RMG platforms.

#### Payment Warning Messages:

- Google reportedly displayed **warning messages** during transactions on **Winzo's app**, discouraging users from engaging.
- Examples of messages:
  - "This person might be flagged as risky."
  - "This is an unusually high amount."

#### Google's Defense

##### Ambiguity Around Games of Skill:

- **No clear definition** exists for "games of skill" in India.
- Google argued that each game must be evaluated on its **features, format, and rules**.

##### Pending Gaming Regulations:

- Highlighted the **uncertainty** around the **IT Ministry's gaming rules**, including SRBs' role in determining permissible games.

##### Fragmented Laws:

- India's **state-specific regulations** create **compliance challenges** for platforms like Google.

##### What's Next?

- The CCI has tasked its **Director General** to conduct a detailed investigation within two months.
- The outcome could shape future regulations for the **online gaming ecosystem** in India and influence global tech practices.

This probe into Google highlights the urgent need for a **clear regulatory framework** in India's booming **online gaming industry**. Balancing **fair competition** with **user protection** will be key to fostering sustainable growth in this dynamic sector.

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## 2 National Transit Pass System (NTPS): Streamlining Forest Produce Transit

**Context:** The Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change recently launched the National Transit Pass System (NTPS) across India. This initiative aims to simplify and standardize the movement of timber, bamboo, and other forest produce nationwide.

**What is the National Transit Pass System?**

**Key Features of NTPS:**

- Facilitates the **seamless transit** of timber, bamboo, and forest produce across India.
- Replaces the current system of **state-specific transit permits**, creating a "One Nation-One Pass" regime.
- Designed to enhance **efficiency and transparency** for farmers and agroforestry practitioners.



**Objectives of NTPS:**

1. **Unified Online Platform:**

- Provides a centralized, digital system for issuing **timber transit permits**.
- Makes the process simple and accessible through **desktop and mobile applications**.

2. **Ease of Doing Business:**

- Aims to support **tree growers** and **farmers** by removing interstate barriers to the transportation of forest produce.
- Contributes to the government's push for **streamlined business operations** in the forestry sector.

3. **Seamless Inter-State and Intra-State Transit:**

- Manages permits for the movement of timber, bamboo, and forest products from sources like:
  - **Private lands**
  - **Government forests**
  - **Private depots**

**How Does NTPS Work?**

**Innovative Features:**

- **QR-Coded Permits:**
  - Transit permits feature **QR codes**, enabling verification at state check posts.
  - Ensures the **authenticity** of permits for uninterrupted transit.
- **User-Friendly Design:**
  - Farmers and businesses can easily register and apply for permits through mobile or desktop applications.
- **Self-Generated Certificates:**
  - Users can generate **No Objection Certificates (NOCs)** for **exempted tree species** without additional approvals.

**Adoption Across India:**

- **25 States and Union Territories** have already implemented NTPS.
- Enables **interstate coordination**, promoting smoother operations for **producers, farmers, and transporters**.

**Significance of NTPS:**

1. **Promotes Agroforestry:**
  - Encourages farmers to grow regulated tree species by simplifying permit procedures.
2. **Boosts Economic Growth:**
  - Enhances the profitability of timber and bamboo businesses by reducing transit delays.



### 3. Technology-Driven Efficiency:

- Introduces a transparent and efficient system, replacing outdated manual procedures.

### 4. Environmental Regulation:

- Ensures better compliance with forestry laws and regulations, balancing development with conservation.

#### Nodal Ministry:

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change** is the primary authority overseeing the implementation of NTPS.

The **National Transit Pass System** is a transformative step toward simplifying forestry-related trade, empowering farmers, and promoting sustainable practices in **timber and bamboo production** across India. Its “**One Nation-One Pass**” vision marks a significant stride toward **efficiency, transparency, and environmental responsibility**.



