

Factly Weekly

Compilation

2023

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

**2nd Week
December 2023**

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Subject: Polity and Nation

Supreme Court upholds repeal of J&K's Special Status

Why in the News?

The Supreme Court in a unanimous ruling upheld the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which had conferred special status on the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir.

What was the case before the Supreme Court?

1. In 2019, Parliament passed the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019. The order effectively abrogates the special status accorded to Jammu and Kashmir under the provision of Article 370.
2. Further, the Parliament has also passed the Jammu and Kashmir (Reorganisation) Bill, 2019. The bill bifurcated the State into two separate union territories of Jammu and Kashmir (with legislature) and Ladakh (without legislature).
3. A petition was filed in the Supreme Court challenging the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the state of Jammu & Kashmir into two Union Territories.

What is the Supreme Court verdict on this?

1. **Abrogation of Article 370 was legal:** The court upheld the power of the President to abrogate the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution.
2. **Article 370 is temporary:** The Court held that Article 370 was always intended to be a temporary provision and not a permanent feature of the Constitution.
3. **No internal sovereignty:** The Court rejected the argument that Jammu and Kashmir had any internal sovereignty after its accession to India.
4. **J&K always been an integral part of India:** J&K has always been an integral part of India. The court cited Section 3 of the J&K Constitution itself, apart from [Article 1](#) and 370 of the Indian Constitution. – Section 3 of the J&K Constitution says that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India. While Section 147 of the J&K Constitution prohibited any amendment to Section 3.
5. **Action of abrogation taken under President's rule:** The petitioners argued that the government acted illegally by taking irrevocable action regarding Article 370 while Jammu and Kashmir was under President's rule (Article 356). – However, the Supreme Court ruled against this argument. The court relied on the 1994 **Bommai judgment**, which states that the President's actions are valid unless they are done with bad faith or are clearly unreasonable.

Other Directions of Supreme Court

1. **Restoration of J&K Statehood:** The court directed the Union Government to expedite the process of restoration of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir (without the Union Territory of Ladakh). It also said that the Legislative Assembly elections should be held by September 2024.
2. **Truth-and-Reconciliation Commission:** The court ordered the establishment of a Truth-and-Reconciliation Commission to address human rights violations both by state and non-state actors in Jammu and Kashmir since the 1980s.

Lok Sabha Rules for Visitors' Entry

Why in the News?

Recently, two people visiting the Parliament jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the visitor's gallery and opened canisters that emitted yellow smoke.

What do the Lok Sabha Rules say on the entry of visitors in Lok Sabha?

Visitors' admission, withdrawal and removal is governed by Rule 386 and 387 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha.

1. **Rule 386:** It states that the admission of strangers during the sittings of the House to those portions of the House which are not reserved for the exclusive use of members shall be regulated in accordance with orders made by the Speaker.
2. **Rule 387:** It gives the Speaker the power to withdraw "strangers" from any part of the House if he/she deems it fit.

What is the process of entry of strangers in Lok Sabha?

1. Visitors such as academics, students, and members of the general public are frequently admitted in Parliament. They ask MPs for passes so they can observe how laws are made.
2. MPs requesting visitor passes must give a declaration that they know the guest personally and take full responsibility for him or her.
3. Visitor cards are typically issued for a particular day and fixed hours. In special cases, two cards may be issued.
4. The visitor is also mandated to carry a photo identification.
5. Lok Sabha has 2 types of galleries– public and Speaker's. Members can facilitate entry for four in the public and two in the Speaker's gallery. The Speaker's gallery entries need Speaker's approval.
6. Members are accountable for any incidents related to the cardholders and are advised to be cautious while recommending visitors.
7. Similar rules are in force for visitor entry into the Rajya Sabha.

Supreme Court Affirms Validity of Arbitration Agreements in Unstamped Contracts

Why in the News?

Recently, a seven-judge Constitution Bench ruled that arbitration agreements in unstamped or insufficiently stamped commercial contracts remain valid, enforceable, and existent.

What are the Highlights of Judgment in simplified terms?

1. The court held that unstamped or insufficiently stamped agreements **are not void or unenforceable**.
2. The Arbitration Act is **independent of the Stamp Act**. Even if a document is invalid under the Stamp Act, any arbitration agreement reached over the invalid document is valid.
3. The court applied the "**separation presumption**" by which an arbitration agreement is presumed to have a separate existence from the contract. This means that the validity of the arbitration agreement is independent of the validity of the underlying contract.
4. The separation presumption applied in this case gave effect to the doctrine of competence-competence. According to this doctrine, the arbitral tribunal has its own authority/ is competent to decide its own

jurisdiction. Thus, an arbitration agreement can be valid if the arbitral authority gives it approval, despite the case being of unstamped or insufficiently stamped commercial contracts.

5. With this, the 7-judge bench has overruled an earlier verdict of the Supreme Court in the N.N. Global case. **Note-** In the **N. N. Global case**, a five-judge bench ruled that an arbitration agreement without proper stamping was deemed void and unenforceable.

What is the Significance of Judgement?

1. **Swift resolution of commercial disputes-** Previously, disputes of this nature faced obstacles due to parties failing to pay the necessary stamp duty or inadequately stamping contracts.
2. The ruling provides a significant boost to India's aspirations of becoming a global arbitration hub.

What is Arbitration?

Arbitration is a form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in which a neutral third party resolves a dispute outside of court. Arbitration in India is governed by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996

Subject: International Relations

Guyana and Venezuela Conflict

Why in the News?

Recently Venezuela held a nonbinding referendum to strengthen the nation's century-old claim to the oil-rich Essequibo territory governed by Guyana.

What is the dispute between Guyana and Venezuela?



Figure 1. Figure 1. Source- BBC

Historical background

1. The land boundary between Guyana and Venezuela has been disputed since its colonial inception between British and Spanish powers in South America.
2. In the 1840s, the British government had the border unilaterally surveyed, but the proposed line encroached on Venezuelan territorial claims.
3. While the British line, accepted by Guyana, is the current de facto boundary, Venezuela maintains a historic claim to all territory currently administered by Guyana west of the Essequibo River.
4. Venezuela contends that the Essequibo River represents the natural border between the countries, dating back to Spanish rule, while Guyana upholds the border established during the British colonial era, validated by 1899 arbitration court.

Current Status

1. Guyana submitted the dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2018. **The ICJ validated Guyana's claims.**

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2. Venezuela proceeded with the referendum despite calls from the ICJ to refrain from actions affecting the disputed territory.

About Essequibo

1. Essequiba is a disputed territory **west of the Essequibo River, claimed by both Guyana and Venezuela.**
2. The region makes up two thirds of the total of the land currently controlled by Guyana and is home to 125,000 of Guyana's 800,000 citizens.
3. **It is an oil and mineral-rich** (gold, copper, diamond, aluminium and iron ore) region.

India to host 27th WAIPA World Investment Conference in New Delhi

Why in the News?

India is going to host the 27th World Investment Conference (WIC) in New Delhi.

What is the World Investment Conference (WIC)?

Specification	Details
What is it?	1) It is an annual flagship event of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA). 2) It serves as a platform for global investment promotion and innovation stakeholders.
2023 WIC theme	Empowering Investors: IPAs Pioneering Future Growth.
Organising body	Invest India (Current President of WAIPA)- 1) It's India's investment promotion agency under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. 2) It empowers investors under the 'Make in India' initiative to establish, operate, and expand businesses in India.
Key features of 2023 WIC	1) The WIC is being held in India for the first time and is set to be the largest WIC ever. 2) This conference unites stakeholders to discuss investment policies and trends, offering a unique opportunity for networking, knowledge sharing, and building partnerships. 3) Experience India Centre (EIC)- Invest India will establish an EIC to showcase India's top services, technology, and products using various technologies, including virtual and augmented reality.

