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SOURCES



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Geography

What is the National Agriculture Code, currently being formulated by Bureau of Indian Standards

Why in News?

On the lines of the existing National Building Code, the NAC will set standards across the agriculture cycle, from field preparation to storage of produce.

Introduction

The NAC aims to create a standardized framework for agricultural practices, ensuring uniformity and addressing existing gaps. This initiative is crucial for enhancing agricultural efficiency, sustainability, and technology adoption in India.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- **Established Under:** BIS Act 2016.
- **Objective:** Harmonise standardisation and quality assurance of goods.
- **Ministry:** Operates under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- **International Representation:** Represents India in ISO and IEC.

What is the National Agriculture Code (NAC)?

The NAC is a comprehensive standards framework for agriculture, covering the entire cycle from field preparation to post-harvest activities. It serves as a guide for policymakers, agricultural universities, and farmers, including general principles and specific standards for key crops.

Why is the NAC Needed?

- **Existing Standards:** BIS has standards for machinery and inputs, but many practices (e.g., micro-irrigation) remain unregulated.
- **Objective:** The NAC aims to fill these gaps and promote uniformity across agricultural practices in India.

Key Features of the NAC

- **Comprehensive Standards:** Covers all stages, including land preparation, sowing, irrigation, soil health, pest management, harvesting, and storage.

- **Post-Harvest Standards:** Focuses on primary processing, sustainability, and traceability.
- **New Technologies:** Incorporates standards for organic farming and IoT integration.

Objectives of the NAC

- Serve as a reference for policy formulation and regulatory mechanisms.
- Aid farmers in effective decision-making.
- Integrate principles of sustainability, traceability, and SMART farming.

Standardised Agriculture Demonstration Farms (SADF)

- BIS is establishing SADFs at premier agricultural institutes to test and showcase practices aligned with Indian standards.
- **Purpose:** Educate farmers and officials on new technologies and standards.

Timeline and Implementation

- **Drafting:** Conducted by working panels comprising R&D organizations and university professors.
- **Target Completion:** October 2025.

Training Programs: Plans to collaborate with universities to provide training and financial support for farmers.

Conclusion

The National Agriculture Code aims to standardize agricultural practices, enhance productivity, and ensure sustainability. Its implementation is vital for modernizing Indian agriculture and securing food supply.

Question: Evaluate the role of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in modernizing Indian agriculture through the National Agriculture Code

Source: [The Indian Express](#)



International Relation

ASEAN Summit 2024: PM Modi unveils 10-point plan to strengthen India-ASEAN relations

Why in News?

ASEAN Summit 2024: PM Modi underlines respect for each other's national integrity and sovereignty

21st ASEAN-Indian Summit 2024

Announcing a 10-point plan while underlining that dialogue and cooperation between India and ASEAN are of utmost importance at a time of conflict and tension in many parts of the world

10-point plan for enhanced cooperation

- 1. Tourism Year 2025:** India will allocate \$5 million to celebrate 2025 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism, promoting cultural and economic exchanges.
- 2. Act East Policy celebrations:** People-centric activities, including a Youth Summit, Start-up Festival, Hackathon, Music Festival, and ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks, to commemorate a decade of the Act East Policy.
- 3. Women in Science:** ASEAN-India Women Scientists Conclave to be organized under the ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund.
- 4. Scholarships at Nalanda University:** Double the current number of scholarships and add new ones for ASEAN students at agricultural universities in India.
- 5. Trade Agreement Review:** A review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement by 2025 to boost economic integration.
- 6. Disaster Resilience Fund:** India will provide \$5 million to enhance disaster resilience across ASEAN.
- 7. Health Ministers' Dialogue:** Initiating a track for health resilience and cooperation in the healthcare sector.
- 8. Cybersecurity Dialogue:** Establishing a regular ASEAN-India Cyber Policy Dialogue to strengthen cybersecurity and digital resilience.
- 9. Green Hydrogen Workshop:** Focusing on clean energy initiatives through a workshop on green hydrogen.
- 10. Climate Resilience Campaign:** Inviting ASEAN leaders to participate in the 'Plant a Tree for Mother' campaign to promote climate resilience.

Maritime and regional security

India's support for maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea. India and ASEAN called for the early conclusion of a substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, based on international law.

Military and defense cooperation: The summit highlighted cooperation in maritime security,

counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, military medicine, and disaster relief.

Technological collaboration: India and ASEAN are set to strengthen ties in emerging technologies, including AI, Blockchain, IoT, Robotics, and 6-G technology, with an emphasis on digital public infrastructure and financial technology.

Economic ties: India's trade with ASEAN has nearly doubled in the last decade, reaching over \$130 billion.

What is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)?

