

Bihar Special

Indian Softshell Turtle

Why in the news?

A rare species of turtle has been found at Piprakothi of Valmikinagar in West Champaran district of Bihar.



- ❖ It is a rare turtle found in the Gandak and Ganga and its tributaries.
- ❖ It has been placed under the category of highly protected aquatic animals.

About the turtle:.

- ❖ It is called Indian Softshell Turtle or Indian Peacock Softshell Turtle.
- ❖ It is usually found in India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Environment And Geography

Indian Wild Ass

Why in the news?

As per the latest Census, the population of Indian Wild Ass has risen from 6,082 in 2020 to 7,672 in 2024 with an increase of about 26.14%.

- ❖ The Wild Ass Population Estimation (WAPE) is carried out once in every four years in Gujarat.

About Indian Wild Ass:

- ❖ Scientific Name: *Equus hemionus khur*.
- ❖ Origin: The Asiatic wild ass (*Equus hemionus*), also known as the onager, comprises five subspecies, one of which is the Indian Wild Ass, referred to as 'Ghudkhur' in Gujarat.
- ❖ Habitat: They are primarily found in the Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) in Gujarat, in a protected area called the Wild Ass Sanctuary.
- ❖ Protection:
 - It is included in the Red List of Threatened Species and was classified as **endangered** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in its 2008 report.
 - The Indian Wild Ass is also listed under **Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, highlighting the substantial conservation challenges this species faces.



Defence And Security

T-90 Bhishma tank

Why in the news?

The Indian Army has rolled out its first overhauled T-90 'Bhishma' tank, a step towards ensuring the operational readiness of its armored formations.

- ❖ The overhaul process involves a meticulous disassembly of the tank, allowing for comprehensive rebuilding.
- ❖ **Significance:** The T-90 Bhishma, a mainstay of India's mechanized forces since 2003, is acclaimed for its firepower, mobility, and protection.

About the T-90 tanks:

- ❖ They have been built under licence from Russia at the Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF) at Avadi near Chennai.
 - The army, which ordered a total of 1,657 T-90 tanks, currently operates around 1,300 such tanks.
- ❖ The successful overhaul of the Russian-origin T-90 main battle tank was conducted by the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) at the 505 Army Base Workshop in Delhi Cantonment.



ADITI 2.0 challenges & DISC 12

Why in the news?

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched the second edition of Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX (ADITI 2.0) challenges and the 12th edition of Defence India Start-up Challenges (DISC 12) during DefConnect 4.0 in New Delhi.

- ❖ **ADITI 2.0**
 - It features 19 challenges from the Armed Forces and allied agencies in the domains of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum Technology, military communication, anti-drone systems customised for military platforms and adaptive camouflage, etc.
 - It offers a grant of up to Rs 25 crore to Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) winners, focusing on critical technological areas crucial for strengthening the defence ecosystem of the country.

❖ **DISC 12:**

- It presents 41 challenges across key technology domains, including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), AI, Networking and Communication, with grants up to Rs 1.50 crore.
- **MIRA Initiative:**
 - ✓ Medical Innovations and Research Advancement (MIRA) initiative, features nine challenges aimed at fostering the development of medical technologies to meet the medical demands of the Armed Forces.

Schemes In News

Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana

Why in the news?

The Union Health Ministry has doubled the monthly nutrition support under Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) for tuberculosis (TB) patients under treatment from ₹500 to ₹1,000.

- ❖ Additionally, all household contacts of TB patients will be covered under the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (PMTBMBA) and will be eligible to receive social support from the community.

Energy Dense Nutrition Supplementation (EDNS)

- ❖ It has been introduced by the health ministry for all patients with BMI < 18.5 and has permitted the expansion of scope and coverage of Ni-kshay Mitra initiative under PMTBMBA to the family members (household contacts) of TB patients.
 - Additionally, all TB patients will now receive nutritional support of ₹3,000 to ₹6,000 under NPY.
- ❖ **Significance:**
 - The enhancement of NPY support will benefit 25 lakh TB patients in a year, introduction of EDNS would cover approximately 12 lakh underweight patients (BMI less than 18.5 kg/m² at the time of diagnosis).
- ❖ EDNS would be provided to all eligible patients for the first two months of their treatment.

Tuberculosis Elimination Target

- ❖ Ending the TB epidemic by 2030 is among the health targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ❖ India has set the target of 2025 for Tuberculosis Elimination.

Awards and Honors

Nobel Prize in Medicine

Why in the news?

Scientists Victor Ambros (USA) and Gary Ruvkun (USA) have won the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

- ❖ They have been awarded for the discovery of microRNA and its role in post-transcriptional gene regulation.
 - Their groundbreaking discovery in the small worm *C. elegans* revealed a completely new principle of gene regulation.
 - This turned out to be essential for multicellular organisms, including humans.
 - MicroRNAs are proving to be fundamentally important for how organisms develop and function.

