

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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Table of Content

Global Land Outlook Thematic Report on Rangelands and Pastoralists

Water For Shared Prosperity Report

Jointness 2.0: Joint Culture in Armed Forces

SC Stayed Project in the Forest Area of Uttarakhand

NEWS IN SHORT

Saint Lalon Shah Fakir

Buddha Jayanti Utsav (aka Buddha Purnima and Vesak)

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Ganga Jatara

Doppler Radar Speed Guns

Pig Butchering Scam

Copernicus programme

Naegleria Fowleri or 'Brain-eating' Amoeba

Furlough

World Bee Day

Link between altered X-chromosome Inactivation and Autoimmune Diseases

GLOBAL LAND OUTLOOK THEMATIC REPORT ON RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS

Context

- According to the report by the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD), pastoralists in India, who rear livestock and depend on grasslands, need better recognition of their rights and access to markets.

Key Findings of report

- Almost half of the world's rangelands are degraded** due to climate change, population growth, land-use change and growing farmlands.
- Pastoralists are a marginalized community** with little influence on policy decisions, resulting in uncertainty over access to common land and land rights.
- Grasslands have been virtually overlooked** in environmental conservation and ecosystem restoration policies in favor of forestry-based interventions, which includes converting natural grasslands into plantation forests or other uses.
- Degradation:** Less than **5 percent** of India's grasslands fall within protected areas, and the total grassland area declined from **18 to 12 million** hectares between 2005 and 2015.

What are Rangelands?

- Rangelands are characterized by low vegetation and comprise grasslands, shrublands, wetlands, desert, semi-arid land, mountain pastures, plateaus and tundra.
- They cover **80 million sq km**, which is **54 percent** of the earth's land surface.
- These rangelands are an important ecosystem to fight against climate change as they act as carbon sinks and prevent soil erosion, land degradation and desertification.

Rangelands in India

- Rangelands occupy about **121 million hectares** in India and a large part (around 100 million hectares) of these is considered underutilized.
- The report highlighted that around 120 million hectares of land in India is degraded due to **water erosion** (82 million hectares), **wind erosion** (12 million hectares), **chemical contamination** (25 million hectares), and **physical degradation** (1 million hectares).

Pastoralist communities in India

- Pastoralists contribute to the economy through livestock rearing and milk production.
- The population of pastoralist communities, comprising groups such as Maldharis, Van Gujjars and Rabaris, among others, is estimated to be 20 million or more.
- The livestock sector of the economy contributes **4 percent** of national gross domestic product and **26 percent** of agricultural gross domestic product.
- India** accounts for **20 percent** of the world's livestock population.

Government measures

- Forest Rights Act 2006** has helped pastoralists obtain grazing rights across states in the country.
- Government through welfare schemes has provided assistance to pastoralists under the **National Livestock Mission, Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund** and the **Rashtriya Gokul Mission** on sustainable dairy production.
- India has launched several programmes to combat land degradation including the **National Afforestation Programme, Green India Mission, and Watershed Development Component.**

Suggestion

- Integrated climate change mitigation** and adaptation strategies with sustainable rangeland management plans are needed to increase carbon sequestration and storage while boosting the resilience of pastoralist and rangeland communities.
- Avoid rangeland conversion** that diminish the diversity and multifunctionality of rangelands, especially on indigenous and communal lands.
- Adopt and support pastoralism-based strategies** that help mitigate harms to rangeland health, such as climate change, overgrazing, soil erosion, invasive species, drought, and wildfires.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- UNCCD was **established in 1994** to protect and restore the land and ensure a safer, just, and more sustainable future.
- is the **only legally binding framework** set up to address desertification and the effects of drought.
- There are **197 Parties** to the Convention, including 196 country Parties and the **European Union.**

Source: IE

WATER FOR SHARED PROSPERITY REPORT

Context

- The World Bank has released the **Water For Shared Prosperity report** at the 10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia.

About

- It highlights the **global inequalities in water access and recommends pro-poor and inclusive interventions** to improve water security and boosting shared prosperity.
- The report emphasises the widening gap in access to water resources and services, with implications for human and economic development worldwide.

