# UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 15-05-2025

## Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve

***Prelims**: Current events of national and international importance | Environmental ecology | Bio-diversity*

## Why in News?

*Recently, the state government of Himachal Pradesh notified the Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve under Section 36A(1) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.*

- The remote and cold *Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh* is now home to India's largest protected area.
- **Geographical spread** – It spreads over 1,585 square kilometres.
- It is bounded by important protection sites
  - **North** - Union Territory of Ladakh
  - **East** – The Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary extending up to Malang Nala and Lungar Lungpa
  - **South** - Kabjima Nala
  - **West** - Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary
- It is also located at the ***confluence of the Unam River and Charap Nala*** and thus is the catchment area of the Charap Nala.
- **Ecological importance** – It is an important ***wildlife corridor*** connecting the Kibber and Chandratal sanctuaries, which is extremely important for biodiversity.

*Tsarap Chu joins Darlaghat, Naina Devi, Potter Hill, and Shilli as **Himachal Pradesh's 5$^{th}$ conservation reserve**.*

- It is also *prime snow leopard habitat*, with a high density of snow leopards.

*The snow leopard is often called the '**ghost of the mountains**'. It is a stealthy predator, found in snowy and rocky terrain at an altitude of 3,000 to 5,000 metres. The species is found in relatively high numbers in the Spiti Valley, and its presence reflects the health of the entire ecosystem.*

- Tibetan wolf, bharal (blue sheep), Himalayan ibex, kiang (wild ass), and the Tibetan argali are also found in the region.
- Rare bird species such as Rose Finch, Tibetan Raven, and Yellow-billed Chough enrich the ecology of the region.

- **Regulation** – It will be managed through a ***Conservation Reserve Management Committee***, which will also include representatives from local Panchayats.
- The committee will manage the area while balancing the needs of local communities and wildlife conservation priorities.
- **Significance** – Declaring this area as a conservation reserve will encourage activities such as wildlife conservation and research, trekking, eco-tourism, and photography, thereby providing a new *base for the livelihood of the local communities*.

**Reference**

Down To Earth| Notification of Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve

## Gamburtsev Subglacial Mountains

***Prelims**: Physical Geography| Current events of national and international importance*

### Why in News?

*A recent study, reveals how hidden mountain chain of Gamburtsev Mountains emerged more than 500 million years ago when the supercontinent Gondwana formed from colliding tectonic plates.*

> *In **Antarctica**, some peaks, like the towering Transantarctic Mountains, rise above the ice. Others, like the ancient Gamburtsev Subglacial Mountains in the middle of East Antarctica, are completely buried.*