- ASEAN is a regional organization that fosters cooperation in the areas of economy, politics, and security.
- Established in August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, ASEAN was formed through the Bangkok Declaration by founding members Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.
- India is not the founding member of ASEAN

Membership:

- Members : Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Together, ASEAN countries have a population of approximately 650 million and a combined GDP of USD 2.8 trillion.
- The chairmanship of ASEAN rotates annually among member states in alphabetical order.

Why India is not the member of ASEAN ?

As India is in South Asia, it doesn't belong to SouthEast Asia geographically.

Significance of ASEAN for India

- Crucial for both economic and security reasons.
- Enhanced India to establish a stronger foothold in the Indo-Pacific region, benefiting economic ties and countering China's influence.
- Promote the development of India's northeastern states.

Question : Discuss the significance of India's 10-point plan unveiled at the 2024 ASEAN Summit in enhancing ASEAN-India relations.

Source : [The Indian Express](#)



Science

Sleep disturbances, sadness of mood, stress and anxiety top the list of callers on govt. mental health helpline

Why in News?

Lakshadweep and Puducherry will soon be covered under National Tele Mental Health Programme of India and offer Tele MANAS service

Tele MANAS Programme:

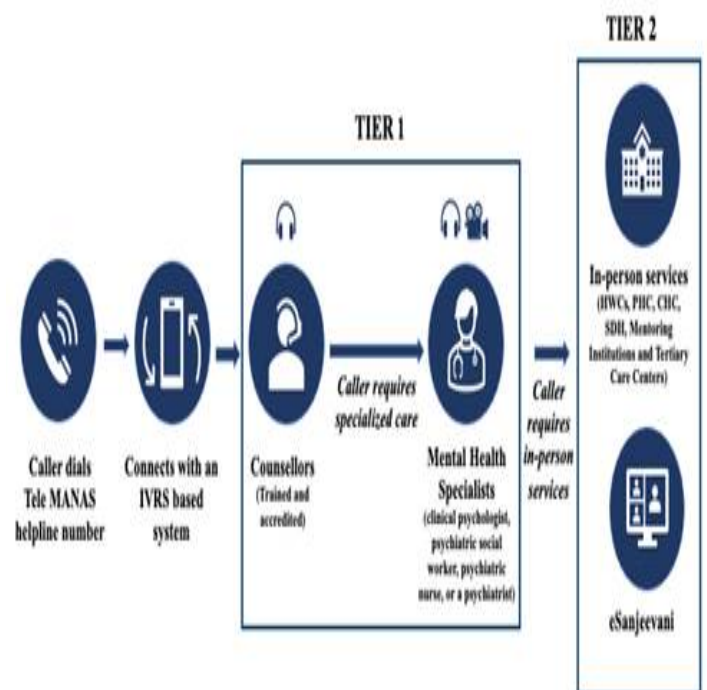
- The National Tele Mental Health Programme of India, also known as **Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States** (Tele MANAS), was launched in 2022 to provide 24x7 tele-mental health services across the country.
- It primarily addresses the mental health needs of people from remote and underserved areas. The programme works in a **two-tier system**, with trained counsellors and specialists at the state and district levels, respectively.

Important Terms

- **Mental Health Policies:** Tele MANAS aligns with the broader policy framework of health initiatives under the National Health Mission and the Mental Health Care Act, 2017.
- **Public Health and Digital India:** This initiative contributes to the government's Digital India mission, emphasizing the role of technology in expanding healthcare access, particularly in mental health.
- **Social Issues:** Mental health is a critical social issue regarding digital innovations in healthcare.
- **Mental Health in Disaster Management:** The availability of tele-mental health services is vital in times of disasters or emergencies, ensuring mental well-being in crisis situations.
- **Digital Healthcare:** Use of digital tools such as telemedicine and health apps to enhance the delivery of healthcare services, reducing geographical barriers, and ensuring equitable access.
- **Mental Health Care Act, 2017 :** A landmark law in India that ensures the rights of individuals with mental health

issues, including access to affordable and quality healthcare services.

Tele MANAS: CALLING MECHANISM



NIMHANS : National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) acts as the nodal center for mental health-related programs, playing a central role in Tele MANAS.

Way Forward : Enhance digital infrastructure, expand coverage to remote regions, integrate mental health in disaster management, promote awareness, and ensure sustained funding for Tele MANAS.

Questions : Discuss the significance of mental health policies in India's healthcare system, and evaluate the potential of Tele MANAS in addressing the mental health gap in rural India.

Source: [The Hindu](#)



Economy

Can India escape the middle-income trap?

Why in News?

The World Bank defines middle-income economies by GDP per capita. State intervention breaks the middle-income trap. South Korea, Chile offer lessons; India's challenge is balancing intervention with democracy.