### 3 Human-Lion Coexistence in Gujarat: Adapting to a Unique Challenge

**Context:** New research has highlighted the **coexistence of 674 Asiatic Lions** with humans in Gujarat. This remarkable harmony is made possible through **mutual adaptation, strict legal protection, economic incentives, and government compensation** for livestock losses. The study, which analyzed over **14,000 livestock predation incidents, 11,000 compensation claims, and human-lion interactions across 277 villages**, sheds light on how these factors collectively enable **peaceful coexistence**.



Understanding Asiatic Lions

**Who Are the Asiatic Lions?**

- The **Asiatic Lion** (*Panthera leo persica*), also known as the **Indian Lion**, is a symbol of **courage and strength** in Indian culture and an integral part of its wildlife heritage.

**Key Features**

**Physical Traits:**

- Smaller and more compact** than African lions.
- Males have **sparser manes** and a distinct **skin fold along their belly**.
- Habitat:**
  - Thrive in **dry deciduous forests, scrublands, and open grasslands**.
  - Currently found exclusively in **Gir Forest and surrounding regions** in Gujarat.

**Status and Range:**

- Historically, Asiatic lions roamed across the **Middle East and India**, but now their range is confined to **Gujarat**.
- Population expansion has seen lions move beyond **Gir Forest**, extending to **neighboring districts**.

**IUCN Status:**

- Initially listed as **Endangered**, their status was upgraded to **Vulnerable** in 2024, reflecting positive conservation outcomes.

**Challenges Facing Asiatic Lions**

**Habitat and Conflict**

- Habitat Loss:** Encroachment due to **agriculture, urbanization, and industrial activities**.
- Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Livestock depredation and occasional human attacks create tension.

**Genetic Concerns**

- Genetic Bottlenecks:** A small population limits genetic diversity, increasing vulnerability to diseases.

**Other Threats**

- Poaching and illegal wildlife activities**.
- Natural risks like **droughts, forest fires**, and potential outbreaks of disease.

**Key Findings of the Study**

**What Enables Coexistence?**

- Economic Incentives:**
  - Regulated **wildlife tourism** generates income for local communities.
  - Government compensation schemes for livestock losses help reduce tensions.
- Sociocultural Acceptance:**
  - Lions are viewed as **noble and charismatic creatures**, fostering a sense of pride and tolerance among locals.
- Benefits for Lions:**
  - Human tolerance** allows lions to roam beyond protected areas.
  - Abandoned **old cattle** serve as a significant food source, reducing predation on live animals.

**Challenges to Coexistence:****Fragile Harmony:**

- Coexistence remains delicate and requires careful **management of conflicts** and **protection of lion populations**.

**Unmet Conservation Goals:**

- Plans to translocate lions to **Madhya Pradesh** to enhance genetic diversity and prevent disease risks remain **unimplemented**, despite Supreme Court directives.

**Conflict and Intolerance:**

- **Pastoralist communities** exhibit higher intolerance due to economic losses.
- **High-conflict villages** are often more tolerant due to economic benefits derived from lions.

**Livestock Depredation:**

- **91% of livestock predation incidents** occur outside protected areas.
- **Amreli district** reports the highest claims, followed by **Junagadh, Gir Somnath, and Bhavnagar**.

**Recommendations for Sustainable Coexistence:****1. Improved Monitoring:**

- Use **radio collars with virtual geofencing** to monitor lion movements and issue warnings, reducing negative interactions.

**2. Enhanced Compensation:**

- Update **livestock compensation schemes** to match market rates.
- Explore **livestock insurance programs** for better financial security.

**3. Community Engagement:**

- Strengthen community ties through **education** and **awareness campaigns** about the ecological importance of lions.

**4. Implementation of Translocation Plans:**

- Establish a second lion population to ensure long-term **genetic health** and **population stability**.

**Conclusion:**

The **coexistence of humans and lions in Gujarat** is a remarkable example of **mutual adaptation**. While the challenges are significant, the **benefits of coexistence** far outweigh the costs. By **enhancing conservation strategies**, addressing **conflicts**, and promoting **economic incentives**, this unique relationship can continue to thrive.

