# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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# 22nd meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG)

**Syllabus:GS2/International Organisation**

**In News**

- Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) hosted the 22nd meeting of the Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

**More about the News**

- The SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meets once every year to discuss a strategy for multilateral cooperation, adopt Organisation's annual budget, etc.
- The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar called for Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to work together to promote stability and prosperity in the region by strictly adhering to the principles of international law, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other and encouraging economic cooperation.

- He also said that the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** and the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** could become **"prosperity enablers.**
- India is focused on **five new verticals of cooperation**- Startups and Innovation, Traditional Medicine, Science and Technology, Youth Empowerment and Shared Buddhist Heritage.

**Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**

- **About:** It is an organization that focuses on political, economic, international security, and defense matters in Eurasia. It holds the distinction of being the largest regional organization in terms of geographic coverage and population.
- **Genesis:** The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was founded on June 15, 2001, by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, succeeding the Shanghai Five.
- **Members of SCO:** It has 9 members, including China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.
- **Permanent Bodies**: Secretariat in Beijing (China) and Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent (Uzbekistan).
- **Significance of the SCO:**
    - **Cooperation on Security:** The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) addresses security concerns, including terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
        - Initiatives like the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) combat issues like human trafficking, weapons trafficking, and terrorism.
        - Collaborates with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) for enhanced security, crime, and drug trafficking cooperation.
        - Focuses on countering cyber warfare and harmful information dissemination.
    - **Military Activities:** Promotes military cooperation, intelligence sharing, and counterterrorism efforts.
        - Conducts joint military exercises for better coordination against terrorism and external threats.
        - Does not directly engage in conflicts but maintains regional peace and stability through exercises and cooperation.
    - **Economic Cooperation:** Aims to enhance economic collaboration among member states.
        - Emphasizes joint energy projects, oil and gas exploration, water resource utilization, and funding via the SCO Interbank Consortium.
        - Prioritizes economic initiatives and joint resource use for food and energy security.
    - **Cultural Cooperation:** Culture ministers meet regularly to strengthen cultural exchange.
        - Organizes events like art festivals and exhibitions to promote cultural exchange among member states.

**Conclusion**

- The continuous movement of goods, ideas and people traversing the region has left indelible imprints on our customs, traditions, language and cuisine. These historical relationships should now create a template for greater economic cooperation

**Source: TH**

# Rashtriya Gokul Mission

**Syllabus:GS:3/Animal Husbandry**

**News**

- Recently concerns were raised for promoting only one indigenous variety, the Gir cow, under Rashtriya Gokul Mission.

**Rashtriya Gokul Mission**

- **The Rashtriya Gokul Mission** was rolled out in **2014**, for development and conservation of indigenous bovine breeds and genetics upgradation of bovine population.
- It is continued under revised and realigned scheme of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying from **2021-22 to 2025-26** with an allocation of **Rs.2400 crore**. It has two major components:
    - **Research and development of high-quality semen** to increase the chances of female calf births and
    - **The setting up of semen stations** to ensure easy access to high-quality semen for livestock rearers across the country.
- The facilities made available to farmers under Rashtriya Gokul Mission are as follows:
    - **Implementation of Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme** to extend Artificial insemination coverage in the districts with less than 50% coverage.
    - **Implementation of Accelerated breed improvement programme** using bovine In-Vitro Fertilization Technology (IVF) for faster genetic upgradation of bovines.
    - Educated rural youth are inducted as **Multi Purpose Artificial Insemination Technicians in Rural India (MAITRIs)** for delivery of quality artificial insemination services and veterinary first aid at farmers' doorstep.

**Concern under RGM**

- The initiative was started with the idea that research will be carried out on a host of high milk-yielding indigenous bovine varieties such as **Sahiwal, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi** and then depending on the geographical location, the high-quality semen will be used to impregnate other indigenous varieties.

- However almost all states are demanding Gir varieties for carrying out artificial insemination.

**Reason behind the popularity of Gir breed**

- **Initial success:**The mission was started in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh where milk production of indigenous bovine varieties impregnated with Gir increased by three to four liters a day. Subsequently, livestock rearers across the country started to demand only Gir breed.
- **Adaptability:** Gir is a native of the west and central parts of India and has the ability to adapt to the entire central belt and northern and southern stretches. In contrast, Sahiwal, a native of Northern India or Tharparkar, from the Northwest, does not adapt as well to new environments.
- **Higher milk production:** A purebred Gir has the highest milk production among indigenous varieties at 18-20 liters a day. Farmers prefer Gir as they are calmer in nature than other indigenous varieties which helps in milk collection.

