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## **Monthly Compendium (MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS)**

of Current Affairs by **SUCCESS MANTRA** (GTB Nagar)

# MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

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Success

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# MISCELLANEOUS

## #HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT AS UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHT

The United Nations declares access to a **clean, healthy environment** as a **universal human right**. India **voted for the resolution** and pointed out that the **resolutions do not create binding obligations**. Only through **conventions and treaties** do state parties undertake obligations for such rights.

### What is the Provision for Clean Environment in Indian Constitution?

The **right to life (Article 21)** has been used in a diversified manner in India. It includes, inter alia, the right to survive as a species, quality of life, the right to live with dignity and the right to livelihood.

**Article 21** of the Indian Constitution states: 'No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedures established by law.'



### What do we need to know about the Resolution?

- **Every person on the planet** has the right to live in a **clean, healthy environment**.
- **Climate change** and **environmental degradation** are the most critical threats awaiting humanity in the future.
- It demonstrates that the **member states can unite** in the collective fight against the triple planetary crisis of **climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution**.
- The declaration adopted by over 160 UN member nations, including India, **is not legally binding**.
- But, it will **encourage countries** to incorporate the **right to a healthy environment** in national constitutions and regional treaties.
- Russia and Iran **abstained from voting**.

### International Human Right Law:

International human rights **law lays down the obligations of Governments** to act in certain ways or to **refrain from certain acts**, in order to promote and protect **human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups**.

### Body of Human Rights:

- A **Comprehensive body of human rights law** consists of a **universal and internationally protected code** to which all nations can subscribe and all people aspire.
- The **United Nations** has defined a broad range of internationally accepted rights, **including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights**.
- It has also established **mechanisms to promote and protect these rights** and to assist states in carrying out their responsibilities.
- The foundations of this body of law are the **Charter of the United Nations** and the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted by the **General Assembly** in 1945 and 1948

## #INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY: 29<sup>TH</sup> JULY

29<sup>th</sup> July is observed as **International Tiger Day (ITD)** to promote the conservation of the striped cat as well as **to advocate a global system for protecting its natural habitats**.

ITD was established in 2010 at St Petersburg Tiger Summit in Russia in order to raise awareness about the decline of wild tiger numbers, leaving them on the brink of extinction, and to encourage the work of Tiger Conservation.

The **Manas Tiger Reserve** in Assam has **2.4 tigresses for every tiger**, the annual wildlife monitoring results of the trans-boundary wildlife preserve has revealed.

### What are the Key Points Related to Tiger?

- **Scientific Name:** *Panthera tigris*
- **Indian Sub Species:** *Panthera tigris tigris*.

**About:** It stretches from Siberian temperate forests to subtropical and tropical forests on the Indian subcontinent and Sumatra. It is the **largest cat species** and a member of the genus *Panthera*. Traditionally **eight subspecies of tigers have been recognized, out of which three are extinct**.

- **Bengal Tigers:** Indian Subcontinent
- **Caspian tiger:** Turkey through central and west Asia (extinct).
- **Amur tiger:** Amur Rivers region of Russia and China, and North Korea
- **Javan tiger:** Java, Indonesia (extinct).
- **South China tiger:** South central China.
- **Bali tiger:** Bali, Indonesia (extinct).
- **Sumatran tiger:** Sumatra, Indonesia.
- **Indo-Chinese tiger:** Continental south-east Asia.

### Tiger Reserves in India

- **Total Number:** 53
- **Largest:** Nagarjunsagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve, Andhra Pradesh
- **Smallest:** Bor tiger reserve in Maharashtra

### What is the Status of Tiger Population in India?

- There are currently between 3,726 and 5,578 tigers in the wild worldwide, according to the latest figures by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Tiger populations are stable or increasing in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Russia and China.
- India is home to **over 70 % of the global tiger population**.
- India has achieved the remarkable feat of doubling the tiger population in 2018 itself, 4 years ahead of the targeted year 2022 of the **St. Petersburg Declaration on tiger conservation**.
- According to the tiger census (2018) – conducted once every four years – India has a tiger population of 2,967.

### What are the Related Steps Taken?

- **Project Tiger 1973:** Project Tiger is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched in 1973. It provides havens for tigers in the country's national parks.
- **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):** It is a statutory body under the MoEFCC and was established in 2005 following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force.
- **Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards:** CA|TS is a set of criteria which allows tiger sites to check if their management will lead to successful tiger conservation.

## #QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

On 8th Aug 2022, India completed **80 years of Quit India Movement** also known as **August Kranti**.

### What was the Quit India Movement?

On 8<sup>th</sup> August 1942, **Mahatma Gandhi** called to end **British rule** and launched the **Quit India Movement** at the session of the All-India Congress Committee in Mumbai.

Gandhiji gave the call **"Do or Die"** in his speech delivered at the **Gowalia Tank Maidan**, now popularly known as **August Kranti Maidan**.

Aruna Asaf Ali popularly known as the '**Grand Old Lady**' of the Independence Movement is **known for hoisting the Indian flag at the Gowalia Tank Maidan** in Mumbai during the Quit India Movement.

The slogan '**Quit India**' was coined by **Yusuf Meherally**, a socialist and trade unionist who also served as Mayor of Mumbai.

Meherally had also coined the slogan **"Simon Go Back"**.

### What were the Demands of the Movement?

- The demand was **to end the British rule in India with immediate effect** to get the cooperation of Indians in World War-II against fascism.
- There was a demand **to form a provisional government** after the withdrawal of the Britishers.

### What were the Phases of Movement?

- **First Phase:** First Phase, urban revolt, marked by strikes, boy cott and picketing (protesting), which were quickly suppressed. There were **strikes and demonstrations all over the country** and workers provided the support by not working in the factories. Gandhiji was soon **imprisoned at Aga Khan Palace in Pune** and almost all leaders were arrested.
- **Second Phase:** The focus **shifted to the countryside**, which witnessed a **major peasant rebellion**, marked by destruction of communication systems, such as railway tracks and stations, telegraph wires and poles, **attacks on government buildings or any other visible symbol of colonial authority**.
- **3rd Phase:** The last phase witnessed the **formation of national governments or parallel governments** in isolated pockets (Ballia, Tamluk, Satara etc.)

## #WORLD TRIBAL DAY OBSERVED ON 9<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

- The **International Day of the World's Indigenous People** is observed on **9 August** each year to raise awareness and protect the rights of the **world's indigenous population**.
- On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2018, the first **National Report on the State of India's Tribal People's Health** was submitted to the Government of India by the Expert Committee on **Tribal Health**.

### What is World Tribal Day?

- The day recognizes the **first meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva in 1982**. It has been celebrated every year since 1994, in accordance with the declaration by the **United Nations**.
- To date, numerous indigenous peoples experience extreme **poverty, marginalization, and other human**





rights violations.

**Theme:** The theme for 2022 is “The Role of Indigenous Women in the Preservation and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge”.

### What do we need to know about the Report?

- **About:** The **13-member committee** was jointly appointed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. It took **five years of research** for the committee to bring out the evidence and provide a **true picture of the state of tribal people of the country**.

### Findings:

- **Geographical Location:** Tribal people are concentrated in **809 blocks in India**.
- Such areas are designated as the **Scheduled Areas**.
- Unexpected finding was that **50% of India's tribal population** (around 5.5 crore) live **outside the Scheduled Areas**, as a scattered and marginalised minority.

### What were the Major Recommendations of the Committee?

- **Firstly**, the committee suggested launching a **National Tribal Health Action Plan** with a goal to bring the **status of health and healthcare** at par with the respective State averages in the next 10 years.
- **Second**, the committee suggested **nearly 80 measures to address the 10 priority health problems**, the **health care gap**, the **human resource gap** and the **governance problems**.
- **Third**, the committee suggested **allocation of additional money** so that the per capita **government health expenditure** on tribal people becomes **equal to the stated goal of the National Health Policy (2017)**, i.e., 2.5% of the per capita GDP.

### What Steps has the Government of India taken for Tribal Welfare?

- Anamaya
- 1000 Springs Initiative
- Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojna (PMAAGY)
- TRIFED
- Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools
- Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
- Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana
- Eklavya Model Residential Schools

## #CONSERVING INDIA'S COASTAL ECOSYSTEM

- Recently, the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** of India tabled a report in Parliament on whether steps taken by the Union Environment Ministry to **conserve India's coastal ecosystems have been successful**.
- This latest report **contains the observations from an audit of Conservation of Coastal Ecosystems from 2015-20**.

