



DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu: Page 10_IR- (GSII)

Quad summit more likely after U.S. polls in November: envoy

U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti says the Quad agenda will be more productive by 2024-end; at a discussion on the grouping's new version, former officials clarify it was the U.S. and Australia, and not India, that pulled out of the Quad in 2007

Subhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Leaders of the Quad nations may not be able to meet for a summit in India before the U.S. elections, U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti said, stressing that the Quad agenda would be “more productive” by 2024-end. Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. form the Quad.

Mr. Garcetti, who was speaking at a discussion with envoys from Australia and Japan and former officials at the Indian Embassy



PM Narendra Modi with leaders of U.S., Australia and Japan during the Quad Leaders' Summit last year in Hiroshima, Japan. FILE PHOTO

response to a question “outcomes,” the U.S. envoy said.

the External Affairs Ministry and the Observer Research Foundation on February 21-23.

Mr. Garcetti, however, rejected the idea that the election schedule, or the possibility of Republican frontrunner and former President Donald Trump defeating Mr. Biden in the elections, would affect the India-U.S. bilateral or Quadilateral relationship.

How it ended

The panel, which included former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull

India “not to push [the Quad] forward”.

The accounts are at some variance with the belief that it was India, not the U.S. and Australia, that ended the Quad's earlier version.

During a speech in February 2023, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar had said that “in 2007, one country put pressure, you can guess which one and we backed down,” he said referring to pressure from China, and comparing the responses in 2007 against 2007.

- Quad brings together four countries - India, Australia, Japan, and the United States, with a commitment to work as a force for global good and to support an open, free, and inclusive Indo-Pacific that is prosperous and resilient
- Quad came together during the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean region to coordinate response and assistance to countries in the region
- The Quad's positive and practical agenda is focused on delivering outcomes for the Indo-Pacific, in response to the region's priorities and most pressing challenges, including health security, climate change, infrastructure, critical and emerging technology, cyber security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, space, maritime security, countering disinformation, and counter-terrorism.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



The Hindu: Page 10-Polity and Governance (GSII)

7-judge Bench to hear pleas on SC, ST subgroups

THE HINDU BUREAU
NEW DELHI

A seven-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud is scheduled to hear from February 6 a series of petitions regarding the validity of sub-classification among reserved categories. Lawyers representing several reserved communities across the country are appearing in the case.

The sub-classification case dates back to 2020 when a five-judge Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra (retd) held that States could sub-classify Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Central List to provide preferential treatment to the “weakest out of the weak”.

The questions referred to the seven-judge Bench for an authoritative decision include whether sub-classification could be permitted for the SC and ST categories as the same was permitted for the Socially and Economically Backward Classes category.

- Article 145(3), which deals with the rules of the court, provides for the setting up of a Constitution Bench.
- Article 145(3) says a minimum of five judges need to sit for deciding a case involving a “substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution”, or for hearing any reference under Article 143, which deals with the power of the President to consult the SC.
- Other scenarios in which a Constitution Bench can be constituted are:
 - If two or three-judge Benches of the Supreme Court have delivered conflicting judgments on the same point of law
 - If a later three-judge Bench of the SC doubts the correctness of a judgment delivered by a former Bench with as much strength and decides to refer the matter to a larger bench for reconsideration of the previous judgment.
- As per the legal provisions, a Constitution Bench consists of a minimum of five judges and the number can go up to an odd number of seven, nine and so on.

The Hindu: Page 10-Polity and Governance (GSII)

Bill to check cheating in govt. recruitment exams introduced

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha on Monday to check malpractices and organised cheating in government recruitment exams, proposing a minimum of three years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹1 crore for persons and organisations indulging in such illegal practices.

The Bill was moved by Union Minister Jitendra Singh in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

sely impacting the prospects of millions of youth.

"Therefore, it is imperative that elements that exploit vulnerabilities of examination system are identified and effectively dealt with by a comprehensive Central legislation," the statement said.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 mentions "leakage of question paper or answer key", "directly or indirectly assisting the candidate in any manner unauthorisedly in the public examination", and

- The Union government introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha to check malpractices and organised cheating in government recruitment exams, proposing a minimum of three years' imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹1 crore for persons and organisations indulging in such illegal practices.
- The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 mentions "leakage of question paper or answer key", "directly or indirectly assisting the candidate in any manner unauthorisedly in the public examination", and "tampering with the computer network or a computer resource or a computer system" as offences done by a person, group of persons or institutions.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu: Page 12_Miscellaneous

Indians win big at Grammys: Shakti takes home honours

Tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain wins 3 awards; flautist Rakesh Chaurasia gets 2 prizes; singer Shankar Mahadevan, violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan and percussionist S. Vinayakram bags one each



- Popularly known as Grammy Award, it is originally named Gramophone Award, presented by the Recording Academy to honour artistes in the music industry for their exceptional work in a year.
- The annual event to recognise musical achievements was started in 1959 to respect the performers for the year 1958.