**Concluding remark**

- India has a diverse cow population each suited for a specific region. Therefore there is a need for promotion of a variety of breed according to the region specific requirements.
- If we constantly crossbreed indigenous varieties then over time the graded varieties might completely lose the region specific traits.

**Source:**DTE

# Interconnected Disaster Risks Report 2023

**Syllabus: GS3/Ecology & Environment**

**In News**

- Recently, the **United Nations University — Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)** released a report titled **Interconnected Disaster Risks Report 2023**, which highlighted the world's interdependence as well as **impending global tipping points.**

**Key findings of the report**

- The report examines a number of specific instances of disasters that occur each year and explains the connections between them and human actions.
- It introduces the concept of **"risk tipping points," or times when socio-ecological systems can no longer buffer risks** and face a greater risk of catastrophic consequences.
- **Tipping Points:** According to the report, the world is approaching six environmental tipping points -
    - **Groundwater Depletion:**
        - Aquifer-stored groundwater is critical for over 2 billion people, with 70% used for agriculture.

        - In certain places, such as Saudi Arabia, over-extraction has led to the depletion of over 80% of the aquifer. Food security is hampered by this forced dependency on imported crops.
        - In India, Punjab has 78% of its wells classified as overexploited, and by 2025, groundwater availability in the country's northwest is expected to drop extremely low.
    - **Melting Mountain Glaciers:**
        - The glaciers lost 267 gigatons of ice annually between 2000 and 2019. Even with modest warming, it is predicted that by 2100, we will have lost about 50% of our glaciers.
        - The more than 90,000 glaciers in the Hindu Kush, Karakoram, and Himalayan regions are in danger, endangering the lives of almost 870 million people who depend on them.
    - **Unbearable Heat:**
        - In this context, the tipping point is a "wet-bulb temperature" above 35°C, which combines temperature and humidity.
        - When the "wet-bulb temperature" exceeds 35°C for more than six hours, organ failure and brain damage can occur.
        - Wet-bulb temperatures in India exceeded 34°C during a heatwave in 2023.

**Wet-Bulb Temperature**
The wet-bulb temperature is defined as the temperature of a parcel of air cooled to saturation (100% relative humidity) by water evaporation, with the parcel supplying the latent heat.

    - **Accelerating Species Extinctions:**
        - Human-caused extinction rates are now hundreds of times higher than natural rates. Extinction can set off a chain reaction that leads to the collapse of ecosystems.
        - Over 400 vertebrate species have become extinct in the last century, and an estimated one million plant and animal species are on the verge of extinction.
    - **Space Debris:**
        - The increasing number of satellites in space is causing a problem with space debris.
        - There are 34,260 objects orbiting the Earth, with only about 25% of them being operational satellites. Space debris, such as broken satellites and discarded rocket stages, is among the remaining objects.
        - These fast-moving objects create a hazardous orbital environment by endangering operational satellites through collisions.
    - **Uninsurable Future:**
        - Since the 1970s, severe weather has caused a sevenfold increase in damages, with USD 313 billion in losses estimated in 2022.
        - As extreme weather events become more hazardous, insurance premiums have risen by up to 57% since 2015.

        - For example, due to increased flood risk, approximately 520,940 homes in Australia may become uninsurable by 2030.

**Major Drivers of Increasing Disaster Risks**

- **Rapid Urbanization:**Occurs in the absence of adequate planning and infrastructure development.
    - As cities grow in size, more people and property are exposed to hazards such as floods and earthquakes, increasing disaster vulnerability.
- **Insufficient Infrastructure:** Bridges, buildings, and roads that are not properly built or maintained are prone to collapse during disasters, causing enormous losses in terms of both money and people.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Natural ecosystems are weakened by pollution, soil erosion, and deforestation.
    - The effects of hazards are amplified when ecosystems' capacity to function as disaster buffers is diminished.
- **Inadequate Land Use Planning:** Communities settle in high-risk locations, such as floodplains or areas vulnerable to wildfires, as a result of poor land use planning. This raises the risk of being affected by disasters.
    - Issues with Water Management: Inadequate use of available water supplies can result in flooding, droughts, and shortages.
- **Issues with Water Management:** Inadequate use of available water supplies can result in flooding, droughts, and shortages.
- **Global Interconnectedness:** As the world becomes more connected, disruptions in one area can have global consequences.
    - This interconnectedness has the potential to spread the economic and social consequences of disasters.