### Why did the CAG conduct this Audit?

- The CAG has a **constitutional mandate to investigate and report** on publicly funded programmes.
- The CAG **conducted “pre-audit studies”** and found that there were large-scale Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) violations in the coastal stretches.
- **Coastal land up to 500 metres from the High Tide Line (HTL)** and a stage of 100m along banks of creeks, lagoons, estuaries, backwater and rivers subject to tidal fluctuations is called Coastal Regulation

Zone (CRZ).

- The media reported **incidents of illegal construction activities** (reducing beach space) and effluent discharged by local bodies, industries, and aquaculture farms that prompted a detailed investigation.



### *How is the Center Responsible for Conserving the Coastline?*

- The government has issued notifications under the **Environment Protection Act, 1986**, to regulate activities along India's coasts particularly regarding construction.
- The **Coastal Regulation Zone Notification (CRZ) 2019**, implemented by the Ministry, classifies the coastal area into different zones to manage infrastructure activities and regulate them.
- The **three institutions responsible for the implementation of the CRZ** are:
- **National Coastal Zone Management Authority (NCZMA)** at the Centre
- **State/Union Territory Coastal Zone Management Authorities (SCZMAs/UTCZMAs)** in every coastal State and Union Territory and
- **District Level Committees (DLCs)** in every district that has a coastal stretch and where the CRZ notification is applicable.

### *What are the Indian Initiatives for Coastal Management?*

- **National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management:** It aims to **promote integrated and sustainable management of the coastal and marine areas** in India for the benefit and wellbeing of the traditional coastal and island communities.
- **Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan:** It is a **process for the management of the coast** using an integrated approach, regarding all aspects of the coastal zone, including geographical and political boundaries, in an attempt to achieve sustainability.
- **Coastal Regulation Zone:** The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification was issued in 1991 under the Environmental Protection Act, 1986, by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** to **regulate activities in coastal areas of India**.

## #FORMATION OF CONTINENTS

According to a new study, **the earth's continents were formed by massive meteorite impacts** that were prevalent during the first billion years of our planet's four and a half billion-year history.



### What are the Highlights of the Study?

Meteorite impacts **generated massive energy to form oceanic plates**, which later evolved into continents.

The theory that giant meteorite impacts formed continents had been around for decades, but until now, there was little solid evidence for its support.

The Current theory is the most commonly accepted theory in place that attributes continent formation to the movement of **tectonic plates**.

### Evidence for Meteorite Impact Theory:

- **Zircon crystals in Pilbara Craton:** The researchers looked for evidence in zircon crystals embedded in rocks from the Pilbara Craton in Western Australia. This craton is the remnant of an ancient crust that began forming more than three billion years ago.
- **Zircons are formed by the crystallisation of magma** or are found in metamorphic rocks.
- They act as tiny time capsules, recording the period of geologic activity. Newer zircon adds to the original crystal as time progresses. The study of the variants or isotopes of oxygen within these crystals i.e., oxygen-18 and oxygen-16 and their ratio helped to estimate past temperatures.
- Older grains of zircon possessed the lighter oxygen-16. The younger ones contained the heavier oxygen-18.
- **Cratons:** A craton is an old and stable part of the continental lithosphere, which consists of Earth's two topmost layers, the crust and the uppermost mantle.

### What are the Theories related to Continent Formation?

#### Plate Tectonics Theory:

Developed from the 1950s to the 1970s, the **theory of plate tectonics is the modern update to continental drift**, an idea first proposed by scientist Alfred Wegener in 1912 which stated that **Earth's continents had "drifted" across the planet over time. Wegener didn't have a correct explanation for how continents could move** around the planet, but researchers do now.

Plate tectonics is the theory that **Earth's outer shell is divided into large slabs of solid rock**, called "plates," that glide over Earth's mantle, the rocky inner layer above Earth's core.

Earth's solid outer layer, which includes the crust and the uppermost mantle, is called the **Lithosphere**.

Below the lithosphere is the asthenosphere — a viscous layer kept malleable by heat deep within the Earth. It lubricates the undersides of Earth's tectonic plates, allowing the lithosphere to move around.

The Earth's Lithosphere is divided into seven major and some minor plates.

#### Major Plates:

- The **Antarctic** (and the surrounding oceanic) **Plate**
- The **North American Plate** (with western Atlantic floor separated from the South American plate along the Caribbean islands)
- The **South American Plate** (with western Atlantic floor separated from the North American plate along the Caribbean islands)
- **The Pacific Plate**
- The **India-Australia-New Zealand Plate**
- **Africa with the eastern Atlantic floor Plate**
- **Eurasia and the adjacent oceanic Plate**



- Some important minor plates include:
- **Cocos Plate:** Between Central America and Pacific plate
- **Nazca Plate:** Between South America and Pacific plate
- **Arabian Plate:** Mostly the Saudi Arabian landmass
- **Philippine Plate:** Between the Asiatic and Pacific plate
- **Caroline Plate:** Between the Philippine and Indian plate (North of New Guinea)
- **Fuji Plate:** North-east of Australia
- **Juan De Fuca Plate:** South-East of North American Plate

### Continental Drift Theory:

- Continental drift theory **deals with the distribution of the oceans and the continents**. It was first suggested by a German meteorologist, Alfred Wegener in 1912. According to the theory, all the continents formed a single continental mass- **Pangea** and mega ocean- **Panthalassa** surrounded it.
- Around 200 million years ago Pangea started splitting and **broke down into two large continental masses as Laurasia and Gondwanaland** forming the northern and southern components respectively.
- Subsequently, **Laurasia and Gondwanaland** continued to break into various smaller continents that exist today.

### Prominent Evidence in Support of Continental Drift Theory

- **South America and Africa seem to fit in with each other**, especially the eastern bulge of Brazil fits into the Gulf of Guinea.
- **Greenland seems to fit in with Ellesmere and Baffin islands.**
- The **west coast of India, Madagascar and Africa seems to fit.**
- North and South America on one side and Africa and Europe on the other fit along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.
- Alfred Wegner studied fossils of ancient plants and animals, geographical features on the borders of the continent and mineral resources and found similar results on the boundaries of the other continents.

## #WORLD LION DAY: 10<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

**World Lion Day** is observed on 10<sup>th</sup> August annually to spread awareness and educate people about lions and their conservation.

### What is World Lion Day?

World Lion Day aims at **spreading awareness of lions and the urgent need to strive toward their conservation** and to make everyone aware of the significance of lions in their natural habitat.

The initiative to protect the big cats **started in 2013 and the first World Lion Day was celebrated that year.**



### What are the Key Points Related to Lion?

**Scientific Name:** *Panthera leo*

The lion is divided into **two subspecies**: the African lion (*Panthera leo leo*) and the **Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*)**.

Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.

The most striking morphological character, which is always seen in Asiatic lions, and rarely in African lions, is a longitudinal fold of skin running along its belly.

### **Protection Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable

- Asiatic Lion - **Endangered**.
- **CITES**: Appendix I for populations of India, all other populations are included in Appendix II.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972**: Schedule I

### Status in India:

India is home to the majestic Asiatic Lion, who inhabit the protected territory of **Sasan-Gir National Park (Gujarat)**.

According to the data from 2020, there are 674 lions in India, which were 523 in 2015.

### #NEW ADDITION TO RAMSAR SITES

- Recently, India has added 10 more Ramsar sites, or wetlands that are of international importance, taking the number of such sites to 64.
- Earlier, India designated **five new wetlands of international importance** – the Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest and Pichavaram Mangrove in Tamil Nadu, Pala wetland in Mizoram and Sakhya Sagar in Madhya Pradesh.
- A Ramsar site is a **wetland of international importance** under the Ramsar Convention, which is also known as the 'Convention on Wetlands' — an intergovernmental environmental treaty established by UNESCO in 1971, and named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the convention was signed that year.