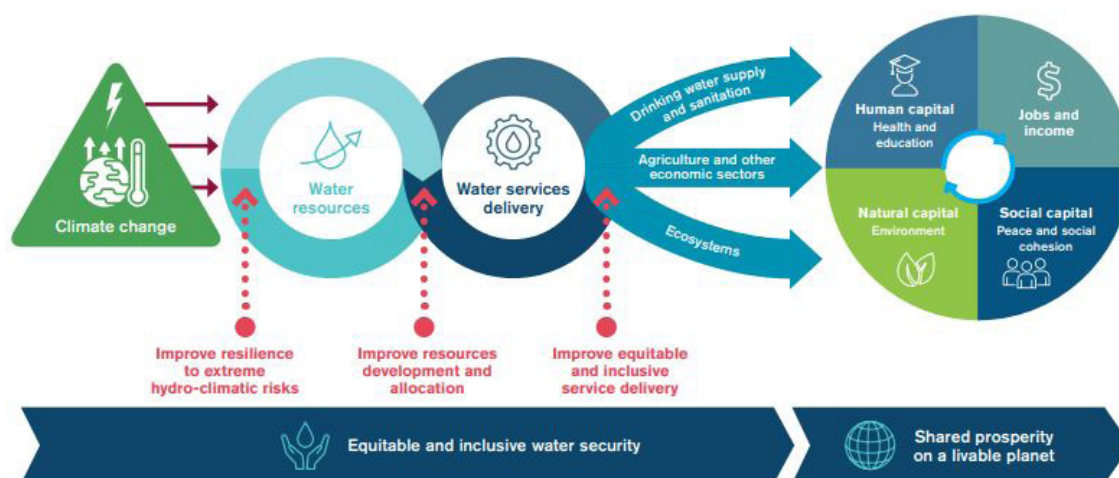
World Water Forum

- The World Water Forum is organized **every three years between the World Water Council and a host country**.
- The Forum provides a unique platform where the water community and key decision makers can collaborate and make long-term progress on global water challenges.
- The Forum brings together participants from all levels and areas, including politics, multilateral institutions, academia, civil society and the private sector, among others.

Major Highlights of the Report

- **Water determines prosperity through** three primary channels: as safe drinking water, as an essential input for various economic sectors, and as a critical support for ecosystems.

FIGURE ES.1 Equitable and Inclusive Water Security for Shared Prosperity on a Livable Planet



- **Access to Safe Water:** In 2022, 2.2 billion people lacked access to safely managed drinking water services, while 3.5 billion lacked access to safely managed sanitation.
 - ♦ Low-income countries, in particular, have seen regression in access to safe drinking water, with an additional 197 million people lacking access since 2000.
- **Rural - Urban Gap:** Eight out of ten people who do not have access to basic drinking water and sanitation services live in rural areas, and little progress has been made in closing the rural-urban access gap in low-income countries over the last two decades.
- **Most Water Stressed:** Hotspots in the Sahel, Southeastern Africa, and South and Central Asia are the most water stressed.
 - ♦ The Democratic Republic of the Congo has more than half of Africa's total water resources.
- **Climate change:** Climate change is also increasing water-related risks.
 - ♦ Between 2000 and 2021, developing countries experienced more severe droughts and longer-lasting floods than advanced economies, which had long-term consequences for nutrition, school attendance, and economic welfare.

- **Risk of Drought:** Globally, over 800 million people are at high risk of drought, with twice as many living in flood-prone areas.
- **Employment:** Water-intensive sectors account for 56 percent of jobs in low-income countries but only 20 percent in high-income countries.
 - ◆ In Sub-Saharan Africa, where water-dependent jobs account for 62 percent of total employment, low rainfall availability frequently results in significant negative gross domestic product or GDP growth.
- **Poor Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):** At the global level, during 2019 alone, poor WASH conditions contributed to between 1.4 and 4.2 million deaths.
 - ◆ Lack of access to WASH also affects optimal cognitive development, school attainment, labor productivity, and income.

