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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 40

- SAMARTH INITIATIVE
- UIDAI
- SAGAR PARIKRAMA
- QUAMI WAQF BOARD TARAQQIATI SCHEME
- ZAPORIZHZHIA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT
- BUCHAREST NINE
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SCAN TO EXPLORE



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INDIAN POLITY

1) SAMARTH INITIATIVE

IN NEWS: - On the occasion of International Women's Day 2022, the Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), launched a Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women - "SAMARTH"

ABOUT SAMARTH INITIATIVE

- Under the Samarth initiative of the Ministry, following benefits will be available to aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs:
 - 20% Seats in free Skill Development Programs organised under skill development schemes of the Ministry will be allocated for Women.
 - 20% of MSME Business Delegations sent to domestic & international exhibitions under the schemes for Marketing Assistance implemented by the Ministry will be dedicated to women owned MSMEs.
 - 20% Discount on annual processing fee on National Small Industries Corporation's (NSIC) Commercial Schemes.
- Special Drive for registration of women-owned MSMEs under Udyam Registration.
- Through this initiative, the Ministry of MSME is focusing on providing Skill Development and Market Development Assistance to women.
 - More than 7500 women candidates from rural and sub-urban areas will be trained in the FY 2022-23.
 - Besides, thousands of women will be getting marketing opportunities to showcase their products in domestic and international exhibitions.
- Also, to enhance the participation of women entrepreneurs in Public Procurement, a special discount of 20% shall also be offered on annual

processing fee on NSIC's following commercial schemes during the year 2022-23:

- Single Point Registration Scheme
- Raw Material Assistance and Bill Discounting
- Tender Marketing
- B2B Portal msmemart.com

2) QUAMI WAQF BOARD TARAQQIATI SCHEME

IN NEWS: - The deadline for “Quami Waqf Boards Taraqqiati Scheme” has been revised from March 2022 to November 2023.

ABOUT QUAMI WAQF BOARD TARAQQIATI SCHEME

- On the recommendation of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf, a Central Sector Scheme of “Computerization of the Records of State/UT Waqf Boards” was launched by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in December 2009.
- After the evaluation of the Scheme, it is further continuing during 2017-18 to 2019-20 Financial Year.
- Now the Scheme has been renamed as “Quami Waqf Board Taraqqiati Scheme (QWBTS)”.
- The Central Waqf Council, New Delhi has been made the Nodal Agency for implementation of the Scheme.

ABOUT CENTRAL WAQF COUNCIL

- Central Wakf Council is an Indian statutory body established in 1964 under Wakf Act, 1954 (now a subsection the Wakf Act, 1995).
- It is of advisory nature on matters pertaining to working of the State Wakf Boards and proper administration of the Wakfs in the country.

- Wakf is a permanent dedication of movable or immovable properties for religious, pious or charitable purposes as recognized by Muslim Law, given by philanthropists.
- The grant is known as mushrut-ul-khidmat, while a person making such dedication is known as Wakif.
- The Council is headed by a Chairperson, who is the Union Minister in charge of Wakfs and there is a maximum of 20 other members.
- The Council has been empowered to advise the Central Government, State Governments and State Waqf Boards.

3) UIDAI

IN NEWS: - The CAG has pulled up the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) over a range of issues related to the issuance of Aadhaar cards.

ABOUT UIDAI

- The UIDAI is a statutory authority established on 12th July 2016 by the Government of India under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, following the provisions of the Aadhaar Act 2016.
- The UIDAI was initially set up by the Government of India in January 2009, as an attached office under the aegis of the Planning Commission.
- The UIDAI is mandated to assign a 12-digit unique identification (UID) number (Aadhaar) to all the residents of India.

ABOUT AADHAAR

- An Aadhaar is a unique 12-digit identification number issued to the citizens of the country by the Government of India as identification proof.

- Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is the issuing and managing body for Aadhaar cards in the country.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The UIDAI is an executive body
2. It is under the Ministry of Science and Technology

Which among the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: - d

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

4) BUCHAREST NINE

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IN NEWS:- The envoys to India of nine Eastern European countries called Bucharest Nine (B9) jointly wrote to acquaint the Indian public with the basic facts on the ground” about the “premeditated, unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression in Ukraine”.

