

Wild Ass Sanctuary

❖ Context

- Recently, **Gujarat High Court** issued a notice to the state government and sought a report from it on the licences and permissions it has granted for **mining activities within Wild Ass Sanctuary** in the Little Rann of Kutch.



❖ Key Highlights:

- The Court issued the notice while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) on 'illegal' salt mining and mineral mining activities in the sanctuary.

❖ Indian Wild Ass Sanctuary:

- It also known as the Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary and is located in the **Little Rann of Kutch** in the Gujarat state of India.
- It is spread over an area of **4954 km²**.
- The wildlife sanctuary was established in **1972** and came under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- The sanctuary is one of the **last places on earth where the endangered wild ass sub-species Indian Wild Ass (Khur) can be spotted**.
- The Rann of Kutch is a **sealine desert**.
- The tribes living in the region are the **Kolis, Rabaris, Bajanias, Kutchis, Gujjars and the Bharvads**.
- **Zinjuwada**, bang on the edge of the Rann, has an old, 11th century fort built during the Solanki era and houses one of the area's largest salt works.
- **Flora** : The Rann of Kutch is full of dry thorny scrub and there are no large trees.
 - The main vegetation in the region includes many species of grasses that are widely available as the source of food for the wild Asses.
- **Fauna** : The most famous wildlife of the region includes the Indian Wild Ass, as well as the chinkara, desert fox, jackal, desert cat, caracal, nilgai, wolf, blackbuck, and striped hyena.

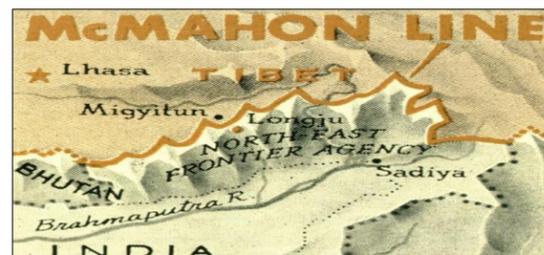
❖ Indian Wild Ass:

- The Indian wild ass (**Equus hemionus khur**), also called the **Indian onager** or, in the local Gujarati language, **Ghudkhur and Khur**, is a subspecies of the onager native to South Asia.
- The previous census in 2009 estimated a population of **4,038 Indian wild asses**.
- It is one of the **fastest of Indian animals**, with speeds clocked at about 70 – 80 km per hour.
- It is characterized by distinctive **white markings on the anterior part** of the rump and on the posterior part of the shoulder and a stripe down the back that is bordered by white.
- **Distribution** :
 - The Indian wild ass's range once extended from **western India, southern Pakistan, Afghanistan, and south-eastern Iran**.
 - Today, its last refuge lies in the **Indian Wild Ass Sanctuary, Little Rann of Kutch** and its surrounding areas of the Great Rann of Kutch in the Gujarat state of India.
 - It is extending into the **neighboring Indian State of Rajasthan** in the bordering villages in Jalore district bordering the Rann of Kutch.
- **Threats : Diseases** (Surra, South African Horse Sickness), Habitat degradation due to salt activities, Uncontrolled grazing by the Maldhari.
- **Conservation** : IUCN Red List- **Endangered**.
 - Wildlife Protection Act (1972)- **Schedule-I**.

McMahon Line

❖ Context

- Recently two US Senators, have introduced a bipartisan resolution in the upper chamber of Congress reiterating that the US recognises the McMahon Line as the international boundary between China and India in Arunachal Pradesh.



❖ What is the McMahon Line?

- The McMahon Line serves as the de facto boundary between China and India in the Eastern Sector.
- It specifically represents the boundary between Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet, from Bhutan in the west to Myanmar in the east.
- China has historically disputed the boundary and claims the state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).

❖ How was the border between British India & China decided?

- The 890-km border from the corner of Bhutan to the Isu Razi Pass on the Burma border was drawn largely along the crest of the Himalayas, following the "highest watershed principle".

- This principle, considered to be the most logical way of drawing borders in mountainous regions by the British, basically drew the border along the highest ridge between two river plains.
- Exceptions: Notably, Tawang, which would have been a part of Tibet had this principle been uniformly implemented, was included in British India due to its proximity to the Assam Valley.

