

### Bihar Special

#### Digital Crop Survey Initiative in Bihar

##### Why in the news?

Bihar's agriculture department plans to conduct a digital crop survey in 10,000 villages across 28 districts during the current Kharif season. In Bihar, digital crop survey work is being conducted in 20 districts since the last Rabi crop season.

- ❖ **Objective:** The survey aims to create a database of standing crops, area-wise coverage, and types of grains and vegetables grown, assisting policy planners.
- ❖ **Purpose:** The collected data on crops and productivity helps farmers and policymakers encourage the farming of climate-resilient varieties.

##### Training and Preparation

- ❖ **Expert Panel:** The department has prepared a panel of experts from 28 districts for specialised training in conducting digital crop surveys.
- ❖ **Training Schedule:** The training program is scheduled for August 2024.

### Polity And Governance

#### Uttar Pradesh Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024

##### Why in the news?

On July 30, 2024, the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha passed the Uttar Pradesh Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

##### Increased Penalties:

- ❖ The amended law introduces stricter penalties, including a maximum punishment of life imprisonment for individuals guilty of deceiving a woman to marry her and unlawfully converting her religion.
- ❖ All crimes under the amended Act are now non-bailable.

##### Expanded Definition of Offenses:

- ❖ The Bill classifies various offenses related to unlawful conversion, including threats, attacks, and trafficking with the intent to convert. Such crimes are now categorized as severe, with penalties ranging from 20 years to life imprisonment.

##### Reporting and Complaints:

- ❖ The amendment allows any individual to file a First Information Report (FIR) in cases of unlawful conversion. Previously, the Unlawful Conversion Act, 2021 required the victim or her immediate family to file a complaint.



### Economy

#### Paytm NFC Card Soundbox

##### Why in the news?

Paytm has launched the 'Paytm NFC Card Soundbox', which utilizes NFC technology and mobile QR payments.

- ❖ This device allows customers to make payments by either tapping their debit or credit cards or by scanning a QR code, providing a comprehensive payment solution for merchants.



### Environment And Geography

#### Decline in Tiger Deaths in 2024

##### Why in the news?

Tiger deaths in India dropped to 81 from January 1 to July 29, 2024, down from 114 in the same period last year, marking a 29% decline.

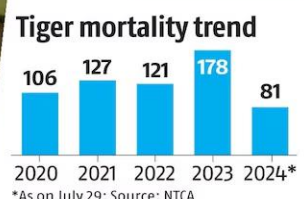
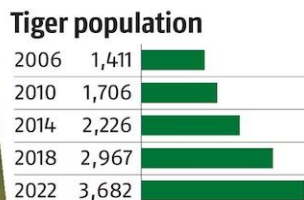
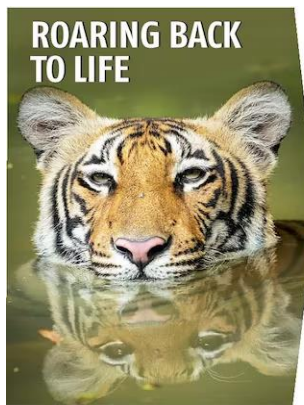
- ❖ **Reduction in Cub Mortality:** Tiger cub deaths also decreased to 8 in 2024 from 13 in 2023.
- ❖ **2023 Statistics:** 2023 recorded the highest number of tiger deaths in a decade, with 178 fatalities.
- ❖ **5th All India Tiger Estimation 2022:** India has 3,682 tigers, comprising over 70% of the world's wild tiger population.

#### Project Tiger and Recent Initiatives

- ❖ **Launch of Project Tiger:** Started in 1973 at Corbett Tiger Reserve with nine tiger reserves, aimed at increasing the tiger population.
- ❖ **50th Anniversary in 2023:** Commemorative event where PM Modi launched 'Amrit Kaal Ka Vision For Tiger Conservation'.
- ❖ **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA):** Launched in 2023 for conserving seven big cats—Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.

- ❖ **IBCA Goals:** Strengthen global cooperation and conservation efforts for big cats' natural habitats.

### Legislative and Institutional Developments



- ❖ **Tiger Task Force Report (2005):** Led to significant amendments to the Wildlife (Protection) Act in 2006.
- ❖ **Establishment of NTCA:** The National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau were established as statutory bodies following the amendments.

### Science And Technology

#### China's Molten Thorium Salt Nuclear Power Plant

##### Why in the news?

China is set to build the world's first nuclear power plant using molten thorium salt in the Gobi Desert. This groundbreaking facility is expected to start operations by 2025.

### Innovative Technology:

- ❖ **Use of Thorium as Fuel:** Unlike conventional reactors that use uranium, this plant will use thorium as its primary fuel. Thorium is chosen for its potential to mitigate concerns over uranium shortages and its advantages in reactor safety.



- ❖ **Cooling System:** The reactor will not require water for cooling, a significant departure from traditional nuclear reactors. Instead, it will employ liquid salt or carbon dioxide to transfer heat and generate electricity, enhancing efficiency and safety.

### Persons In News

#### Preeti Sudan

##### Why in the news?

Preeti Sudan has been appointed as the Chairman of the UPSC, following the resignation of Manoj Soni.

- ❖ She is a retired IAS officer from the 1983 batch of the Andhra Pradesh cadre and previously served as the Union Health Secretary.



#### News in Short

- ❖ The Government Secondary School in Pachin, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, has become India's first 3D printed school. The school, which was previously destroyed by a fire, was rebuilt in a record time of just two months using cutting-edge 3D printing technology.

- ❖ The Asian Development Bank and the Indian government signed a \$200 million loan agreement to enhance solid waste management and sanitation in 100 cities across eight states.
- ❖ Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, represented the Indian government at the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's new President, Masoud Pezeshkian, on July 30, 2024, in Tehran.



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