ABOUT BUCHAREST NINE

- The “Bucharest Nine” is a group of nine NATO countries in Eastern Europe that became part of the US-led military alliance after the end of the Cold War.
- The B9 was founded on November 4, 2015, and takes its name from Bucharest, the capital of Romania.

- The group was created on the initiative of Klaus Iohannis, who has been President of Romania since 2014, and Andrzej Duda, who became President of Poland in August 2015.
- Romania, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.
- All members of the B9 are part of the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).
- All nine countries were once closely associated with the now dissolved Soviet Union, but later chose the path of democracy.
- The B9 offers a platform for deepening the dialogue and consultation among the participant allied states, in order to articulate their specific contribution to the ongoing processes across the North-Atlantic Alliance.
- It works in total compliance with the principles of solidarity and indivisibility of the security of the NATO Member States.

5) BIMSTEC

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IN NEWS: - The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping's fifth summit took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

- The signing of the BIMSTEC Charter was the main outcome of this summit.
- Under this Charter, the members are expected to meet once every two years.
- With the Charter, the BIMSTEC now has an international personality. It has an emblem, it has a flag.



ABOUT BIMSTEC

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organisation comprising seven Member States: five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.
- This sub-regional organisation came into being on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- The BIMSTEC Secretariat is in Dhaka.
- Institutional Mechanisms:
 - BIMSTEC Summit
 - Ministerial Meeting
 - Senior Officials' Meeting
 - BIMSTEC Working Group
 - Business Forum & Economic Forum

6) ZAPORIZHZHIA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

IN NEWS: - Russian forces have seized the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine, the largest in Europe, after intense fighting with Ukrainian defenders.

ABOUT ZAPORIZHZHIA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

- It is located on the banks of the Dnieper river, just 200 kilometers from the conflicted Donbas region where Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces have been fighting.
- Zaporizhzhya is one of the four operating NPPs in the country and has been operating since 1984.
- It accounts for about 40% of the total electricity generated by all the Ukrainian NPPs and one-fifth of Ukraine's annual electricity production.
- The Zaporizhzhya NPP consists of six Pressurised Water Reactor (PWR) units commissioned between 1984 and 1995, with a gross electrical capacity of 1,000MW each.

7) NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION

IN NEWS: - When Russia launched a military invasion of Ukraine, the purported reason behind this act of territorial aggression was the eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

ABOUT NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed in 1949.
- The organization constitutes a system of collective defence whereby its member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by a non-member external party.
- NATO's headquarters are located at Boulevard Leopold III in the city of Brussels, Belgium, where the Supreme Allied Commander resides.

History

The organisation was formed as a means to ensure collective security in western Europe. Even though World War 2 had come to an end, the deteriorating relations between two former allies, the United States and the USSR would eventually lead to the Cold War. The USSR sought to expand its influence in Europe through the spread of communism, while the US saw the ideology of the USSR as a threat to its way of life. Hence it saw the need to form NATO.

INDIAN ECONOMY

8) MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

IN NEWS: - A dissident member of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has said that the central bank's accommodative policy stance "carries with it the risk of falling behind the curve in future because the stance limits the MPC's freedom of action in ensuing meetings"

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ABOUT MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

- The RBI has a government-constituted Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) which is tasked with framing monetary policy using tools like the repo rate, reverse repo rate, bank rate, cash reserve ratio (CRR).
- It has been instituted by the Central Government of India under Section 45ZB of the RBI Act that was amended in 1934.
- The MPC is entrusted with the responsibility of deciding the different policy rates including MSF, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate, and Liquidity Adjustment Facility.
- The committee will have six members. Of the six members, the government will nominate three. No government official will be nominated to the MPC.

- The other three members would be from the RBI with the governor being the ex-officio chairperson. Deputy governor of RBI in charge of the monetary policy will be a member, as also an executive director of the central bank.
- The government nominees to the MPC will be selected by a Search-cum-Selection Committee under Cabinet Secretary with RBI Governor and Economic Affairs Secretary and three experts in the field of economics or banking or finance or monetary policy as its members.
- Members of the MPC will be appointed for a period of four years and shall not be eligible for reappointment.
- Decisions will be taken by majority vote with each member having a vote.
- The RBI Governor will chair the committee. The governor, however, will not enjoy a veto power to overrule the other panel members, but will have a casting vote in case of a tie.

9) EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX 2021

IN NEWS: - NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the Institute of Competitiveness, has released the second edition of the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2021.

ABOUT EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX 2021

- The Export Preparedness Index is a comprehensive analysis of India's export achievements.
- It aims to identify the fundamental areas critical for subnational export promotion.
- The coastal states have been adjudged as the best performers in the index.
- The index ranked states on four key parameters – policy; business ecosystem; export ecosystem; export performance.
- The index also took into consideration 11 sub-pillars — export promotion policy; institutional framework; business environment; infrastructure;

transport connectivity; access to finance; export infrastructure; trade support; R&D infrastructure; export diversification; and growth orientation.

- Gujarat has topped NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2021 for the second consecutive time.
- Maharashtra has been ranked second and Karnataka has been ranked third.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The Export Preparedness Index is prepared by the NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the Institute of Competitiveness.
2. Maharashtra has topped NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2021

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

10)SAGAR PARIKRAMA

IN NEWS: - The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has organized the "Sagar Parikrama" program on the occasion of the 75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava.

ABOUT SAGAR PARIKRAMA

- As a mark of gratitude to our seas, Sagar Parikrama Program is saluting our great freedom fighters, sailors and fishers.
- The first leg of 'Sagar Parikrama' began from Gujarat on 5th Feb 2022.

- Sagar Parikrama program is proposed to be celebrated in all coastal states/UTs.
- The focus of the programme is sustainable balance between the utilisation of marine fisheries resources for food security of the nation and livelihoods of coastal fisher communities and protection of marine ecosystems.
- It is proposed to be conducted in all coastal states/UTs through a pre-decided sea route to demonstrate solidarity with all fisher folk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders as a spirit of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.
- States includes Gujarat, Diu, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

11) INTERNATIONAL MATHS DAY 2022

IN NEWS: - The theme for the 2022 International Day of Mathematics is Mathematics Unites.

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ABOUT INTERNATIONAL MATHS DAY 2022

- 14th March, every year is observed as the International Day of Mathematics.
- The International Day of Mathematics is a project led by the International Mathematical Union with the support of numerous international and regional organizations.
- The first International Day of Mathematics was marked in March 2020.
- March 14 is already celebrated in many countries as Pi Day because that date is written as 3/14 in some countries and the mathematical constant Pi is approximately 3.14.

12)GSAT 7B

IN NEWS: - GSAT-7B satellite, which recently got the acceptance of necessity from the Defence Ministry, will be a dedicated satellite for the Indian Army.

ABOUT GSAT 7B

- The GSAT 7B will primarily fulfil the communication needs of the Army.
- The use of such a satellite would also mean that the Army's vast array of radio communication equipment could come under a single platform.