❖ Current Status:

- During the 1962 Sino-Indian War, China was able to quickly overpower India and make deep inroads into Indian territory across the McMahon Line.
- However, its forces retreated to pre-war positions after the unilateral ceasefire was announced on November 21 1962.

News in Between the Lines

NIPUN BHARAT



❖ Context

➤ Recently, Union minister of Women and Child Development introduced about NIPUN BHARAT in Rajysabha.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Ministry of Education** has launched a National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat).
- It been launched under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha.
- It is one of the **components of the NEP 2020**.
- Its Objective is to ensure that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.
- **It will focus on :**
 - Providing access and retaining children in foundational years of schooling.
 - Teacher capacity building.
 - Development of high quality and diversified Student and Teacher Resources/Learning Materials; and tracking the progress of each child in achieving learning outcomes.
- **Implementing Agency :**
 - The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education (MoE).
- **Student Covered :**
 - Children of age group of 3 to 9 years including pre-school to Grade 3.

Bumchu Festival



❖ Context

➤ Recently, The **Tashiding Monastery** in the northeastern Indian state of Sikkim hosted the annual Bumchu Festival.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Bumchu means **“pot of sacred water”** in Tibetan.
- Bumchu, the Tashiding holy water vase ritual, is a unique and important occasion that draws travellers from all over the world.
- Annual performances of this ancient ceremony are held at the Tashiding Monastery.
- The Tashiding Monastery is one of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites, located on a hilltop overlooking the Rangeet River in Sikkim.
- **Background :**
 - The Bumchu festival commemorates a supernatural occurrence that took place in the 18th century under Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal.
 - A legend says that a Lama was told by a deity to visit a nearby spring and gather water in a vase.
 - The Lama followed the instructions and found that no matter how much water was used, the water level in the vase never dropped.
 - The Lama understood that the vase was scary and that its water had healing properties.
 - The vase was delivered to the Tashiding Monastery, where it was revered as a holy object and served as the centrepiece of the Bumchu festival.

Poshan 2.0



❖ Context

➤ Recently, Union minister of Women and Child Development introduced about Poshan 2.0 in Rajysabha.

❖ Key Highlights:

- It was announced in Union Budget 2021-22 by **merging supplementary nutrition programmes and the POSHAN Abhiyaan**.
- The scheme has been approved by the Government of India for implementation during the 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 is an Integrated Nutrition Support Programme.
- It seeks to **address the challenges of malnutrition** in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- **Nodal Ministry :** Ministry for Women and Child Development.

Face to Face Centres



PM MITRA Scheme



❖ Context

- The Ministry of Textiles will shortly name the States identified for implementation of Prime Minister MITRA (Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel) scheme.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Nodal Ministry-** Ministry for the textile industry.
- Ministry of Textiles is planning to set up **7 Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks** with a total outlay of Rs. 4,445 crore.
- PM MITRA park will be developed by a **Special Purpose Vehicle** which will be owned by the Central and State governments and in a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Mode.
- The PM MITRA scheme is **Inspired by the 5F vision** - Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign.
- It aspires to **fulfil the vision of building an Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and to position India strongly on the Global textiles map.
- PM MITRA Parks will offer an **opportunity to create an integrated textiles value chain** right from spinning, weaving, processing/dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing at 1 location.
- Integrated Textile **Value chain at 1 location** will reduce logistics cost of Industry.
- Intended to generate ~1 lakh direct and 2 lakh indirect per park.
- Sites for PM MITRA Parks will be selected by a Challenge Method based on objective criteria.
- Proposals of State Governments having ready availability of contiguous and encumbrance-free land parcel of 1,000+ acres along with other textiles related facilities & ecosystem are welcome.
- Several states such as Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Assam, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana have expressed interest.