What is the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA)?

Specification	Details
What is it?	It's a non-governmental organization serving as a forum for investment promotion agencies (IPAs), facilitating networking, and promoting best practices in investment promotion.

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Established in	1995 by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
Secretariat	Istanbul
Members	It has more than 120 member agencies representing more than 100 countries.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Promote and develop understanding and cooperation amongst IPAs. 2) Assist IPAs in advising their respective governments on the formulation of appropriate investment promotion policies and strategies. 3) It acts as a bridge between the public and private sector

Operation Storm Makers II: Cases of human trafficking victims being forced to commit cybercrimes on the rise

Why in the News?

Interpol has conducted a major operation called Operation Storm Makers II.

What is Operation Storm Makers II?

Specifications	Details
Conducted by	Interpol
Aim	To target fraud schemes fuelled by victims of human trafficking.
Participating countries	27 including India
Key findings of the operation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Human trafficking-fuelled frauds are expanding beyond Southeast Asia. 2) Victims are lured by fake job ads and forced to commit online fraud such as: Fake cryptocurrency investments, Work-from-home scams and Lottery and online gambling scams. 3) Victims are also subjected to physical abuse.

What is Interpol?



Source: Interpol

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Specifications	Details
Full Name	International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL)
Type	Inter-governmental organization
Established in	1923
Purpose	It facilitates worldwide police cooperation and crime control.
Functions	1) It provides investigative support, expertise and training to law enforcement worldwide, focusing on three major areas of transnational crime: terrorism, cybercrime and organised crime. 2) It facilitates cooperation among national law enforcement institutions through criminal databases and communications networks.
Members	196 (India has been member since 1949)
Headquarters	Lyon, France
INTERPOL Notices	Notices are international requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information.
National Central Bureau (NCB)	1) Each of the member countries hosts a National Central Bureau (NCB) which acts as a country's focal point for all INTERPOL activities 3) CBI is the NCB for Interpol in India.

Tax Inspectors Without Borders

Why in the News?

Recently Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) launched a programme in Saint Lucia. India has been selected as the Partner Administration and will contribute Tax Experts to this programme.

What is Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)?

Aspect	Details
What is it?	1) It is an initiative aimed at supporting countries in building tax audit capacity . 2) It facilitates the transfer of tax audit knowledge and skills to developing country tax administrations using a practical, "learning by doing" approach. 3) The initiative underpins the OECD/G20 BEPS actions.
Launched by	Joint initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched in 2015.
Secretariat	Located in Paris, the Secretariat is backed by UNDP's network of Country Offices in developing nations.

Key Features of the Programme	1) Enhance international cooperation on tax matters and support the domestic resource mobilization efforts of developing countries. 2) It facilitates targeted, tax audit assistance programmes in developing countries across the globe.
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What is the TIWB Programme in Saint Lucia?

1. In partnership with the TIWB Secretariat, **India aims to assist Saint Lucia in enhancing its tax administration** by imparting technical knowledge and skills, as well as sharing best practices.
2. The program will emphasize the efficient utilisation of automatic exchange of information within the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) framework.
3. It is the **seventh TIWB programme which India has supported** by providing Tax Experts.

Subject: Indian Economy

RBI's Cloud Facility for Financial Sector

Why in the News?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is working on establishing a cloud facility for the financial sector in India.

What is the Cloud Centre for Financial Data?

1. It aims to provide a structured, scalable data storage and data processing facility.
2. It will be part of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)
3. The facility will be set up and initially operated by the Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS), a **wholly owned subsidiary of RBI**. Eventually, the cloud facility will be transferred to a separate entity owned by the financial sector participants.

What is the Significance of the move?

1. Enhance the security, integrity and privacy of financial sector data.
2. Alternative to similar services offered by American companies like Amazon, Google and Microsoft.
3. For smaller organizations such as cooperative banks, this offers significant efficiency in scaling since maintaining individual databases for each one could require substantial investments and specialized skills.
4. It will empower the financial sector to utilise next-generation technologies, including AI, platform automation, etc.

Mines Ministry to directly Sanctions Critical Mineral Exploration to Private Agencies

Why in the News?

Ministry of Mines has introduced a new scheme. Now exploration projects for critical and deep-seated minerals will be directly sanctioned to Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEAs).

What are the Policy Changes taken up by the Ministry?

1. The government has taken the recent step–

- a. The Ministry of Mines will **directly sanction exploration projects** to NPEAs for critical and deep-seated minerals.
- b. It has also allowed these NPEAs to bid for auction for mineral blocks explored by them which was not allowed earlier.

2. Earlier in 2023, the government brought amendment to the MMDR Act through which the Ministry of Mines designated 24 minerals, including graphite and nickel, as critical and strategic. This amendment empowers the Center to issue mineral concessions for these minerals, enabling it to prioritize their auction.

What is the Significance of this New Scheme?

- 1. The scheme will help cut delays in sanction of projects as well as fast-track execution of projects.
- 2. It will also attract major mining companies and encourage global junior mining firms to undertake exploration projects in India
- 3. It will **contribute to the infusion of innovative technologies** in the field of exploration.
- 4. It will increase the pace of auction and early production of the critical minerals.

What are Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEAs)?

- 1. The government amended the 1957 Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act) through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2021 which empowers the Central Government to identify entities, including private ones, eligible for prospecting operations.
- 2. In **association with QCI-NABET**, the ministry of Mines will provide accreditation to Private entities. National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET) is a constituent Board of Quality Council of India.
- 3. Upon accreditation, they should submit their application to the Ministry for notification under the MMDR Act.
- 4. Based on this, the Ministry of Mines has notified 16 Private Exploration Agencies to take up exploration projects through State Governments, funded by National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET).

What is the National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET)?

NMET is a **statutory body** responsible for overseeing the comprehensive operations of the mining sector.

Subject: Science & Technology

Lyfgenia and Casgevy: U.S FDA approves gene therapies for sickle cell disease

Why in the News?

The U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a pair of gene therapies named Lyfgenia and Casgevy for the treatment of sickle cell disease.

What is Lyfgenia?

Specifications	Details

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What is it	Lyfgenia is a cell-based gene therapy developed for the treatment of sickle cell disease.
Developed by	Bluebird Bio
Eligibility	The therapy is approved for people aged 12 years and older.
Treatment process	1) The treatment involves removing stem cells out of bone marrow from a patient's blood. 2) The stem cells are then genetically modified to produce HbAT87Q. It is a gene-therapy-derived haemoglobin that functions similarly to haemoglobin A or the normal adult haemoglobin produced by those who do not have sickle cell disease. 3) The modified stem cells are then delivered to the patient in a one-time, single-dose infusion.

What is Sickle Cell Disease?

1. It is a **genetic red blood cell disorder** that affects the shape of the hemoglobin, a protein that carries oxygen through the body.
2. The RBCs become crescent- or "sickle"-shaped which makes the flow of hemoglobin through the blood vessels difficult, blocking the blood flow to the rest of the body.

DRESS Syndrome: Painkiller Meftal can have adverse reactions; govt issues drug safety alert

Why in the News?

The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) has warned about risks linked to the painkiller Meftal. They have cautioned about possible harmful reactions with the drug such as a severe condition called DRESS syndrome.

What is DRESS Syndrome?

