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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 10

- MARATHA MILITARY ARCHITECTURE
- GHARIALS
- INDIA ai
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SCAN TO EXPLORE





IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

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HISTORY AND CULTURE

1) MARATHA MILITARY ARCHITECTURE

IN NEWS: - Maratha Military architecture in Maharashtra is among the six Indian places added to tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The other sites in the tentative list are Satpura Tiger Reserve, Iconic riverfront of the historic city of Varanasi, Megalithic site of Hire Benkal, Bhedaghat-Lameta Ghat in Narmada Valley- Jabalpur, and temples of Kanchipuram

ABOUT MARATHA MILITARY ARCHITECTURE

- There are 12 forts in Maharashtra dating back to the era of the 17th century Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji. They are Shivneri, Raigad, Torna, Rajgad, Salher-Mulher, Panhala, Pratapgad, Lohagad, Sindhudurg, Padmadurga, Vijaydurg and Kolaba.
- These forts offer new insight in various forms of architecture including rock cut features, construction of perimeter walls in layers on hill tops and slopes, temples, palaces, markets, residential areas, and almost every form of medieval architecture.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

- A World Heritage site is classified as a natural or man-made area or a structure that is of international importance, and a space which requires special protection.
- These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO.
- The list is maintained by the international World Heritage Programme administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 UNESCO member states which are elected by the General Assembly.

Check: UNESCO sites in India

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

2) GHARIALS

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IN NEWS:- Punjab government in collaboration with the World-Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF-India) has released a lot of 24 gharials (Gavialis Gangeticus) into the Beas Conservation Reserve.

ABOUT GHARIALS

- Gharials are a type of Asian crocodilian distinguished by their long, thin snouts.
- IUCN Red List- **Critically Endangered**

- Listed on Appendix I of CITES and Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Natural Habitat: Fresh waters of the northern India.
- Population of Gharials are a good indicator of clean river water.
- Conservation Efforts: Breeding Centres of Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, National Chambal Sanctuary (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).

CROCODILIANS IN INDIA

Crocodylians are a group of reptiles that includes crocodiles, alligators, caimans, and more.

India has three species of Crocodylians namely:

- Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*): IUCN Red List- Critically Endangered
- Mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*): IUCN- Vulnerable.
- Saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*): IUCN- Least Concern.

BEAS CONSERVATION RESERVE

- The Beas Conservation Reserve covers an 185km stretch of the river Beas.
- The area of the Reserve lies primarily in north-west Punjab.

It was declared a conservation reserve by the government of Punjab, in 2017

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild

Fauna and Flora

- **CITES entered into force in July 1975.** Currently there are 183 Parties (include countries or regional economic integration organizations)
- CITES is **legally binding on the Parties**, but it does not take **the**

place of national laws.

- **Appendix I**

- It lists species that are the most endangered among CITES-listed animals and plants.
- They are threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial

- **Appendix II**

- It lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled.
- International trade in specimens of Appendix-II species may be authorized by the granting of an export permit or re-export certificate.

- **Appendix III**

- It is a list of species included at the request of a Party that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation.
- International trade in specimens of species listed in this Appendix is allowed only on presentation of the appropriate permits or certificates.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements regarding gharials

1. These crocodilians are classified as Least Concern in the IUCN Red List
2. Gharials are an indicator species

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - B

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

3) INDIAai

IN NEWS: - The 'National AI Portal (<https://indiaai.gov.in>)', celebrated its first anniversary on May 28, 2021.

ABOUT INDIAai

- INDIAai is the National AI Portal of India - a central hub for everything AI in India and beyond.
- It is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM).
- It serves as a central hub for AI related news, learning, articles, events and activities etc., in India and beyond.
- It has been set up to prepare the nation for an AI future.
- It is the single central knowledge hub on artificial intelligence and allied fields for aspiring entrepreneurs, students, professionals, academics, and everyone else.

ABOUT AI - ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- Artificial intelligence (AI), the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings.

- The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalize, or learn from past experience

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements about National AI Portal of India

1. It is an initiative of Department of Science and Technology
2. It is the single central knowledge hub on artificial intelligence and allied fields

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - B

4) MAGNETOSPHERE

IN NEWS: - Scientists at the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG) have developed a generalized one-dimensional fluid simulation code capable of studying a wide spectrum of coherent electric field structures in near-earth plasma environment or earth's magnetosphere which can be useful in planning of future space missions.