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## Warli Paintings: A Timeless Tribal Art Form

**Context:** An exhibition by the **Inherited Arts Forum** recently celebrated the artistic journey of the **Mashe family**, renowned for their efforts in reviving **Warli paintings**, a rich and ancient tribal art form.

**What are Warli Paintings?****Origins:**

- **Warli paintings** are a distinctive tribal art style created by the **Warli tribe**, indigenous to the **North Sahyadri Range** in Maharashtra.
- This art form dates back to the **10th century AD**, but it only gained widespread recognition for its unique style in the **1970s**.



**Traditional Practitioners:** Historically, this art was practiced by **Warli women**, known as **Suvasinis**, who adorned the **Lagn Chowk** or wedding square with intricate designs.

**Themes of Warli Art:****Depiction of Rural Life:**

- Warli paintings illustrate the **everyday lives** of rural communities, capturing their:
  - **Connection with nature.**
  - **Religious beliefs, myths, and traditions.**
  - **Festivities and social customs.**

**Geometric Simplicity:**

- The art relies on **basic geometric shapes**:
  - **Circle:** Inspired by the sun and moon.
  - **Triangle:** Derived from mountains and trees.
  - **Square:** Represents sacred enclosures.
- The central motif in many paintings is a square, called "**chauk**" or "**chaukat**", which is further categorized into:
  - **Devchauk:** Dedicated to deities.
  - **Lagnachauk:** Used for weddings.

**The Tarpa Dance:**

- A prominent feature in Warli paintings is the **Tarpa dance**, symbolizing community bonding.
  - **Tarpa**, a trumpet-like instrument, is played by men, around whom others form a circle, entwining hands and dancing rhythmically.

**Painting Techniques and Materials:****Process:**

1. **Design Selection:** The motif or theme is first decided.
2. **Freehand Drawing:** Artists directly draw on surfaces like **paper** or **cloth** without tracing.
3. **Brushes:** Handmade brushes are crafted from **bamboo sticks**, skillfully modified to create intricate designs.

**Natural Colors:**

- **Earth-derived hues** bring Warli art to life, including:
  - **White:** Made from **thick rice paste**.
  - **Brown/Orange:** Sourced from **henna**.
  - **Indigo:** Extracted from **dyes**.
  - **Red:** Produced using **brick dust**.

**A Cultural Treasure:**

**Warli paintings** beautifully capture the harmony between humans and nature, reflecting the **values, culture, and heritage** of the tribal communities. Their revival through exhibitions and dedicated efforts by families like the **Mashe family** ensures that this timeless art form continues to thrive in modern times.



5

## Know India Programme (KIP): A Gateway to India's Cultural and Societal Landscape

**Context:** Recently, the **Secretary (CPV & OIA)** addressed the **Valedictory Session** of the 70th edition of the **Know India Programme (KIP)**, a significant initiative held by the **Ministry of External Affairs**. This program has been a key avenue for engaging with the **Indian diaspora youth** and promoting awareness about India.

**What is the Know India Programme (KIP)?**

The **Know India Programme (KIP)** is a prestigious **three-week orientation** program organized by the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**. It focuses on youth of **Indian origin** aged between **18 and 30 years**, aiming to foster a deeper understanding of contemporary **Indian life**. The initiative has been running since **2003**, providing participants with unique insights into India's **culture, economy, and society**.

**Key Features of KIP****Immersive Experience:**

- Participants are selected after a thorough **selection process** and travel to India for a **21-day itinerary**.
- The program is designed to offer a comprehensive exposure to India's **political system, economic landscape, and key developmental sectors**.
- Participants explore India's rich **historical heritage** through visits to **cultural landmarks, and historically significant sites**.
- The program also arranges for **interactive sessions** with **students, professionals, and government officials**, offering a platform to engage with India's leadership and experts.

