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Diplomatic Passport

Context: *Following accusations of sexual abuse against Janata Dal (Secular) MP Prajwal Revanna, he fled to Germany using a diplomatic passport.*

➢ **What is a diplomatic passport?**

- Diplomatic passports, identifiable by their maroon covers, are issued for shorter durations compared to regular passports.
- Holders enjoy certain privileges and immunities under international law, including immunity from arrest and certain legal proceedings in the host country.

➢ **Who can obtain a diplomatic passport?**

- Diplomatic passports ('Type D' passports) are issued to individuals in five broad categories:
  1. Those with diplomatic status.
  2. Government-appointed individuals on official business abroad.
  3. Officers working under branches A and B of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) at Joint Secretary rank and above.
  4. Relatives and immediate family of IFS and MEA officers.
  5. Select individuals authorised to undertake official travel on behalf of the government, including union ministers and MPs.

➢ **Who can revoke a diplomatic passport?**

- Diplomatic passports can be revoked by the passport authority under several circumstances, including:
  1. Wrongful possession or suppression of material information during acquisition.
  2. In the interests of India's sovereignty, integrity, or friendly relations with foreign countries.
  3. Conviction by an Indian court resulting in imprisonment for at least two years after passport issuance.
  4. Court orders during proceedings for alleged offences before a criminal court.

➢ **Why are the benefits of having a diplomatic passport?**

- **Diplomatic Immunity:** Diplomatic passport holders enjoy immunity from specific legal processes and obligations in the host country, shielding them from potential legal issues.
- **Tax and Duty Exemption:** Holders of diplomatic passports are frequently exempted from certain taxes and duties, reducing the financial burden on personal and official imports and purchases.
- **Expedited Entry and Exit:** Diplomatic passports facilitate smooth entry and exit from countries, often accompanied by faster immigration and customs procedures.
- **Access to Diplomatic Channels:** Individuals possessing diplomatic passports have access to diplomatic channels and events, enabling them to engage with counterparts and participate in official functions seamlessly.
- **Enhanced Security Measures:** Diplomatic passport holders often benefit from heightened security measures during official travels, ensuring their safety and well-being.

Press and Planet in Danger

Context: *A new UNESCO report reveals that environment journalists worldwide encounter rising violence, with 44 deaths in 15 years.*

➢ **Global Trends in Violence Against Environment Journalists:**

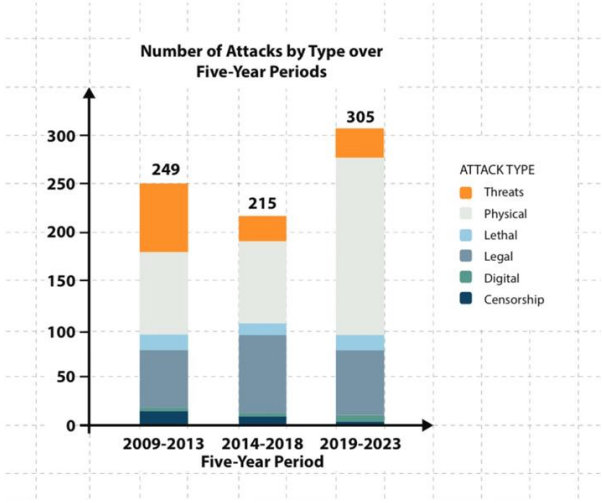
- Over 15 years, 44 environment journalists have been killed globally.
- The highest number of killings occurred in Asia and the Pacific, totalling 30 cases, followed by 11 cases in Latin America and the Caribbean.

➢ **Survey Findings:**

- A survey of 905 journalists and agencies from 129 countries revealed that 70% reported attacks, threats, or pressure.
- The report "Press and Planet in Danger" was launched at the 2024 World Press Freedom Day Global Conference in Santiago, Chile.
- Attacks against environment journalists increased from 249 between 2009 and 2023 to 305 between 2019 and 2023, averaging 50 attacks per year globally.

➢ **Nature of Attacks:**

- Attacks came from state machinery like police, military forces, and government officials, as well as private actors such as extractive industry companies and criminal groups.
- State actor attacks rose significantly from 111 incidents between 2014 and 2018 to 174 between 2019 and 2023.
- Attacks included physical assaults, harassment, arbitrary detentions, criminal charges, imprisonment, and defamation.



➢ **Topics and Locations of Attacks:**

- Journalists reporting on environmental protests, mining, land conflicts, deforestation, pollution, and the fossil fuel industry faced the highest risks.
- Those covering environmental protests, mining, and land conflicts were particularly targeted.
- Journalists killed in Asia and the Pacific were specifically covering mining, deforestation, and land conflicts.

Legal Status of Cases: Of documented cases, 19 remain unresolved, only five have resulted in convictions, and five are under investigation.

➢ **Challenges and Recommendations:**

- Conflicts of interest within newsrooms often lead to internal censorship and self-censorship among journalists reporting on environmental issues.
- Environmental journalism plays a crucial role in shaping global understanding of environmental crises.
- - Stakeholders must prioritize press freedom and journalist safety, providing funding and resources for training and equipping journalists, especially in under-resourced areas.