**Recommend to Mitigate Disaster Risk**

- **Four-category framework** for classifying and prioritizing solutions to address disaster risks:
    - **Avoid Delay:** These are measures meant to avert disasters by reducing their pace with existing techniques.
        - For instance, enforcing stringent land-use and building codes to avert significant damage from natural disasters.
    - **Avoid Transform:** These actions aim to prevent disasters by fundamentally changing how things are done.
        - For instance, transitioning from fossil fuel-based energy production to renewable energy sources (such as solar and wind) to avoid the risks associated with climate change.
    - **Adapt Delay:** These steps give us extra time to react appropriately in the event of a disaster, preparing us for managing it.
        - As an illustration, creating effective tsunami early warning systems to give people extra time to evacuate and get ready for the calamity.
    - **Adapt Transform:** These steps entail fundamentally altering our way of life in order to better prepare for emergencies.
        - To prepare for rising sea levels, for instance, coastal zoning laws should be put into place and natural barrier ecosystems, like mangroves, should be restored.

**Conclusion**

- These risk tipping points highlight the importance and need for adopting proactive measures, transformational changes, and global cooperation in mitigating their impact and building a sustainable future for all.

**United Nations University – Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)**

- It is an academic arm of the United Nations and acts as a global think tank.
- Established in 2003
- Its mission is to carry out research on risks and adaptation related to environmental hazards and global change.

Source: Indian Express

# The 2023 State of the Climate Report

**Syllabus: GS3/Environment**

**Context**

- BioScience journal published a report stating that life on earth 'under siege' as climate change pushes the planet into **'uncharted territory'.**

**About**

- According to the **'2023 State of the Climate Report: Entering Uncharted Territory,**' published in the **BioScience journal** said that the Earth's 'vital signs' are worse than humans have ever seen, putting life on the planet in peril.

**Highlights of the Report**

- **'Vital Signs' of the Planet in Crisis: 20 out of the 35** signs, that are used by the scientists to track climate change, are at record extremes.
    - Many climate-related records were **broken by 'enormous margins' in 2023**, particularly those related to *global air temperature, ocean temperature, melting of Antarctic sea ice, and loss of the world's forests*.
    - However, a few vital signs are moving in the *right direction, like levels of renewable energy* are at an all-time high and continuing to rise.
- **Fossil Fuel Subsidy:** Report emphasises actions by certain governments are **artificially lowering the cost of energy production** by raising the fossil fuel subsidy.
    - It highlights that **fossil fuel subsidies doubled** from $531 billion in 2021 to just over $1 trillion in 2022.
- **Unprecedented Extreme Events:** There are already global average temperatures more than 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. The highest average surface temperature of the planet was **recorded in July** this year.
    - According to the World Meteorological Organisation, **1.5 °C of warming** will start to **become the norm in the next five years** – and become permanent by the mid-2030s.

    - It is estimated that **concentrations of carbon dioxide** stand as high as this **haven't been seen since the Pliocene** around four million years ago.
- **Impacts on Human Well-being:** By the end of the 21st century, as many as **three to six billion people** may find themselves **outside the Earth's liveable regions**, meaning they will be encountering *severe heat, limited food availability, elevated mortality rates, social unrest, and geopolitical conflict*.
- **Atmospheric CO2 Levels:** The amount of CO2 in the atmosphere is forecast to be 419.2 parts per million (ppm), and the global average last year was 417.2 ppm. In the past **50 years, we have added 100 ppm of CO2 to the atmosphere**.
- **Climate Justice and Resilient Development:** The report focuses on the critical need for action that considers **climate justice and focuses on climate resilient development**. It outlines that by *sharing best practices, technology, effective policy measures, and mobilising sufficient finance*, any community can decrease or prevent the usage of carbon-intensive consumption methods.

**Our climate in numbers:**

- 1.1°C – the temperature Earth has warmed by since 1880.
- 4.93 tonnes – the average carbon dioxide emission of every person on Earth.
- 150% – levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere compared before the Industrial Revolution.
- 1.75 million square kilometres – the area of sea ice lost in the Antarctic in 2023, compared to the 1981-2010 average.