**Support for Participants:**

- **90% of the airfare** is covered by the Ministry, while participants are required to pay the remaining **10%**.
- **Accommodation, meals, and domestic travel** (by road/air) within India are provided by the Ministry throughout their stay.
- A **7-10 day state visit** to one or more **Indian states** is included to give participants a more localized experience of the country's diversity.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

To participate in the **Know India Programme**, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- **Age:** Applicants should be between **18 and 30 years** old. Preference is given to youth from **Girmitiya countries** such as **Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica**, etc.
- **Educational Qualifications:** Applicants must have completed **graduation** from a recognized institution or be currently enrolled in a **graduation program**.
- **Language:** Proficiency in **English** is essential. The applicant should have studied English at the **High School level** or have **English as the medium of instruction** in their undergraduate studies.
- **Previous Participation:** Applicants who have previously participated in any **KIP, Internship Programme for Diaspora Youth (IPDY)**, or similar programs organized by the Government of India or State Governments are not eligible.
- **Preference for First-time Visitors:** Preference is given to applicants who have not visited India before.

**Why Participate in KIP?**

The **Know India Programme** offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for **youth of Indian origin** to connect with their **roots** while experiencing firsthand the dynamic changes shaping India today. By participating in this program, youth can gain:

- A deeper understanding of **India's culture, heritage, and economic growth**.
- The chance to interact with **policymakers, scholars, and professionals** from various fields.
- The opportunity to explore India's **diverse states** and witness local traditions and innovations.

This program serves as a bridge for diaspora youth to strengthen their **connection with India**, and empowers them to become **ambassadors** of India's culture and developments globally.

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## 6 Understanding Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV) news

**Context:** Recently, a **suspected case of Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV)** was reported in **Bindapur, New Delhi**. JEV is a **mosquito-borne flavivirus**, belonging to the same genus as other significant viruses such as **dengue, Zika, yellow fever, and West Nile virus**. It is primarily spread through the bite of an infected mosquito, particularly the **Culex tritaeniorhynchus** species.

**Symptoms of Japanese Encephalitis Virus:**

JEV infection can manifest in two stages: **mild** and **severe**.

**Mild Symptoms (Initial Phase):**

- **Fever**
- **Headache**
- **Gastrointestinal pain**
- **Seizures**
- **Vomiting**

**Severe Symptoms:**

If the infection progresses, it can lead to:

- **High fever**
- **Neck stiffness**
- **Disorientation**
- **Weakness**
- **Coma**
- **Seizures**
- **Spastic paralysis**
- **Death** in extreme cases

The time between infection and the onset of symptoms typically ranges from **5 to 15 days**.

**Transmission and Risk Factors**

JEV is **not** spread from person to person. Instead, it circulates in nature between mosquitoes and animals, particularly **wading birds** and **pigs**. Humans typically contract the virus when a mosquito feeds on infected animals and then bites a person.

**Regions and Seasonality:**

- **Temperate areas of Asia** are most affected during the **warm season**.
- In the **tropics** and **subtropics**, transmission intensifies during the **rainy season**.

**Who is at Risk?**

- **Children under 15 years old** are particularly vulnerable.
- Less than **1%** of infections develop into severe **neurologic illness**.
- **20-30%** of severe cases can result in death due to **brain inflammation**.
- **30-50%** of those who survive may suffer from **long-term neurological effects**, such as:
  - Seizures
  - **Hearing or vision loss**
  - **Memory, language, or speech problems**
  - Weakness of the limbs

**Prevention and Treatment:****Vaccine and Prevention:**

There is a **vaccine** available to prevent **Japanese Encephalitis**. Individuals living in high-risk areas should consider vaccination.

**Treatment**

There is currently **no** antiviral treatment for **JEV**. The focus is on:

- **Supporting patients** to relieve symptoms
- **Rest, fluids, and pain management** to alleviate discomfort.

For **severe cases**, medical support is crucial to help manage complications and provide **critical care**.

JEV remains a significant health concern, especially in certain regions, but with **early detection, supportive care, and vaccination**, the risks can be managed effectively.