Recommendations

- **Enhancing resilience** to extreme hydro-climatic risks for the poorest by
 - ◆ Setting up robust and inclusive early-warning systems.
 - ◆ Developing insurance programs for weather risks.
 - ◆ Scaling up social protection schemes to assist vulnerable communities impacted by floods, droughts, or both.
- **Improving water resources development, management, and allocation by**
 - ◆ Scaling up nature-based solutions through innovative financing schemes and evidence-based approaches.
 - ◆ Enabling coordination of and cooperation for water allocation through information sharing and financial incentives.
 - ◆ Adopting water accounting to inform water allocation decisions.
- **Improving equitable and inclusive service delivery by**
 - ◆ Scaling up financing through institutional and tariff reforms.
 - ◆ Creating an enabling regulatory and policy environment to promote innovations.
 - ◆ Improving coordination of institutions responsible for water, health, education, and urban planning.

Scarcity of Water in India

- India has **18 percent** of the world's population, but only **4 percent** of its water resources, making it among the **most water-stressed in the world**.
- A NITI Aayog report, '**Composite Water Management Index**' (2018) has said that India is facing its '**worst**' water crisis in history, with more than 600 million people facing acute water shortages.
- India is facing a **threat of water shortage** as **water levels in reservoirs** across India have reported lower storage levels than last year.

Government Initiatives to Tackle Shortage of Water in India

- **National Water Mission (NWM):** NWM aims to conserve water, minimize wastage, and ensure equitable distribution of water across various sectors.
 - ◆ It focuses on promoting water use efficiency, groundwater recharge, and sustainable development of water resources.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):** Launched in **2019**, the Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide piped water supply to all rural households by 2024.
- **Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY):** Launched in **2019**, the Atal Bhujal Yojana aims to improve groundwater management and promote sustainable groundwater use in identified water-stressed areas across India.
- **The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT):** It was launched in 2015 in selected 500 cities and focuses on the development of basic urban infrastructure in the Mission cities in the sectors of water supply, sewerage & septage management, storm water drainage, green spaces & parks and non-motorized urban transport.
- **Namami Gange Programme:** Launched in **2014**, it aims to rejuvenate the River Ganga and its tributaries by addressing pollution, promoting sustainable wastewater management, and restoring the ecological health of the river basin.
- **Interlinking of Rivers (ILR):** The National Water Development Agency (NWDA) has been entrusted with the work of inter-linking of rivers under the National Perspective Plan (NPP).
 - ◆ NPP has two components, viz., Himalayan Rivers Development Component and Peninsular Rivers Development Component.
 - ◆ 30 link projects have been identified under NPP.

Conclusion

- Water resources that are managed effectively and equitably can foster community trust, inclusivity, and cooperation, ultimately leading to peace.
- However, if mismanaged, water can act as a threat multiplier, exacerbating existing conflicts or leading to new conflicts.

Source: DTE

JOINTNESS 2.0: JOINT CULTURE IN ARMED FORCES

In News

- The **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** has called upon the three services to create a Joint Culture which are prerequisites to the creation of functional **Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC)**.

About the Joint Culture' in Armed Force

- The Indian Armed Forces have embarked on a transformative journey towards fostering a '**Joint Culture**'—a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing interoperability, efficiency, and combat readiness across its military branches.

Importance and Need

- The concept of Joint Culture within the armed forces is not merely about uniformity; it's about harmonising the distinct strengths and capabilities of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to forge a cohesive, formidable force.
- In an era where threats are becoming increasingly complex and multi-dimensional, the need for a unified approach to defence strategy and operations is paramount.
- **Jointness & Integration** are prerequisites to the creation of functional Integrated Theatre Commands,
 - ♦ The creation of such commands will separate the 'operational' functions from the Raise-Train-Sustain (RTS) and other administrative functions, and will allow greater focus of the operational commander to matters of security
- Integrated Theatre Commands will lead to many reforms like Single to Multi Domain operations, fusing space and cyberspace into traditional domains, digitisation of battlefield information and visualisation, net centric to data centric among others.