Eta Aquariid

Context: *The Eta Aquariid meteor shower, ongoing since April 15, will reach its peak on May 5th and 6th.*

➢ **What are Comets?**

- Comets are remnants from the formation of the solar system, comprising dust, rock, and ice.
- They orbit the Sun in highly elliptical paths, with some taking hundreds of thousands of years to complete their orbit.
- NASA estimates the existence of 3,910 known comets, with potentially billions more in the Kuiper Belt and Oort cloud.

➢ **Relation between Meteor Showers and Comets:**

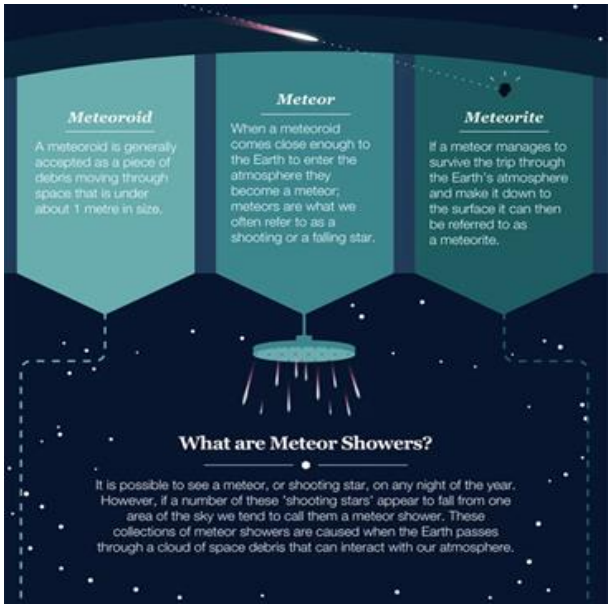
- Meteor showers result from Earth passing through the debris left behind by comets in their orbital plane.
- Meteors are dust or rock grains that burn up upon entering Earth's atmosphere, creating brief tails.
- Occasionally, larger meteors survive the atmospheric entry and strike the ground as meteorites, causing significant damage.

➢ **Unique Characteristics of Eta Aquariids:**

- Eta Aquariids meteor shower originates from Halley's Comet's orbital plane, observed approximately every 76 years.
- Known for their rapid speed, Eta Aquariid meteors create long, glowing tails that can last several minutes.
- In the Southern Hemisphere, observers can expect to see around 30 to 40 meteors per hour during the peak, while in the Northern Hemisphere, the rate decreases to about 10 meteors per hour.
- The location of the "radiant" determines the visibility of the meteor shower, with Northern Hemisphere observers often witnessing "Earth-grazers" and Southern Hemisphere observers experiencing clearer views.

➢ **Observing the Eta Aquariid Meteor Shower:**

- The meteor shower appears to originate from the Aquarius constellation, hence the name "Eta Aquariid."
- Optimal viewing conditions include a clear night sky with minimal light pollution from the Moon or artificial sources.
- Even a basic telescope can enhance the viewing experience of this celestial event.



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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

INCOIS

Recently, the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) alerted the coastal States of Goa, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, about the possibility of high-energy swell waves over the weekend.

About ICOIS:

- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) is **an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Earth Sciences** (MoES) and is a **division of the Earth System Science Organization** (ESSO) in New Delhi.
- It was **established in 1998** and is located in Pragathi Nagar, **Hyderabad**.
- Its mission is to **provide ocean information** and **advisory services** to the scientific community, government, business and society through continuous ocean observations and research.
- It **provides round-the-clock monitoring and warning services for coastal** populations regarding **tsunamis**, **storm surges**, **high waves**, etc., through the Indian **Tsunami Early Warning Centre** (ITEWC).
- It has been designated as the National Oceanographic Data Centre by the International Oceanographic Data Exchange Programme (**IODE**) of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (**IOC**).

THOTA,1994

Recently, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) issued an Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) under the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA), 1994.

About THOTA, 1994:

- The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA) of 1994 **regulates the removal, storage and transplantation of human organs** and **tissues** for therapeutic purposes.
- The act was **introduced by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** on **February 4, 1994.**
- The aim of this Act is to **prevent commercial dealings in human organs** and **tissues**.
- It **lays down regulations** governing healthcare providers and hospitals and stipulates **penalties for violations**.
- The act **authorizes living donations from close relatives** such as siblings, parents, kids, partners, grandmothers and grandfathers and grandkids in the majority of situations.
- The Act also allows for the **donation of almost 37 different organs** and tissues after brain stem death, including vital organs such as **kidneys**, **heart**, **liver** and **lungs**.
- In **2022, a total of 16,041 organs were donated in India,** with kidneys being the most commonly donated organs.
- **Delhi recorded the highest** number of donations with **3,818 organs** donated.