Indian Express: Species (GSIII)-Page 12

Snow leopard count: why this Himalayan feat is the first step in securing the cat

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THERE ARE 718 snow leopards in India — in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, the Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI) has estimated. The study, carried out between 2019 and 2023, is a major leap in the understanding of the species.

Snow leopards are believed to occupy around 1 lakh sq km of the higher Himalayan terrains in India. As recently as 2016, the cat's status was unknown in as much as one-third of its range. This went well with the legend of the "ghost of the mountains" built around the elusive cat's mastery of stealth and camouflage.

But for this 'ghost' to have a future — and since the future of most species is increasingly determined by human actions — knowledge of the cat's status across its range is necessary for framing the right policies. This is also a question of securing the future of Indians, because the snow leopard's habitat is where all major Himalayan rivers, which sustain life across much of the country, spring to life.

Yet, a national effort to count snow leopards across its range remained daunting



Future of the 'ghost' is in a way linked to the future of Indians. Lati Kumari/File

NUMBERS IN THE WILD

Area	Camera trap	No. of unique	Density	Estimated
Ladakh	956	126	126/8,604	477
Jammu and Kashmir	278	9	9/949	36
Himachal Pradesh	135	44	44/25,000	124
Uttarakhand	396	124	124/14,156	36
Sikkim	64	14	14/99	115
Arunachal Pradesh	99	14	14/99	115

across their habitat.

In Ladakh, camera traps were placed at 956 locations covering 8,604 sq km for 120 to 180 days. Based on their distinctive forehead patterns, 126 unique adult individuals were identified from 10,789 images. The population was estimated to be 477 across 47,572 sq km.

In Jammu and Kashmir, only 9 unique individuals were identified by deploying 278 camera traps at 135 locations. Even after dropping four individuals due to poor image quality and unfavourable capture angles, this data set fell short of providing a comprehensive estimate for the snow leopard population across 949 sq km, noted SPAI.

In Himachal Pradesh, 44 unique individuals were identified from 187 photos captured across 284 camera trap locations, leading to an estimated population of 51 over 25,000 sq km. From 41 unique individuals identified from 396 snow leopard photos, Uttarakhand estimated a population of 124 occupying 12,768 sq km.

Arunachal Pradesh estimated a population of 36 across 14,156 sq km, from 8 unique snow leopards identified from 115 camera trap locations. In Sikkim, 14 unique individuals were identified from 64 snow leopard photos captured from 99 camera trap locations. The estimated population was 115 snow

- **Snow Leopard**

- **Scientific Name:** Panthera uncia.

- **Habitat:** Cold High Mountains.

- These are found in 12 countries including China, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia & Mongolia.

- **Conservation Status:**

- A. **IUCN:** Vulnerable

- B. **Schedule I:** Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



Indian Express: Economy (GSIII)-Page 13

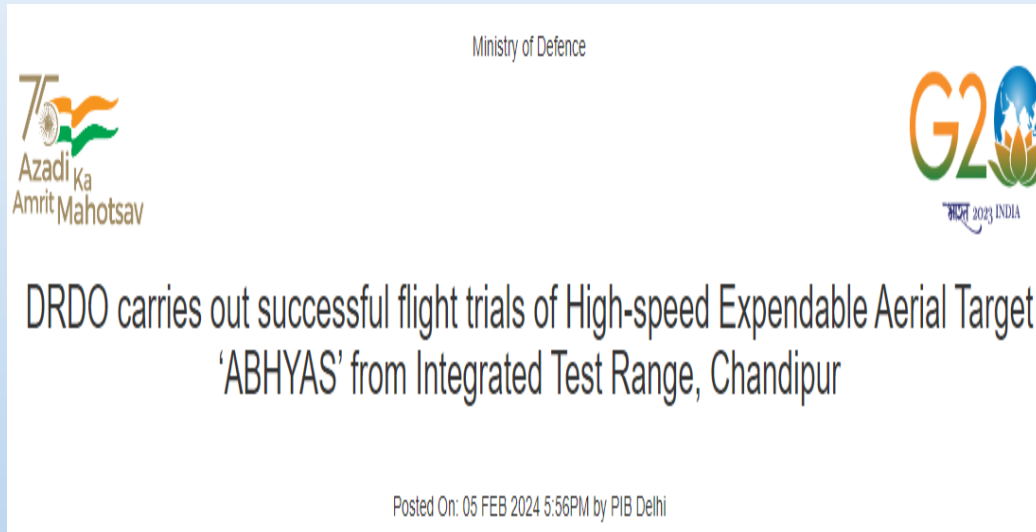
Manufacturing sector saw employment, profits improve despite pandemic blows: Survey

Total number of employees in over 2.50 lakh factories decreased in 2020-21 to 1.60 crore from 1.66 crore in 2019-20, while the number of workers employed in the factories reduced to 1.26 crore from 1.31 core during the same period.

- Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) for 2020-21 and 2021-22 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)
- Employment in the manufacturing sector took a hit during the lockdown-affected year of 2020-21, but then recovered in 2021-22 to levels higher than pre-pandemic.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

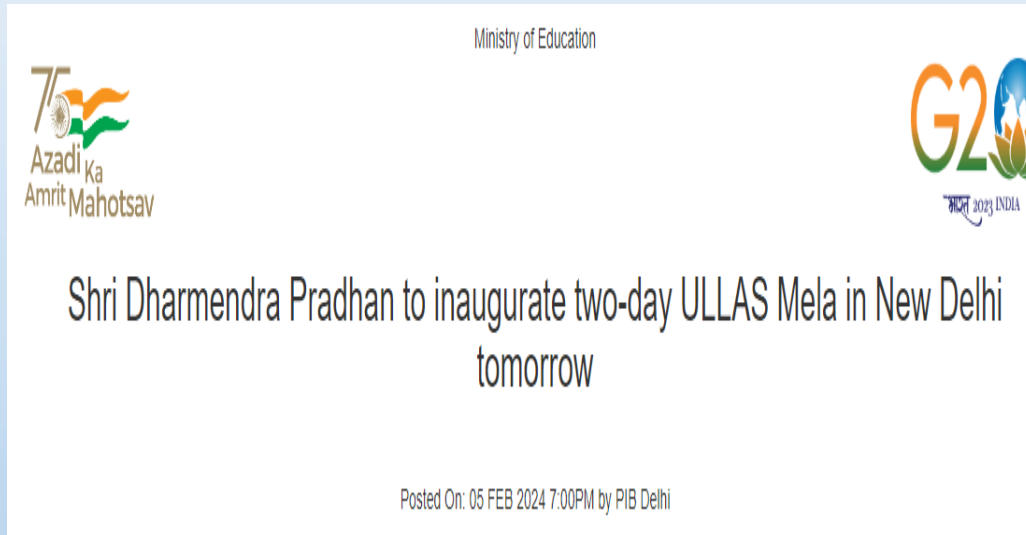
PIB: Defence (GSIII)



- Four flight trials of High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) - ABHYAS were successfully carried out by Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur in Odisha
- Designed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), ABHYAS offers a realistic threat scenario for practice of weapon systems.
- It is designed for autonomous flying with the help of an auto pilot indigenously made by the ADE.
- It has Radar Cross Section, Visual and Infrared augmentation system required for weapon practice.
- It has a laptop-based Ground Control System with which the aircraft can be integrated and pre-flight checks, data recording during the flight, replay after the flight and post-flight analysis can be carried out.
- ABHYAS requires minimum logistics and is cost effective compared to imported equivalents.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB:Governance (GSII)



- To achieve the target of 100% literacy by 2030, the Government of India is implementing a centrally sponsored innovative scheme called Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram or New India Literacy Program for the period of FYs 2022-2027.
- The scheme is popularly known as ULLAS: Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society, upholding the motto "Jan-Jan Sakshar".
- The scheme is targeted at all non-literates of age 15 years and above.
- The scheme, in line with NEP 2020, targets adults (aged 15 and above) who could not go to school or attain formal education. It focuses on imparting Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), through critical life skills, such as Digital Literacy, Financial Literacy, Legal Literacy, Environmental Literacy, Health & Hygiene, etc. Implemented in a hybrid mode, States/UTs have flexibility in offline, online, or combined approaches.
- The scheme consists of five components: (i) Foundational Literacy and Numeracy; (ii) Critical Life Skills; (iii) Basic Education; (iv) Vocational Skills; and (v) Continuing Education.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB:Species (GSIII)

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change



Black-necked Crane

Posted On: 05 FEB 2024 4:37PM by PIB Delhi



- The Black-necked Crane (*Grus nigricollis*) is listed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according them the highest degree of protection.
- The species is also listed in Appendix I of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora and the Convention on conservation of Migratory Species.
- *Grus nigricollis* is listed as Near Threatened
- The birds are found in India, China and Bhutan and breed in high-altitude wetlands of the Tibetan plateau of China and eastern Ladakh in India at an elevation ranging from 2950 to 4900 meters above mean sea level.