**How to improve Earth's vital signs?**

- Report **identified and recommended key areas** focusing on the *climate crisis, and its effect on biodiversity, food security and disease etc*. These include:
    - **Curbing** global warming and phasing out the use of fossil fuels;
    - **Prioritising** and expanding **nature-based solutions** to this problem;
    - Technologies to take greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere, and exploring the **negative emissions technology**.
    - **Cooperation** between people, government organisations and institutions to support the needs of people and the planet.
    - **Ensuring social and climate justice** for the world's countries, with nations needing to share resources more equally so that everyone can benefit.
- **Other measures** and strategies highlighted in the report are like avoiding catastrophic climate change impacts; protecting public health; mitigating social inequities; and international cooperation.

**Impacts of Climate Change**

- **Global Warming:** Climate change leads to an increase in the average temperature of the Earth, causing global warming. The world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history.
- **Extreme Weather Events:** Changes in climate lead to shifts in weather patterns, resulting in more frequent and severe weather events like floods, droughts, heatwaves, and intense rain.
- **Rising Sea Levels:** The planet's oceans are warming, ice caps are melting, and sea levels are rising. This poses a significant threat to coastal communities and ecosystems.
- **Impact on Biodiversity:** Changes in climate influence the geographic ranges of many plant and animal species and the timing of their lifecycle events, such as migration and reproduction.
- **Health Risks:** Warmer temperatures increase the frequency, intensity, and duration of heat waves, posing health risks, particularly for young children and the elderly. Climate change can also impact human health by worsening air and water quality and increasing the spread of certain diseases.
- **Economic Impact:** Increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events can cause costly disruptions to society, increase losses to property, and reduce the affordability of insurance.
- **Threat to Food Security:** Rising global temperatures can lead to massive crop and fishery collapse, threatening global food security.
- **Displacement of Communities:** Certain communities may become uninhabitable due to the effects of climate change.

**Way Forward**

- Report aimed at the **underlying issue of 'ecological overshoot'.** When humanity's demand for Earth's resources is too large, it results in an array of environmental crises, including biodiversity decline. Any strategy that focuses only on carbon emissions or the climate will just redistribute the pressure.
- **Coordinated efforts** in each of these areas could help to support a broader agenda focused on holistic and equitable climate policy.

Source: IE

# Facts In News

## Tectonic Plates on ancient Venus

**Syllabus:** GS3/Science & Technology

**In News**

- According to new research, Earth's sister planet-Venus may have supported microbial life billions of years ago due to tectonic activity.

**Key findings**

- According to the study, tectonic activity on Venus may have occurred between 4.5 billion and 3.5 billion years ago.
- The atmosphere of the planet is mostly made up of carbon dioxide (96.5%) and nitrogen (less than 3.5%).

**Plate Tectonics**

- Plate tectonics is a scientific theory that describes how the Earth's thin outer shell is broken up into large chunks known as tectonic plates, which float on the planet's mantle.
- Plate tectonics created oceans, continents, and mountains, as well as playing an important role in sustaining life on Earth.

- The **two planets (Earth and Venus)** are thought to have formed at the same time in the same solar system, operating in the same plate tectonic regime with the same mode of tectonics that allowed for life on Earth today.
- According to experts plate tectonics would have likely ended on Venus after it lost water & atmosphere which got too hot and thick, leading to drying up of necessary ingredients that make tectonic movements possible.
- In terms of size, mass, density, and volume, Venus and Earth are alike.
- Researchers concluded that only early plate tectonics could explain the current Venusian atmosphere and surface pressure by comparing it to those generated by computer models.

**About Venus**

- Venus is approximately the same size as Earth with primary rock composition, with an iron-nickel core.
- Surface temperatures on Venus can reach up to 475 degrees Celsius, which is hotter than the surface of Mercury.
- It is covered in thick clouds that obscure the surface from visible light, making it challenging to observe from space.
- It has many volcanoes, including some that are much larger than those found on Earth. One example is Maat Mons, which is one of the highest volcanoes in the solar system.
- Several space missions have been sent to study Venus, including the Soviet Union's Venera program in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as NASA's Magellan spacecraft in the 1990s.