Orangutans

Recently, a male orangutan, on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, has been recorded on video by German and Indonesian scientists using a medicinal plant to treat a wound on his face.

About Orangutans:

- Orangutans are one of the **extant species of great apes**, along with common chimpanzees, gorillas and bonobos.
- They are known as the "**Man of the forest" in Malay** due to their habitat preference.
- They are **found in the islands of Sumatra** (Indonesia) and **Borneo** (divided between Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei).
- There are three types of orangutans: **Sumatran**, **Bornean** and **Tapanuli**.
- They are the **largest tree-dwelling mammals** and are **closely related to humans**, sharing **97% of their DNA**.
- They have **long arms**, **brown skin** and **long**, **sparse reddish-brown hair**.
- Each type is distinct in terms of genetics, morphology and behavior.
- Orangutans are classified as **critically endangered**, primarily due to habitat loss, deforestation, and illegal hunting.
- Orangutans are **highly intelligent** and exhibit **complex social behaviors**.
- They are primarily **solitary animals**, with adult males having large home ranges.
- Known for their **tool-using abilities**, orangutans utilize tools for various purposes, including **foraging** and **communication**.

Face to Face Centres

DELHI MUKHERJEE NAGAR: 9205274741, 42 | LAXMI NAGAR : 9205212500, 9205962002 | RAJENDRA NAGAR: 9205274743 | UTTAR PRADESH PRAYAGRAJ: 0532-2260189, 8853467068 | LUCKNOW (ALIGANJ): 0522-4025825, 9506256789 | LUCKNOW (GOMTI NAGAR): 7234000501, 7234000502 | GREATER NOIDA: 9205336037, 38 | KANPUR: 7887003962, 7897003962 | GORAKHPUR : 7080847474, 9161947474 | ODISHA BHUBANESWAR: 9818244644/7656949029

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Oxytocin

Recently, the Delhi High Court addressed concerns about the rampant use of oxytocin hormone in dairy colonies in the national capital, calling it "animal cruelty" and called for action against its misuse.

About Oxytocin:

- Oxytocin is a **hormone produced by the hypothalamus** and released by the **pituitary gland**.
- It plays a crucial role in various physiological processes, including **childbirth**, **lactation** and **social bonding**.
- It is **used medically to induce labour** and manage **postpartum hemorrhage** during childbirth.
- It has been **misused in livestock farming to increase milk production** in dairy cattle.
- Misuse of oxytocin in dairy farming can lead to **adverse health effects in animals**, including **uterine infections** and **reproductive disorders**.
- Consumption of milk from animals treated with oxytocin may pose **health risks to humans**, such as **hormonal imbalances** and **allergic reactions**.
- It was **banned** for veterinary use **in India by the Centre in April 2018** due to concerns about its misuse in dairy farming.
- Government authorities, such as the **Department of Drugs Control**, conduct inspections and **enforce laws to prevent the illegal production**, distribution and use of oxytocin in livestock.
- The **Centre permitted only Karnataka Antibiotics and Pharmaceuticals Limited to produce oxytocin** to meet the country's needs.
- Since administering of Oxytocin amounts to animal cruelty, and is a cognisable offence under Section 12 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960

Place in News

Netherlands

Recently, the 12th India-Netherlands Foreign Office Consultations were held in The Hague, Netherlands.

Netherlands (Capital: Amsterdam)

Location: Netherlands, also **known as Holland** is a country located in northwestern **Europe**.

Boundaries: Netherlands shares its borders with **Germany** (East), **North Sea** (North & West) and **Belgium** (South),

Physical Features:

- The highest natural point in the Netherlands is the **Vaalserberg**.
- The Netherlands is intersected by rivers such as the **Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt**.

India-Netherlands Relations:

- India and the Netherlands established diplomatic relations in **1947,** marking 75 years of diplomatic engagement in **2022**.
- The Netherlands ranks as India's 4th largest trading partner in Europe and it is also **the 4th largest investor in India.**
- India exported a diverse range of commodities valued at **USD 3.29 billion to the Netherlands** during April-May **2023-24,** including **petroleum** products, telecom instruments, **aluminum**, electronic instruments, **iron** and **steel**.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Who laid the groundwork for the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa by establishing the first anti-colonial and anti-racial discrimination movement and founding the Natal Indian Congress in 1894? **– Mahatma Gandhi**
- Which organization recently released the white paper titled 'At the Helm: Women Entrepreneurs Transforming Middle India'? **– Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)**
- Which renowned educationist, often referred to as Mahatma Hansraj, co-established the first Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Schools System (DAV) in Lahore in 1886 with Guru Datta Vidyarthi? **– Lala Hansraj (1864-1938)**
- Recently, the Russian government released new footage purportedly depicting the targeting of which Ukrainian military systems? **– High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS)**
- Which region, claimed by India, borders the Xinjiang Province of China to the north and the Siachen Glacier region to the east? **– Shaksgam Valley (Also known as Trans Karakoram Tract, is part of the Hunza-Gilgit region of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir)**

Face to Face Centres

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