India's Stride Towards Jointness

- **India's Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** has been a **vocal advocate for the development of a Joint Culture**.
 - ♦ He emphasised the need for a de-novo approach that respects the uniqueness of each service while distilling the best of each to enhance war fighting ability and interoperability.
- The Indian Armed Forces have taken concrete steps towards this goal with initiatives such as the establishment of **Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC)**.
 - ♦ These commands are designed to streamline operational functions and foster a joint operational structure, propelling the forces into the next orbit of military preparedness
- The '**Joint Training Doctrine Indian Armed Forces - 2017**' underscores the importance of synergy and integration among the services. It serves as a foundation for promoting diplomacy, civil-military interface, and stimulating creativity for enhanced joint operations.
- **Various initiatives** of symbology that were being processed towards fostering the Joint Culture, **including Tri-Services participation** in national events.

Challenges

- The path to achieving a Joint Culture is fraught with challenges.
 - ♦ These include overcoming inter-service rivalries,
 - ♦ aligning strategic objectives, and ensuring equitable resource allocation.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

- The pursuit of a Joint Culture in the Indian Armed Forces is a testament to India's commitment to building a 'Future Ready' military.
- By embracing this culture, the forces aim to achieve greater strategic depth, operational flexibility, and a robust defense mechanism capable of countering contemporary and future threats.
- As the Indian Armed Forces continue to evolve, the Joint Culture will undoubtedly be the cornerstone of its quest for integrated military excellence.
- Joint Culture, though different from Service specific Culture, needs to respect the uniqueness of each service.

Integrated Theatre Command

- An integrated theatre command envisages a **unified command of the three Services**, under a single commander, for geographical theatres that are of security concern.
- The integrated theatre commander will **not be answerable to individual Services**, and will be free to train, equip and exercise his command to make it a cohesive fighting force capable of achieving designated goals.
- Recommended by Lieutenant General **D B Shekatkar Committee**.

Integrated vs Jointness

- **Jointness:** 3 Services progress and develop in their respective spheres with their independent identity.
- **Integrated Commands:** To merge individual service identities into a cohesive whole.

Advantages of Integrated Theatre Command

- **Better acclimatisation of troops** in the battlespace.
- Administrative and training requirements (Specialization).
- **Quick mobilization of troops** during an emergency.
- Optimisation of the resources
- **Prompt and precise decision making** (hierarchical redundancies).

Disadvantages of Integrated Theatre Command

- **Medium to high-intensity wars is a distant possibility.**
- Increasing the communication network eliminates the need for the new organisation.
- Limited **Domain knowledge**.
- Interoperability of troops will be **difficult and less effective**.
- May promote a sense of **“fighting battles, rather than fighting a war”**.

Current Command Structure in India

- **Current structure:** 17 different commands from Army, Navy and Airforce.
- Each command is headed by a **4-star rank military officer**.
- India only has **two tri-service commands (1st A&N and 2nd Strategic Forces Command)**.

Source: TH

SC STAYED PROJECT IN THE FOREST AREA OF UTTARAKHAND

Context

- The Supreme Court has temporarily **stayed the construction** of a 90-acre hotel and township project in the **Kumaon hills of Uttarakhand**.

About

- The stay was based on a special leave petition raising a question of law whether **“single window” clearances could replace prior environmental clearances** which were mandatory before commencement of huge constructions in ecologically fragile Uttarakhand.
- The petition sought a bar on the commencement of commercial projects in the State **without the requisite permission under law and comprehensive Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)**.
 - ♦ An EIA notification of 2006, clearly stated that **“prior environmental clearance is required before any construction work starts as opposed to an ex-post facto approval”**.

Fragile Ecology of Uttrakhand

- Most part of Uttarakhand is covered by **Himalayan peaks and glaciers**. The Himalayas are **young fold mountains**, formed a few million years ago.
- Tectonic activities like **thrusts, faults and plate collisions** are very common here, making the region **very unstable and sensitive**.
- As per a report, submitted in the Parliament in 2016, Uttarakhand has the **highest number of unstable zones** among north Himalayan state Himachal Pradesh and Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir.
- The adverse geological setting makes the state **highly susceptible to intense seismic shaking (earthquakes) and landslides**.

Concerns

- **Tourism:** The state's economy is majorly based on tourism. The number of people visiting the state as tourists is huge.
 - ♦ To cater to tourists, deforestation, mindless construction of hotels and lodges on river edges, widening of narrow lanes is happening on a large scale.