1. DRESS syndrome stands for Drug Rash with Eosinophilia and Systemic Symptoms.
2. It is a **severe, idiosyncratic reaction to a drugs** such as such as abacavir, allopurinol, and lamotrigine.
3. **Note-** Idiosyncratic drug reaction is used for unpredictable reactions that occur in only a small percentage of patients receiving the drug
4. It is characterised by a delayed onset of symptoms including fever, skin rash, lymphadenopathy (swelling of lymph nodes), eosinophilia (an increase in a type of white blood cells) and various systemic manifestations.
5. The syndrome has an estimated mortality rate of 10 per cent.

What is Meftal?

1. Meftal is an over-the-counter medication used to **treat pain and inflammation**.
2. It contains the active ingredient mefenamic acid, which belongs to a class of drugs known as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
3. It is often prescribed for conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, menstrual pain, dental pain, inflammation, fever, etc.
4. Other commonly used NSAIDs include ibuprofen, naproxen, and aspirin

EU Artificial Intelligence Act: What does the world's first law on regulating AI propose?

Why in the News?

European Union (EU) lawmakers have reached a provisional deal on a comprehensive set of rules regulating the use of artificial intelligence (AI).

What is the proposed European Union (EU) Artificial Intelligence Act?

1. It is the world's first set of comprehensive laws to regulate the use of artificial intelligence (AI).
2. **Aim:** To ensure that fundamental rights, democracy, the rule of law and environment are protected from high-risk AI while boosting innovation.

Key Provisions of the AI Law:

Specifications	Details
Four Levels of Risks	1) Unacceptable risk: These are banned. Example- deployment of mass scale facial recognition. 2) High risk: These are allowed but are subject to certification. Example- AI tools for self-driving cars. 3) Medium Risk: They can be deployed without restrictions but require detailed documentation. Example- generative AI chatbots. 4) Minimal risk: There are no restrictions on this. Example- AI powered spam filters and video games.
Biometric Surveillance	Governments can only use real-time biometric surveillance in public areas only when there are serious threats involved such as terrorist attacks.
Empowering Consumers	Consumers can launch complaints against any perceived violations.
Penalties for Non-Compliance	The fines will be based on a percentage of their global annual turnover or a predetermined amount, whichever is higher.
EU AI Office	The EU will establish the EU AI Office, tasked with monitoring and fining violators of the law.

How are other countries planning to regulate Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

1. **US:** Released an AI Bill of Rights and an Executive Order on AI.
2. **China:** Released its own set of AI regulations.
3. **India:** India wants to take the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) approach with AI where the underlying technology is sanctioned by the government and is later offered to private entities to develop various use cases.

Amrit Technology for Removal of Arsenic and Metal Ions from Water

Why in the News?

Minister of State for Jal Shakti has informed Rajya Sabha about AMRIT Technology.

What is AMRIT Technology?

Specifications	Details
Full Form	Arsenic and Metal Removal by Indian Technology (AMRIT)
Purpose	It is a water purifier developed for the removal of Arsenic and Metal ions from water.
Developed by	Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras
Working Process	The technology uses nano-scale iron oxy-hydroxide which selectively removes arsenic when water is passed through it.
Used for	It can be used for both domestic and community levels.

Note: According to the Jal Jeevan Mission guidelines, rural areas with unsafe drinking water, like those affected by arsenic, should receive short term measures until permanent piped water systems with clean water sources are built.

What are the other facts covered in the article?

1. Drinking Water is a **State Subject**.
2. **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):** It was launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Jal Shakti. It aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.
- 3.

AKTOCYTE tablets - Revolutionizing Cancer Care + Infographic

Why in the News?

AKTOCYTE tablets have been granted approval by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

What are AKTOCYTE tablets?

AKTOCYTE tablets

Purpose
 → Used during cancer treatment to minimize the side effects of radiotherapy.

Developed by
 → Department of Atomic Energy and M/s. IDRS Labs Pvt. Ltd. Bengaluru

Market Entry
 → January 2024

Characteristics

- Impressive Recovery in Pelvic Cancer**
 → Promising results in pelvic cancer patients suffering from radiotherapy-induced Cystitis (Blood in urine)
- Diverse applications**
 → Beyond a supplement, they serve as an adjuvant to cancer radiotherapy, a regenerative nutraceutical, an immunomodulator, and an antioxidant
- Safe**
 → Received approval from the FSSAI.

FSSAI
 → **Statutory body** established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006
 → Autonomous body under the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**

ForumIAS



Source- PIB

Specifications	Details
What is it?	Its a tablet used during cancer treatment to minimize the side effects of radiotherapy.
Developed by	Department of Atomic Energy and M/s. IDRS Labs Pvt. Ltd. Bengaluru
Characteristics	1) Impressive Recovery in Pelvic Cancer: AKTOCYTE Tablets show promise in pelvic cancer patients suffering from radiotherapy-induced Cystitis (Blood in urine). 2) Versatile AKTOCYTE Tablets: Beyond a supplement, they serve as an adjuvant to cancer radiotherapy, a regenerative nutraceutical, an immunomodulator, and an antioxidant, highlighting their diverse applications in cancer care. 3) Safe: AKTOCYTE has received approval from the FSSAI.
Market Entry	AKTOCYTE Tablets, set to debut in January 2024, promise to revolutionize cancer treatment protocols.

What is FSSAI?

1. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is a **statutory body** established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSS Act).
2. FSSAI is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

New Delhi Declaration on Artificial Intelligence Adopted

Why in the News?

The New Delhi Declaration has been adopted at the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit. It is being hosted by India at the Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

What is Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)?

1. GPAI is a multi-stakeholder effort aimed at steering the responsible development and application of artificial intelligence.
2. **Members**- 29 member countries.
3. India will be the lead chair for 2024.

What are the Key Highlights of the New Delhi Declaration?

1. **Responsible AI development and deployment:** This includes ensuring transparency, accountability, fairness, and non-discrimination in AI systems.
2. **Global framework on AI:** It states that such a framework should be rooted in democratic values and human rights, safeguarding dignity and well-being as well as ensuring personal data protection.
3. **Inclusive AI:** Ensuring equitable access to the benefits of AI for all countries and people.
4. **Address concerns around AI:** The declaration commits countries to work on addressing concerns around AI such as unemployment, lack of transparency and fairness, protection of intellectual property and personal data and threats to human rights and democratic values.
5. **Diverse membership:** GPAI will pursue a diverse membership with a particular focus on low and middle-income countries to ensure a broad range of expertise, national and regional views and experiences based on our shared values
6. **Agriculture as a priority:** The declaration acknowledges India's contribution in making agriculture a part of the AI agenda.

Subject: Environment

Dodo De-extinction Project: Why scientists are planning to bring back the bird to Mauritius

Why in the News?

Scientists have launched an ambitious Dodo De-extinction Project to bring the dodo back to life and also re-introduce it in its once-native habitat in Mauritius.

What is Dodo?



Source: Indian Express

Specifications	Details
What is it	Dodo was a flightless bird endemic to the Island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean.
IUCN Status	Extinct
Reason for extinction	Dodos went extinct in 17th century. Reasons include hunting by humans as well as dogs, cats, etc.

What is the Dodo De-extinction project?

1. The Dodo Extinction Project is an ambitious project to bring back the extinct dodo bird to life.
2. The project is a collaboration between **genetic engineering company Colossal Biosciences and the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation**
3. Scientists will edit the primordial germ cells (PGCs) of the Nicobar pigeon, the dodo's closest living relative, to express the physical traits of a dodo. These edited PGCs will then be inserted into the embryos of a sterile chicken and rooster, who will act as 'interspecies surrogates. In theory, when the chicken and rooster reproduce, they will give birth to a dodo offspring.
Note- PGCs are basically embryonic precursors of a species' sperm and egg.

What are the benefits of the Dodo De-extinction project?