ABOUT MAGNETOSPHERE

- The magnetosphere is the region of space surrounding Earth where the dominant magnetic field is the magnetic field of Earth, rather than the magnetic field of interplanetary space.
- It is generated by the interaction of the solar wind with Earth's magnetic field.

FORMATION OF MAGNETOSPHERE

- Sun is the major source of plasma deposition in space around the Earth. Sun forces some of its plasma towards the earth in the form of the solar wind.
- The speed of this wind varies between 300 to 1500 km/s, which carries with it solar magnetic field, called as Interplanetary Magnetic Field (IMF).
- The magnetic field is generated by electric currents due to the motion of convection currents of a mixture of molten iron and nickel in the Earth's outer core.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

5) MONGLA PORT - BANGLADESH

IN NEWS:- The National Economic Council of Bangladesh, chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has approved the proposal to enhance the capacity of the Mongla port.

ABOUT MONGLA PORT

- The Port of Mongla is the second busiest seaport of Bangladesh after Chittagong.
- It is situated at the confluence of the Pasur River and the Mongla River.
- The Port is surrounded and protected by the Sundarban mangrove forest
- Mongla is a gateway for tourist ships traveling to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the region, including the Sundarbans and the Mosque City of Bagerhat.
- The port also hosts the Mongla Export Processing Zone (Mongla EPZ)

- India and Bangladesh had signed a MoU on the use of Chattogram and Mongla ports in 2015.
- The MoU envisages transit of goods from Mongla port to north eastern states of India through waterways, roads and railways.
- India has also extended a line of credit for the expansion of the Mongla Port capacity.
- The project consists building of two container terminals and related infrastructure facilities at the port. The project is expected to be completed by June 2024.



PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements about Mongla Port

1. It is situated at the confluence of the Pasur River and the Mongla River.
2. It is the busiest port in Bangladesh

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only

- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - A

INDIAN POLITY

6) T K VISWANATHAN COMMITTEE ON HATE SPEECH

IN NEWS: - A panel constituted by the Union Home Ministry to suggest reforms to the British-era Indian Penal Code (IPC) is likely to propose a separate Section on “offences relating to speech and expression.”

ABOUT T K VISWANATHAN COMMITTEE

- It is an expert committee headed by former Lok Sabha secretary general TK Viswanathan to deal with cybercrimes especially online hate speech
- It proposed inserting Sections 153 C (b) and Section 505 A in the IPC for incitement to commit an offence on grounds of religion, race, caste or community, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, place of birth, residence, language, disability or tribe.
- It proposed punishment of up to two years along with Rs. 5,000 fine.
- The committee suggested that the state cybercrime coordinator should be an officer not below the rank of Inspector General of Police (IGP).

HATE SPEECH

- In general, it refers to words whose intent is to create hatred towards a particular group, that group may be a community, religion or race. This speech may or may not have meaning, but is likely to result in violence.
- In the 267th Report of the Law Commission of India, hate speech is stated as an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons

defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and the like.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Which among the following statements regarding the T K Viswanathan committee are correct?

1. It proposed inserting Sections 153 C (b) and Section 505 A in the IPC for incitement to commit an offence on grounds of religion, race, caste or community, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, place of birth, residence, language, disability or tribe.
 2. The committee suggested that the state cybercrime coordinator should be an officer not below the rank of Inspector General of Police (IGP).
- a. 1 only
 - b. 2 only
 - c. Both 1 and 2
 - d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - C

ECONOMICS

7) MALEGAM COMMITTEE

IN NEWS:- The Reserve Bank of India formed a sub-committee in order to study the Microfinance sector regulated by the bank.

ABOUT MALEGAM COMMITTEE

- The Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India, formed a Sub-Committee of the Board to study matters and concerns in the microfinance sector insofar as they are related to the entities regulated by the Bank.

- The Sub-Committee was under the chairmanship of Y.H. Malegam.
- The terms of mention of the Sub-Committee included framing the description of 'microfinance' and 'Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs)' for the point of regulation of non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) undertaking microfinance by the Reserve Bank of India and giving proper recommendations.
- Also, the committee had to look at the widespread activities of MFIs in relation to interest rates, lending and recovery measures to identify trends that impose on borrowers' interests.