- ◆ These activities are cutting right into the toes of the delicate slopes of the state, thereby adding to the destabilizing process and exposing the state to nature's fury.
- **Climate Change:** As a result of climate change, the rate of melting of Himalayan snow has accelerated significantly since the beginning of the 21st century, leading to weakening of glaciers and increasing the water level in various river systems.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The mountainous terrain presents challenges for infrastructure development, which is crucial for economic growth.
 - ◆ Poor roads, inadequate connectivity, and limited access to basic services hinder business activities and discourage investment.
- **Unemployment and Migration:** The state grapples with unemployment issues, particularly among the youth.
 - ◆ Limited job opportunities often lead to migration to urban areas, resulting in a drain of talent and resources from rural areas.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Uttarakhand's fragile ecosystem faces threats from deforestation, unsustainable development practices, and natural disasters like landslides and floods.
 - ◆ Balancing economic growth with environmental conservation is a critical challenge.
- **Disaster Resilience Planning:** Integrate disaster resilience into infrastructure planning and design to minimize the impact of natural disasters such as floods, landslides, and earthquakes.
- **Community Engagement and Capacity Building:** Engage local communities in infrastructure planning, decision-making, and implementation to ensure that projects align with their needs, priorities, and traditional knowledge.

Source: TH

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Suggestions

- **Ecological Corridors:** Identify and preserve ecological corridors and wildlife habitats to maintain biodiversity and facilitate the movement of wildlife across the landscape.
- **Sustainable Tourism Development:** Develop eco-friendly accommodation options, promote responsible tourism behavior, and establish protected areas and nature reserves.
- **Renewable Energy Integration:** Promote the adoption of renewable energy technologies such as solar, wind, and small-scale hydropower to meet energy needs sustainably while minimizing the impact on the environment and local ecosystems.
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Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

SAINT LALON SHAH FAKIR

Context

- A three day long Indo-Bangla music festival began in Bangladesh to celebrate the 250th birth anniversary of Saint Lalon Shah Fakir.

About

- Lalon also known as Fakir Lalon Shah, or Mahatma Lalon was a prominent **Bengali philosopher, Baul saint, mystic song composer, social reformer** and thinker from the Indian subcontinent.
- Lalon also known as Fakir Lalon Shah was born in **1774 at Horishpur in Jhenaidah** district of modern Bangladesh.
- He is considered the most prominent figure of the **Baul tradition** of Bangladesh and India.
- He inspired and influenced people like **Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam** and the American poet **Allen Ginsberg** among others.

Source: AIR

BUDDHA JAYANTI UTSAV (AKA BUDDHA PURNIMA AND VESAK)

Context:

- It is observed that the 2,568th Buddha Jayanti Utsav and Vaishakhi Buddha Purnima will be celebrated at Venuban Buddha Vihara in Kunjaban, Agartala.

About the Buddha Jayanti Utsav

- It is a significant festival celebrated by Buddhists worldwide that **commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Siddhartha Gautama**, who later became known as Gautama Buddha.

Date and Significance:

- Buddha Jayanti falls on the **full moon day in the month of Vaisakha** according to the Hindu lunar calendar.
- Birth of Gautama Buddha:** According to **Theravada Tripitaka**, Gautama Buddha was born in Lumbini (now in Nepal) around 563 BCE.

Path to Enlightenment:

- Four Sights:** At age 29, Siddhartha ventured outside the palace and encountered **an elderly person, an ailing person, a corpse, and a serene ascetic**.
- Renunciation:** Moved by suffering, Siddhartha renounced his princely life, seeking answers to life's deeper questions.
- Enlightenment:** Under the **Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, Bihar**, Siddhartha attained enlightenment, becoming Gautama Buddha.

Three Major Events on Vesak:

- Birth:** Siddhartha was born on Vesak in Lumbini.
- Enlightenment:** He attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree on Vesak.
- Passing Away:** Gautama Buddha passed away to nirvana in Kusinara on Vesak.