Introduction

- The World Bank's World Development Report 2024 highlights the concept of the "**middle-income trap**," where countries experience stagnation in growth as they reach middle-income status.
- For India, escaping this trap is crucial to achieving high-income status and sustaining long-term economic growth.

Middle-Income Trap

- Refers to the slowdown in economic growth when a country reaches a per capita income threshold between \$1,136 and \$13,845.
- **Global Data:** Only 34 middle-income economies have successfully transitioned to high-income status in the last 34 years.

Key Factors to Escape the Trap

1. **Investment:** Countries must ensure sufficient investment in infrastructure, technology, and human capital to sustain growth.
2. **Infusion of Global Technology:** Adopting and integrating advanced global technologies is critical to increasing productivity and fostering innovation.
3. **Innovation:** Creating a domestic environment conducive to innovation is essential to overcoming challenges and maintaining a competitive edge.

State Intervention

- **Lessons from South Korea:** Guiding private sector activities and promoting export-driven growth.
- **Lessons from Chile:** Natural resource sector, particularly the salmon industry, proactive role for the state in fostering sector-specific growth.

Challenges for India

1. **Global Economic Environment:**
- **Slowed Export Growth:** Slowing global demand and increasing protectionism in key markets.

- **Premature Deindustrialization :** Manufacturing's share in the economy declines at much lower income levels than seen historically, limiting its role as a growth engine.

Stagflation

[ˈstɑːɡ-ˈflɑː-shən]

An economic cycle characterized by slow growth, a high unemployment rate, and high inflation.

2. Domestic Economic Issues:

- **Stagnation in Manufacturing:** The stagnation of India's manufacturing sector and the increase in low-productivity employment, particularly in agriculture, hinder structural transformation.
- **Wage Growth:** Wages have not kept pace with economic growth. The lack of real wage growth limits consumption demand, making it difficult for India to achieve sustained growth.

Democracy and Development:

The challenge for India is to balance state intervention with democratic values, ensuring that growth is inclusive and does not come at the cost of democratic rights.

Conclusion: To escape the middle-income trap, it must focus on fostering innovation, attracting investments, and ensuring that economic growth benefits all sections of society.

Question: What measures should India take to balance state intervention with democratic principles while trying to escape the middle-income trap?

Source: [The Hindu](#)



Environment

The blue-blooded sea creature on Odisha's coastline

Why in News?

Horseshoe crabs face habitat degradation, yet scientists tag them for research. Their blood is vital for the medical industry, driving increased demand.

Horseshoe Crab Overview

- **Species:** Found on North-East coasts of India, which hosts two species (*Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda* and *Tachyplesus gigas*).
- **Evolutionary Significance:** They are called "living fossils," having survived for 445 million years without any major morphological changes.
- **Habitat:** Prefer sandy beaches and estuarine mudflats, crucial for spawning and breeding.

Conservation Concerns

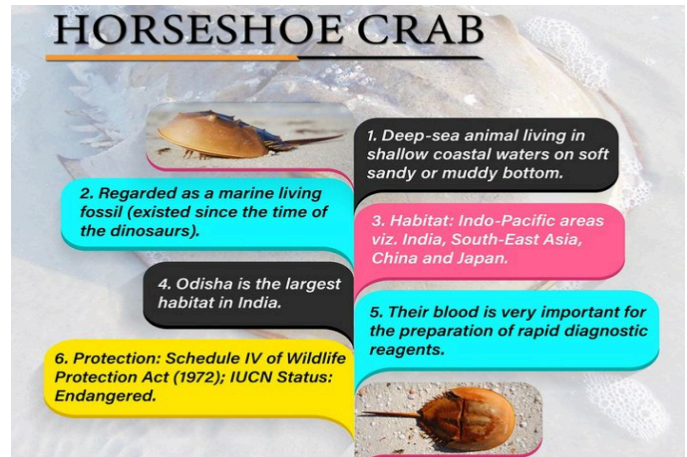
- **Threats:** Habitat degradation due to anthropogenic activities like fishing, coastal fortification (e.g., stone patching), and mangrove depletion.
- **Declining Population:** Surveys indicate a reduction in their numbers, which poses a risk to their survival and ecological balance.
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Listed under Schedule IV, offering some protection, though inadequate without specific conservation initiatives.

Significance in Medical Industry:

- **Biomedical Applications:** Horseshoe crab blood, due to its unique properties, is crucial in producing **limulus amebocyte lysate (LAL)**, used to test the safety of injectable drugs. This has made their blood highly valuable.
- **Conservation Implications:** Despite being returned to the wild after extraction, up to 30% of crabs die during the process, raising ethical and conservation issues.