### Which New Sites have been added?

Name	States	Specifications
<b>Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This is the largest reserve for breeding resident and migratory water birds in South India.</li> <li>▪ It is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area forming part of the Central Asian Flyway.</li> </ul>
<b>Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is the first Marine Biosphere Reserve in South &amp; South -East Asia.</li> <li>▪ It is one of the most biologically diverse regions in India.</li> </ul>
<b>Vembannur Wetland Complex</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is a human-made inland tank.</li> <li>▪ It forms the southernmost tip of peninsular India further it forms part of the Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and hence part of BirdLife</li> </ul>

		International Data Zone.
<b>Vellode Bird Sanctuary</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The wetlands have been evaluated and prioritized considering factors like the ecology of the wetland, earlier bird counts, records of breeding, and roosting colonies.</li> </ul>
<b>Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is one of the oldest bird-protected areas in Tamil Nadu.</li> <li>This site is also recognized internationally as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA).</li> </ul>
<b>Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is an important staging and breeding ground for several species of waterbirds.</li> <li>The notable species observed at the site are oriental darter, glossy ibis, grey Heron &amp; Eurasian spoonbill.</li> </ul>
<b>Satkosia Gorge</b>	<b>Odisha</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It spreads along the magnificent gorge over the mighty river <b>Mahanadi</b>.</li> <li>It was established in 1976 as a wildlife sanctuary and supports a rich ecosystem, representing a diverse population of floral and faunal species.</li> <li>Satkosia is the meeting point of <b>two biogeographic regions of India, the Deccan Peninsula and the Eastern Ghats</b>, contributing immense biodiversity.</li> </ul>
<b>Nanda Lake</b>	<b>Goa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is considered to be critically significant for its ecosystem services and biodiversity values for the local communities and society at large.</li> </ul>
<b>Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary</b>	<b>Karnataka</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been enlisted as one of the Important Bird Areas (IBA) in Karnataka and India by Bombay Natural History Society.</li> <li>It is an ecologically important riverine wetland of India, rich in biodiversity.</li> </ul>
<b>Sirpur Wetland</b>	<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not only important for its aesthetic value but it provides immense ecological services such as being an important source of water and helping groundwater recharge in the downstream areas.</li> </ul>

## #INDIA ADDED 11 MORE RAMSAR SITES

- Recently, India has **added 11 more Ramsar sites**, or wetlands that are of international importance, **taking the number of such sites to 75**.
- Tamil Nadu has maximum no. of Ramsar sites (14), followed by UP which has 10 nos. of Ramsar sites.

### What is Ramsar Site?

- A Ramsar site is a **wetland of international importance** under the **Ramsar Convention**, which is also known as the '**Convention on Wetlands**' — an intergovernmental environmental treaty established by **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** in **1971**, and named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the convention was signed that year.

### Which New Sites have been added?

Name	States	Specifications
Tampara Lake	Odisha	It is among the <b>most prominent freshwater lakes</b> in Odisha, situated in Ganjam district. The wetland is an important habitat for vulnerable species such as <b>Cyprinus carpio</b> , <b>common pochard</b> ( <i>Aythya ferina</i> ), and <b>river tern</b> ( <i>Sterna aurantia</i> ).
Hirakud Reservoir	Odisha	It is the <b>largest earthen dam in Odisha</b> started operating in 1957. Out of the known 54 species of fish from the reservoir, <b>one has been classed as being endangered, six near threatened and 21 fish species of economic importance</b> . It also provides important <b>hydrological services</b> by moderating floods in the <b>Mahanadi delta</b> , the ecological and socio-economic hub of the east coast of India.
Ansupa Lake	Odisha	It is the <b>largest freshwater lake of Odisha</b> situated in Banki sub-division of Cuttack district. The wetland is an <b>oxbow lake</b> formed by <b>River Mahanadi</b> . It provides a safe habitat to: <b>Three threatened bird species- Rynchops albicollis (EN), Sterna acuticauda (EN) and Sterna aurantia (VU)</b> <b>Three threatened fish species- Clarias magur (Clariidae) (EN), Cyprinus carpio (Cyprinidae) (VU) and Wallago attu (VU).</b>
Yashwant Sagar	Madhya Pradesh	Yashwant Sagar is one of the two <b>Important Bird Areas (IBA)</b> in the Indore region as well as one of the most important birding sites in Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. It is considered to be a stronghold of the <b>vulnerable Sarus Crane in central India</b> . Due to its vast shallow reed beds, the wetland is considered <b>heaven to a large number of winter migratory birds</b> .
Chitrangudi	Tamil Nadu	Locally, it is known as " <b>Chitrangudi Kanmoli</b> ".



<b>Bird Sanctuary</b>		<p>The wetland has been a protected area since 1989 and declared as <b>Bird Sanctuary</b>, coming under the jurisdiction of <b>Tamil Nadu Forest Department</b>, Ramanathapuram division.</p> <p>It is an ideal habitat for <b>winter migratory birds</b>. Around 50 birds belonging to 30 families have been reported from the site.</p> <p><b>Notable waterbirds spotted from the site area include:</b> spot-billed pelican, little egret, grey heron, large egret, open billed stork, purple, and pond herons.</p>
<b>Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<p>Suchindrum Theroor Wetland complex is part of the <b>Suchindrum-Theroor Manakudi Conservation Reserve</b>.</p> <p>It is declared an <b>Important Bird Area (IBA)</b> and lies at the <b>southern tip of the Central Asian</b> flyway of migratory birds.</p> <p><b>Copper plate inscriptions from the 9<sup>th</sup> century</b> mention Pasumkulam, Venchikulam, Nedumarthukulam, Perumkulam, Elemchikulam and Konadunkulam.</p>
<b>Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<p>It is a large <b>human-made irrigation tank</b> and <b>shelter for migratory birds</b> as it provides a suitable environment for food, shelter, and breeding ground.</p> <p><b>Indian Pond Heron Ardeola grayii</b> occurred in most of the surveyed tanks.</p> <p>Large concentrations of wintering waterfowl such as <b>Eurasian Wigeon Anas penelope</b>, <b>Northern Pintail Anas acuta</b>, <b>Garganey Anas querquedula</b> were recorded in tanks.</p>
<b>Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<p>It is notable as a <b>nesting site for several migratory heron species</b> that roost in the <b>prominent growth of babul trees</b>.</p> <p>The breeding population of migratory waterbirds arrive here <b>between October and February</b> and include: <b>painted stork, white ibis, black ibis, little egret, great egret</b>.</p> <p>The site qualifies as an <b>Important Bird and Biodiversity Area IBA</b> as the threatened <b>Spot-billed Pelican Pelecanus philippensis</b> breeds here.</p> <p>The wetland exhibits rich biodiversity including many globally <b>near-threatened species including:</b> Spot-billed Pelican, Oriental Darter, Oriental white Ibis and Painted Stork and also commonly occurring shore and water birds like greenshank, plovers, stilts and forest birds like bee-eaters, bulbuls, cuckoos, starlings, barbets, etc.</p>
<b>Thane Creek</b>	<b>Maharashtra</b>	<p>It has been declared as <b>Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary</b>.</p> <p>Thane creek is <b>fringed by mangroves</b> on both banks &amp; comprises around <b>20% of the total Indian mangrove species</b>.</p> <p>The area is an important part of the wetland complex of the Central Asian Flyway of the birds and has been categorized as an Important Bird Area (IBA).</p>
<b>Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve</b>	<b>Jammu and Kashmir</b>	<p>It serves as an <b>abode to many residents and migratory bird species</b>.</p> <p>It is also recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA).</p> <p>It provides a <b>plethora of ecosystem services</b> including fish and fiber, water supply, water purification, climate regulation,</p>

		flood regulation, and recreational opportunities.
<b>Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve</b>	<b>Jammu and Kashmir</b>	The area has <b>extensive reedbeds of Phragmites communis</b> and <b>Typha angustata</b> , and rich growth of <b>Nymphaea candida</b> and <b>N. stellata</b> on open water. It serves as an abode to more than four lakh resident and migratory birds of at least 21 species.

## #OUTBOUND TRAVEL & TOURISM REPORT

Recently a report was released titled 'Outbound Travel and Tourism - An Opportunity Untapped', which shows India's outbound tourism will surpass USD 42 billion by 2024.

Outbound tourism is the **act of travelling 'out' of the home country** for the purposes of tourism.

