

29 April 2023

Gum Arabic

❖ Context

- The Sahel region provides 70% of the world's Gum Arabic supply, which comes from acacia trees.
- However, the region is currently facing conflict and instability, which has led to concerns about the future of the gum arabic industry.



❖ Key Highlights:

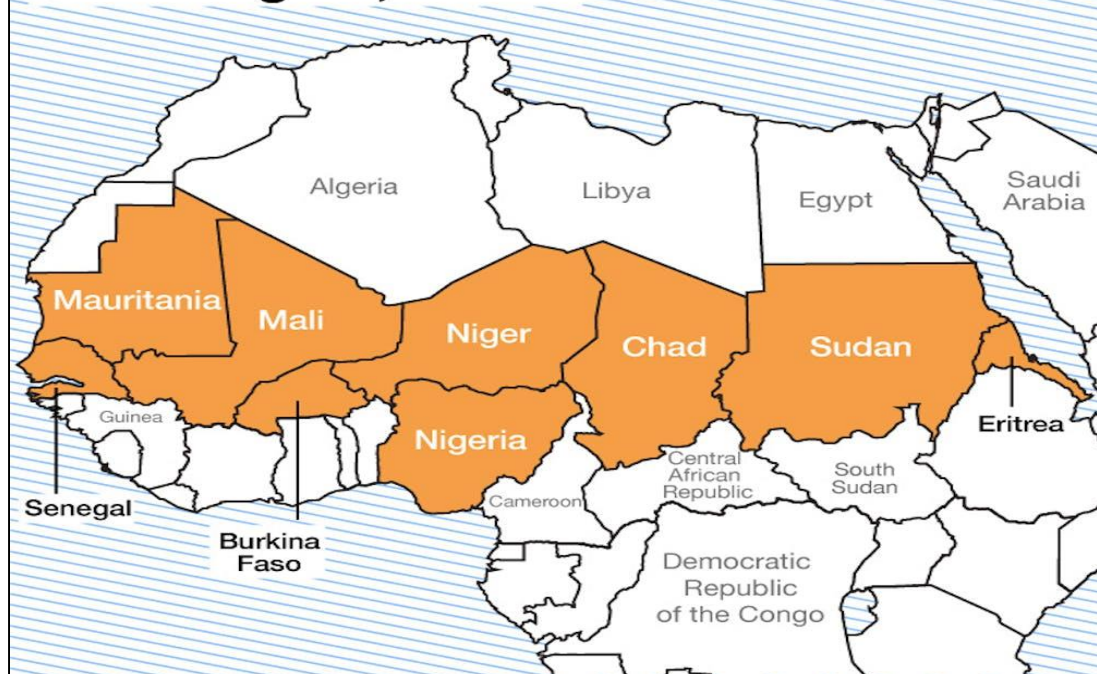
- Gum arabic is a natural gum that is harvested from the sap of various species of acacia trees.
- It is commonly used in the food industry as a **stabilizer, thickener, and emulsifier**, as well as in the production of soft drinks, candies, and other products.
- Gum arabic is also used in non-food industries, such as pharmaceuticals, printing, textiles, and cosmetics.

❖ Sahel Region:

- The Sahel region is a semi-arid belt of land that spans across several African countries, including Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, and Eritrea.
- The region is characterized by a dry climate, with limited rainfall and a short growing season, which makes agriculture difficult.
- The Sahel is also prone to desertification, which is the gradual degradation of land due to human activity and natural factors, such as climate change.

- Despite these challenges, the Sahel is home to many diverse cultures and communities, and is an important source of natural resources, such as gum arabic, gold, & oil.

Sahel region, Africa



Lesser Flamingo

❖ Context

- After a six-year absence, the lesser flamingos, resplendent with deep red legs and bills, have finally found their way back to Pulicat lake.



❖ About Lesser Flamingo:

- The Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*) is a species of flamingo that inhabits the shallow, saline lakes and lagoons of **sub-Saharan Africa and northwestern India**.
- They are known for their distinctive **pink plumage**, which is the result of the **carotenoid pigments in the algae and small crustaceans they eat**.
- Lesser flamingos are smaller than other flamingo species, with adults typically measuring around **80-90 cm in length and weighing around 1.2-2.7 kg**.
- They have long, thin legs and a long, thin neck, which they use to reach down into the water to feed.
- They also have a unique, downward-curving beak that is adapted for **filter feeding**.
- These birds are social and **gregarious, typically living in large flocks** that can number in the tens of thousands.
- During the breeding season, they gather in **huge colonies and build mud nests** in the shallow waters of their habitat.
- Females lay a single egg, which both parents take turns incubating until it hatches.
- **IUCN Status:** Near-threatened.