Conservation Efforts:

- **Tagging Initiative:** Initiated by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and Odisha Forest Department to track their movements and develop conservation strategies.
- **Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ-1A):** Coastal areas where horseshoe crabs are found are classified under CRZ-1A, aiming to protect coastal ecosystems.
- **Proposed Solutions:** Establishment of conservation reserves, particularly in areas under protection from other



activities like missile testing by DRDO, is recommended.

Socio-Economic Impact:

Fishermen's Concerns: Coastal communities are concerned that additional conservation zones may reduce fishing areas, affecting their income. Balancing conservation with economic activities remains a challenge.

Important Terms

- **Living Fossils:** Species that have remained largely unchanged over millions of years, e.g., horseshoe crabs, highlighting evolutionary resilience.
- **Merostomata:** The class to which horseshoe crabs belong. It signifies organisms that have ancient evolutionary roots.
- **Limulus Amebocyte Lysate (LAL):** A reagent derived from horseshoe crab blood, vital for testing endotoxins in medical applications.

Ways Forward

Enhance habitat conservation, regulate biomedical use, establish reserves, strengthen legal protection, and balance livelihoods with conservation efforts.

Question: "The medical industry's demand for horseshoe crabs' blue blood has made conservation efforts more complex." Critically analyze this statement in the context of India's conservation laws and strategies.

Source: [The Hindu](#)



As green patch spreads in Antarctica, here's what is worrying scientists

Why in News?

In a new analysis, researchers used satellite imagery and data to conclude that the extent of vegetation in the Antarctic Peninsula has increased 14 times in just 35 years.

Introduction

- A new analysis reveals that vegetation in the Antarctic Peninsula has increased 14 times in 35 years, primarily due to rising temperatures.
- This transformation marks a dramatic change in one of the planet's most remote regions, prompting scientists to examine its broader implications for the environment.

What has the study found?

- **Vegetation Increase:** The extent of plant cover has grown from less than 1 sq km in 1986 to nearly 12 sq km by 2021. Mosses and lichens are the primary species observed.
- **Warming Rate:** Antarctica is warming at a rate of 0.22 to 0.32 degrees Celsius per decade, approximately five times faster than the global average, with the Antarctic Peninsula nearly 3 degrees Celsius warmer than in 1950.
- **Record Temperatures:** Recent heatwaves have pushed ground temperatures significantly higher than normal, highlighting the continent's vulnerability to climate change.

Causes of Increased Vegetation

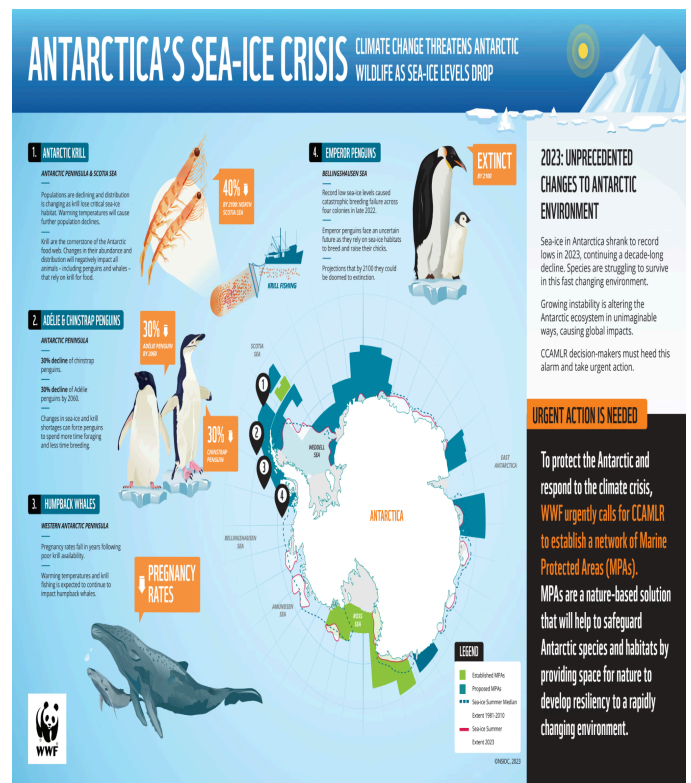
- **Climate Change:** Rising temperatures and changing climatic conditions favor the growth of mosses, leading to changes in the ecosystem.
- **Decreased Sea Ice:** Warmer seas result in conditions conducive to plant growth, although the actual area of coverage remains small.

Implications of Increased Vegetation

- **Soil Formation:** As mosses colonize bare rock, they create organic matter and may facilitate soil development, potentially making the environment more hospitable for invasive species.
- **Invasive Species Risk:** Increased vegetation raises the risk of non-native species establishing themselves, which could disrupt local ecosystems. This risk is exacerbated by human activity, such as eco-tourism.
- **Albedo Effect:** Greater vegetation cover may reduce the Antarctic Peninsula's ability to reflect sunlight, leading to further warming as darker surfaces

absorb more solar radiation.