1. **Ecological Restoration:** The dodo played a crucial role in seed dispersal and its return could help restore the island's ecosystem.
2. **Inspires Conservation Efforts:** The project's symbolism could inspire people and promote global conservation efforts.
3. **Technology Advancement:** The de-extinction technology being used to revive the dodo would help to conserve and restore other avian populations.

Olive Ridley Sea Turtles: Missile testing paused in Odisha to save sea turtles

Why in the News?

To help protect Olive Ridley Sea turtles during their nesting season, Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) has decided to stop testing missiles at Wheeler Island near Odisha's coast from January to March, 2024.

What are Olive Ridley Turtles?



Source: Wikipedia

Specifications	Details
What is it	These are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
Habitat	They are found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
Diet	They are carnivores .
Mass Nesting	1) They are best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs. 2) The coast of Odisha in India is the largest mass nesting site for the Olive Ridley. 3) Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is the world's largest known rookery (breeding colony) of the Olive Ridley Sea turtles.
IUCN Red List	Vulnerable
CITES	Appendix I
Wildlife Protection Act, 1972	Schedule I
Threats	1) Poor fishing practices. 2) Hunted for food and their oil. Unhatched eggs and shells on the sand are used as fertilizers. 3) Missile testing, mechanized boats and movement of people adversely impact the mass nesting and breeding.
Initiatives	Indian Coast Guard undertakes "Operation Olivia" every year. It is an Olive Ridley Turtle protection program.

Where is Wheeler Island?



Source: The Hindu

1. Abdul Kalam Island, formerly known as Wheeler Island, is an **island off the coast of Odisha, India.**
2. The island was originally named after English commandant Lieutenant Wheeler.
3. The Integrated Test Range missile testing facility is located on the island and serves as the test facility for most of India's missiles such as the Agni, Prithvi, etc.

Santiago Network

Why in the News?

The draft text on the Santiago Network has been adopted at COP28.

What is Santiago network?

1. The Santiago Network was **established at COP 25 in Madrid**
2. It was established as part of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
3. **Objective-** It aims to catalyze technical assistance for vulnerable developing countries in order to address loss and damage.
4. **Significance of this initiative-**
 - a. Enhanced capacity of developing countries to address loss and damage.
 - b. Increased access to finance and technology.
 - c. More effective implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

What are the other initiatives discussed on the sidelines of COP 28?

1. **The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)**- it is a collective commitment under the Paris Agreement aimed at "enhancing [the world's] adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change.
2. **Dairy Methane Alliance**- Six of the world's largest food companies, including Nestle, have come together to accelerate food industry action to drive down methane emissions from the sector.

Urban Flood Mitigation Project

Why in the News?

PM Shri Narendra Modi has approved the India's first urban flood mitigation project.

What is 'Integrated Urban Flood Management activities for Chennai Basin Project'?

Specification	Details
What is it?	It is India's first project to tackle urban floods after Chennai heavy floods.
Funding	This project will be implemented through the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank.
Key features	1) It boosts Chennai's resilience to natural disasters through effective flood management strategies. 2) This project proactively tackles urban flooding challenges

Note- Under the impact of Cyclone Michaung, Chennai is facing major floods. This is the third such occurring in the last eight years.

What is the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF)?

1. NDMF is constituted **under Section 47(1)** of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
2. This fund is **exclusively** for the purpose of mitigation projects in respect of disasters covered in National Disaster Response Fund (NDMF) guidelines only.
3. The Mitigation Fund supports local and community interventions that minimize risks and encourage eco-friendly settlements and livelihood practices.
4. **Major mitigation efforts** like building coastal walls and flood embankments will be undertaken through standard development schemes, **not through the mitigation fund.**

Global Cooling Watch 2023

Why in the News?

Recently, the Global Cooling Watch 2023 Report titled "Keeping it Chill: How to meet cooling demands while cutting emissions" was released.

What is the Global Cooling Watch Report?

1. The report was **released by UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**-led Cool Coalition.
2. It has been released in support of the Global Cooling Pledge.
3. It is a comprehensive analysis of the global cooling sector and focuses not only on space cooling but also on cold chains for food and health.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

1. Currently, cooling equipment currently **accounts for 20% of total electricity consumption** and is expected to more than double by 2050.

2. Under a business-as-usual scenario, emissions from cooling are predicted to account for more than 10 per cent of global emissions in 2050.
3. **The report focuses on three key measures for sustainable cooling-**
 - a. Passive cooling
 - b. Higher-energy efficiency standards
 - c. Faster phase down of climate-warming hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerants through the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.
4. These measures could lead to 60 per cent cut off predicted 2050 sectoral emissions.

What is the Global Cooling Pledge?

1. Signed at COP28, the pledge aims to address the growing demand for cooling while mitigating its climate impacts.
2. 63 countries have signed the pledge. However, India has not signed it yet.

Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme

Why in the News?

The Ministry of Environment has launched the Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme.

What is Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme?

Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme

Purpose

» Promotes sustainable forest management and agroforestry in India through voluntary third-party certification.

Implementing agency

» Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal (Responsible for overall management of the Scheme.)

Key features of the scheme

» Offers market incentives to various entities such as state forest departments, individual farmers, FPOs etc.

» Comprises forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification

» A distinct Trees Outside Forests Standard is introduced in this newly launched Scheme

Supervised by

» Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (Act as a multistakeholder advisory body)

Do you know?

The Forest Management certification aligns with the Indian Forest Management Standard, incorporating 8 criteria, 69 indicators, and 254 verifiers within the National Working Plan Code 2023.



Specification	Details
Purpose	This national certification scheme promotes sustainable forest management and agroforestry in India through voluntary third-party certification.

Supervised by	Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (Act as a multistakeholder advisory body)
Implementing agency	Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal (Responsible for overall management of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme.)
Key features of the scheme	<p>1) Market incentives – This Scheme offers market incentives to various entities such as state forest departments, individual farmers, FPOs, and wood-based industries, that practice responsible forest management and agroforestry.</p> <p>2) The scheme comprises forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification.</p> <p>3) A distinct Trees Outside Forests Standard is introduced in the newly launched Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme.</p>

Note: The Forest Management certification is aligned with the Indian Forest Management Standard. It features 8 criteria, 69 indicators, and 254 verifiers, integrated into the National Working Plan Code 2023.

Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary: Eastern Ghats Nature Interpretation Centre in Visakhapatnam

Why in the News?

The Eastern Ghats Nature Interpretation Centre is being opened in the Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary.

Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary

News:

The Eastern Ghats Nature Interpretation Centre is being opened in the Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary (named after **Kambalakonda Hills**).

🌳

Forest Type:

🐾

Species Found:

📍

Location:

Dry evergreen forest mixed with scrub and meadows.

Floral species include **Indian screw tree, Bush plum tree, Jungle berry bunches.**

Leopard
Indian pangolin
Barking Deer
Indian Golden Oriole (Bird)
Russel's Viper (Snake)



Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh



What is the Eastern Ghats Nature Interpretation Centre?

1. Eastern Ghats Nature Interpretation Centre (EG-NIC) is a unique project located in the Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
2. The center offers an immersive experience highlighting the diverse ecosystems of the Eastern Ghats stretching from Odisha to Tamil Nadu.
3. It aims to inform, educate and inspire visitors to care about the rich biodiversity of the Eastern Ghats Mountain range.

4. The center is a collaboration between wildlife artists, illustrators, sculptors, architects, wildlife biologists, translators and content creators.

Where is Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary?