### What are the Findings of the Report?

- The Indian outbound travel market is **among the fastest growing markets globally with approximately 80 million passport levels of purchasing power**, especially among the middle class.
- With a growing economy, young population, and growing middle class, **India is ideally positioned to become one of the most lucrative outbound tourism markets** in the world.
- Europe sees 20% of the travellers from India's outbound traffic. 10 % travel to Australia and New Zealand, while the rest of the traffic is towards Southeast Asia.
- **In 2021, Indians spent approximately USD 12.6 billion in outbound trips**, compared to USD 22.9 billion in 2019. While the reason for decrease in spending could be due to the pandemic, these figures point out the huge value that can be captured from Indian outbound travellers.

### What is the Scenario of Tourism in India?

- **About:** India attracted a lot of travellers in the past due to its fabled wealth. Visit of **Hieun-tsang, a devout Chinese Buddhist is an example of this.**
- Pilgrim Travel got a boost when **Emperors like Ashoka and Harsha started building rest houses** for pilgrims.
- Arthashastra' pointing out the **importance of the travel infrastructure for the state, which played an important role** in the past.
- Post-Independence, Tourism continuously remained part of the **Five Year Plans (FYP).**
- Different forms of Tourism like Business Tourism, Health Tourism, and Wildlife Tourism etc. were introduced in India after seventh FYP.

### Status:

- India's Tourism is ranked at 10<sup>th</sup> position in terms of its contribution to World **GDP (Gross Domestic Product)** in the World Travel and Tourism Council's report in 2019.
- During 2019, contribution of travel & tourism to GDP was 6.8% of the total economy, Rs. 13,68,100 crore (USD 194.30 billion).
- India as of now in 2021 has 40 sites listed under '**World Heritage List**', **6<sup>th</sup> highest (32 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed site) in the world.**
- **Dholavira and Ramappa Temple (Telangana)** are the latest ones.
- In FY20, the tourism sector in India accounted for 39 million jobs, which was 8.0 % of the total employment in the country. By 2029, it is expected to account for about 53 million jobs.

## #CORAL REEFS IN GREAT BARRIER REEF

According to the Australian Institute of Marine Science's (AIMS) annual long-term monitoring report, Australia's northern and central Great Barrier Reef (GBR) has experienced high levels of coral reef cover over the past 36 years.

The researchers also warned that the gains could be quickly reversed due to rising global temperatures.



### What are the Key highlights of Report?

- **Quick Recovery:** It states that reef systems are resilient and capable of recovering after disturbances such as accumulated heat stress, cyclones, predatory attacks.
- It shows record levels of region-wide coral cover in the northern and central GBR since the first ever Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) survey was done.
- Coral cover is measured by determining the increase in the cover of hard corals.

**Growth in Central & Northern:** The hard coral cover in northern Great Barrier Reef had reached 36% while that in the central region had reached 33%. Meanwhile, coral cover levels declined in the southern region from 38% in 2021 to 34% in 2022.

### What are Coral Reefs?

- **About:** Corals are marine invertebrates or animals which **do not possess a spine**.
- They are the largest living structures on the planet.
- **Each coral is called a polyp and thousands of such polyps live together to form a colony, which grow when polyps multiply to make copies of themselves.**

Further, they are of **two types**:

- **Hard corals:** They extract calcium carbonate from seawater to build hard, white coral exoskeletons. They are in a way the **engineers of reef ecosystems** and measuring the extent of hard coral is a widely-accepted metric for measuring the condition of coral reefs.
- **Soft corals:** They attach themselves to such skeletons and older skeletons built by their ancestors. Soft corals also add their own skeletons to the hard structure over the years. These growing multiplying structures gradually form coral reefs.

### What is Australia's Great Barrier Reef?

- **About:** It is the world's largest reef system stretching across 2,300 km and having nearly 3,000 individual reefs. Further, it hosts 400 different types of coral, gives shelter to 1,500 species of fish and 4,000 types of mollusc.

## #GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR YOUTH: ILO

- Recently, the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** has released a report titled "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people".

### What is the International Labour Organization?

- It is the only tripartite **United Nation (UN) agency**.
- It brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States (India is a member), **to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women**

and men.

- Received the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1969**.
- **Establishment:** Established in 1919 by the **Treaty of Versailles** as an affiliated agency of the **League of Nations**.
- Became the first affiliated specialized agency of the UN in 1946.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland



### Reports:

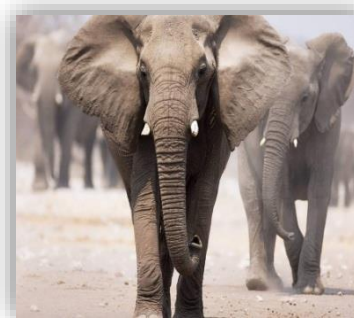
- **World of Work Report**
- **World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2022**
- **World Social Protection Report**
- **Social Dialogue Report**
- **Global Wage Report**

### What are the Findings Globally?

- **Gender Disparity in EPR:** Young women exhibited a **much lower Employment-to-Population ratio (EPR)**, showing that young men are **almost 1.5 times** more likely than young women to be employed. In 2022, 27.4 % of young women globally are projected to be in employment, compared to 40.3 % of young men.
- **Pandemic Impacted Youth Employment:** Covid-19 Pandemic has worsened the **numerous labour market challenges** facing those aged **between 15 and 24 years**, who have experienced a much higher percentage loss in employment than adults since early 2020. The total global number of unemployed youths is estimated to reach 73 million in 2022, a **slight improvement from 2021** but still six million above the pre-pandemic level of 2019.

## #WORLD ELEPHANT DAY: 12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

- The **World Elephant Day** is celebrated every year on **12<sup>th</sup> of August**, with the aim to acknowledge Elephants' significance in our ecosystem.
- It emphasizes on **raising the awareness of the threats that elephants face in their daily lives**.
- Whether **poaching, mistreatment in captivity, or habitat loss**, every single factor plays a role in animal abuse.



### What is the Significance of Celebrating Elephant Day?

- Elephants are considered sacred in many cultures and are essential for maintaining a healthy ecosystem.
- Elephants also encourage biodiversity.
- They are an **intelligent species**, they have the **biggest brain of any land animal**.

### Conservation Status:

- **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** Red List of threatened species:
- African Forest Elephant- **Critically Endangered**
- African Savanna Elephant- **Endangered**
- Asian Elephant- **Endangered**
- **Convention of the Migratory species (CMS): Appendix I**
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I**



### What are the Initiatives taken by the Government?

- **Project Elephant:** Project Elephant was launched in 1991-92 as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Ministry of Environment and Forests**.
- Estimation of wild elephant population in the year 2007, 2012 and 2017. **Karnataka** has the highest number of elephants followed by Assam and Kerala.
- Agasthiyamalai (Tamil Nadu) will be the country's 32<sup>nd</sup> elephant reserve.
- **Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme** - The MIKE program **started in South Asia in the year 2003 with the following purpose:** To provide information needed for elephant range States to make appropriate management and enforcement decisions, and to **build institutional capacity within the range States for the long-term management of their elephant populations.**

### Mike Sites in India:

- Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve (Assam)
- Deomali Elephant Reserve (Arunachal Pradesh)
- Dihing Patkai Elephant Reserve (Assam)
- Garo Hills Elephant Reserve (Meghalaya)
- Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve (West Bengal)
- Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve (Odisha)
- Shivalik Elephant Reserve (Uttarakhand)
- Mysore Elephant Reserve (Karnataka)
- Nilgiri Elephant Reserve (Tamil Nadu)
- Wayanad Elephant Reserve (Kerala)

## #ITALY'S LAKE GARDA

Italy's worst **drought** in decades has reduced **Lake Garda**, the country's largest lake, to near its lowest level ever recorded. It has exposed **swaths of previously underwater rocks and warmed the water** to temperatures that approach the average in the **Caribbean Sea**.

### What do we need to know about Drought?

- **About: Drought** is generally considered as a **deficiency in rainfall/precipitation** over an extended period, usually a season or more, resulting in a **water shortage** causing adverse impacts on **vegetation, animals, and/or people**.

### Types:

- **Meteorological Drought:** It is based on the degree of dryness or rainfall deficit and the length of the dry period.
- **Hydrological Drought:** It is based on the impact of rainfall deficits on the water supply such as stream flow, reservoir and lake levels, and ground water table decline.
- **Agricultural Drought:** It refers to the impact on **agriculture** by factors such as rainfall deficits, soil water deficits, reduced ground water, or reservoir levels needed for irrigation.
- **Socioeconomic Drought:** It considers the **impact of drought conditions** (meteorological, agricultural, or hydrological drought) on supply and demand of some economic goods such as fruits, vegetables, grains and meat.

