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Integrated Theatre Commands

Context: *The Indian Armed Forces have been fine-tuning the final draft for the creation of integrated theatre commands.*

Definition: Combining resources of the Army, Navy, and Air Force under a single commander to secure a geographic area.
Examples: Theatre commands exist in countries like China and the United States.

Proposed Theatre Commands

- Northern Command: For the China border.
- Western Command: For the Pakistan border.
- Southern Command: For the sea role.

Current Commands in India

- **Army:** 7 commands (Northern, Eastern, Southern, Western, Central, South-western, Army Training Command).
- **Air Force:** 7 commands (Western, Eastern, Southern, Southwestern, Central, Training, Maintenance).
- **Navy:** 3 commands (Western, Eastern, Southern).
- **Leadership:** Each command is led by a four-star military commander.

Need for Integrated Theatre Commands

- **Objective:** Increase cooperation between the Army, Navy, and Air Force.
- **Function:** Unified command to secure specific geographic areas.
- **Advantages:**
  - Improved troop acclimatisation.
  - Optimisation of military hardware and resources.
  - Better understanding of training and administrative needs.
  - Enhanced mobilisation and equipment pre-positioning.

heatres and India

- **Recommendations:** The Kargil Review Committee, Naresh Chandra Committee, and Group of Ministers (GoM) called for higher defence management reforms.
- **Shekatkar Committee:** Recommended the creation of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and theatre commands.

Recent Steps Towards Theatre Commands

- **National Defence Committee Proposal:** Theatre commanders under a committee likely headed by the Defence Minister.
- **Inter-Services Organisation (Command, Control and Discipline) Act 2023:**
  - Empowers commanders with disciplinary and administrative powers over personnel from other services.
  - Limited cross-postings to promote jointness.
  - Restructuring of headquarters pending government approval.
- **First Tri-Service Common Defence Station:**
  - Mumbai to be transformed into the first tri-service common defence station.
  - Additional joint logistics nodes to be set up nationwide.

Proposed Organisational Structure for Integrated Theatre Commands

- **Vice Chief of Defence Staff (CDS):**
  - Likely an officer of the rank of General or equivalent.
  - To oversee strategic planning, capability development, and procurement.
- **Deputy CDS:**
  - Likely an officer of the rank of Lieutenant General or equivalent.
  - To manage operations, intelligence, and asset allocation.
- **Command Headquarters:**
  - Western Theatre Command: Jaipur.
  - Northern Theatre Command: Lucknow.
  - Maritime Theatre Command: Coimbatore (involving IAF's Central Command in Prayagraj and Southern Air Command in Thiruvananthapuram).

Global Assessment of Mangrove Ecosystems

Context: *A recent global assessment by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has highlighted a bleak outlook for the world's mangrove forests.*

Conducted by: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
Scope: Assessed mangroves using the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems.
Coverage: 36 regions across 44 countries.

Key Findings

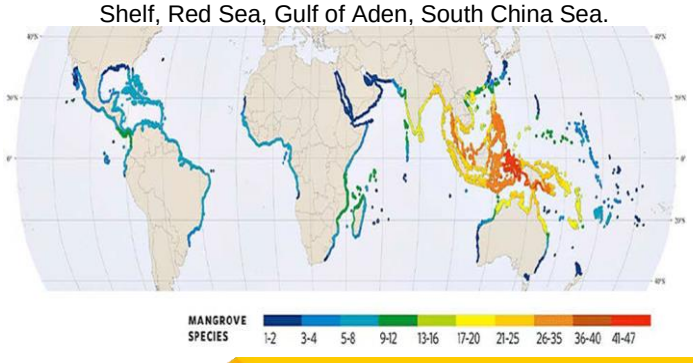
- **Threats:**
  - **Human activities:** deforestation, development, pollution, dam construction.
  - **Climate change:** increased frequency of severe storms, sea-level rise.