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Specifications	Details
Location	Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
Named after	A local hill named Kambalakonda
Forest Type	Dry evergreen forest mixed with scrub and meadows
Terrain	The terrain is hilly with steep slopes
Flora	Indian screw tree, Bush plum tree, Jungle berry bunches
Fauna	1)Animals: Indian leopard, Indian pangolin, Madras treeshrew, Barking Deer, Jackal 2)Snake: Russel's viper or Daboia russelii; 3)Birds: Indian Golden oriole, Indian peafowl, Banded Bay Cuckoo

The Reintroduction of Cheetahs in Banni grassland


Why in the News?

The central government has approved a proposal to set up a cheetah conservation breeding centre in Banni grasslands of Kutch district in Gujarat.

What is Project Cheetah?

1. Project Cheetah is India's ambitious cheetah relocation program aimed at establishing a self-sustaining population of cheetahs, which had become extinct in 1950s in the country.
2. It is the **world's first intercontinental large wild carnivore translocation project**.
3. Under this, **20 cheetahs** brought from Namibia and South Africa were introduced in the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
4. With the setting up of a cheetah conservation breeding centre in Gujarat, cheetahs brought from Africa could start roaming Banni grasslands in the near future.

What are the Key Features of Banni Grassland?




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Banni Grassland

Size → Covering **2,618 km²**, it represents nearly 45% of Gujarat's grazing land.
 → Considered to be the **largest Grassland in Asia**

Location
 → **Kutch district** of Gujarat



Vegetation
 → Salt tolerant varieties, with scattered trees and scrub like **Salvadora spp, Cressa cretica, Prosopis juliflora** etc.

Flora and Fauna
 → Area is rich in flora and fauna with **species of plants like Prosopis juliflora, Bird species like flamingo, cranes,** and several species of mammals such as Nilgai, Chinkara etc

Protection Efforts
 → In 1955, the court notified the **grassland will be a reserve forest.**
 → In 2019, the NGT ordered to demarcate the boundaries of the Banni grassland and **restricted non-forest activities.**

Ecosystem
 → **Wetlands and grasslands** coexist in Banni.

Maldhari Tribe
 → **Pastoralist tribal group, living in the Gir National Park,** in the Banni Grasslands Reserve area.
 → In 2021, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) recognized their **right to conserve the community forests** in the Banni Grasslands area under the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**

Specification	Details
Location	Kutch district of Gujarat
Size	1) Covering 2,618 km ² , it represents nearly 45% of Gujarat's grazing land. 2) It is considered to be the largest Grassland in Asia.
Ecosystem	Wetlands and grasslands coexist in Banni.
Vegetation	Features sparse growth dominated by low forbs and graminoids, including salt-tolerant varieties, along with scattered trees and scrub.
Flora and Fauna	The area is rich in flora and fauna with 192 species of plants, 273 species of birds, several species of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.
Protection Efforts	1) In 1955, the court notified the grassland will be a reserve forest. 2) In 2019, the NGT ordered to demarcate the boundaries of the Banni grassland and restricted non-forest activities.

About Maldhari Tribe

1. The Maldharis is a pastoralist tribal group, **living in the Gir National Park, in the Banni Grasslands Reserve area.**
2. In 2021, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) recognized their right to conserve the community forests in the Banni Grasslands area under the **Forest Rights Act, 2006.**

Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) Launched at COP28

Why in the News?

The Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA), led by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), was launched at COP28 in Dubai.

What is Global River Cities Alliance?

What is it?	1) The GRCA is a unique alliance to propagate river-sensitive development in cities around the world. 2) It extends the River Cities Alliance , initially established by NMCG in 2021.
Aim	To foster global collaboration for river conservation and sustainable water management.
Members	Includes over 275 river-cities worldwide across 11 countries (India, Australia, Japan, Bhutan, Egypt, etc), along with international funding agencies (World Bank, AIIB, ADB) Note- River cities of Den Haag, from the Netherlands, Adelaide from Australia, and Szolnok of Hungary joined the GRCA.

What is River Cities Alliance?

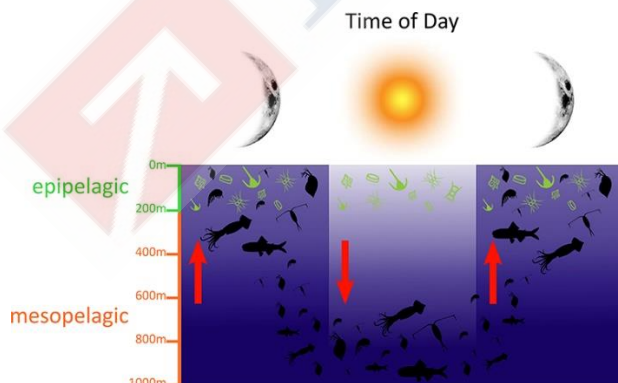
1. **Purpose:** It is a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for the sustainable management of urban rivers.
2. **Launched by:** NMCG in association with National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)

Diel Vertical Migration: A Key Player in Carbon Sequestration

Why in the News?

Diel Vertical Migration (DVM) has garnered attention in recent news for its involvement in carbon sequestration.

What is Diel Vertical Migration?



Source- Frontiers

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1. Diel Vertical Migration (DVM) is the coordinated **daily movement of marine organisms (particularly zooplankton)** between the ocean's surface and deeper layers.
2. At sunset, deep-sea organisms ascend from the mesopelagic layer (200-1,000 m deep) to the epipelagic layer (topmost zone from the surface to 200 m), driven by the need for food.

What is the Significance of DVM?

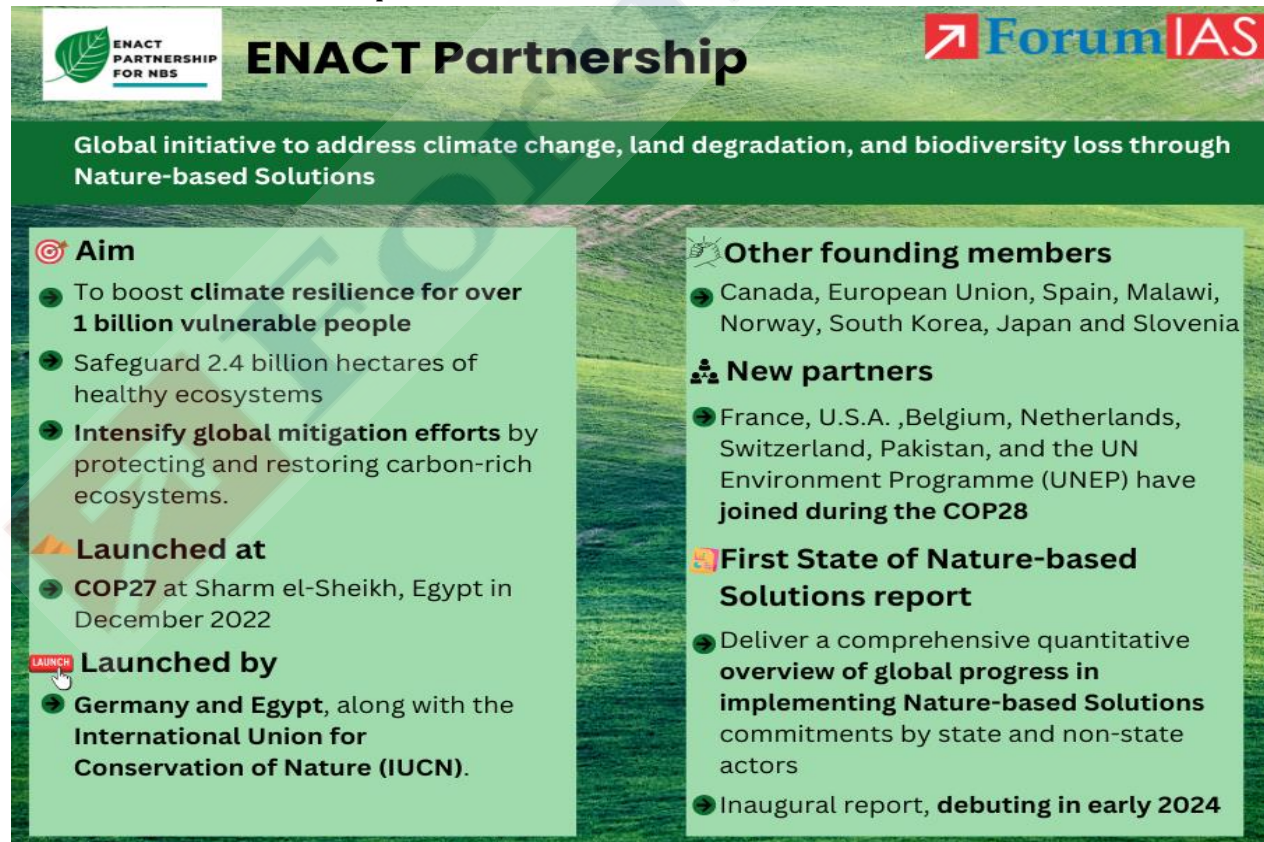
1. This nighttime migration allows deep sea marine organisms to feed on phytoplankton while evading diurnal predators.
2. It is the **largest daily biomass migration on Earth**, occurring daily in all oceans.
3. **Serves as an Important Carbon Sink**– As the mesopelagic creatures feed on surface plankton, they extract carbon from the upper surface and carry it with them when they migrate back to the deeper oceans. Some of these creatures may get consumed by other predators, passing on the consumed carbon to them. When the predator produces carbon-rich waste, it sinks to the ocean floor and remains trapped for millennia.