### Indian Government's Initiative:

- **Integrated Watershed Management Programme**
- **National Mission on Green India**
- **Desert Development Programme**
- Launched in 1995 to minimize the adverse effects of drought and to rejuvenate the natural resource base of the identified desert areas.

## #INDIAN TELEGRAPH RIGHT OF WAY, AMENDMENT RULES

In a bid to expedite the rollout of **5G networks** in the country, the Ministry of Communications announced amendments to the **Right of Way (RoW)**.

### What are the Amendments?

- The amendments include **rationalisation of charges, introduction of a single window clearance system** and doing away with the need for consent from a government authority for installing infrastructure over private property.
- Telecom licensees **can enter into agreement with private property owners and will not require any permission from any government authority** for installing telecom infrastructure such as towers, poles or optical fibre.
- **No administrative fee shall be charged** by the Central government for the establishment of poles on land owned/controlled by it.
- **For State/UTs, this fee will be limited to Rs 1,000 per pole.** The fee for laying overground optical fibre shall be limited to Rs 1,000/ Km.
- Telecom companies will need to submit **details of the building or structure, where the establishment of a mobile tower or pole is proposed**, and a copy of certification by a structural engineer, authorised by the appropriate authority, attesting to the structural safety of the building or structure, where the mobile tower or pole is proposed to be established.
- The amendments provide for **a single window clearance system for RoW applications.**
- **Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal** of the Ministry of Communications will be the single window portal for all telecom related RoW applications.
- The telecom licences will be able to use street infrastructure to deploy telecom equipment at a nominal cost of Rs 150 annually in rural areas and Rs 300 annually in urban areas.

### Why are these Amendments Announced?

- The Amendments are announced to expedite **upgradation and expansion of telecom networks** and to **pave the way for the deployment of 5G small cells on existing street infrastructure.**
- The current infrastructure may be able to sustain the rollout of services. However, experts say **at least 70 % of the telecom towers need to be fiberized from the current level of 33 %** to roll out 5G in a way that utilises its full potential.
- **Fiberization** is essential for 5G due to the **increasing data consumption and growth in India compared to the 2G and 3G wireless technologies**, which work on a shared network and have a limited capacity to handle an increase in load.
- Access to the existing infrastructure, deployment of new infrastructure, and the high cost involved in it **were major challenges the telecom sector always came across** which will now be eased down.

## #NATIONAL SPORTS DAY: 29<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

The National Sports Day or Rashtriya Khel Divas is celebrated on **29<sup>th</sup> August every year** in India as a tribute to hockey legend **Major Dhyan Chand** who was born on this date in 1905.

### What are the Key Points?

- The day was first designated and celebrated in 2012 as India's National Sports Day.

- The nation celebrates the day honouring our sports stars. The president gives away sports awards such as the **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, Arjuna Award, Dronacharya Award, and Dhyan Chand Awards** on this occasion.

### Who was Major Dhyan Chand?

- Widely known as the '**Wizard of Hockey**', the greatest hockey player of India, Major Dhyan Chand Singh, was born on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1905 in present-day Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.
- He played as the centre forward at three Olympic Games for India winning Gold Medals at Amsterdam in 1928, Los Angeles in 1932 and **Berlin in 1936 where he was the captain.**
- He was a member of the first Indian overseas army team that toured New Zealand in 1926.
- Major Dhyan Chand scored more than 400 international goals in his career from 1926 to 1948 while scoring nearly 1,000 goals in his entire career.
- In a bid to pay tribute to such a legendary player, the Government of India decided to celebrate his birthday as the National Sports Day in 2012.
- Before this recognition, he was **awarded the Padma Bhushan Award by the Government of India in 1956**, the third-largest civilian honour in India.
- He breathed his last on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1979, in Delhi having slipped into a coma.

### **#NEW ELEPHANT RESERVE IN TAMIL NADU**

- Recently, the Government of India has announced the notification of one more **Elephant Reserve (ER)** Agasthiyamalai in Tamil Nadu during a programme in the **Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala.**
- This will be the **32<sup>nd</sup> Elephant Reserve in the country** after Singphan ER in Nagaland was notified in 2018.
- Agasthiyamalai is Tamil Nadu's 5<sup>th</sup> Elephant Reserve and also a **Biosphere Reserve.**



### What do we need to know about Indian Elephant?

- It is also known as "**Elephas maximus**".
- **Location:**
  - Central and Southern Western Ghats
  - North East India
  - Eastern India
  - Northern India
  - Some parts of Southern Peninsular India.



### Protection Status:

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:** Schedule I

### What is Project Elephant?

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** and was launched in February 1992 for the **protection of elephants, their habitats and corridors**. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change provides financial and technical support to major elephant range states in the country through the project.

### Objectives:

- To protect elephants, their habitat & corridors
- To address issues of man-animal conflict
- Welfare of captive elephants

## #MANUAL SCAVENGERS ENUMERATION EXERCISE

- The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E)** is preparing to undertake a nationwide survey to **enumerate all Sanitation workers engaged in cleaning of sewers and septic tanks**.
- The enumeration exercise is part of **the National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme** and will be conducted across **500 AMRUT** (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) **cities**.
- It will merge with and replace the **Self-Employment Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)**, which was started in 2007.
- Programme Monitoring Units (PMUs) for the 500 AMRUT cities will be set up to carry out the exercise.
- Once this exercise is completed across the 500 cities, it will be **expanded nationwide, making it easier to bring government benefits** like upskilling and loan and capital subsidies to them.

### What is the NAMASTE Scheme?

It was launched in July 2022. The NAMASTE scheme is being undertaken jointly by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the MoSJ&E and **aims to eradicate unsafe sewer and septic tank cleaning practices**.

### Objectives:

- Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India.
- All sanitation work **is performed by skilled workers**.
- No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter.
- Sanitation workers are collectivised into **Self Help Groups (SHGs)** and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises. Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at National, State and Urban Local Body (ULB) levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work. Increased awareness among sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers.

### What are the Steps taken to tackle the Menace of Manual Scavenging?

- **The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (Amendment) Bill, 2020:** It proposes to completely mechanise sewer cleaning, introduce ways for 'on-site' protection and provide compensation to manual scavengers in case of sewer deaths. It will be an amendment to The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. It is still awaiting



cabinet approval.

- **The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013:** Superseding the 1993 Act, the 2013 Act goes beyond prohibitions on dry latrines, and outlaws all manual excrement cleaning of insanitary latrines, open drains, or pits.
- **The Building and Maintenance of Insanitary Latrines Act of 2013:** It outlaws construction or maintenance of unsanitary toilets, and the hiring of anybody for their manual scavenging, as well as of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. It also provides a constitutional responsibility to provide alternative jobs and other assistance to manual scavenging communities, as reparation for historical injustice and indignity.
- **Prevention of Atrocities Act:** In 1989, the Prevention of **Atrocities Act** became an integrated guard for sanitation workers, more than 90% people employed as manual scavengers belonged to the Scheduled Caste. This became an important landmark to free manual scavengers from designated traditional occupations.
- **Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge:** It was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on **World Toilet Day** (19<sup>th</sup> November) in 2020. The Government launched this “challenge” for all states to make sewer-cleaning mechanised by April 2021 — if any human needs to enter a sewer line in case of unavoidable emergency, proper gear and oxygen tanks, etc., are to be provided.
- **‘Swachhta Abhiyan App’:** It has been developed to identify and geotag the data of insanitary latrines and manual scavengers so that the insanitary latrines can be replaced with sanitary latrines and rehabilitate all the manual scavengers to provide dignity of life to them.
- **SC Judgment:** In 2014, a **Supreme Court** order made it mandatory for the government to identify all those who died in sewage work since 1993 and provide Rs. 10 lakh each as compensation to their families.

## #CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

A petition has been filed in the **Delhi High Court** to stop a person, who has been suffering from **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome** since 2014, from travelling to Europe to undergo a physician-assisted **euthanasia**.