Risk Status:

- Over 50% of mangrove ecosystems are on the verge of collapse.
- 50% classified as vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered.
- 19.6% marked as endangered or critically endangered.
- 33% threatened by climate change impacts.

Regional Classifications

- **Critically Endangered:** South India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, North West Atlantic.
- **Endangered:** Agulhas, Central Pacific, East Coral Triangle, East Central and South East Australian Shelf, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, South China Sea.



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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Ecosystem Extent and Importance

- **Coverage:** 150,000 square kilometres, on tropical, subtropical, and warm temperate coasts.
- **Coastline Presence:** 15% of the world's coastlines.
- **Importance:**
  - Biodiversity conservation.
  - Livelihoods for local communities.
  - Climate change mitigation.

Carbon Sequestration and Protection

- **Carbon Storage:** Sequester approximately 11 billion tonnes of carbon.
- **Protection:** Safeguard 15.4 million people, support 126 million fishing days per year.

Future Projections

- **Potential Loss:**
  - 5%, or over 7,000 square kilometres of mangroves by 2050.
  - 16%, or 23,672 square kilometres, could become submerged.
- **Carbon Sink Loss:** Risk of losing 1.8 billion tonnes of carbon sink.
- **Economic Impact:** Potential loss valued at $13 billion in voluntary carbon market prices.
- **Human Impact:** Endanger 2.1 million people, affect 17 million days of fishing effort per year.

Conservation Importance

- **Role in Climate Mitigation:**
  - Combat sea level rise.
  - Provide inland protection from extreme weather events.
- **Recommendations:**
  - Use national, sub-national, or lower scale assessment results when available.
  - Enhance mangrove protection and restoration for increased resilience.

World Economic Forum: Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024

Context: *Travel and Tourism Development Index, 2024 has recently been released by the World Economic Forum (WEF).*

Improvement in India's Ranking

- **New Rank:** India has risen to 39th place on the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024.
- **Previous Rank:** Ranked 54th in 2021.
- **Collaboration:** The report was compiled with the UK-based University of Surrey.
- **Regional Standing:** India is the highest-ranked in South Asia and among lower-middle-income economies.
- **Top Countries:** The US, Spain, Japan, France, and Australia are the top five in 2024.

About the Report

- **Scope:** The biennial index assessed the travel and tourism sectors of 119 countries.
- **Components:** Consists of 5 dimensions, 17 pillars, and 102 individual indicators. The dimensions are not factored into the index calculation.
- **Findings:** High-income economies generally maintain better conditions for travel and tourism development due to favourable business environments, dynamic labor markets, open travel policies, robust transport and tourism infrastructure, and well-developed attractions.

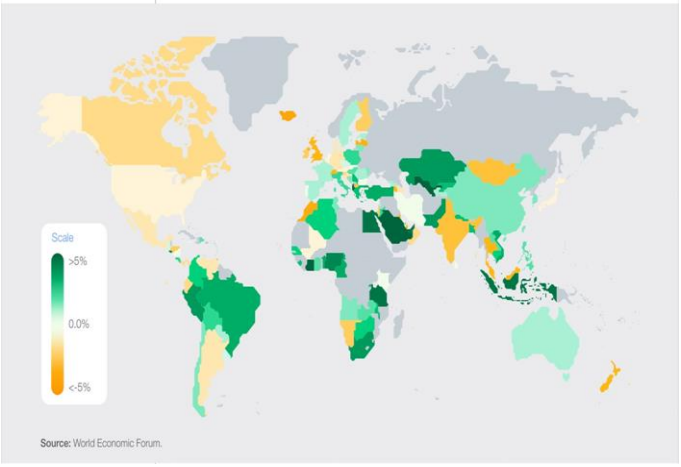
Status of India

- **Ranking Improvement:** Climbed to 39th position from 54th in 2021.
- **Criteria Changes:** Index criteria changes limit direct comparison with 2022 and 2023.
- **Competitiveness:** High price competitiveness (18th), competitive air transport (26th), and ground and port infrastructure (25th).
- **Resources:** Strong natural (6th), cultural (9th), and non-leisure (9th) resources.
- **TTDI Score:** Overall score is 2.1 percent lower than in 2019.

