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DAILY pre PARE
Current affairs summary for prelims

22 January, 2024

India-Myanmar Free Movement Regime

Context: *Union Home Minister Amit Shah declared that the Indian government has opted to erect a fence along the entire India-Myanmar border in order to curb unrestricted movement of individuals.*

- **India-Myanmar Border:** The shared border between India and Myanmar is approximately 1,643 km long, traversing the states of Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Free Movement Regime (FMR) Agreement:**
  - The FMR agreement, implemented in 2018 as part of the Act East policy, allows tribes residing along the border to travel up to 16 km inside the neighboring country without a visa.
  - Under FMR, people living on both sides of the India-Myanmar border can travel 16 km into each other's territory without needing a visa.
  - To cross the border, individuals need a border pass with one-year validity.
  - Those with a valid border pass can stay in the neighboring country for up to two weeks.
- **Historical Context and Rationale for FMR:**
  - The border, demarcated by the British in 1826, divided ethnic and culturally connected communities without their consent.
  - FMR aimed to foster people-to-people contact, boost local trade, and address historical divisions created by the British-drawn border.
- **Criticism and Concerns Surrounding FMR:**
  - FMR faced criticism for unintentionally facilitating illegal activities, including immigration, drug trafficking, and gun running.
  - Less than 6 km of the Manipur border is currently fenced, contributing to challenges in monitoring and controlling illicit activities.
- **Ethnic Conflict and Migration Dynamics:**
  - Ongoing ethnic conflicts, particularly between Meiteis and Kukis in Manipur, have been exacerbated by events such as the Rohingya refugee crisis and the military coup in Myanmar.
  - The influx of Myanmarese tribals into India, seeking shelter, has raised concerns about illegal migration.
- **Issues of Illegal Migration:** Manipur has experienced an increase in illegal migrants from Myanmar, leading to tensions and concerns about environmental impacts due to the establishment of new villages.

- **Drug Trafficking and Terrorism Nexus:**
  - Porous borders and misuse of FMR have allowed insurgent groups, including the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and People's Liberation Army (PLA), to operate in Myanmar.
  - The region has witnessed a surge in drug-related cases, with significant quantities of narcotics seized, including heroin, opium, brown sugar, ganja, crystal meth, and prescription drugs.
- **Impact of Suspending FMR:**
  - FMR was suspended in September 2022 amid the escalating crisis in Myanmar.
  - Experts highlight the need for better regulation rather than complete removal, considering the potential impact on local livelihoods and essential travel for healthcare and education.
- **Border Management Challenges:**
  - Fencing alone may not be a comprehensive solution, as the unfenced and challenging terrains pose difficulties in effective monitoring and control.
  - Despite robust patrolling and intelligence efforts, illegal activities persist, emphasizing the complex nature of border security.

New amendments in wildlife trade rules

Context: *In the updated regulations, the central government has omitted certain species from the licensing procedure for wildlife trade—a change implemented after a span of four decades.*

- **Revised Wildlife Trade Rules (2024):**
  - The government issued a notification on January 16, 2024, introducing revised guidelines for licensing in wildlife trade.
  - These rules cover stakeholders involved in snake venom, captive animals, trophy animals, and stuffed animals.
- **Effectiveness and Revision:**
  - The revised rules came into effect on January 16, marking the first update since 1983.
  - Earlier rules prohibited licenses for trading in Schedule I or Part II of Schedule II wild animals under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

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- **Revised Guidelines:**
  - Licenses for Schedule I animals can now only be granted with prior consultation with the central government.
  - Additional considerations for granting licenses include the applicant's capacity, the source and manner of supplies, existing licenses in the area, and implications on hunting or trade of wild animals.
- **Unclear Schedule II Restrictions:**
  - The notification doesn't explain why restrictions on Schedule II species have been lifted.
  - In 2022, the central government amended the Wildlife Protection Act, merging four schedules into two, reducing from six to four.
- **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:**
  - Enacted to protect wildlife and biodiversity in India.
  - Schedules categorize animals and plants based on the level of protection needed.
  - Schedules under Wildlife Protection Act 1972

Schedule I and part II of schedule II	Animals which are in the category of **endangered species. These are given absolute protection from hunting. Eg Tiger**
Schedule III and IV	These also have roughly the same provisions of Section I and II, but cover animals that are not in danger of becoming extinct.
Schedule V	Delineates animals that can be hunted **like ducks and deers** with the prior permission of **chief wildlife warden. (Vermins)**
Schedule VI	Concerns cultivation and plant life and gives teeth to setting up more protected animal parks.