GSAT 7 SATELLITES

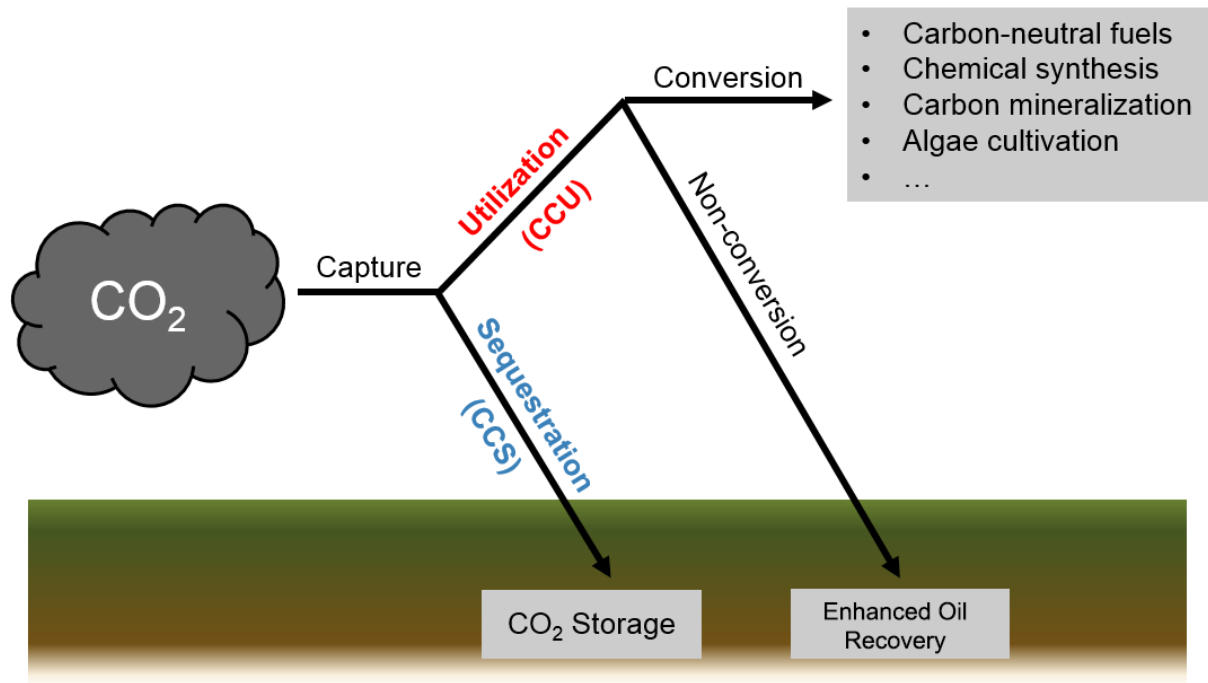
- They are advanced satellites developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to meet the communication needs of the defence services.
- The GSAT 7 satellite has a footprint of nearly 2,000 nautical miles in the Indian Ocean region.
- The GSAT 7 (Rukmini) is India's first military satellite. It provides a gamut of services for military communication needs, which includes low bit voice rate to high bit rate data facilities, including multi-band communications.
- The GSAT 7A, launched in 2018, helps in boosting the connectivity between the ground radar stations, airbases and the airborne early warning and control aircraft (AEW&C) of the IAF.

13)CARBON CAPTURE UTILIZATION AND STORAGE (CCUS) TECHNOLOGIES

IN NEWS: - Indian Scientists under Mission Innovation program, have discovered a strategy to synthesize novel solid adsorbents for CO2 capture and utilization.

ABOUT CARBON CAPTURE UTILIZATION AND STORAGE (CCUS) TECHNOLOGIES

- Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS) encompasses methods and technologies to remove CO₂ from the flue gas and from the atmosphere, followed by recycling the CO₂ for utilization and determining safe and permanent storage options.
- CO₂ captured using CCUS technologies are converted into fuel (methane and methanol), refrigerants and building materials.
- The captured gas is used directly in fire extinguishers, pharma, food and beverage industries as well as the agricultural sector.
- CCUS technologies can play an important role in meeting net zero targets, including as one of few solutions to tackle emissions from heavy industry and to remove carbon from the atmosphere.
- CCUS is considered an important tool to help countries halve their emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050.
- These goals are crucial to meet the Paris Agreement targets for restricting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius (°C), and preferable to 1.5°C, over pre-industrial levels.



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ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

14) NORTHERN RIVER TERRAPIN

IN NEWS: - Recently, forest officials installed GPS transmitters on the northern river terrapin in the Indian Sundarbans. However, In just six weeks after the release, at least three of the 10 turtles of the critically endangered Batagur baska species have travelled hundreds of kilometres and are now in Bangladesh.

ABOUT NORTHERN RIVER TERRAPIN

- The northern river terrapin (Batagur baska) is a species of riverine turtle native to Southeast Asia.
- It is one of Asia's largest freshwater and brackwater turtles, reaching a carapace length of up to 60 cm and a maximum weight of 18 kg. Its carapace is moderately depressed.

- The species is currently found in Bangladesh and India(in the Sunderbans), Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia.
- It is strongly aquatic but uses terrestrial nesting sites, frequenting the tidal areas of estuaries, large rivers, and mangrove forests.

It is classified Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List and considered extinct in much of its former range, principally due to exploitation as a food item (including egg harvesting).



15) BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

IN NEWS: - The US said that Russia could be planning a chemical or biological weapons attack in Ukraine.