- **Ice Mass Loss:** Enhanced vegetation and rising temperatures contribute to accelerated ice loss, exacerbating global sea-level rise, which poses a threat to coastal communities worldwide.



Conclusion

The observed greening of the Antarctic Peninsula underscores the profound impacts of climate change, revealing the interconnectedness of ecosystems. Monitoring these changes is crucial for understanding future implications for global sea levels and biodiversity. Policymakers must address these challenges through targeted climate action and sustainable practices to mitigate further environmental degradation.

Question: Evaluate the consequences of the rapid warming of the Antarctic Peninsula on global sea levels. What measures can be taken to mitigate these effects?

Source: [The Indian Express](https://www.thehindianews.com)



Editorial, Opinions & Ideas

The gruelling course of litigation in India

Why in News?

Court scheduling and case management continue to be a hurdle that litigants face

Litigation refers to the process of taking legal action or resolving disputes through the judicial system.

Litigation in India can be particularly challenging due to factors like

- Delays and backlog of cases
- Multiple stages of appeal
- Legal costs
- Bureaucratic hurdles

Case Flow Management Rules

- Introduced in the late 2000s to streamline court scheduling and case management in Indian courts, especially at the district and high court levels.
- **Objective:** To set timelines, limit adjournments, and create a predictable process for the disposal of cases.

Black Coat Syndrome

- The reluctance of people to approach courts, fearing that the long and complex litigation process will only worsen their problems. It is symbolically compared to "white coat hypertension."
- **White coat syndrome, or white coat hypertension,** is the term for when you get a high blood pressure reading in a doctor's office and a normal reading at home. The anxiety of being around doctors in white coats can make your blood pressure rise.

Unit System

- A performance evaluation mechanism for judges, where points (or "units") are awarded based on the number and type of cases they dispose of.
- Judges tend to focus on simpler cases to accumulate units quickly, which can sideline more complex cases, causing further delays.

Adjournments

- Frequent postponements of hearings, often requested by lawyers, contribute significantly to delays in the judicial system.
- They disrupt scheduling and prevent efficient case management.

Stay Orders

- These are interim orders issued by courts to temporarily halt proceedings or actions in a case.
- Once granted, litigants may lose interest in expediting the case, leading to further delays in final resolutions.

Technological Solutions in Case Management

- Utilizing real-time updates, tracking timelines, and adopting a data-driven approach to identify scheduling issues can improve efficiency in court case management.

Conclusion

The delays in India's judiciary are deeply rooted in inefficient scheduling and case management practices. While reforms like the Case Flow Management Rules and technological solutions hold potential, addressing systemic pressures on judges, strategic behavior by lawyers, and misaligned incentives within the Unit System is essential.

Question: Examine the performance evaluation system for judges (Unit System) in the Indian judiciary and its impact on the prioritization of cases.

Source : [The Hindu](#)



The U.K. and 'leaving lessons' from the Indian Ocean

Why in News?

In its decolonisation in the Indian Ocean, the U.K. must ensure that all island nations agree to maintain the fully protected environmental status of the Chagos archipelago



The **Chagos islands** in the Indian Ocean comprise seven atolls, with the northernmost atoll called **Peros Banhos**.

Maldivians know the Chagos islands as Foalhavahi which are just 300 miles from Addu Atoll, the southern tip of the Maldives and where the United Kingdom had a Royal Air Force base on Gan Island (Maldives) until 1976.

North of Peros Banhos, there are two reefs and a sandbank; another sandbank lies further north. The **Atoll of Foamulak** is next to the Addu Atoll.

Chagos Archipelago

- It is an island group located in the central Indian Ocean and is south of the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent.
- It is an overseas territory of the United Kingdom that was established on November 8, 1965.
- Its key islands include the Diego Garcia atoll, Danger Island, Egmont Islands, Eagle Islands, Nelsons Island, Peros Banhos atoll. (Diego Garcia island, which houses a strategic US military base).
- **Climate:** It experiences a tropical marine climate with high temperatures and elevated humidity levels. The island's climate is low over the islands.

Chagos Island Dispute

- The Chagos dispute centres around the archipelago in the Indian Ocean, which Britain claimed along with Mauritius in 1814.
- In 1966, Britain leased Diego Garcia, the

largest of the Chagos Islands, to the United States, which was seeking a military base in the region.

- The Chagossians, who are mostly descendants of African slaves brought to the islands in the 18th century, have since been engaged in a prolonged legal battle for the right to return to their homeland.
- Mauritius, which gained independence from Britain in 1968, has consistently maintained its claim over the Chagos Islands.
- In 2019, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) dismissed the UK's right to govern the Chagos Islands and called on its government to withdraw from the archipelago.