ENACT Partnership

Why in the News?

The ENACT (Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for an Accelerated Climate Transformation) Partnership has welcomed six new countries and UNEP into its collaboration at COP 28.

What is the ENACT Partnership?



The infographic features a green background with a field of crops. At the top left is the ENACT Partnership logo, and at the top right is the ForumIAS logo. The main title 'ENACT Partnership' is centered at the top. Below it, a green banner reads 'Global initiative to address climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity loss through Nature-based Solutions'. The content is organized into two columns of text boxes with icons.

ENACT Partnership ForumIAS

Global initiative to address climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity loss through Nature-based Solutions

Aim

- ➔ To boost **climate resilience for over 1 billion vulnerable people**
- ➔ Safeguard 2.4 billion hectares of healthy ecosystems
- ➔ **Intensify global mitigation efforts** by protecting and restoring carbon-rich ecosystems.

Launched at

- ➔ **COP27** at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in December 2022

Launched by

- ➔ **Germany and Egypt**, along with the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.

Other founding members

- ➔ Canada, European Union, Spain, Malawi, Norway, South Korea, Japan and Slovenia

New partners

- ➔ France, U.S.A., Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Pakistan, and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) have **joined during the COP28**

First State of Nature-based Solutions report

- ➔ Deliver a comprehensive quantitative **overview of global progress in implementing Nature-based Solutions** commitments by state and non-state actors
- ➔ Inaugural report, **debuting in early 2024**

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Aspect	Details
What is it?	Global initiative aiming to synchronize global endeavors in tackling climate change, land and ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss by employing Nature-based Solutions.
Aim	1) To boost climate resilience for over 1 billion vulnerable people. 2) Safeguard 2.4 billion hectares of healthy ecosystems. 3) Intensify global mitigation efforts by protecting and restoring carbon-rich ecosystems.
Launched at	COP27 at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in December 2022
Launched by	Germany and Egypt, along with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
Other founding members	Canada, European Union, Spain, Malawi, Norway, South Korea, Japan and Slovenia.
New partners	France, U.S.A., Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Pakistan, and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) have joined during the COP28
First State of Nature-based Solutions report	1) Deliver a comprehensive quantitative overview of global progress in implementing Nature-based Solutions commitments by state and non-state actors. 2) The initial report, launching in early 2024, will kick start the annual series on ENACT's NbS Goals.

Note- According to IUCN, Nature-based Solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously benefiting people and nature.

Barracuda: India's fastest' solar-electric boat launched

Why in the News?

India's fastest solar-electric boat named Barracuda has been launched.

What is Barracuda?

Specifications	Details
What is it	It is India's fastest solar-electric boat
Developed jointly by	Navalt Solar and Electric Boats and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd
Named after	A swift, long fish named Barracuda
Key Features	1) The boat can attain a top speed of 12 knots and has a range of 7 hours in a single charge. 2) The vessel harnesses twin 50 kW electric motors, a marine-grade LFP battery, and 6 kW solar power.

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	3) It is an eco-friendly vessel. 4) It produces no noise and vibrations. 5) It can accommodate upto 12 passengers and cargo.
Deployed at	The boat will be deployed at Mazagon Dock at the Mumbai dock under the name Saur Sakthi.

Subject: Schemes & Programmes

Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP): NITI Aayog releases the 1st Delta Ranking of ABP

Why in the News?

NITI Aayog has released the first Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP).

Note- It has also released the Aspirational District Programme (ADP) rankings for the month of October 2023. Rayagada (Odisha) and Jamui (Bihar) have achieved the first and second ranks respectively.

What is the Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)?

1. The Delta Ranking is a core strategy of the Programme based on the spirit of **competitive and cooperative federalism**.
2. It is calculated on the basis of performance of blocks and progress achieved in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
3. Tiriyani Block in Telangana has secured the top position and Kaushambi Block in Uttar Pradesh ranked second.
4. The top rankers of ABP and ADP will be displayed on the Wall of Fame at NITI Aayog. It will display the projects undertaken by the blocks and districts to improve their indicators.

What is the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)?

Specifications	Details
Launched in	January 2023
Launched by	NITI Aayog
Inspired from	Aspirational District Programme
Purpose	The programme focuses on improving governance to enhance the quality of life of citizens and service delivery in the remotest and less developed blocks of India.
Blocks covered	500 blocks from 329 districts in 27 states and 4 Union Territories.
Themes	Each block will be monitored based on the following themes: 1) Health and Nutrition 2) Education 3) Agriculture and Allied Services

	4) Basic Infrastructure and 5) Social Development.
Implementation strategy	The program strategy is based on three levels: 1) Convergence (of Central & State Schemes) 2) Collaboration (of NITI Aayog, Central Ministries and Departments, State Governments and District and Block Administration) and 3) Competition among blocks driven by a spirit of mass Movement.
Nodal Officers	1) Block Officials are identified as Leaders of Change. They will be equipped with skills to drive transformation in blocks. 2) They will work under the guidance of their respective state and district administrations.
Rankings	NITI Aayog in partnership with the states will release a quarterly ranking of these blocks.

Dare To Dream (D2D) Scheme

Why in the News?

Recently Minister of State for Defence has filed a reply in Parliament regarding the successful implementation of the Dare to Dream (D2D) scheme.

What is Dare to Dream (D2D) Scheme?

Dare To Dream (D2D) Scheme

Initiated in memory of the former President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam

Under this the annual Dare to Dream Contests organised to encourage individual and start-up innovations in defense and aerospace technologies.

▶ Launched on
2019

▶ Launched by
Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

▶ Shortlisting and Ranking
The winners will be decided after due **evaluation by an independent expert committee**

▶ Benefits to Winners
Cash awards: 10 lakhs for Start-ups, 5 lakhs for individuals.
Winners are **also eligible to secure funding through DRDO's TDF scheme**

▶ Eligibility
Indian citizens aged 18 and above and startups registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade, founded by Indians.