- **Some Animals Listed under Schedule II:**
  - Birds: Sparrows, bulbul, ducks, geese, owls, kites, eagles, falcons, prinias.
  - Reptiles: Snakes, turtles.
  - Mammals: Deer, hare, rats, langur.
  - Amphibians: Geckos, frogs.
- **Global Wildlife Trade:**
  - According to the World Wildlife Report 2020, approximately 6,000 species of flora and fauna were seized globally from 1999-2018.

Key Takeaways from Davos Summit 2024

Context: *The World Economic Forum's annual meeting occurred from January 15 to 19, bringing together leaders for discussions on global challenges.*

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):**
  - AI emerged as a central theme, with discussions on its transformative potential for human welfare.
  - Topics included the need for regulation, concerns about job losses, risks of impersonation and misinformation, and potential inequalities.
  - Overall sentiment leaned towards the belief that the benefits of AI outweigh the negatives.
- **War and Uncertainty:**
  - Business leaders expressed concerns about geopolitical fragility, conflicts in the Middle East and Europe, threats to global supply chains, and food security uncertainties.
  - No clear plans or roadmaps for peace, particularly regarding the Israel-Gaza violence, were offered.
  - Participants acknowledged the complexity of the issues, with some hesitant to speak out to avoid potential conflicts.
- **Climate Change:**
  - Businesses were urged to adapt to climate change, emphasizing the existential crisis at hand.
  - Calls for global unity in the fight against climate change despite differences were prominent.
  - The need for developed countries to financially support climate action in developing nations was emphasized to address growing inequalities.
- **China's Economy:**
  - China aimed to attract more Western investment amidst a slowing economy and attempts by the West to isolate it.
  - China's GDP growth in 2023, at 5.2%, remained below pre-pandemic levels, prompting efforts to address structural economic challenges.
  - Despite challenges, China's growth still held significance for companies attending the WEF.
- **India's Role and Transformation:**
  - India's transformation as one of the fastest-growing large economies was highlighted.
  - Attention was drawn to India's potential in technology, talent, healthcare, and other areas.
  - The rise of India became a notable theme at WEF 2024, emphasizing the country's economic and strategic importance.
- **Special Mention - India's Global Good Alliance for Gender Equity and Equality:**
  - India's initiative to launch a Global Good Alliance for Gender Equity and Equality was announced at WEF.
  - The alliance focuses on women's health, education, and enterprise, aiming to boost the global economy by $1 trillion annually by 2040.
  - The initiative gained support and endorsement from both WEF and the Government of India, aligning with the G20 Leaders' Declaration.

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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Chakaliya Community

Recently, it is found that K.P. Narayanan and his niece Rajputhri who belong from the Chakaliya community at Kannur district in Kerala are the last fluent speakers of Madhika, after them, the language, which has no script, will be lost to the world.

About Chakaliya Community:

- Chakaliya Community is a **Nomadic community** and the **worshipper of Thiruvenkatramana and Mariamma.**
- They **considered untouchables** and not allowed to participate in feasts associated with marriages and funerals in the past.
- They have migrated from the hilly regions of Karnataka to northern Malabar centuries ago.
- They reside in small numbers in areas such as **Palakunnu**, **Kookanam**, **Pranthanchal** and **Ezhilode**.
- They initially recognized as a Scheduled Tribe, later included in the Scheduled Caste category.

Madhika Language:

- Madhika is an **endangered language of Kannur district, Kerala**.
- It has been **facing extinction** and lacks proper documentation due to the dominance of Malayalam.
- The Chakaliya community is the custodian of Madhika.
- Madhika has **no script**, making it solely oral.
- It is characterized by a linguistic blend, incorporating influences from **Telugu, Tulu, Kannada and Malayalam.**
- It is Influenced notably by **Havyaka Kannada**, an ancient form of Kannada.
- Chakaliya community faced historical social stigma and discrimination.

Mosquitofish

Visakhapatnam officials have made a recently plan to release an additional six lakh mosquitofish after releasing 20 lakh a few months ago.