Key Facts

- The Chagos archipelago, comprising 58 islands, lies to the south of the Maldives archipelago in the Indian Ocean.
- These islands were uninhabited until the late 18th century, when the French brought in slave labour from Africa and India to work in newly-established **coconut plantations**. In 1814, France ceded the islands to the British.
- In 1965, the UK constituted the **British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)**, of which the Chagos Islands were a central part. A few other BIOT islands were later ceded to the Seychelles in 1976 after it gained independence from Britain.
- Chagos was attached to Mauritius, another British colony in the Indian Ocean, for administrative purposes. But when Mauritius gained independence in 1968, Chagos remained with Britain. The UK government gave the newly-independent country a grant of 3 million pounds over the "detachment" of the Chagos archipelago.

Question: Examine the challenges of decolonization in the Indian Ocean, with specific reference to the Chagos Archipelago dispute.

Source: [The Hindu](#)



In Brief

1. Living Planet Report 2024

The Living Planet Report 2024 indicates a significant decline in monitored wildlife populations, showing an average decrease of 73% since 1970.

About the Living Planet Report

This report is released every two years by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). It serves as a thorough analysis of global biodiversity trends and the overall health of the planet. The 2024 edition marks the 15th iteration of this important report.

The WWF employs the Living Planet Index (LPI), which measures general trends in wildlife populations instead of concentrating on the fluctuations of individual species. By tracking changes in species population sizes over time, the LPI acts as an early warning system for extinction risks and evaluates the efficiency of ecosystems.

Highlights of the Living Planet Report 2024

The most significant decline was observed in freshwater ecosystems, which have decreased by 85%. This is followed by terrestrial ecosystems at 69% and marine ecosystems at 56%.

The WWF reported notable decreases in wildlife populations across various regions:

- Latin America and the Caribbean: 95% decline
- Africa: 76% decline
- Asia-Pacific: 60% decline
- Central Asia: 35% decline
- North America: 39% decline

Major threats

Impacting wildlife include habitat destruction, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, invasive species, and diseases, which are the primary contributors to wildlife population declines. Habitat loss is largely driven by unsustainable practices in agriculture, logging, mining, and habitat fragmentation.

Critical environmental concerns

Include widespread coral reef bleaching, which is impacting over 75% of the world's coral reefs, along with significant issues such as the deterioration of the Amazon rainforest, the breakdown of the subpolar gyre, and the melting of the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets, all nearing critical thresholds.

The report also warns that more than half of the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 are unlikely to be achieved, with 30% already worse than their 2015 benchmarks.

2. What is Footrot Disease?

Overview

Footrot disease is causing significant mortality among the sheep and goats of Gaddi shepherds in Himachal Pradesh.

About Footrot Disease

Footrot is a highly infectious disease that affects the interdigital (the area between the toes) tissue in ruminants. It is one of the leading causes of lameness in cattle and sheep, leading to considerable economic losses for farmers. Once footrot appears in a herd or flock, it can be extremely challenging to manage.



Causative Agent

The disease is primarily caused by the bacteria **Dichelobacter nodosus**, often in conjunction with several other bacterial species.

Transmission

Infected feet from animals carrying *D. nodosus* contaminate the surrounding environment, serving as a source of infection for other cattle. The bacteria enter through skin injuries inflicted by sharp objects such as stones, metal, wood, stubble, or thorns. Footrot typically occurs in seasonal outbreaks, with the highest rates during wet weather.

Symptoms

The manifestations of virulent footrot disease include:

- Severe chronic lesions
- Lameness
- Reduced productivity
- In severe instances, death

Treatment

To treat footrot, the interdigital tissue should be thoroughly cleaned, debrided, and disinfected. Administering an antibiotic treatment promptly, ideally on the first day of infection, is usually effective. Most animals show signs of recovery within three to four days.

3. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS)

Overview:

A recent two-day survey conducted in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary has identified 80 vultures across nine different locations.

About Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

Location: Situated in Wayanad, Kerala, this sanctuary lies in the southern stretches of the Western Ghats. It forms a crucial part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, which has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The sanctuary is bordered to the northeast by the protected areas of Nagarhole and Bandipur in Karnataka, while to the southeast lies Mudumalai in Tamil Nadu.

Indigenous Tribes : The forests are home to several scheduled tribes, including the Paniyas, Kattunaikkans, Kurumas, Ooralis, Adiyans, and Kurichiyas.

Flora : The sanctuary features a diverse range of vegetation types typical of the Western Ghats, including moist deciduous, dry deciduous, and semi-evergreen patches. Approximately one-third of the area is covered by plantations of teak, rosewood, eucalyptus, and silver oak.