▶ Selection Criteria
Entries will be evaluated based on criteria such as novelty, applicability, implementability, technical merit and maturity.

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Aspect	Details
What is it?	1) Under this, annual Dare to Dream Contests are organised to promote innovations by individuals and start-ups for advancements in defence and aerospace technologies. 2) It was initiated in memory of the former President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. 3) This is the 4th edition of the contest .
Launched on	2019
Launched by	Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
Eligibility	Indian citizens above 18 years and startups registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade, led by Indian founders.
Shortlisting and Ranking	The winners will be decided after due evaluation by an independent expert committee.
Selection Criteria	Entries will be evaluated based on criteria such as novelty, applicability, implementability, technical merit and maturity.
Benefits to Winners	1) Cash award of up to 10 lakhs for Start-ups and 5 lakhs for individuals. 2) Winners are also eligible to secure funding through DRDO's TDF scheme for realizing prototypes, contingent on merit and feasibility.

Amrit Dharohar Scheme training conducted in Indore

Why in the News?

The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) has joined hands with the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) for conducting training under Amrit Dharohar Scheme 2023.

What is the Amrit Dharohar Scheme?

Specifications	Details
Launched in	June, 2023
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC)
Announced in	Union Budget 2023-24
Aim	To promote unique conservation values of the Ramsar Sites in the country while generating employment opportunities and supporting local livelihoods.
Components of the scheme	1) Species and Habitat Conservation 2) Nature Tourism 3) Wetlands Livelihoods 4) Wetlands Carbon

Implementation	The scheme is being implemented in convergence with various Central Government ministries and agencies, State Wetland Authorities and a network of formal and informal institutions.
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What is the Nature Tourism component of the Amrit Dharohar Scheme?

1. The Nature Tourism component is being implemented jointly by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Ministry of Tourism (MoT).
2. Aim: To enhance livelihood opportunities for local communities through harnessing the nature-tourism potential of the Ramsar Sites across the country.
3. Sites selected for implementing this component: Sirpur (MP), Yashwant Sagar (MP), Bhitarkanika (Odisha), Chilika lake (Odisha) and Sultanpur (Haryana).
4. MoT and MoEFCC for taking up training programmes for local communities under the Alternative Livelihood Programme (ALP).

Subject: Reports & Indices

Food Security and Nutrition Report 2023: 74% Indians could not afford healthy diet in 2021

Why in the News?

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has released a report titled “Asia Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and Trends”.

What is the Asia Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023 Report?

1. **Released by:** Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
2. **Aim:** To inform stakeholders on progress towards ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition.
 - The report is a glimpse of the progress in meeting Sustainable Development Goals and World Health Assembly (WHA) Global Nutrition Targets 2025.

Key Findings of the report:

Asia-Pacific Region:

1. During the pandemic and the “5Fs” crisis (food, feed, fuel, fertiliser, and finance), the Asia Pacific region experienced troubling statistics.
2. About half of the world’s undernourished people live in the Asia-Pacific region, with more women than men being food insecure.
3. Southern Asia has the highest prevalence of undernourishment at 15.6 percent.

India:

1. **Affordability of Healthy Diet:** In 2021, over 74% of Indians (76.2% in 2020) could not afford a healthy diet.
2. **Undernourishment:** 16.6% of India’s population is undernourished, facing economic and social costs.

3. **Prevalence of Child Malnutrition:**
 - a. **Stunting (low height for age):** 31.7% of children under the age of five.
 - b. **Wasting (low weight for height):** 18.7% (the highest rate in the region)
 - c. **Overweight:** 2.8%.
4. **Low Birth Weight:** 27.4% (highest regional prevalence in the region)
5. **Anaemia:** 53% of women aged 15-49 had anaemia in 2019 (largest prevalence in the region)
6. **Exclusive Breastfeeding:** India has a higher prevalence (63.7%) of exclusive breastfeeding in infants (0-5 months) compared to the world average (47.7%).

Subject: Art & Culture

First India Art, Architecture and Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023

Why in the News?

The Prime Minister has inaugurated the First Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023 being held at Red Fort.

Note: A Biennale is a large-scale art exhibition or cultural event that typically occurs every two years.

What is the Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale (IAADB)?

Specifications	Details
What is it	It is India's first Global Cultural Initiative to showcase Indian art, architecture and designs.
Organized by	Ministry of Culture
Aim	1) To institutionalise a global cultural initiative in India, similar to the ones organised at places like Venice, Sao Paulo, Singapore, Sydney and Sharjah. 2) To initiate a conversation between artists, architects, designers and others to strengthen the cultural dialogue.
Partners	1) Ministry of Education 2) National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) 3) Archaeological Survey of India 4) National Council of Science Museums 5) Lalit Kala Akademi
Themes	The exhibitions will be based on seven themes – Doors of India, Gardens of India, Baolis (step-wells) of India, Temples of India, Architectural Wonders of Independent India, Indigenous Design and Women in Architecture and Design.
Significance	1) The initiative would serve as a warm-up for India's participation in the Venice Biennale in 2024. 2) Provides a platform to the creators of art, architecture and design to collaborate.

What is Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design (ABCD)?

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1. **Named Project Aatman**, it is a centre setup to to pave the way for a sustainable cultural economy derived from the indigenous crafts.
2. **Aim:**
 - a. To promote unique and rare crafts of India and
 - b. To bring together artisans and designers to help them innovate according to the market.
3. **Setup by:** Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Ministry of Culture
4. **Housed at the Red Fort premises**, it was inaugurated along with IAADB.

Koya tribe

Why in the News?

In an effort to conserve the [Indian Bison](#), the Koya tribe of Andhra Pradesh, India, is switching from traditional bison horns to palm leaves for crafting their traditional flute.

What are the Key Features of Koya tribe?

Koya tribe

- About**
 - Found in the **Papikonda hill range**, near the Godavari and Sabari rivers in **Andhra Pradesh**.
 - Also present in **Telangana** as the second-largest tribal community.
 - Call themselves **Dorala Sattam (Lords group)** and **Putta Dora (Original lords)**
- Religion**
 - Many Koya deities are female, with the **most significant being "mother earth"**
- Permakore**
 - Traditional flute made of Bison horn** played at a set time and place, signaling the entire village to commence a hunting expedition.
- Festivals**
 - Medaram Jathara** – Second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela and the largest tribal festival in Asia
 - Vijji Pandum** (seed charming festival)
 - Kondala Kolupu**(dedicated to appeasing Hill deities)
 - Bhumi Panduga** (commencement of the agricultural season)
- Language**
 - Telegu, **Koya language (Koyi)**
- Traditional Dance**
 - Permakok ata**, also known as the **Bison Horn Dance**, is performed at festivals and weddings

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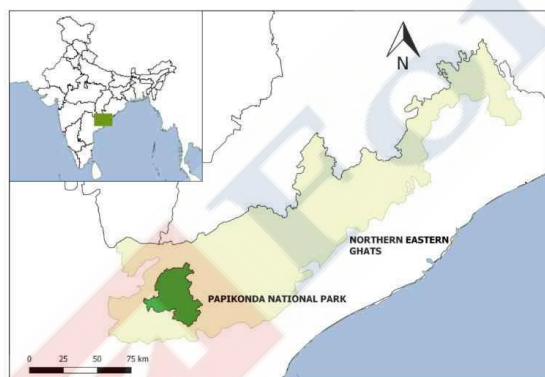
Aspect	Details
Who are they?	1) Koya tribe is a tribe found in the Papikonda hill range, near the Godavari and Sabari rivers in Andhra Pradesh. 2) They are also found in Telangana where they are the second largest tribal community. 3) The Koyas commonly refer to themselves as Dorala Sattam (Lords group) and Putta Dora (Original lords).
Language	Telegu, Koya language (Koyi)