MICROFINANCE

- Microfinance is an economic development tool whose objective is to assist the poor to work their way out of poverty.
- It covers a range of services which include, in addition to the provision of credit, many other services such as savings, insurance, money transfers, counselling, etc.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SONADIA ISLAND- BANGLADESH

IN NEWS: - The Bangladesh government has officially called off the development of a deep-sea port at Sonadia Island off the country's southeastern coast.

- The idea of the port was first conceived in 2006. China agreed to construct the port as well as providing loans to finance the project. But environmental concerns drove the Bangladesh government's decision to scrap the project.

- Instead, a deep-sea port will be built at Matarbari, 25 kilometers away from Sonadia

ABOUT SONADIA ISLAND

- Sonadia Island is a small island of about 9 square kilometres offshore of the Cox's Bazar coast in Chittagong Division, Bangladesh.
- Sonadia Maheshkhali is separated from the main island by a canal.
- The island is seen as a potential deepwater port that could serve the landlocked parts of India, Myanmar and China.
- The island is of geo-strategic significance and development of the deep-sea water port by China would have posed threat to India's maritime interest because of proximity of Chittagong to Indian coastline

Ministry of Science and Technology

Minister in charge: Y. S. Chowdary

Departments: Department of Science and Technology (DST)

➤ **India's ranking in global S&T indices continues to rise**

- India has risen to the 46th position featuring within the top 50 innovative economies globally as per Global Innovation Index (GII)

➤ **National Supercomputing Mission**

- Implemented and steered jointly by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY)**. Implemented by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.

- Mission aims to connect academic institutions and R&D labs over a high-speed network by installing a vast supercomputing grid.
 - Under the National Super-Computer Mission (NSM), 4 new Supercomputers have been installed at IIT-Hyderabad, NABI-Mohali, CDAC-Bengaluru, and IIT Kanpur
- **Synergistic Training Program Utilizing the Scientific and Technological Infrastructure (STUTI) Program**
- Program envisioned to boost human resource and its capacity building through open access to S & T Infrastructure across the country through Sophisticated Analytical and Technical Help Institutes (SATHI) programme and Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence” (PURSE).
- **Institutional support for women scientists.**
- **GATI** (Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions): Based on UK Athena SWAN (Scientific Women’s Academic Network) concept, the project aims gender advancement in STEMM (Science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine.) area at institutional level and Gender equality in scientific laboratories and institutions of higher education.
 - **WISER** (Women’s Involvement in Science and Engineering Research) is the first of its kind program for lateral entry for women researchers in joint R&D projects between India and Germany.
- A new material, Silver Antimony Telluride developed by **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)** to tap waste heat generated by appliances and reuse it(energy conversion)

- An **innovative mango variety**, which is a **regular and round-the-year dwarf variety of mango called Sadabahar has been developed. It is resistant to most major diseases and common mango disorders.**
- **Sadiya earthquake:**
 - Recently, scientists have found the **first geological evidence of an earthquake on the border of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh**, documented as the **Sadiya earthquake in history.**
 - This site is near the Tuting- Tidding Suture Zone- a major part of the Eastern Himalaya, where the Himalaya takes a sharp southward bend and connects with the Indo-Burma Range.
 - **Sadiya town is located southeast of Subansiri river.**
- The National climate vulnerability assessment report supported by DST has identified 6 eastern states---**Jharkhand, Mizoram, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, and West Bengal as states highly vulnerable to climate change.**
- **INSPIRE Awards--MANAK** (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspiration and Knowledge):
 - It is aligned with the **'Start-up India'** initiative and is being executed by Department of Science and Technology with **National Innovation Foundation - India (NIF)**, an autonomous body of DST.
 - Under the scheme the **students (age group of 10-15 years and studying in classes 6 to 10) are invited from all government or private schools throughout the country**, irrespective of their educational boards (national and state) to pursue Science and a career in Research.

- **Saffron cultivation which was confined to Jammu and Kashmir has spread its wings to parts of the North East** (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya) through the focused efforts of the North East Centre for Technology Application & Reach (NECTAR).

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