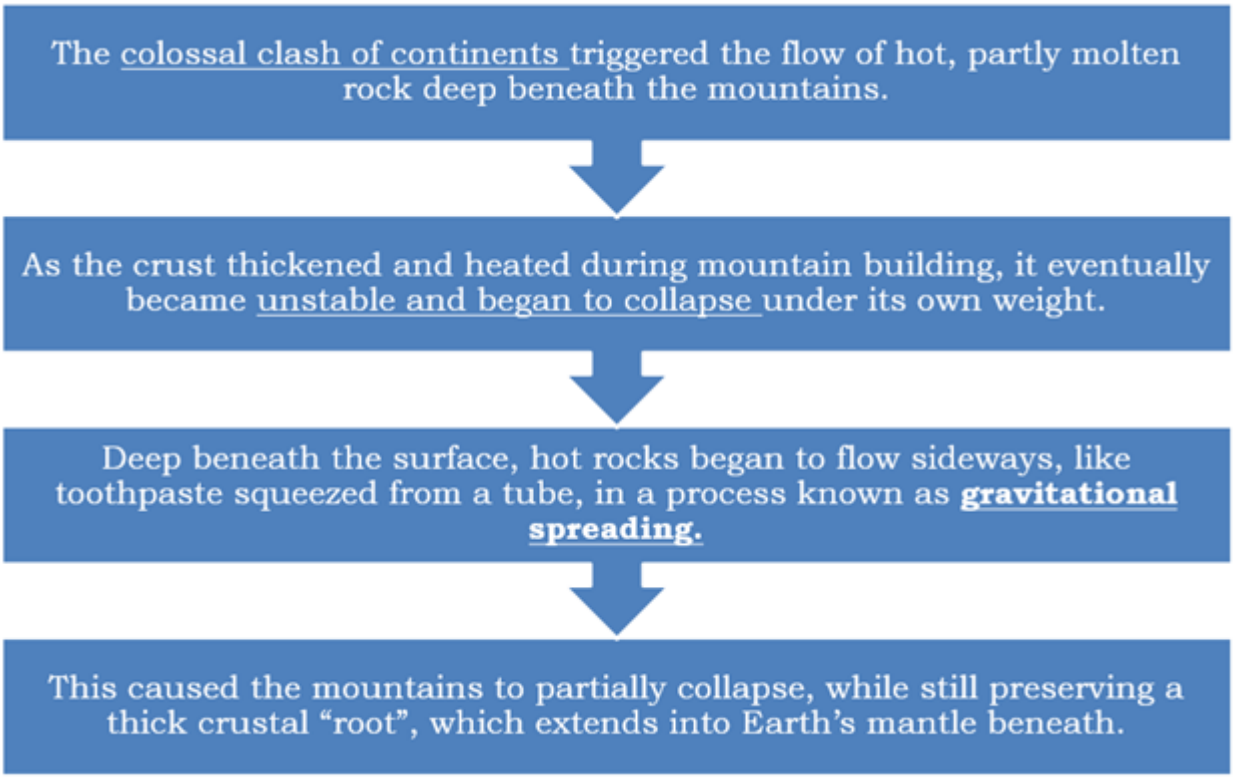
- It is an ancient ***subglacial mountain buried*** beneath the highest point of the *East Antarctica ice sheet*.
- **Discovery** - They were first discovered by a Soviet expedition using seismic techniques in 1958.

> *Typically, a mountain range will rise in places where 2 tectonic plates clash with each other. For example, the Himalayas are still rising today as the Indian and Eurasian plates continue to converge, a process that began about 50 million years ago.*

### East Antarctica

• It has been *tectonically stable* for millions of years and plate tectonic models suggest the crust now forming East Antarctica came from at least 2 large continents more than 700 million years ago.
• These continents used to be separated by a vast ocean basin.
• The collision of these landmasses was key to the birth of Gondwana, a supercontinent that included what is now Africa, South America, Australia, India and Antarctica.