Developing Countries' Performance

- **Improvement:** 71 economies improved their TTDI scores since 2019, 52 of which are low to upper-middle-income brackets.
- **Top Improvers:** Saudi Arabia (+5.7%, 50th to 41st) and UAE (+4.4%, 25th to 18th).
- **Developing Nations:** Significant improvements in Uzbekistan (+7.8%, 94th to 78th), Côte d'Ivoire (+6.4%, 116th to 114th), Albania (+5.9%, 78th to 66th), Tanzania (+4.5%, 88th to 81st), and Indonesia (+4.5%, 36th to 22nd).

FIGURE 5 | TTDI score, 2019–2024, percentage change



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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Pravara River

Recently, in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district, three State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel tragically lost their lives when their boat capsized during a rescue operation in the Pravara river.

About the Pravara River:

- Pravara River is a **major tributary of the Godavari River**, situated in Maharashtra, India.
- It is the **smallest among the seven major tributaries** of the Godavari.
- It **originates in the Western Ghats** on the eastern slopes of the **Sahayadris**, between **Kulang** and **Ratangad** mountains.
- It flows eastward through **Bhandardara**, where the **Bhandardara Dam** forms **Arthur Lake** and **Umbrella Falls** during downstream release.
- The Pravara River receives contributions from various tributaries, among which **Mahalungi** and **Mula** are notable.
- **Bhandardara Dam** also **known as Wilson Dam** has its existence on Pravara River.
- **Nilwande dam,** also called as Upper Pravara dam, in the Indian state of Maharashtra is the second largest dam on the Pravara river.

Rhododendron

Recently, 'mad honey' from rhododendron flowers in the Pontic Alps, touted for its health benefits, has been displayed in a shop in Cayeli, Turkey.

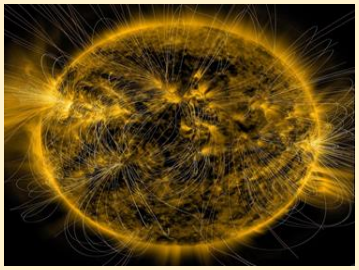
About Rhododendron:

- Rhododendron is a **genus of flowering plant** that is native to many regions of the world, including **Asia**, **Europe**, **North America** and **Australia**.
- It is known for its attractive flowers and handsome foliage and can grow in a variety of habitats, including **alpine regions**, **coniferous** and **broadleaved woodlands**, **temperate rain forests** and **tropical jungles**.
- In India, **132 taxa (80 species, 25 subspecies and 27 varieties)** of rhododendrons are found, with more than one-third (34%) of all rhododendron types found in India in the Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas.
- Rhododendron arboreum is the **state flower of Nagaland** and the **official State Tree of Uttarakhand**, while **Pink Rhododendron is the state flower of Himachal Pradesh**.
- It has also been **used in traditional medicine** for its medicinal properties, with the **bark**, **leaves** and flowers of these plants used to treat a range of ailments, including fever, **headache** and **inflammation**.

Mad Honey:

- Mad honey (komar honey in Turkish) is a **dark**, **reddish honey** that contains **grayanotoxins** and is produced from the nectar and pollen of genus Rhododendron.
- It has **intoxicating effects** and is used as a **traditional medicine and recreational drug in Turkey and Nepal.**
- In Turkey, **it's known as deli bal** and is commonly made from the nectar of Rhododendron luteum and Rhododendron ponticum in the Caucasus region.
- In the **Hindu Kush Himalayan range**, it's produced by Himalayan giant honey bees (Apis laboriosa).
- Mad honey' can **cure heart palpitations, digestive issues and even impotence**.
- However, despite its purported health benefits, hundreds of people end up in hospitals each year after consuming too much of the substance.