Pilgrimage Sites in India

- Bodh Gaya, Bihar:** Where Buddha attained enlightenment.
- Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh:** Where he delivered his **first sermon**.
- Rajgir, Bihar:** Where he spent 12 years and convened the **First Buddhist Council**.

- Vaishali, Bihar:** Where he gave his **last sermon before Mahaparinirvana**.
- Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh:** The site of his **Mahaparinirvana**.

Buddha's Teachings

- Gautama Buddha preached **Dharma (duty), non-violence, harmony and kindness**.
- The teachings were recorded around **25 B.C.E. in Pali language**, into three Pitakas.
 - Vinaya Pitaka
 - Sutta Pitaka
 - Abhidhamma Pitaka
- Noble Eightfold Path**
 - Right Understanding
 - Right Thought
 - Right Speech
 - Right Action
 - Right Livelihood
 - Right Effort
 - Right Mindfulness and
 - Right Concentration.
- Four Noble Truths**
 - Truth of Suffering (Dukkha);
 - Truth of the Cause of Suffering;
 - Truth of the End of Suffering;
 - Truth of the Path that Leads to the End of Suffering.

Quotes of Buddha

- Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth.
- The mind is everything. What you think, you become.
- Peace comes from within.

Source: DD News

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

Context

- Recently, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) requested arrest warrants against leaders of Hamas and Israel's Prime Minister.

About International Criminal Court (ICC)

- It is the world's first permanent international criminal court **governed by Rome Statute**.
 - ♦ It was established to prosecute serious **international crimes committed by individuals**.
- It plays a crucial role in addressing impunity and ensuring accountability for grave offenses against humanity.
- It seeks to complement, not replace, national Courts, as a court of last resort.

Purpose and Jurisdiction

- **Genocide:** Acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.
- **War Crimes:** Violations of the laws and customs of war during armed conflicts.
- **Crimes Against Humanity:** Widespread and systematic attacks on civilians, including murder, torture, and sexual violence.
- **Aggression:** The use of armed force by a state against another state in violation of the UN Charter.
- **Complementarity:** The ICC complements national courts and intervenes only when states are unwilling or unable to prosecute these crimes effectively.

Membership and Non-Membership

- **Rome Statute:** The ICC's founding treaty, known as the Rome Statute, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1998 in Rome, Italy.
- **Membership:** Currently, 124 countries are parties to the Rome Statute.
 - ♦ African countries constitute the largest bloc.
- **Non-Members:** Notably, some significant countries have **not ratified the Rome Statute**, that include **India, China**, Iraq, North Korea, Turkey, **United States, Russia**, Israel, Syria etc.

Functioning

- **Office of the Prosecutor:** The ICC carries out investigations through its Office of the Prosecutor.
- **Judges:** The court has 18 judges who serve non-renewable nine-year terms.
- **Impartiality:** The ICC aims to ensure impartial justice, regardless of the accused's rank or stature.

Additional Information

How is the International Criminal Court (ICC) different from the International Court of Justice (ICJ)?

Purpose and Function

- The ICC is primarily a criminal court that focuses on individual criminal responsibility for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. It prosecutes individuals rather than states.
- The ICJ, on the other hand, is the **main legal arm of the United Nations**. It **serves as a civil court** and aims **to resolve legal disputes between states**. Its role is to provide advisory opinions on international legal matters.

Jurisdiction

- The **ICC's** jurisdiction extends to prosecuting individuals who commit serious international crimes. **It operates independently** and is not affiliated with the United Nations.
- The **ICJ's** jurisdiction involves cases between states. It settles disputes related to **territorial boundaries, treaties, and other legal matters**.

Membership

- The ICC is a permanent, autonomous court. It is not directly linked to the United Nations, although it collaborates with it.
- The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and is part of the UN system. It consists of judges elected by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

Headquarters

- **Both the ICC and the ICJ** are headquartered in **The Hague, Netherlands**, which sometimes leads to confusion due to their proximity.

Source: IE

GANGA JATARA

Context

- Large numbers of devotees have started pouring into the Thathayagunta Gangamma temple to offer prayers during Ganga Jatara'.

About

- It venerates **Thathayagunta Gangamma**, the folk goddess of Tirupati, believed to be Lord Venkateswara's younger sister.