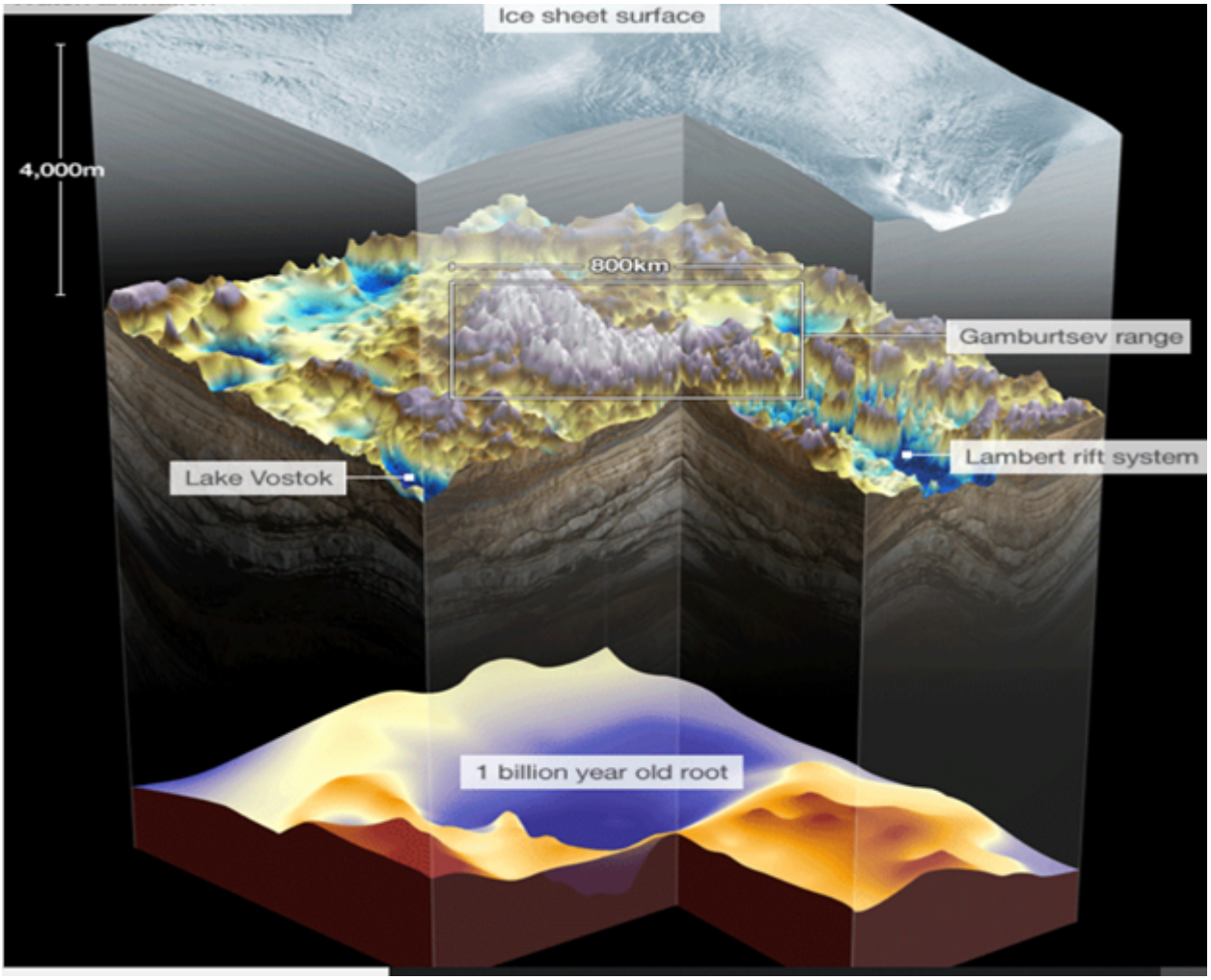
- **New findings** – It supports the idea that the ***Gamburtsev Mountains 1st formed during this ancient collision.***




- **Evidence** - Tiny zircon grains found in sandstones deposited by rivers flowing from the ancient mountains more than 250 million years ago were analysed.
- These sandstones were recovered from the Prince Charles Mountains, which poke out of the ice hundreds of kilometres away.

***Zircons*** *are often called "time capsules" because they contain minuscule amounts of uranium in their crystal structure, which decays at a known rate and allows scientists to determine their age with great precision.*

- The Gamburtsev Mountains began to rise around 650 million years ago, reached Himalayan heights by 580 million years ago, and experienced deep crustal melting and flow that ended around 500 million years ago.
- Because they've been preserved by a deep layer of ice, the Gamburtsev Subglacial Mountains are one of the best-preserved ancient mountain belts on Earth.




*The **Denman Glacier** on East Antarctica's coast uncovered rocks that may be related to these ancient mountains.*

**Reference**

The Hindu| Revelations of Hidden Mountain of Antarctica

## National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)

### Why in news?

*Recently the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) dismissed an insolvency petition against PepsiCo India Holdings.*

- **NCLAT** – It is a quasi-judicial body that act as an appellate authority over decisions made by National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).
- It serves as a specialized tribunal to resolve corporate disputes.
- It was established in 2016 under the Companies Act, 2013.
- **Composition** - It consists of *a chairperson and other members* with judiciary and law

backgrounds.

- **Jurisdiction** – It has only appellate jurisdiction (hears appeals against NCLT decisions).
- **Functions** – It hears appeals against,
  - The orders of the NCLT (related to company law and insolvency),
  - The orders of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI),
  - The orders of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA).

| Feature | NCLT | NCLAT |
|---|---|---|
| **Jurisdiction** | Original jurisdiction | Appellate jurisdiction |
| **Role** | Initial hearings and adjudications. | Review of NCLT decisions. |
| **Types of Cases** | Corporate insolvency, mergers, winding up. | Only appeals against NCLT decisions. |

- **PepsiCo India Holdings Case (2025)** - NCLAT dismissed an insolvency petition against PepsiCo.
- It upheld NCLT Chandigarh's earlier rejection of SNJ Synthetics's plea.
- It ruled that Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) provisions "cannot be turned into debt-recovery proceedings".
- It determined that insolvency proceedings cannot be initiated solely based on interest claims when principal has been repaid.