Sun's Magnetic Field



Recent study indicates the magnetic field is generated about 20,000 miles below the surface, contradicting earlier estimates of 130,000 miles.

About the Sun's Magnetic Field:

- The Sun's magnetic field is **generated by the movement of charged particles**, which is a natural process that creates magnetic fields.
- It is contained in the **corona**, **photosphere** and **chromosphere**.
- The Solar Mean Magnetic Field (SMMF) is the **average strength** and direction of the Sun's magnetic field on its surface.
- The Sun's magnetic field is created by a complex process called the **solar dynamo,** which is generated by electrical currents from the flow of hot, ionized gases in the Sun's convection zone.
- It is roughly **straight lines between the north and south poles,** but it **changes polarity every 11 years** at the peak of each solar cycle.
- During the first half of the **Sun's 22-year magnetic dynamo cycle**, the magnetic north pole is in the northern hemisphere and the magnetic south pole is in the southern hemisphere.
- It is responsible for the **Sun's 11-year activity cycle** and creates sunspots on the Sun's surface.

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Personality in News
Bachendri Pal

Bachendri Pal:

Bachendri Pal, an Indian mountaineer was born to a Bhotiya family on 24 May 1954 in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.

Contributions:

- On **May 23, 1984, Bachendri Pal became the first Indian woman** to set foot on the summit of the **world's highest peak, Mount Everest.**
- She **reached the Everest through the South Col route** along with two male colleagues, mountaineering Inspector Lhatoo Dorjee, 39 and Nepalese Sherpa Sardar Ang Dorjee.
- In **1993**, Bachendri Pal led the **Indo-Nepalese Women's Everest Expedition**, which included seven women who successfully summited Mount Everest.
- In **2009**, **she led the first all-women Trans-Himalayan** Expedition, a 4,000 km trek from **Arunachal Pradesh to the Siachen Glacier**.
- She authored her **autobiography titled "Everest - My Journey to the Top ".**

Awards and Honours:

- Bachendri Pal was awarded **Padma Shri** award in 1984.
- She received **Arjuna award** in 1986 for her outstanding achievement in sports.
- She was awarded **National Adventure Award** in 1994 by the Government of India.

Place in News
Norway

Recently, Norway announced that it will close its border to Russian tourists as of May 29, effectively shutting their last direct access to Europe's border-free Schengen area.

Norway (Capital: Oslo)

Location: Norway, formally known as the Kingdom of Norway is a Nordic country in Northern Europe, situated on the Scandinavian Peninsula.

Boundaries: Norway shares its borders with **Sweden** (East), **Finland** and **Russia** (Northeast), **Norwegian Sea**, **Atlantic Ocean** (West & South), **the Arctic Ocean** (North), the **North Sea** (South).

Physical Features:

- The highest point in Norway is **Galdhopiggen**.
- Norway's major rivers include **Glomma**, **Numedalslågen**, **Drammenselva**, **Tana** and **Vefsna**.
- Norway is rich in minerals such as **iron ore**, **copper**, **zinc**, **nickel**, **titanium** and **phosphate.**

Membership: It is a member of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

POINTS TO PONDER

- Who became India's youngest and the world's second youngest person to scale Mount Everest from the Nepal side recently? **– Kaamya Karthikeyan**
- What has the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) urged the government to ensure in order to propel the Indian textile industry towards the target of $350 billion by 2030? **– Availability of cotton and Man-Made Fibre (MMF) at internationally competitive prices**
- In which Indian state did the Supreme Court recently halt the deportation of a woman declared a foreigner by a Foreigners' Tribunal? **– Assam**
- What is the composition of the clouds in Venus' atmosphere, which has been recently in news? **– Sulfuric acid droplets**
- The rare hemi-parasitic terrestrial plant "Phtheirospermum lushaiorum" found in Phawngpui National Park of Mizoram is named after which tribe? **– Lushai tribe**