### What is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

- It is a **serious and debilitating disease** that affects the **nervous system**, the **immune system** and the **body's production of energy**. It is also known as “**Myalgic Encephalomyelitis**”. Its potential results are **viral or bacterial infection, hormonal imbalances and genetic predispositions**. It can **affect anyone**, from children to adults of all ages.



### What is Euthanasia?

**Euthanasia** is the practice of **ending the life of a patient** to limit the patient's suffering. The patient in question would typically be terminally ill or experiencing great pain and suffering.

#### Types:

- **Active euthanasia:** Killing a patient by active means, for example, injecting a patient with a lethal dose of a drug. Sometimes called “aggressive” euthanasia.
- **Passive euthanasia:** Intentionally letting a patient die by withholding artificial life support.

- **Voluntary euthanasia:** With the consent of the patient.
- **Involuntary euthanasia:** Without the consent of the patient, for example, if the patient is unconscious and his or her wishes are unknown.

### Legal Provisions in India:

- In 1994, the **Supreme Court of India** in **Gian Kaur vs State of Punjab** had held that **both assisted suicide and euthanasia were unlawful**.
- The bench stated that **the right to life did not include the right to die**, hence **overruling the two-judge bench decision in P. Rathinam vs Union of India** which struck down section 309 of Indian Penal Code (attempt to suicide) as **unconstitutional**.
- In 2011, the Supreme Court in **Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug vs Union of India** held that **passive euthanasia could be given a nod in case of exceptional circumstances and under strict monitoring of the apex court**.
- In 2018, the Supreme Court declared **the right to die with dignity as a fundamental right**, allowing **passive euthanasia** in the country.

## #WHAT IS ARCTIC AMPLIFICATION?

Recently, some studies were published on Arctic Amplification, which suggested that the **region is fast changing and that the best of climate models may not be able to capture the rate of changes** and predict it accurately.

### What are the Findings of these Studies?

- The **Arctic is heating four times faster than the rest of the planet**.
- The warming is more concentrated in the **Eurasian part of the Arctic**, where the Barents Sea north of Russia and Norway is warming at an alarming rate — **seven times faster than the global average**.

### What do Previous Studies Say?

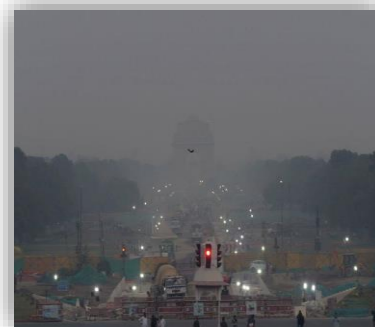
- The Arctic was warming twice the global rate prior to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Arctic surface air temperature has increased by more than double the global average over the last two decades as per a 'Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate' in 2019 by the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**.
- In May 2021, the **Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)** warned that the **Arctic has warmed three times quicker than the planet**, and the chance of the sea ice completely disappearing in summers is 10 times greater, if the planet is warmer by two degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial levels.
- The report also said that the **average annual temperature in the region increased by 3.1 degree Celsius** compared to 1 degree Celsius for the planet. Mean Arctic amplification saw **steep changes in 1986 and 1999, when the ratio reached 4.0**, implying four times faster heating than the rest of the planet.

### What is Arctic amplification?

- Polar amplification happens **when changes to the earth's atmosphere led to a larger difference in temperature near the north and south poles** than to the rest of the world. This phenomenon is measured **against the average temperature change of the planet**.
- These changes are **more pronounced at the northern latitudes** and are known as the **Arctic amplification**.
- It occurs when the **atmosphere's net radiation balance is affected by an increase in greenhouse gases**.

## #AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH IN CITIES REPORT

Recently, a report was released titled **Air Quality and Health in Cities**, which analysed pollution and global health effects for more than 7,000 cities around the world between 2010 and 2019. The study ranked cities on the **basis of two major air pollutants found** — fine **Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)** and **Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)**.



### What is the State of Global Air?

- The State of Global Air (SoGA) is a research and outreach initiative to provide reliable, meaningful information about air quality around the world.
- A collaboration of the US-based Health Effects Institute and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's Global Burden of Disease project, the program **gives citizens, journalists, policymakers, and scientists access to high-quality, objective information about air pollution exposure** and its health impacts.

### What are the Findings?

- **PM 2.5 Levels:** Delhi and Kolkata are ranked **first and second in the list of top 10 most polluted cities** when PM 2.5 levels were compared. PM 2.5 is an atmospheric particulate matter of diameter of fewer than 2.5 micrometres, which is around 3% the diameter of a human hair. It causes respiratory problems and reduces visibility. While exposures to PM 2.5 pollution **tend to be higher in cities located in low- and middle-income countries**, exposure to NO<sub>2</sub> is high across cities in high-income as well as low- and middle-income countries.
- **NO<sub>2</sub> Levels:** No Indian city appeared in the list of top **10 or even top 20 polluted cities when NO<sub>2</sub> levels were compared**. Average NO<sub>2</sub> levels for Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai, according to the report, ranged from 20-30 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. This list saw **Shanghai at the top with an average annual exposure of 41 µg/m<sup>3</sup>**.
- NO<sub>2</sub> comes mainly from the **burning of fuels in older vehicles, power plants, industrial facilities and residential cooking** and heating. As city residents tend to live closer to busy roads with dense traffic, they are **often exposed to higher NO<sub>2</sub> pollution** than residents of rural areas.
- Other cities with high NO<sub>2</sub> population levels included Moscow, Beijing, Paris, Istanbul and Seoul.

### What are Initiatives taken by India for Controlling Air Pollution?

- System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) Portal
- Air Quality Index
- Graded Response Action Plan
- BS-VI Vehicles,
- Push for Electric Vehicles (EVs),
- Odd-Even Policy as an emergency measure for reducing Vehicular Pollution.
- New Commission for Air Quality Management
- Turbo Happy Seeder (THS) Machine

## #BAN ON VLC MEDIA PLAYER

The website of VideoLAN Client (VLC) Media Player has been **banned** in India. VLC states that according to its statistics, its website has been banned since February 2022 in India.



### What do we need to know about the VLC & Its Ban?

#### About VLC:

- VLC gained popularity in India in the late 90s when **advancements in information technology** led to the penetration of personal computers in Indian homes.
- Apart from being free and open source, **VLC easily integrates with other platforms and streaming services** and supports all file formats without requiring additional codecs.
- **Ban on VLC:** While the VLC website has been banned, the VLC app continues to be available for download on Google and Apple stores.
- **Civil society organisations** have repeatedly filed **Right to Information (RTI)** applications with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** regarding the ban on VLC website.
- However, these applications have been met with similar responses stating that “**no information is available**” with the Ministry. When the website was accessed previously, the message “**The website has been blocked as per order of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology under Information Technology Act, 2000**” was displayed.

### When can the Government Ban Online Content to the Public?

- There are two routes through which content can be blocked online:
- **Executive: Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000:**
- **Section 69A** allows the government to direct an intermediary to “**block for access by the public**” any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource if it is **necessary or expedient to do so**, in the interest of **sovereignty and integrity of India**, defence of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognisable offence”.
- **Section 69A draws its power from Article 19(2) of the Constitution** which allows the government to place reasonable restrictions on the **fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression**.

#### Judiciary:

- Courts in India have the power to **direct intermediaries to make content unavailable in India** to provide **effective remedy to the victim/plaintiff**. For example, courts may order internet service providers to block websites which provide access to pirated content and violate the plaintiff's copyright.

### What are Government's Initiatives for Cyber Security?

- Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative
- Cyber Swachhta Kendra
- Online cybercrime reporting portal
- Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)
- National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)



- Information Technology Act, 2000

## #GI TAG FOR MITHILA MAKHANA

The government has recently awarded the **Geographical Indication (GI)** tag to **Mithila Makhana**. The move is expected to **help growers get the maximum price for their premium produce**.

### What is understood by a Geographical Indication (GI) Tag?

- **Geographical Indication (GI)** is an indication used to identify goods having special characteristics originating from a definite geographical territory.
- The **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999** seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- It is governed and directed by the **WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)**.
- It was decided and also stated under Articles 1 (2) and 10 of the Paris Convention that the protection of industrial Property and **Geographical Indication** are elements of Intellectual Property.
- It is **primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product** (handicrafts and industrial goods).