**References**


1. The Hindu| NCLAT dismisses insolvency plea against PepsiCo India
2. NCLAT| About NCLAT


## India's New Doctrine of War Against Terror

***Prelims**: Current events of national and international importance| Security Issues*

### Why in news?

*Prime Minister recently unveiled a new military doctrine against terrorism following Operation Sindoor.*

- **New military doctrine** – It includes three principles that will guide the nation's response against terror.

### Three Principles of Doctrine of War Against Terror

- **Decisive retaliation -** Response will be on India's terms where India will determine the timing, scale, and nature of its response to terrorist attacks.
- **No Nuclear blackmail** - No tolerance for terror that hides under nuclear blackmail

rather India will act decisively on the terrorist hideouts.

- **No distinction between terrorists and sponsor** - It removes previous distinctions between terrorist organizations and state sponsors, that India will not differentiate between the government sponsoring terrorism and the masterminds of terrorism.
- It aims to dismantle state sponsored terrorism by discouraging funding to terrorism.
- India's approach to terrorism, will be *new normal that retaliation against terrorism is India's policy against terrorism*.
- The doctrine represents a qualitatively *higher level of aggression* and *lowers the threshold for future responses* to terrorist attacks.
- PM has placed this doctrine within the ***framework of the global war on terror***.

*The framework of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) refers to the strategic, legal, military and diplomatic structures established primarily by the United States and its allies after the September 11, 2001 attacks to combat terrorism worldwide.*

- The doctrine maintains India's long-standing position that "***terror and talks cannot go together***" regarding relations with Pakistan.
- This new approach follows and escalates from two previous major responses to terrorism such that,
  - The surgical strike after the Uri terror attack (September 2016) and the Balakot strike after the Pulwama terror attack (February 2019).

**Reference**

The Indian Express| PM unveils new doctrine

## Afrikaners

***Prelims**: Current events of national and international importance*

### Why in news?

*Recently United States of America recognised a group of Afrikaners, as the refugees.*

- **Afrikaners** – They are *white South African citizens* who have descended from predominantly ***Dutch colonists*** who had first arrived in the mid-17th century.
- **Demography** - Afrikaners in South Africa amount to 7% of the country's population, but own *70% of the country's land*.
- The vast majority of them are *farmers* and they speak a language called ***Afrikaans***.
- Afrikaners, who had benefited from apartheid policies, lost political control Post-Apartheid South Africa.
- They were ***subjected to affirmative action programs*** designed to uplift the historically disadvantaged Black population.
- Some Afrikaners, cited increased violent crime, particularly farm attacks, and racial tensions as reasons to emigrate.

- **Land reform in South Africa** – In 2025, South African passed Expropriation Act No. 13 of 2024, which aims to address historical land inequalities stemming from the apartheid era.
- It allows the state to seize land without compensation for public purposes in certain circumstances
- **Refugee status** - The refugee status given through an executive order on February 2025, titled "Addressing Egregious Actions of the Republic of South Africa.

*Under U.S. refugee law, a person (or group) can claim refugee status if they face persecution based on race.*

- They now have a *direct pathway to US citizenship* and are eligible for government benefits.
- They will need to find work and "accept entry level employment," with the possibility of advancing to higher-level jobs over time.