MQ-9 Reaper Drone



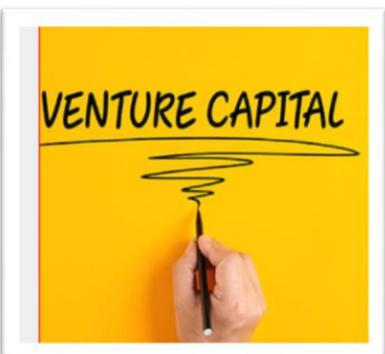
❖ Context

- In the first direct confrontation between the United States and Russia during the Ukraine war, the US military said its **MQ-9 Reaper drone crashed into the Black Sea.**

❖ Key Highlights:

- The remotely piloted MQ-9 “Reaper” **can reach up to 50,000 feet** for more than **27 hours**, gathering intelligence with cameras, sensors and radars.
- It can also carry **precision strikes.**
- It has a **66-foot wingspan and a length of 36 feet.** It can carry 3,900 pounds of fuel and travel at a speed of 240 knots.
- The MQ-9 has “demonstrated an air-to-air weapons capability” in Air Force tests.
- It can also be equipped with a “Self Protect Pod” that can detect threats and deploy countermeasures against surface-to-air weapons.
- MQ-9s have also been purchased by NASA & the air forces of **the UK, Spain & France.**
- **Significance of Drones :**
 - Drones are cheaper than manned aircraft with similar capabilities and are safer for operators since they do not require a pilot.

Venture Capital



❖ Context

- In 2021-22, the deal value of venture capital investments in India decreased 33 per cent from \$38.5 billion to \$25.7 billion.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Software-as-a-service (SaaS) and fintech continued to see momentum relative to 2021, growing in salience from 25 per cent to 35 per cent of total funding in 2022.

❖ About Venture Capital:

- Venture capital refers to a type of private equity investment in which investors provide funding to startups or early-stage companies with high growth potential.
- The investors, known as venture capitalists, typically provide both financial capital and strategic support to help the company grow and achieve success.
- In exchange for their investment, venture capitalists typically receive an ownership stake in the company.

Face to Face Centres

Cheetah Helicopter



❖ Context

- Cheetah helicopter of the Indian Army crashed near the Mandala hills area in Arunachal Pradesh recently.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The HAL Cheetah is a licence-built version of the French Aérospatiale SA 315B Lama.
- The Cheetah has been the backbone of Indian military presence in high-altitude regions in the Himalayas.
- Operated by both the Indian Air Force and the Army Aviation Corps, it has been used for transporting men and material, search and rescue, and reconnaissance.
- Cheetahs have especially been crucial for operations in Siachen, the world's highest battleground at over 6,000 m.
- HAL also managed to arm the Cheetah with two 12.7 mm heavy machine guns and 70mm rockets, marketing this modified Cheetah as the Lancer.
- The reason why the Cheetah continues to be a mainstay for Indian armed forces operating in the mountains is that there is no better alternative available at the present.

❖ Current Scenario:

- Starting in 2008, HAL has been working on an indigenously developed Light Utility Helicopter (HAL LUH), to eventually replace the Cheetahs and Chetak in the Army and Air Force's fleet.
- However, development has been slow, with initial operational clearance obtained only in 2020.
- Currently, HAL has been given permission to manufacture 12 LUH, with deliveries set to take place in 2024.

Industry' Status to Tourism



❖ Context

- Centre advises state govts, UT administrations to grant 'industry' status to Tourism.

❖ Key Highlights:

- This would help in pushing hospitality projects in the country.
- Industry status to the tourism sector would make it more competitive.
- It would also help reduce the cost of hospitality projects which are capital intensive and also encourage further investment.
- Ten States and one UT have accorded 'industry' status to the Tourism sector, so far.
- They are Gujarat, Kerala, Rajasthan, Punjab, Goa, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Tripura.

Milk, Meat See Rise in Production



❖ Context

- The 'Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics,' prepared by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying after an integrated sample survey, has shown an increase in milk, eggs and meat production in the country.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The report said the total milk production in the country was 221.06 million tonnes in 2022.
- The production had increased by 5.29% over the previous year.
- The per capita availability of milk was 444 grams per day.
- The total egg production in the country was 129.6 billion, with an increase of 6.19% compared to the previous year.
- The per capita availability of eggs is 95 eggs per annum.
- The total meat production in the country was 9.29 million tonnes.
- It had increased by 5.62% as compared to the previous year.
- The meat production from poultry was 4.78 million tonnes, contributing to about 51.44% of the total production.
- The top five meat-producing States are :
 - Maharashtra (12.25%),
 - Uttar Pradesh (12.14%),
 - West Bengal (11.63%),
 - Andhra Pradesh (11.04%) and
 - Telangana (10.82%).

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