Fauna: Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary supports a rich variety of wildlife, including elephants, panthers, tigers, jungle cats, civet cats, monkeys, wild dogs, bison, deer, and bears. Notably, it is recognized for hosting the largest population of tigers in Kerala.



4. Red Panda

Overview

The Red Panda Program at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park in Darjeeling has been nominated as a finalist for the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) Conservation Award for 2024.

About the Red Panda

This animal is predominantly herbivorous, characterized by its shy and solitary nature, as well as its tree-dwelling lifestyle. The red panda serves as an important indicator species for monitoring ecological changes. Its long, bushy tail helps it maintain balance and provides warmth during winter months.

Appearance : Similar in size to a house cat, the red panda is well-known for its charming facial features and its endearing defensive posture.

Distribution: Red pandas inhabit the mountainous forests across Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, and Nepal, with nearly 50% of their habitat located in the Eastern Himalayas.

Conservation Status

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

Threats: The primary threats to red panda populations include the destruction of nesting trees and bamboo in the Eastern Himalayas, which significantly impacts nearly half of their habitat and contributes to a decline in their numbers across much of their range.



Daily Quiz

Q1. Tele MANAS operates on a two-tier system. What does Tier 1 primarily comprise?

- Mental health specialists at national institutions
- Trained counsellors and mental health specialists at state-level Tele-MANAS cells
- District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) centers for physical consultations
- Prank call response centers

Q2. With reference to the horseshoe crabs, consider the following statement :

- They are classified as mammals.
- They have remained morphologically unchanged for millions of years.
- Their population is rapidly increasing due to conservation efforts.
- They are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All are correct

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the National Agriculture Code (NAC) being formulated by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):

- The NAC aims to create a standardized framework for agricultural practices in India, similar to the National Building Code.
- The NAC will cover the entire agricultural cycle, including land preparation, irrigation, and post-harvest activities.
- The implementation of the NAC is expected to be completed by December 2025.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2, and 3
- 1 only

Q4. Which of the following initiatives was announced during the 21st ASEAN-Indian Summit 2024 to enhance cooperation between India and ASEAN?

- Establishment of an ASEAN-India Cyber Policy Dialogue.
- Launch of a Maritime Security Initiative for the South China Sea.
- Doubling the number of scholarships at Nalanda University for ASEAN students.
- Creation of an ASEAN-India Disaster Response Force.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 4 only
- 1, 2, and 3 only
- 1, 3, and 4 only

Q5. Regarding India's economy, what benefits do "Inflation-Indexed Bonds (IIBs)" offer?

- The government can lower the coupon rates on its borrowings by using IIBs.
- IIBs shield investors from inflation-related uncertainties.
- The interest earned and capital gains from IIBs are exempt from taxation.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q6. Consider the following statements about the Aurora, also known as the Northern Lights:

- Auroras are luminous displays observed at high latitudes.
- Auroras are typically seen in the stratosphere.
- Variations in atmospheric temperature lead to the formation of Auroras.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 3
- 1 only
- 2 and 3
- 1, 2, and 3



Q7. Which of the following terms refers to people's hesitation to approach the judiciary due to fear of long and complicated legal processes?

- A. White Coat Syndrome
- B. Stay Order Syndrome
- C. Red Tape Syndrome
- D. Black Coat Syndrome

Q8. Footrot disease which is significantly causing to the sheep and goats that is primarily caused by

- A. Helicobacter pylori
- B. Salmonella
- C. Dichelobacter nodosus
- D. Staphylococcus

Q9. With reference to the Red Panda, which of the following statements are correct?

- 1. Red Pandas are predominantly carnivorous and live in social groups.
- 2. Nearly 50% of their habitat is located in the Eastern Himalayas.
- 3. Red Pandas are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and are classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. None

Q10. Forchhammer's Principle is associated with which of the following?

- A. Ocean composition
- B. Population density
- C. Typhoon study
- D. None



Solutions

1. Correct Answer is B

Explanation:

The Tier 1 system of Tele MANAS consists of trained counsellors and specialists in state-level cells, while Tier 2 involves district-level specialists.

2. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

Horseshoe crabs are marine arthropods, not mammals. They belong to the class Merostomata and have been around for over 450 million years, making them one of the oldest species on Earth.

The species has remained morphologically unchanged for millions of years, which is why they are often called "living fossils." This means that their physical form and structure have not undergone significant evolutionary changes over a vast period.

Statement 1 is incorrect because horseshoe crabs are not classified as mammals. They are more closely related to spiders and scorpions.

Statement 3 is incorrect because horseshoe crabs face a decline in population due to habitat loss, overharvesting for biomedical uses (their blue blood is valuable for testing bacterial contamination), and environmental changes. Conservation efforts are in place, but their populations are not rapidly increasing.