*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR) is yet to recognize Afrikaners as a refugee because it recognizes one as a refugee based on widespread, state-sanctioned or tolerated harm,* ***not based on isolated incidents or policy grievances.***

**Reference**

The Indian Express| Afrikaners

| **One Liners 15-05-2025** |
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| **History, Art and Culture** |
| **Miss World Contestants Visit Buddhavanam**<br>Recently, Contestants from 22 countries participating in Miss World 2025 recently visited Buddhavanam on Buddha Purnima.<br>• **Theme Park -** Located on the Krishna River's north bank in Telangana, Buddhavanam is a 279-acre Buddhist theme park.<br>• **Development Objective -** Sanctioned by the Indian government to create an integrated Buddhist Circuit, aiming to attract tourists.<br>• **Key Attractions -** Features Buddhacharitha Vanam (Buddha's life), Jataka Park, Dhyana Vanam, Stupa Vanam (with the Maha Stupa), and a museum.<br>• **Historical Significance -** Situated near Nagarjuna Sagar and the historically significant Nagarjunakonda, a Mahayana Buddhism center named after Acharya Nagarjuna.<br>• **Archaeological Importance -** Excavations at Nagarjunakonda revealed significant Buddhist structures and artifacts, many reconstructed on Nagarjunakonda Island and Anupu. |

**National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Seeks Report on Dongria Kondh Conditions**

*Recently, NHRC has requested an Action Taken Report from Odisha's Chief Secretary over 10,000 families face poor living conditions and lack basic amenities and necessities.*

• **Vulnerable Tribal Group** - The report concerns the "Dongria Kondh," a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) community.
• **Niyamgiri Inhabitants** - The Dongria Kondh are ancient residents of the Niyamgiri hills in Odisha.
• **Cultural Identity** - They deeply revere the hilltops and forests, consider themselves protectors of streams, and have unique customs and languages.
• **Livelihood Dependence** - Their economy relies on non-timber forest products collection and traditional horticulture.

## Geography

**Earthquake Hits Shigatse, Tibet**

Recently, a 5.5-magnitude earthquake struck Shigatse, Tibet, at a shallow depth of 10 km, as reported by Chinese authorities.
• **Tibet's Location -** Situated in Central Asia, Tibet is officially the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China, bordering India, Nepal, and Bhutan.
• **"Roof of the World" -** Lying on the high-altitude Tibetan Plateau (4,500–5,000m), Tibet features the Qiangtang Plateau, deep valleys, and the Himalayas.
• **Significant Peaks -** Home to Mount Everest and the sacred Mount Kailash, along with other major ranges like the Kunlun and Himalayas.
• **Major River Origins -** Several major Asian rivers, including the Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) and the Indus, originate in Tibet.
• **Diverse Flora and Fauna -** Vegetation ranges from grasslands to sparse forests, supporting unique wildlife like the snow leopard and wild yak.

## Polity & Governance

**UPSC Chairman**

It has been officially announced that Ajay Kumar, an accomplished bureaucrat with a notable tenure as the former Defence Secretary, is the newly appointed Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
• **Appointed by:** The President of India, as per Article 316 of the Constitution.
• **Tenure:** The Chairman holds office for a term of six years or until they reach the age of 65, whichever occurs first. Ajay Kumar's term will be until he turns 65 in October 2027.
• **Eligibility:** While the Constitution doesn't specify qualifications, it mandates that at least half of the UPSC members should have held a government office for a minimum of 10 years.
• **Functions:** The Chairman heads the UPSC, a constitutional body responsible for conducting examinations for appointments to the All India Services and Central Civil Services (Group A and B).
• **The UPSC** - Is a constitutional body established by Article 315 of the Constitution of India.
• **Role of UPSC**- plays a crucial role in selecting competent individuals who will hold key positions in the Indian bureaucracy and contribute to the governance and administration of the country.

**'Vruthi 2025**

The recent 'Vruthi 2025 – The Clean Kerala Conclave' witnessed significant participation, drawing approximately 25,000 individuals and highlighting the strong commitment towards effective waste management in the state.

• **'Vruthi', a cleanliness** - Initiative focusing on body and mind, launched in Kerala in October 2024.
• **Historical Context** - Traditional household waste repurposing shifted post-liberalisation, increasing non-biodegradable waste and necessitating action.
• **Campaign Goals** - Promotes personal and public hygiene, encourages community participation for a garbage-free Kerala, and emphasizes clean public spaces.
• **Approach vs. Swachh Bharat** - 'Vruthi' prioritizes behavioural change and decentralised, community-led solutions, unlike the top-down Swachh Bharat Mission.
• **Waste Management Insights** - The 'Vruthi 2025' conclave highlighted successes and challenges in both centralised and decentralised waste management systems.
• **Sustainability and Future** - Continued government support, stronger EPR laws, and fostering citizen responsibility are crucial for the campaign's long-term success.