ABOUT BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

- It is a key element in the international community's efforts to address Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation and it has established a strong norm against biological weapons.

- WMD is a weapon with the capacity to inflict death and destruction on such a massive scale and so indiscriminately that its very presence in the hands of a hostile power can be considered a grievous threat.
- Formally known as “The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction”, the Convention was negotiated by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It opened for signature on 10th April 1972 and entered into force on 26th March 1975.
- Members: 183 States Parties and 4 Signatory States.
- India is a signatory of the convention.
- The convention Prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons.
- It was the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

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ABOUT BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Biological weapons use microbiological agents (such as bacteria, viruses or fungi) or toxins to intentionally cause death or harm to humans, animals, or plants. Some of the deadliest biological weapons are:-

- **Anthrax:-** Anthrax was caused by bacteria named Bacillus Anthracis. It is one of the deadliest agents to be used as a biological weapon. It has been used with food, water, spray, powders. It is completely tasteless and odourless.
- **Botulinum Toxin:-** It is caused by naturally found bacteria named Clostridium Botulinum. It can be used by contaminating food and water. It was known to be used by Japan on Prisoners of War (POW) during the occupation of Manchuria.

- **Francisella Tularensis:-** As per a former Soviet Union scientist, this was used as a biological weapon against the Nazi Army of Germany by the Soviet Union Army in the Battle of Stalingrad of World War II.
- **Aflatoxin:-** Iraq had produced and deployed different weapons armed with Aflatoxin. It was noted by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in 1995. However, it was destroyed during the Gulf War.

14) HIMALAYAN GRIFFONS

IN NEWS: - Recently, at least Himalayan Griffons died of suspected poisoning in Assam.

ABOUT HIMALAYAN GRIFFONS

- The Himalayan Griffon Vulture, *Gyps himalayensis*, is an Old World vulture in the family Accipitridae, which also includes eagles, kites, buzzards and hawks.
- It is closely related to the European Griffon Vulture, *G. fulvus*.
- This vulture is a typical vulture, with a bald white head, very broad wings, and short tail feathers.
- It has a white neck ruff and yellow bill and the whitish body and wing coverts contrast with the dark flight feathers.
- IUCN Status: Near Threatened (NT)
- The Himalayan vulture mostly lives in the Himalayas on the Tibetan plateau (India, Nepal and Bhutan, central China and Mongolia).
- It is also found in the Central Asian mountains (from Kazakhstan and Afghanistan in the west to western China and Mongolia in the east).
- Occasionally it migrates to northern India but migration usually only occurs altitudinally.



15) EXTINCTION REBELLION

IN NEWS: - World over activists of Extinction Rebellion are staging protests in various formats

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ABOUT EXTINCTION REBELLION

- Initially, launched in the United Kingdom on October 31, 2018, as a response to a report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- Now, it is a global movement which seeks to “rebel”, and asks groups to “self-organise”, without the need for anyone’s permission, to come up with collective action plans as long as they adhere to the group’s core principles and values.
- It is a decentralised, international and politically non-partisan movement using non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency.
- The group has “three core demands” of governments around the world.

- It wants governments to “Tell the Truth”, to “Act Now”, and to “Go Beyond Politics” in order to confront the climate and ecological emergency that the world is faced with



16) ACTION PLAN FOR INTRODUCTION OF CHEETAH IN INDIA

IN NEWS: - An Action Plan regarding the introduction of the Cheetah in India was released in the 19th Meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (Statutory Body).

ABOUT ACTION PLAN FOR INTRODUCTION OF CHEETAH IN INDIA

- Under the plan, 50 Cheetahs will be introduced in the different National Parks in the country in a span of 5 years.
- Initially, translocating around 8-12 cheetahs from South Africa, Namibia and Botswana will be done.
- This is the first time in the world that a large carnivore will be relocated from one continent to another.
- African Cheetah from South Africa was expected to be reintroduced in Kuno National Park (MP) in November 2021(Postponed due to Covid-19).

- Kuno National Park (MP) has a healthy population of chital, sambar, nilgai, wild pig, chinkara and cattle emerged as one of the most promising habitats for the cheetah.



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A LONG TIME."



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