About Mosquitofish:

- Mosquitofish (**Gambusia affinis**) are **small, live-bearing fish** that are dull grey or brown in color.
- They have a **rounded tail**, a **short body**, **a flattened head**, and a mouth that points upward for surface feeding.
- They are **characteristic of shallow**, enclosed fresh and **brackish waters**, including marshes and swamps.
- They have been introduced around the world **as a biocontrol agent for mosquitos**.
- They can withstand environmental conditions that native fish cannot, such as high temperatures and low oxygen.
- They introduced in India in **1928** during British rule for malaria control.
- World Health Organisation stoped recommending Gambusia in **1982**.
- India designated it as invasive species in **2018**.

The Mpemba Effect

Modern scientists recently started paying attention to the Mpemba Effect despite earlier mentions by historical figures.

About the Mpemba Effect:

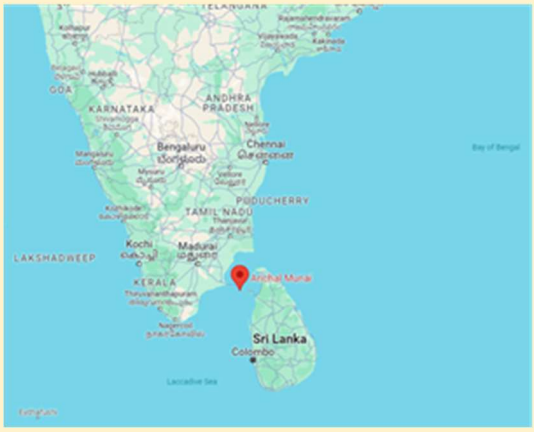
- The Mpemba effect is a **phenomenon where a hot system cools faster than an identical system** that starts at a colder temperature.
- It is named after **Erasto Bartholomeo Mpemba**, a Tanzanian game warden who discovered this phenomenon in **1969**.
- This effect is **counter-intuitive** and has been observed since at least the time of Aristotle.
- It is defined by the phase transition timing in many experimental observations. For example, if hot water starts at 99.9°C and cold water starts at 0.01°C, the colder water will freeze first.

Place in News

Arichal Munai

Recently, Prime Minister of India has visited Arichal Munai, Tamil Nadu.

About Arichal Munai:



- Arichal Munai is a Tamil word that refers to the **meeting point of the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Mannar Sea of the Indian Ocean.**
- This meeting point is located at **Dhanushkodi** Beach, which is on the tip of Rameswaram Island.
- Dhanushkodi, an abandoned town in the state of Tamil Nadu is located at the south-eastern tip of **Pamban Island**.
- According to the Hindu Mythology, Arichal Munai is the place where Ram Setu was built.
- Ram Setu is also known as the **"Adam's Bridge".**
- Arichal Munai is famous for its stunning beaches, strong waves, and attractive tourist destination.

Place in News

Senegal

Recently, it has been found that the Senegal's pink lake (Lake Retba or Lac Rose) is on the verge of disappearing sudden increase in nitrate levels.

Senegal (Capital: Dakar)

Location: Senegal is a country in West Africa, located at the westernmost point of the continent. It also lies in a depression known as the **Senegal-Mauritanian Basin**.

Boundaries: Senegal shares its border with **Mali** (East), the **Atlantic Ocean** (West), **Mauritania** (North), **Guinea** (South) **Gambia** (Southeast) and **Guinea-Bissau** to the Southwest.

Physical features:

- **Baunez Ridge** is the highest point in Senegal.
- The **Senegal** and the **Saloum** are the prominent major rivers in Senegal.
- The **Galeakouto** is the most prominent mountain in Senegal.
- Some important minerals like, **Phosphates**, **limestone**, **gold** and **zircon deposits** are also found in the country.

POINTS TO PONDER

- In which state is the Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary, recently making headlines, located? – **Odisha**
- What country is associated with "Green Rooms," a term recently in the news? **– Ukraine**
- With which IIT did Altair collaborate to establish the eMobility Simulation Lab? **– IIT Madras**
- Which entity publishes the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)? **– NGO Pratham Foundation**
- In Crohn's disease, a type of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), which organ is most commonly affected? **– Small Intestines**