- **Ganga Jatara** is an annual folk festival celebrated for nine days in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.
- It is an ancient practice at this centuries-old temple for devotees to offer prayers by **dressing up in different costumes** and smearing sandalwood, chalk and charcoal powder all over their bodies.

Source: TH

DOPPLER RADAR SPEED GUNS

In News

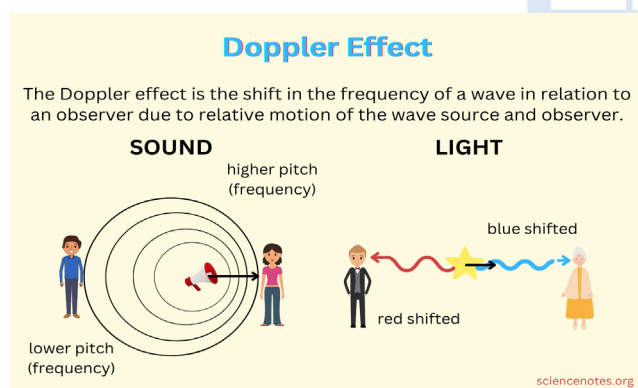
- The Consumer Affairs Ministry has announced a call for public comments on proposed new regulations for microwave **doppler radar equipment** used to measure vehicle speeds on roads.

About Draft Regulations

- These draft regulations mandate that any radar speed equipment installed after the finalization of the rules must undergo verification and receive official stamping within one year. The aim is to ensure the accuracy and reliability of speed measurements, which are often used in legal proceedings related to traffic violations.

Doppler Radar

- Doppler radar is a type of radar system that uses the Doppler effect to measure the velocity of objects, such as precipitation particles or aircraft.



- It works by emitting radio waves and then detecting the frequency shift of the waves that are reflected back from moving objects. This frequency shift, known as the **Doppler shift**, is proportional to the velocity of the objects relative to the radar.
- This phenomenon is observed in sound waves and electromagnetic waves. Doppler radar finds applications in meteorology and vehicle speed monitoring by law enforcement.

Source: TH

PIG BUTCHERING SCAM

In News

- There has been increasing stances of Pig Butchering Scams across worldwide including India.

About

- Pig butchering,” is a term that refers to the practice of fattening a hog before slaughter, originated in China and went global during the pandemic.
- Pig butchering involves extensive grooming and relationship building before scamming the person.
- They interact with the victim using advanced communication technologies like messaging platforms, dating apps, and social media to interact with their victims.

Source: BS

COPERNICUS PROGRAMME

Context

- The European Union (EU) activated its rapid satellite mapping service, following a request from Iran to locate the crashed chopper of the Iranian President.

About

- The rapid mapping service is one of the crucial components of the **Emergency Management Service (EMS)**, which comes under the EU's Copernicus programme.

What is the Europe Union's Copernicus programme?

- The programme was launched in **1998**, and was earlier known as the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security Programme (GMES).
- The Copernicus programme is part of the **EU's space programme** and aims to monitor the Earth and its environment by collecting data from a set of satellites known as the Sentinels.

What is Copernicus EMS?

- The Copernicus EMS has been in operation since **2012**, and provides geo-spatial information derived from satellite remote sensing and in situ data sources to help manage natural disasters, man-made emergencies, and humanitarian crises.

- **There are two components of the service:** the mapping component and the early warning component.
 - ◆ The former provides maps and analysis based on satellite imagery;
 - ◆ The latter issues alerts about floods, droughts, and forest fires, and gives near-real time assessment of forest fire impacts.

Source: IE

NAEGLERIA FOWLERI OR 'BRAIN-EATING' AMOEBEA

In News

- A five-year-old girl undergoing treatment for primary **amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM)** died in Kozhikode.

About Primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM)

- Primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) is a rare brain infection that is caused by **Naegleria fowleri**. It is a free-living amoeba or a single-celled living organism.
- **Naegleria fowleri** lives in **warm fresh water** and soil around the world, and infects people when it enters the body through the nose.
- **Favourable condition for growth:** Higher temperatures of up to 115°F (46°C) are conducive to its growth and it can survive for short periods in warm environments.
 - ◆ The amoeba can be found in warm freshwater, such as lakes and rivers, swimming pools, splash pads, surf parks, or other recreational venues that are poorly maintained or minimally chlorinated.
- **Transmission :** **Naegleria fowleri** enters the body through the nose, usually when people are swimming. It then travels up to the brain, where it destroys the brain tissue and causes swelling.
 - ◆ People cannot get infected with **Naegleria fowleri** from drinking water contaminated with the amoeba.
 - ◆ PAM is also non-communicable.
- **Symptoms :** headache, fever, nausea and vomiting.
- Later on, the patient may have a stiff neck and experience confusion, seizures, hallucinations and slip into a state of coma.

- ◆ "Most people with PAM die within 1 to 18 days after symptoms begin. It usually leads to coma and death after 5 days."

- **Treatment :** At present, doctors treat it with a combination of drugs, including amphotericin B, azithromycin, fluconazole, rifampin, miltefosine, and dexamethasone.

Source:IE

FURLOUGH

In News

- SC stated that Double-murder convicts are not entitled to furlough extension.

About Furlough

- It refers to a temporary release of inmates from prison.
- It's a short-term leave granted to prisoners that allows them to go outside the prison for a specific period, usually for maintaining family ties and enabling reintegration into society.
- The **Model Prison Manual 2016**, prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs, provides detailed guidelines on the issue of inmates' contact with the outside world, remission, premature release, and parole and furlough.
 - ◆ It emphasizes that the privilege of release on parole and furlough should be allowed to selective prisoners on the basis of eligibility criteria, which include the nature of the offense, the behavior of the prisoner, and the potential impact on public peace and order
- **Purpose :** It aims to strike a balance between ensuring the rights of inmates and protecting society from criminal activities. It's part of the correctional administration that seeks to rehabilitate prisoners and prepare them for eventual release into society.

Source:TOI

WORLD BEE DAY

Context

- Globally, **May 20 is celebrated as World Bee Day.**

About

- The theme for World Bee Day 2024 is "**Bee Engaged with Youth.**"

- The Day was founded by the United Nations in **2017** following a proposal by Slovenia, which has a long tradition of beekeeping.
- **Significance of Bees:** Bees play an important role in pollinating plants, which is crucial for producing fruits, vegetables and seeds.
 - ♦ Pollination by bees and other insects also helps maintain ecosystem health, food security and biodiversity.

Bees Waggle Dance

- The honey bee is the only insect that produces food for humans.
- The **waggle dance** is a fascinating behavior exhibited by honeybees to communicate information about the location of food sources, such as nectar and pollen, to other members of the hive.
- This dance was first studied and described by **Austrian ethologist Karl von Frisch**, who was awarded the **Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1973** for his contributions to the understanding of the honeybee's communication system.

Source: HT

LINK BETWEEN ALTERED X-CHROMOSOME INACTIVATION AND AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES

Context

- Scientists have found a molecular link between **altered X-chromosome inactivation and autoimmune diseases.**

About

- In mammals, the **females have two copies of the X chromosome while the males carry a single copy.**
- The evidence suggests that **X Chromosome** controls the **sex-specific susceptibility to certain diseases.**
- The human X chromosome **encodes around 800 genes**, which in turn code for proteins. A loss of function of these genes could thus lead to a variety of genetic diseases.
- The diseases whose onset and/or progression the X chromosome influences can be grouped into **three types:** X-linked genetic diseases, diseases influenced by XCI escape, and those linked to X-chromosome aneuploidy.
 - ♦ There are more than 500 X-linked genetic diseases, and they most affect males.
- **Inactivation of the X chromosome:** In 1961, an English geneticist named Mary Frances Lyon argued that since females have two copies of the X chromosome, one of the X chromosomes is randomly inactivated during early embryonic development, in a process called X chromosome inactivation (XCI), **to prevent the overexpression of X-linked genes in females.**
 - ♦ Issues such as incomplete inactivation (a.k.a. escape) or skewed inactivation can lead to the abnormal expression of genes, which contributes to diseases including X-linked disorders, certain cancers, and autoimmune conditions.

Source: TH