### What do we need to Know about Mithila Makhana?

Mithila Makhana or Makhan (botanical name: Euryale ferox Salisb.) is a special variety of **aquatic fox nut cultivated in Mithila region** of Bihar and Nepal.

Makhana is the **one of the three prestigious cultural identities** of Mithila.

**Pan, Makhan and Machh (fish)** are the three prestigious cultural identity of Mithila.

It is also very famous in **Kojagara festival of Maithil Brahmins** celebrated for newly married couples.

Makhana contains **protein and fiber**, along with **micronutrients like calcium, magnesium, iron, and phosphorus**.

**What Other Products of Bihar have GI Tag?**

GI tagging of products in Bihar has helped in **brand building, creating local employment, creating a regional brand, generating spin-off effects in tourism, preserving traditional knowledge** and traditional cultural expressions and conserving biodiversity.

Many products from Bihar have been granted GI tag such as:

- **Bhagalpuri Jardalu Mango**
- Katarni Rice
- Magahi Betel (Paan)
- Shahi Litchi
- Silao Khaja (a delicacy)
- **Madhubani Painting**
- Pipli Work

## #WHAT IS PEN-PLUS STRATEGY?

Recently, Africa has adopted a new strategy called **PEN-PLUS Strategy** to boost access to the diagnosis, treatment and care of severe **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD)**.

### What is Pen Plus Strategy?

- It's a **regional strategy to address severe Non-Communicable Diseases at First-Level Referral Health Facilities**.
- The strategy is aimed at **bridging the access gap in treatment and care of patients with chronic and severe NCDs**.

- It urges countries to put in place standardised programmes to tackle chronic and serious non-communicable diseases by ensuring that essential medicines, technologies and diagnostics are available and accessible in district hospitals

### What are Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD)?

- **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)** are medical conditions or diseases that are not caused by infectious agents.
- These are **chronic diseases of long duration**, and generally slow progression and are the result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behaviours factors.
- These diseases are those chronic conditions that **lead to high levels of disability and death among children, adolescents and young adults if left undiagnosed or untreated.**
- NCDs include heart diseases, cancers, diabetes, asthma among others.
- Globally, NCDs are the main cause of morbidity and mortality.
- They **account for 71% of global mortality**, according to **World Health organisation (WHO).**
- In the African Region, the proportion of mortality due to NCDs ranges from 27-88%.

### What is the status of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) in India?

- In India, nearly **5.8 million people (WHO report, 2015)** die from NCDs (**heart and lung diseases, stroke, cancer and diabetes**) every year or in other words 1 in 4 Indians has a risk of dying from an NCD before they reach the age of 70.
- Further, it is found that **there is an increase in the contribution of NCDs from 30% of the total disease burden- 'disability-adjusted life years' (DALYs) in 1990 to 55% in 2016** and also an increase in proportion of deaths due to NCDs (among all deaths) from 37% in 1990 to 61% in 2016.
- The four major NCDs are cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs) and diabetes.

## #MULTI MODAL LOGISTICS PARK

Recently, the Government of India has signed the **tripartite agreement for swift development of modern Multi Modal Logistics Parks (MMLP)** under **Bharatmala Pariyojna** across the country.

The objective is to **centralize freight consolidation** and **reduce logistics cost** from 14% to less than 10% of **Gross Domestic Product** at par with International Standards.

### What do we need to know about the Agreement?

- **The tripartite agreement was signed by: National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML):** It is a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** of the **National Highway Authority (NHAI)** of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways
- **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI):** It is a statutory authority under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways.
- **Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL):** It is wholly owned **Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Railways.** The agreement underlines the **cooperation & collaboration model** between the three bodies in order to achieve **efficiency in logistics movement within the country.** It will provide **seamless modal shift**, MMLPs will ensure that **cargo is swapped/shifted from and to Waterways, Dedicated Freight Corridors & Road Transport.**

### What is a Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP)?

- Developed under a **'Hub & Spoke'** model, the MMLP will integrate multiple modes of freight transport through **highways, railways & inland waterways.**
- The Multi Modal Logistic Park project is poised to **develop state-of-the-art large scale warehousing**

**facilities** for different types of commodities, to become a **one stop solution for all services** related to cargo movement like **warehousing, custom clearance, parking, maintenance of trucks etc.**

- **It will have all the facilities like** warehouses, railway siding, cold storage, custom clearance house, yard facility, workshops, petrol pumps, truck parking, administrative building, boarding lodging, eating joints, water treatment plant, etc.

### What is Bharatmala Pariyojna?

- Bharatmala Pariyojana is an **umbrella program for the highways sector** envisaged by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**.
- It calls for **improvement in efficiency of existing corridors** through development of **Multimodal Logistics Parks and elimination of choke points**.
- It enhances focus on **improving connectivity in North East** and leveraging synergies with Inland Waterways.
- North East Economic corridor enhancing connectivity to state capitals and key towns.
- Multimodal freight movement via 7 Waterway terminals on River **Brahmaputra – Dhubri, Silghat, Biswanath Ghat, Neamati, Dibrugarh, Sengajan, Oriyamgh.**

## #WHAT ARE LA NINA & EL NINO?

Recently, **Australia's Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)** predicted, that a third consecutive event of La Nina could be underway which could lead to unusual weather effects in various countries.

There is an **extended period of La Nina in 2022**. It is the **first time that this has happened since the 1950s** when the event started to be recorded. The years 1973-76 and 1998-2001 were consecutive La Nina years.

### What are La Nina and El Nino?

- In the neutral state (neither El Niño nor La Niña) **trade winds blow east to west across the surface of the tropical Pacific Ocean, bringing warm moist air and warmer surface waters towards the western Pacific** and keeping the central Pacific Ocean relatively cool.
- Warm sea surface temperatures in the western Pacific pump heat and moisture into the atmosphere above.
- In a process known as **atmospheric convection**, this **warm air rises high into the atmosphere and, if the air is moist enough, causes towering cumulonimbus clouds and rain.**
- The pattern of **air rising in the west and falling in the east with westward moving air at the surface is referred to as the Walker Circulation.**

### Impacts:

- **Europe:** In Europe, El Nino reduces the number of autumnal hurricanes.
- La Nina tends to lead to **milder winters in Northern Europe** (especially UK) and colder **winters in southern/western Europe** leading to snow in the Mediterranean region.
- **North America:** It is continental North America where most of these conditions are felt. The wider effects include:
  - **Stronger winds along the equatorial region**, especially in the Pacific.
  - **Favourable conditions for hurricanes** in the Caribbean and central Atlantic area.
  - **Greater instances of tornados** in various states of the US.
- **South America:** La Nina causes **drought in the** South American countries of **Peru and Ecuador**.
- It usually has a **positive impact on the fishing industry** of western South America.
- **Western Pacific:** In the western Pacific, La Nina increases the **potential for landfall** in those areas most vulnerable to their effects, and especially into **continental Asia and China**.
- It also leads to **heavy floods in Australia**.

- There are **increased temperatures** in Western Pacific, Indian Ocean and off the Somalian coast.

### EL Nino:

- **El Nino** is a climate pattern that describes the **unusual warming of surface waters in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean**.
- It is the “warm phase” of a larger phenomenon called the **El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)**.
- It occurs more frequently than La Nina.

### Impacts:

- **Impact on Ocean:** El Nino also impacts ocean temperatures, the speed and strength of ocean currents, the health of coastal fisheries, and local weather from Australia to South America and beyond.
- **Increased Rainfall:** Convection above warmer surface waters brings increased precipitation.
- Rainfall increases drastically in South America, contributing to coastal flooding and erosion.
- **Diseases caused by Floods and Droughts:** Diseases thrive in communities devastated by natural hazards such as flood or drought.
- El Nino-related flooding is associated with increases in cholera, dengue, and malaria in some parts of the world, while drought can lead to wildfires that create respiratory problems.
- **Positive impact:** It can sometimes have a positive impact too, for example, El Nino reduces the instances of hurricanes in the Atlantic.
- **In South America:** As El Nino brings rain to South America, it brings droughts to Indonesia and Australia.
- These droughts threaten the region’s water supplies, as reservoirs dry and rivers carry less water. Agriculture, which depends on water for irrigation, is also threatened.
- **In Western Pacific:** These winds **push warm surface water** towards the western Pacific, where it borders **Asia and Australia**.
- Due to the warm trade winds, the sea surface is normally about **0.5 meter higher and 4-5° F warmer in Indonesia than Ecuador**.
- The westward movement of warmer waters causes **cooler waters to rise up** towards the surface on the coasts of **Ecuador, Peru, and Chile**. This process is known as **upwelling**.
- Upwelling elevates cold, nutrient-rich water to the euphotic zone, the upper layer of the ocean.