**Minister Urges Youth to Join MY Bharat**

• Union Minister in Patna encouraged youth to actively register on the 'MY Bharat' portal.
• **MY Bharat Overview -** Mera Yuva Bharat is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, launched on October 31, 2023.
• **Core Objectives -** Aims to foster inclusive youth participation in national development and prepare them as change-makers for Amrit Kaal and Viksit Bharat@2047.
• **Platform Features -** Offers volunteer mobilization in public welfare, digital profiles for skill listing, experiential learning through projects, and mentorship opportunities.
• **Youth as Ambassadors -** Engages youth to disseminate information about government schemes at the grassroots level.
• **Nation-Building Contribution -** The portal serves as a tech-driven platform for youth development and their active contribution to nation-building initiatives.

## International Relations and Issues

**Indian Lawyer Honored Globally**

18. Bhuwan Ribhu becomes the first Indian lawyer to receive the World Jurist Association's Medal of Honour.
• **Reason for Award -** His two-decade fight against child exploitation through legal reforms and advocacy is acknowledged.

**World Jurist Association's Medal (WJA) of Honour**

• **Contributions -** It recognizes individuals with significant global impact on justice, rule of law, and human rights.
• **Past honorees include** - Nelson Mandela and Ruth Bader Ginsburg & Winsten Churchill underscoring the award's significance.
• **WJA's Initiative -** Presented by the World Jurist Association, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1963 dedicated to strengthening the rule of law worldwide.

## Science

**India's Surveillance Boost with EOS-09**

2. will launch the EOS-09 satellite on May 18, 2025, from Sriharikota using PSLV.

• **Satellite Capabilities -** EOS-09 (RISAT-1B), weighing 1,710 kg, carries a C-band synthetic aperture radar for high-resolution, all-weather imaging.

• **Key Applications -** The satellite will bolster national security through border monitoring, aid in agriculture and forestry surveys, and support disaster management with real-time data.

• **Advanced Technology -** Featuring five operational modes, its radar can detect objects as small as one meter, crucial for precise surveillance.

• **Orbit and Operation -** EOS-09 will enter a sun-synchronous orbit, ensuring consistent imaging conditions.

• **Enhanced Network -** It will join existing satellites like Resourcesat and RISAT-2B, significantly improving India's monitoring and data analysis capabilities.

## Miscellaneous

**Bandaru Dattatraya's Life Story Unveiled**

Recently, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar launched 'Janta Ki Kahani Meri Aatamkatha' on May 9, 2025. [1]

• **Narrative Focus -**The book delves into the multifaceted life of Bandaru Dattatraya, the current Governor of Haryana, encompassing his personal, political, and social experiences.

• **Public Service Chronicle -** It extensively documents his journey through public service, including his tenures as a Union Minister and Governor, providing insights into his contributions.

• **Inspirational Objective -** The autobiography aims to inspire younger generations by sharing authentic accounts of Dattatraya's struggles, unwavering dedication, and inherent humility.

• **Personal Reflections -** The book offers a candid look into the author's life, revealing the challenges and triumphs that shaped his career and character.

• **Solemn Remembrance -** The launch event also included a moment of silence to honor the victims of the tragic terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir.

**India Navigates Germanium Export Curbs**

Recently, India engages with China over export restrictions on germanium, vital for semiconductors, fiber optics, and solar panels.

• **Germanium Basics** - A silvery-gray metalloid in Group 14, with atomic number 32, possessing a diamond-like structure and properties akin to silicon.

• **Historical Context** - Predicted by Mendeleyev in 1871 as ekasilicon, discovered in 1886, its semiconductor properties gained economic significance post-1945.

• **Key Applications** - Crucial in manufacturing transistors, rectifiers, and photocells due to its semiconductor properties.

• **Natural Occurrence & Extraction** - Widely distributed but rarely free, mainly extracted as a by-product of zinc production (75%) and from coal fly ash (25%).

• **Global Production** - China is the dominant producer (around 60%), with Canada, Finland, Russia, and the United States contributing the remainder.

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