Source: DTE

# Highest cancer incidence rate in India: Mizoram

**Syllabus: GS2/Health Issues**

**Context:**

- The **'Cancer awareness, diagnosis and treatment needs in Mizoram, India: evidence from 18 years trends (2003–2020)'** was published in The Lancet Regional Health — Southeast Asia.

**Highlights of the Report**

- Mizoram, despite being India's second least populated state, has the **highest incidence rate of cancer in the country**.
- An 18-year trend study notes a consistent uptick in cancer incidence and mortality. **The primary cause** of cancer-related deaths among **men is stomach cancer**, while **lung cancer** is the leading cause among **women**.
- Cancer incidence and mortality are growing among the **younger generation in Mizoram**, possibly due to lifestyle patterns contributing to **a genetic predisposition** within the **endogamous tribal population**.

**Do you know?**

- **Cancer incidence and mortality data** were extracted from the **Mizoram Population Based Cancer Registry (PBCR)** spanning the years 2003–2020.
  - PBCR was supported by funding from the National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research of the Indian Council of Medical Research
- A **parliamentary committee** (in August, 2023) urged the Union Ministry of Health **to expand coverage of population-based registries to rural areas** to help with *'data-driven and evidence-based policy formulation'* (currently **less than 1% of the rural population** is included in **Population Based Cancer Registry**).

**Cancer: a deadly disease**

- According to the **World Health Organisation**, cancer is a large group of diseases that can start in **almost any organ or tissue of the body** when **abnormal cells grow uncontrollably**, and go beyond their usual boundaries to **invade adjoining parts of the body** or spread to other organs.
- It is the **second leading cause of death globally**, accounting for one in six deaths in 2018.
  - **Lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach and liver cancer** are the most common types of cancer in men, while **breast, colorectal, lung, cervical and thyroid cancer** are the most common among women.

Source: TH

# Reference Fuels

**Syllabus: GS3/ Energy Sector**

**Context**

- India began producing 'reference' petrol and diesel, joining a select league of nations that produce the highly specialized fuel which is used for testing automobiles.
    - Indian Oil Corporation Limited launched **India's first gasoline and diesel Reference Fuel (RF).**
    - Currently, reference fuels are being **imported by India.**

**About**

- Reference fuels are specially formulated and standardized blends of hydrocarbons used in research and testing within the automotive and fuels industry.
- 'Reference' petrol and diesel strictly conform to government-mandated regulations, encompassing parameters such as cetane number, flash point, viscosity, sulphur and water content, hydrogen purity, and acid number.
- These specialized fuels are vital for conducting emission tests on vehicles equipped with spark ignition engines, ensuring accurate and reliable assessment of emissions.

**Significance**

- It is part of the **four-pronged energy security strategy** which includes diversification of energy supplies, increasing exploration and production footprint, alternate energy sources and meeting energy transition through gas-based economy, and green hydrogen and EVs adopted by the government to make the nation 'energy-independent' by 2047.

Source: PIB

# Credit Information Companies (CICs)

**Syllabus: GS3/Economy**

**Context**

- RBI has directed **credit information companies (CICs)** to alert customers through SMS or email when their Credit Information Report (CIR) is accessed by banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs).

**Credit Information Companies (CICs)**

- These are organisations that **collect, maintain, and analyse** the consumer and business credit information of individuals and companies across the nation, as provided by financial institutions.
- At present, there are **four CICs in India**, namely, *Credit Information Bureau (India) Limited (CIBIL), Equifax Credit Information Services Private Limited, Experian Credit Information Company of India Private Limited, and CRIF High*

*Mark Credit Information Services Private Limited* **licensed by the Reserve Bank of India.**

- **Role:** CICs play an invaluable role by collecting an individual's data about their debt repayment and its history and providing these inputs to financial institutions.
    - Whenever an individual approaches a bank/financial institution to avail loans, the bank will be concerned about the repayment capacity of the individual.
    - The repayment capacity can be traced from the loan repayment history of the individual.
- **Credit Information Report (CIR):** Based on the provided data, CICs prepare CIR for individuals and Credit Company Report (CCR) for companies.
    - CICs further calculate and generate credit scores for individuals and credit ranks for companies as per their creditworthiness and past credit history.
- **Regulation:** CICs are regulated by the **Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act, 2005 (CICRA)** which is **binding for the Credit information Companies as well as for financial institutions**.