**El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO):** The **combined phases of La Nina and El Nino** are termed **El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** and affect rainfall patterns, global atmospheric circulation, and atmospheric pressure across the planet.

## #ACCIDENTAL DEATH & SUICIDES IN INDIA

Recently, the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** released the “**Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India Report 2021**.”

The report tabled figures for “**Crime against Women**”, “**Suicide**” and “**Crime Rates**”.

### What are the Report’s findings for Crime against Women?

**National Figures:** The rate of crime against women (number of incidents per 1 lakh population) **increased from 56.5% in 2020 to 64.5% in 2021**.

- 31.8%: **Cruelty by husband or his relatives**
- 20.8%: **Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty**
- 17.6%: **Kidnapping and Abduction**
- 7.40%: **Rape**
- **State:** The **highest rate of crime against women** in 2021 was registered in **Assam** 168.3% followed by

Odisha, Haryana, Telangana and Rajasthan.

- Rajasthan showed a **marginal decrease** in the actual number of cases while the three other states (Odisha, Haryana and Telangana) marked an increase.
- In terms of actual number of cases registered in 2021, **UP tops the list** followed by Rajasthan, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Odisha.
- **Nagaland** stood out with the **lowest number of crimes against women** registered in the past three years.
- **Union Territories:** Among Union Territories, **Delhi had the highest rate of crime against women** in 2021 at 147.6%.
- **Cities:**
  - Jaipur had the highest rate at over 194%, followed by **Delhi, Indore** and **Lucknow**.
  - Chennai and Coimbatore (Both in Chennai) had the lowest rate.
  - In actual numbers among these cities, **Delhi topped in 2021 (13,892)** followed by Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.
- **Domestic Violence & Dowry Deaths:** Only 507 cases were registered in the country under the **Domestic Violence Act** in 2021 — 0.1% of the total cases of crime against women.
- The highest number of cases (270) were filed in Kerala.
- 6,589 **cases of dowry deaths** were registered in 2021 with the highest number of such deaths registered in UP and Bihar.

### What are the Report's findings for Suicide Rate?

- **Daily Wager:** Daily wage earners **remained the largest profession-wise group among suicide victims** in 2021, accounting for 42,004 suicides (25.6%). The share of daily wagers death by suicide has **crossed the quarter mark for the first time**. At the national level, the **number of suicides increased by 7.17% from the years 2020 to 2021**.
- However, the number of suicides in the daily wage group rose by 11.52% during this period.
- **Farming Sector:** The overall share of "**Persons engaged in farming sector**" among the total recorded suicides stood at 6.6% during 2021.
- **State: Maharashtra topped the country** in terms of the number of suicides reported in 2021 followed by Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh. Maharashtra contributed 13.5% to the total number of suicides registered across the country in 2021.

**Union Territories: Delhi recorded the highest number of 2,840 suicides.**

### What are the Report's findings for Crime Rates?

- Registered violent crimes such as **rape, kidnapping, crimes against children and robberies** increased again across India in 2021.
- **Pandemic-related restrictions** led to a decline in these severe offences in 2020.
- Murders, which did not come down even in 2020, continued to increase last year too.

### What is the National Crime Records Bureau?

- **About:** NCRB, headquartered in New Delhi, was set-up in 1986 under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** to function as a **repository of information on crime and criminals** so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was set up based on the recommendations of the **National Police Commission (1977-1981)** and the **MHA's Task Force (1985)**.

### Functions:

- The Bureau has been entrusted to maintain **National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO)** and share it



with the States/UTs on regular basis.

- NCRB has also been designated as the **Central Nodal Agency** to manage technical and operational functions of the '**Online Cyber-Crime Reporting Portal**' through which **any citizen can lodge a complaint or upload a video clip** as evidence of crime related to child pornography, rape/gang rape.
- The responsibility of implementation of the **Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** has also been given to the NCRB.
- ICJS is a **national platform for enabling integration of the main IT system used for delivery of Criminal Justice in the country.**
- It seeks to **integrate the five pillars of the system viz Police** (through **Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems**), **e-Forensics** for Forensic Labs, **e-Courts** for Courts, **e-Prosecution** for Public Prosecutors and **e-Prisons** for Prisons.

### Major Publications:

- **Crimes in India**
- **Accidental Deaths and Suicides**
- **Prison Statistics**
- **Reports on Missing Women and children in India**

## #WHAT ARE THE OTT PLATFORMS?

Recently, a report was released by SBI Research, which said that the OTT (Over-The-Top) market is set to become a **Rs 12,000-crore** industry by 2023, up from Rs 2,590 crore in 2018.

### What are the Findings?

- **Statistics:** The OTT market is expected to **reach Rs 11,944 crore by 2023**, up from Rs 2,590 crore in 2018, logging in a compound annual growth of 36%.
- OTT has already chipped away **7-9 % of the entertainment industry share and revenue**, and is consistently growing with over 40-odd players and offering original media content in all languages.
- There are over 45 crore OTT subscribers today in the country and this is expected to **reach 50 crores by end-2023.**
- The pay-per-view segment stood at 3.5 crore in 2018 and is on course to touch 8.9 crore this year and touch 11.7 crore in 2027.
- Pay-per-view is a **pay television or webcast program that allows viewers to buy activities to watch** on a private telecast.
- Video downloads were 4.2 crore and 7.7 crore, 8.6 crore, while video streaming at 1.9 crore, 6.8 crore, and 10.8 crore, respectively during this period.



### What are OTT platforms?

- OTT, or over-the-top platforms, are **audio and video hosting and streaming services** which started out as content hosting platforms, but soon branched out into the production and release of short movies, feature films, documentaries and web-series themselves.
- These platforms offer a **range of content and use artificial intelligence to suggest to users the content they are likely to view** based on their past viewership on the platform.
- Most OTT platforms generally **offer some content for free and charge a monthly subscription fee for premium content** which is generally unavailable elsewhere.
- Premium content is **usually produced and marketed by the OTT platform themselves**, in association with established production houses which historically have made feature films.
- **Examples:** Netflix, Disney+, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Peacock, CuriosityStream, Pluto TV, and so many more.

### What are the laws regulating OTT platforms?

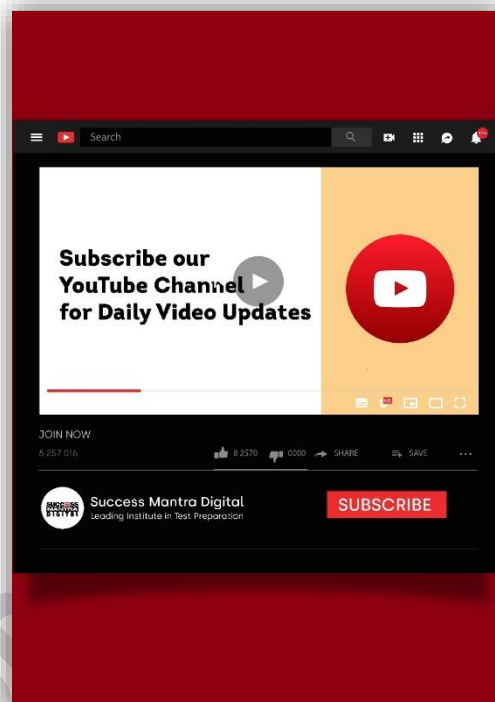
- In February 2022, the government had notified the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021** to regulate OTT platforms.
- The rules establish a **soft-touch self-regulatory architecture with a Code of Ethics and three-tier grievance redressal** mechanism for OTT platforms.
- Every publisher should appoint a **Grievance Officer based in India** for receiving and redressing grievances in 15 days.
- Also, every publisher needs to become a member of a self-regulating body. Such a body will have to register with **the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** and address grievances that have not been resolved by the publisher within 15 days.
- The **Ministry of Information Broadcasting** and the Inter-Departmental Committee constituted by the Ministry constitute the third-tier Oversight Mechanism
- They provide for self-classification of the content without any involvement of Central Board of Film Certification.

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