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Livelihood	1) Earlier they were engaged in shifting cultivation. But have started practicing settled cultivation, cultivating crops such as Jowar, Ragi, Bajra, and other millets. 2) They also resort to hunting and foraging.
Religion	1) Many Koya deities are female, the most important being the “mother earth “. 2) They also worship a number of Hindu gods Lord Bhima, Korra Rajulu, Mamili, and Potaraju.
Festivals	1) Medaram Jathara – It is conducted in honour of the goddesses Sammakka and Saramma. Note- It is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela and the largest tribal festival in Asia. 2) Other major festivals include: a. Viji Pandum (seed-charming festival) b. Kondala Kolupu (festival dedicated to appeasing Hill deities) c. Bhumi Panduga (commencement of the agricultural season)
Traditional Dance	Permakok ata , also called the Bison Horn Dance, is practiced during festivals and marriage ceremonies.
Permakore	It is the traditional flute made of Bison horn . Permakore is played at a designated time and place to give a call to the entire village to go hunting in the forest

About Papikonda hill range

1. It is the habitat of the Indian Bison and hence is also known as the ‘Bison hill range’.
2. Papikonda National park- Declared in 2008, the Papikonda National Park is spread across East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. It lies on the left and right banks of the river Godavari.



Source- Scroll

Mohiniyattam: Johannes Kepler's Science Fiction Novel, World's Oldest, To Be Adapted into Mohiniyattam

Why in the News?

Somnium, the world's first science fiction novel, will be adapted into Mohiniyattam, a classical dance form. The adaptation will be titled “Nilakkanavu” (Moonlit Chronicle).

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What is Nilakkanavu?

1. Nilakkanavu is a Mohiniyattam dance performance **based on the world's first science fiction novel, *Somnium***, written by 17th century German Scientist Johannes Kepler.
2. The performance will be performed at the Samanwayam 2023 national dance-music festival in Palakkad, Kerala.
3. The artistic endeavor was **conceptualised by Mankara** and is executed by the well-known danseuse Gayathri Madhusudan. The musical landscape of Nilakkanavu is crafted by national award-winning composer Ramesh Narayan.
4. The performance will also pay tribute to the scientists who worked hard to make India's Chandrayaan Mission a success.

What is Mohiniyattam?

Specifications	Details
What is it	It is a classical dance that originated in Kerala . It derives its name from the word 'Mohini', the female avatar of Lord Vishnu.
Also known as	Dasiattam, as earlier the dance was practiced by devadasis or temple dancers
Flourished under	1) Chera kings between the 9th and the 12th century CE. 2) In the 19th century, the dance form gained prominence under rulers of Travancore and Tanjore Quartets (Ponnayya, Chinnayya, Sivananda and Vadivelu).
Key Characteristics	1) It is a solo dance performed by female artists 2) The dance is characterized by graceful, swaying body movements with no abrupt jerks or sudden leaps. 3) It belongs to the lasya style which is feminine, tender and graceful.
Attire	1) Plain white or off-white sari with golden or gold-laced brocade embroidery. 2) Golden waist belt and various jewellery pieces. 3) Musical anklets (ghungroo) for rhythmic footwork.
Musical Instruments	1) Carnatic style music. 2) Instruments used: Kuzhitalam (cymbals), Veena, Idakka (hourglass-shaped drum), Mridangam (barrel-shaped drum) and flute.
Important Personalities associated	1) The dance form was revived by Malayali Poet VN Menon and Kalyani Amma. 2) Other important personalities include Mukundraja, Appiradeth Krishna Panicker, Sunanda Nair among others.

Subject: Geography and Places in News

Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary: Tiger spotted at record high elevation of 3,640m in Sikkim

Why in the News?

A tiger has been spotted at an elevation of 3,640 meters in the Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary in Sikkim. This marks the highest elevation in India where tigers have been observed, surpassing the previous record of 3,630 meters in Arunachal Pradesh.

What is Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary?

Specifications	Details
Location	Sikkim
Geographical Features	1) The sanctuary is situated at the tri-junction of Sikkim, Bengal and Bhutan. 2) The Pangolakha range in the east separates Sikkim from Bhutan.
National Park	The sanctuary is linked to Neora Valley National Park of West Bengal, forests of Samtse and Haa district in Bhutan.
Significance	It is the largest wildlife sanctuary in Sikkim .
Vegetation	Alpine-temperate-subtropical
Lakes	Features high-altitude lakes like Lake Tsongmo, a biodiversity hotspot for migratory birds.
Rivers	Rivers like Rangpo and Jaldhaka originate from nearby lakes within the sanctuary.
Flora	Rhododendrons, silver fir, juniper and moss-covered oaks.
Fauna	The sanctuary is home to Red Panda (Sikkim's state animal) , Himalayan Black Bear, Musk Deer among others.
Eco-regions	The sanctuary encompasses various eco-regions like Terai-Duar savanna, Eastern Himalayan broadleaf forests, Himalayan subtropical pine forests among others.

Subject: Miscellaneous

VINBAX-2023: Joint Military Exercise

Why in the News?

The Indian Armed Forces contingent arrived in Hanoi, Vietnam for the fourth edition of Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023.

What is Exercise VINBAX?

Exercise VINBAX

- 🎯 **Annual training event** held alternately in India and Vietnam 📍 **2023 Edition**
- 🎯 **Foster collaboration**, ensure interoperability, and exchange best practices in UN Peacekeeping Operations under Chapter VII. Hanoi , Vietnam

Started in	First Edition	Type	Participating Nations
2018	Jabalpur Madhya pradesh	Military Exercise	India Vietnam

VINBAX 2023-key features

- ➔ Exercise **facilitates the exchange of ideas** and collaborative practice of tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- ➔ Exercise **concludes with a Validation Exercise**, showcasing standards achieved by both contingents.

Specification	Details
What is it?	It's an annual training event held alternately in India and Vietnam.
Participating Nations	India and Vietnam
Type	Military Exercise
Started in	2018 (First edition-Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh)
Aim	To enhance collaboration, promote interoperability, and share best practices under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter on Peacekeeping Operations.

What are the key features of the 2023 edition of Exercise VINBAX?

1. The joint exercise promotes idea exchange and collaborative rehearsal of tactics, techniques, and procedures.
2. They will perform technical military operations aligned with scenarios resembling global deployment of United Nations' contingents.
3. This joint effort enhances understanding, interoperability, and strengthens defense cooperation between the friendly armies.

Indira Gandhi Peace Prize: Activist Ali Abu Awwad and pianist Daniel Barenboim wins

Why in the News?

The Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2023 has been jointly awarded to Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad.

What is the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize?

Specifications	Details
Established in	1986 in memory of Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India.
Purpose	The award is given to individuals or organisations in recognition of their efforts towards: 1) Promoting international peace, development, and a new international economic order. 2) Ensuring that scientific discoveries are used for the larger good of humanity. 3) Enlarging the scope of freedom.
Given by	Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust
Prize	The award consists of a monetary award of 25 lakh rupees along with a citation.
Past Recipients	UNICEF, ISRO (2014), Pratham NGO (2021) among others.

Who has been awarded the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize 2023?

- Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad** have been jointly awarded Indira Gandhi Peace Prize 2023 for their efforts in bringing together the people of Israel and the Arab World for a non-violent resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Daniel Barenboim is an Argentine-born distinguished classical pianist, known for his relentless endeavor in using music to foster harmony in West Asia.
- Ali Awwad co-founded a local Palestinian-Israeli initiative called Roots promoting understanding, non-violence and transformation.