Source:IE

# Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) Awards

**Syllabus: Miscellaneous**

## In News

- Since 1958, only 20 of the 592 Bhatnagar prizes – among the most prestigious science awards in India – have gone to women scientists.

## About Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) awards

- The award is named after the founder Director of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) India, the late Dr (Sir) Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar and is known as the '**Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) Prize** for Science and Technology'.
- The Prize is given each year for outstanding contributions to science and technology.
- **Nature of the Prize:** SSB Prizes, each of the value of Rs 5,00,000 (Rupees five lakh only), are awarded annually for notable and outstanding research, applied or fundamental, in the following disciplines:
    - Biological Sciences,
    - Chemical Sciences,
    - Earth, Atmosphere, Ocean and Planetary Sciences,

    - Engineering Sciences,
    - (v) Mathematical Sciences,
    - (vi) Medical Sciences and
    - (vii) Physical Sciences.
- **Purpose :** To recognise outstanding Indian work in science and technology.
- **Eligibility:** Any citizen of India engaged in research in any field of science and technology up to the age of 45 years as reckoned on 31st December of the year preceding the year of the Prize.
    - Overseas citizens of India (OCI) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) working in India are also eligible.
    - The Prize is awarded on the basis of contributions made through work done primarily in India during the five years preceding the year of the Prize. (For this purpose 'primarily' will mean 'for the most part')

Source:IE

# Presence of avian flu for the first time in the Antarctic region

**Syllabus :GS 2/Health**

## In News

Scientists have detected the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) for the first time in the Antarctic region, raising concerns for remote populations of penguins and seals.

## More in news

- The HPAI was detected in **brown skua (a predatory seabird)** populations on Bird Island, South Georgia, making it the first known case in the Antarctic region.

## About HPAI

- The viral disease **HPIA or avian influenza,** especially the **H5 and H7** strains, mostly **affects birds**.
    - These strains are **highly pathogenic** and have been reported in domestic poultry, resulting in high mortality if they manage to reach wild bird populations.
- The virus is known to spread among **birds and mammals** due to predators and scavengers feeding on infected birds.
    - In recent cases, marine mammals have also been found to be infected.
- The ongoing outbreak of HPAI H5N1 was first reported in 2022.
- In 2022 and 2023, HPAI H5N1 spread rapidly in South America.
- **Vulnerability of**
    - **Species :** The most threatened avian group are gulls and skuas. They are followed by birds of prey such as hawks and caracaras, terns and shorebirds.

        - Among marine mammals, fur seals and sea lions are reportedly most vulnerable, followed by southern elephant seals and dolphins.
    - **Areas :** Sub-Antarctic islands between the southernmost tip of South America and the Antarctic Peninsula with the Falkland Islands are at most risk.
        - The risks are significantly high due to the presence of other vulnerable wildlife groups.

**Do you know ?**

- Bird flu, also known as avian influenza, is a type A influenza virus. It is lethal to poultry and is potentially fatal in humans.

**Source:DTE**

# POCSO Division

**Syllabus :GS 2/Polity and Governance**

## In News

A member of the POCSO Division of the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) alleged in a letter to the Secretary of DCPCR, that the POCSO Division has no working staff.

## POCSO Division

- The POCSO Division primarily focuses on preventive measures, awareness on issues concerning sexual safety of the children.
- It also works to encourage reporting of the instances of sexual violence, and then tracks the legal proceedings, compensation, education and other rehabilitative standards and their implementation for the children victims of sexual violence.
- In 2019, DCPCR collaborated with NGOs working in the field of child protection to initiate 'Project Smile Club' to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of child sexual abuse.

**Do you know ?**

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses (POCSO) Act, 2012 was enacted by Govt. of India to safeguard children from sexual abuse and sexual offences.
    - The Act clearly defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years. The POCSO Act provides punishment as per the gravity of offence.
- The Act was further **reviewed and amended in 2019** to Introduce more stringent punishment including the death penalty for Committing sexual crimes on children, with a view to deter the perpetrators & prevent such crimes against children.
- The Government of India has also notified the **POCSO Rules, 2020**.
    - Rule-9 of the POCSO Rules provides that the Special Court may, in appropriate cases, on its own or on an application filed by or on behalf of

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| | the child, pass an order for interim compensation to meet the needs of the child for relief or rehabilitation at any stage after registration of the First Information Report (FIR). Such interim compensation paid to the child shall be adjusted against the final compensation, if any. |

Source:IE