Nobel Prize

- ❖ It was created in the will of Swedish dynamite inventor and businessman Alfred Nobel.
 - The first Nobel Prizes were awarded in 1901.
 - The Nobel Prize in Economics, officially known as the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, was first awarded in 1969.

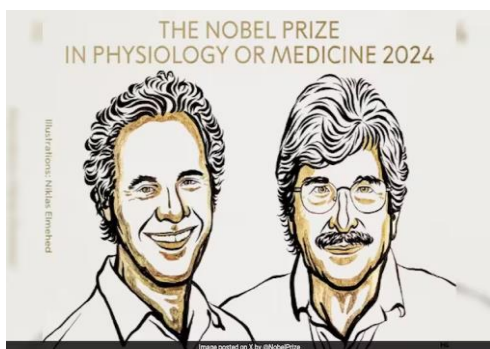
- Since 1901, the Nobel Prizes have been awarded 621 times to about 1000 individuals and organizations.
- The awards are presented during Nobel Week, culminating in a ceremony on December 10, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death.
- The ceremonies take place at the Stockholm Concert Hall in Sweden and Oslo City Hall in Norway.

- ❖ Each Nobel Prize can be awarded to up to three individuals who will share the prize money.
- ❖ Winners receive a prize sum of 11 million Swedish crowns (\$1.1 million).

Awarding Institutions:

- ❖ The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awards the Nobel Prizes in Physics and Chemistry.
- ❖ The Karolinska Institutet awards the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.
 - It is the first prize among all Nobels announced every year.
- ❖ The Swedish Academy is responsible for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

- ❖ The Nobel Peace Prize is decided by a committee of five individuals selected by the Norwegian Parliament.
 - It is awarded in Oslo, Norway, at the annual Nobel Prize Award Ceremony.



Persons In News

Dipa Karmakar

Why in the news?

Dipa Karmakar has announced her retirement from gymnastics.

- ❖ She became the first Indian female gymnast to compete at the Olympics when she qualified for Rio 2016.
 - She ended up missing out on a bronze medal by a whisker and finished fourth in the vault, with an overall score of 15.066.
- ❖ She is one of only five women in the world to have mastered the Produnova vault.



Index and Report

Academic Freedom Index

Why in the news?

According to the “Free to Think 2024” annual report, India has plummeted on the academic freedom index ranks over the past decade.

- ❖ The annual report has been published by the Scholars at Risk (SAR) Academic Freedom Monitoring Project.

Key insights from the report:

- ❖ India's academic freedom slipped from 0.6 points to 0.2 points from 2013 to 2023.
- ❖ India now ranks as “completely restricted”, its lowest score since the mid-1940s.

About Scholars at Risk (SAR):

- ❖ It is a network of 665 universities across the globe, including Columbia University, Duke University, and New York University.

- ❖ The report has looked extensively at India, Afghanistan, China, Colombia, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Israel, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russia, Turkiye, Sudan, Ukraine, the U.K. and the U.S., while documenting 391 attacks on higher education communities in 51 countries between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024.

Important Days/ Dates

Indian Air Force Day

Why in the news?

India celebrated its 92nd Air Force Day 2024 on October 8, 2024 at Marina Beach in Chennai.

- ❖ History of this day:
 - It has a deep history that goes back to 1932 when the Indian Air Force (IAF) was established.
 - The Indian Air Force was established on October 8, 1932, as an auxiliary force under British rule. Initially, it consisted of a limited number of aircraft and personnel.
 - The first official flight took place on April 1, 1933, marking the beginning of its operational journey.

Theme 2024:

- 'Bhartiya Vayu Sena - Saksham, Sashakt, Atmanirbhar' (Potent, Powerful, and Self-Reliant).'
- This theme reflects the IAF's commitment to self-reliance and modernization, aligning with India's vision for a robust defense capability.



News in Short

- ❖ Indian Institute of Foreign Trade will open its first overseas campus in Dubai.
- ❖ Red Panda Conservation Breeding and Augmentation Programme of Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Darjeeling has been shortlisted as one of the top three finalists by World Association of Zoos and Aquariums for the 2024 WAZA Conservation & Environmental Sustainability Awards.

- ❖ Winner will be announced at the 79th WAZA Annual Conference at Tarong Zoo, Sydney, Australia on 7th Nov 2024.
- ❖ Public sector lender Bank of Baroda (BoB) has signed cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar as the bank's global brand ambassador.
- ❖ In Billiards, Indian cueist Pankaj Advani has won the Songhe Singapore Open title with a 5-1 victory over local favourite Jaden Ong.
- ❖ Appointment of New Ambassadors:
- ❖ Sanjeev Kumar Singla has been named as India's next Ambassador to France.

- ❖ Ajit Vinayak Gupte has been named as India's next Ambassador to Germany.
- ❖ The World Health Organisation convened its 77th session of the Regional Committee for Southeast Asia in New Delhi from October 7 to 9, 2024.
- ❖ India's Minister of Health, JP Nadda was elected as the Chairperson of the 77th Session.



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