Statement 4 is incorrect because horseshoe crabs are not listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 in India. Schedule I offers the highest level of protection, and while conservationists are advocating for better protection, horseshoe crabs have yet to receive this specific status under the Act.

3. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

Statement 1: Correct. The NAC is designed to establish a standardized framework for agricultural practices in India, drawing parallels with the existing National Building Code.

Statement 2: Correct. The NAC will indeed cover the entire agricultural cycle, which includes stages from land preparation to post-harvest activities, ensuring uniformity across agricultural practices.

Statement 3: Incorrect. The target completion for drafting the NAC is set for October 2025, not December 2025.

4. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

Statement 1: Correct. An ASEAN-India Cyber Policy Dialogue was announced to strengthen cybersecurity and digital resilience.

Statement 2: Incorrect. There was no mention of a Maritime Security Initiative for the South China Sea in the context of the summit.

Statement 3: Correct. The plan includes doubling the number of scholarships at Nalanda University for ASEAN students.

Statement 4: Incorrect. The establishment of an ASEAN-India Disaster Response Force was not part of the initiatives announced.

5. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

Statement 1 is Correct: IIBs adjust interest payments in accordance with inflation rates. Since the real value of the bond's returns is maintained even with lower coupon rates, the government can borrow at a lower rate compared to conventional bonds, as inflation compensation is built into the bond.

Statement 2 is Correct: the principal or interest payment of IIBs is adjusted with inflation. This ensures that the purchasing power of the investment is protected from rising inflation, making IIBs an ideal instrument for inflation-sensitive investors.

Statement 3 is Incorrect: Like other bonds, the interest earned from IIBs is taxable under the Income Tax Act. There is no specific tax exemption for IIBs regarding interest or capital gains in India.

6. Correct Answer is B

Explanation:

Statement 1: This is correct. Auroras are colorful displays of light visible in regions near the poles (high latitudes), caused by charged particles from the Sun interacting with the Earth's magnetic field.

Statement 2: This is incorrect. Auroras occur in the thermosphere, not the stratosphere, where the interaction between solar winds and atmospheric particles happens.



Statement 3: This is incorrect. Auroras are caused by the interaction of solar wind with Earth's magnetic field, not by changes in atmospheric temperature.

7. Correct Answer is D

Explanation:

White Coat Syndrome : Incorrect : This refers to the anxiety some people experience when visiting a doctor or medical professional, often resulting in elevated blood pressure. It's unrelated to the judiciary, so this is not the correct answer.

Stay Order Syndrome : Incorrect : A "stay order" is a legal term referring to a court order that temporarily halts a proceeding. While related to legal processes, this term does not specifically capture the fear or hesitation to approach the judiciary.

Red Tape Syndrome : Incorrect : This refers to excessive bureaucracy or formalities, often slowing down processes in government or administrative functions. While it relates to delays, it is not specific to the judiciary or legal processes.

Black Coat Syndrome : Correct : This term draws a parallel to the legal profession, where lawyers and judges traditionally wear black coats or robes. Black Coat Syndrome refers to the fear or hesitation to approach the judiciary due to perceptions of lengthy, complex, and intimidating legal processes.

8. Correct Answer is D

Explanation:

Helicobacter pylori : Incorrect : This bacterium is primarily associated with gastrointestinal issues in humans, such as stomach ulcers. It does not cause footrot in animals, so this is not the correct answer.

Salmonella: Incorrect : This bacterium is known for causing foodborne illness and infections in animals and humans, but it is not responsible for footrot in sheep and goats. So, this is also not the correct answer.

Dichelobacter nodosus : Correct : This is the correct answer. Dichelobacter nodosus is the bacterium primarily responsible for footrot disease in sheep and goats. It is a contagious bacterial infection that affects the hooves of these animals, leading to lameness, swelling, and severe pain. The disease spreads in wet and muddy conditions and can cause significant economic losses for farmers due to decreased productivity and the need for treatment.

Staphylococcus : Incorrect : This genus of bacteria can cause a variety of infections in animals and humans, including skin infections, but it is not the primary cause of footrot in sheep and goats.

9. Correct Answer is A

Explanation:

Statement 1: Incorrect. Red Pandas are predominantly herbivorous and are known for their shy and solitary nature, not for living in social groups.

Statement 2: Correct. Nearly 50% of their habitat is located in the Eastern Himalayas, spanning countries like Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, and Nepal.

Statement 3: Incorrect. Red Pandas are classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, listed under Appendix I of CITES, and protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 in India.

10. Correct Answer is D

Explanation:

Forchhammer's Principle, also known as the **Principle of Constant Proportions**, is related to the study of **ocean chemistry**.

It states that although the salinity of seawater may vary in different regions, the relative proportions of major salts (such as sodium, chloride, sulfate, etc.) remain nearly constant throughout the world's oceans.





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