❖ Pulicat Lake:

- Pulicat Lake is the second largest saltwater lake in India, located on the border of **Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu states**.
- Three major river feed the lagoon: **Arani, Kalangi and Swarnamukhi River**.
- **The barrier island** of Sriharikota separates the lake from Bay of Bengal.



Face to Face Centres

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Adi Shankaracharya

❖ Context

- Recently, Adi Shankaracharya's 1235th birth anniversary was observed.



❖ Adi Shankaracharya

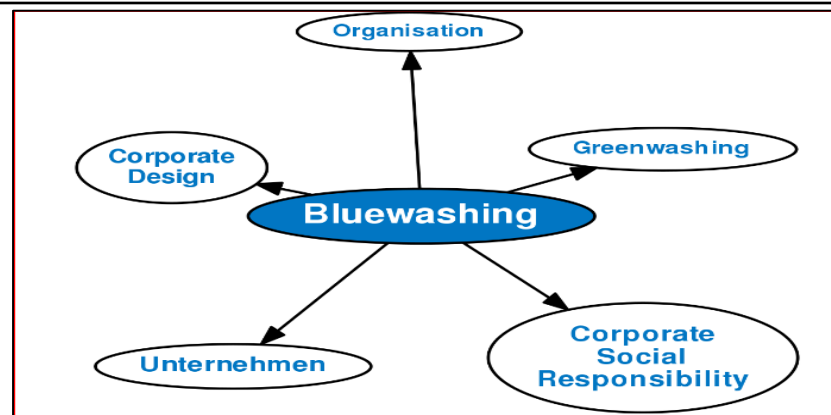
- **Date And Place of Birth:** 788 CE, Kaladi, Kerala, India
- **Date and Place of Death:** 820 CE, Kedarnath, Uttarakhand, India.
- Adi Shankara was an **Indian philosopher and theologian** who expounded the doctrine of **Advaita Vedanta**.
- He renounced the worldly pleasures at a very young age.
- Shankaracharya amalgamated the ideologies of ancient 'Advaita Vedanta' and also **explained the basic ideas of Upanishads**. He **advocated the oldest concept of Hinduism** which explains the unification of the soul (atman) with the Supreme Soul (Nirguna Brahman).
- One of Shankaracharya's most important works is his efforts to **synthesize the six sub-sects, known as 'Shanmata.'**
- 'Shanmata', which literally translates to 'six religions,' is the worship of six supreme deities.
- His review of '**Brahma Sutra**' is known as '**Brahmasutrabhasya**', and it is the oldest surviving commentary on 'Brahma Sutra'.

- Adi Shankaracharya is also well-known for his '**stotras**' (poems).
- He also composed the famous '**Upadesasahasri**' which literally translates to 'a thousand teachings.'
- Shankaracharya explained the existence of one Supreme Being (Brahman) and that the six supreme deities are part of one divine power.
- He also founded '**Dashanami Sampradaya**,' which talks about leading a monastic life.
- While Shankaracharya was a firm believer in ancient Hinduism, he **condemned the 'Mimamsa school of Hinduism'** which was purely based on ritual practices.
- Throughout the course of his journey, Shankaracharya discussed his ideas with various other philosophers and fine-tuned his own teachings from time to time.
- Adi Shankaracharya **founded four monasteries (mathas)** - one each at the four cardinal points in India.
 - Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Dvaraka Pitha, Jyotirmatha Peetham, Govardhana matha.

Bluewashing

❖ Context

- A new research has highlighted how corporate capture of global food governance is increasingly taking place in more visible ways.
- There has been a growing presence of firms in governance and spaces, staking claims to be legitimate actors, for example, **through public-private partnerships** and multi-stakeholder roundtables.



❖ What is Bluewashing?

- The term "blue washing" refers to the practice of companies or organizations portraying themselves as **environmentally responsible** or committed to sustainability, without actually making substantial efforts to reduce their environmental impact.
- This can involve using **eco-friendly language** or imagery in their marketing and branding to appeal to consumers who are concerned about the environment, while continuing to engage in environmentally harmful practices.

- Blue washing is similar to the concept of "**greenwashing**," which refers to the practice of making false or exaggerated claims about the environmental benefits of a product or service.
- However, blue washing specifically focuses on the use of the colour blue and references to water, which are often associated with environmental sustainability.

Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)

❖ Context

- The Enforcement Directorate recently searched the Bengaluru residence and offices of Byju's CEO, in relation to violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).



❖ About FEMA:

- The Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) is an Indian law that regulates foreign exchange transactions and capital flows in and out of the country.
- The law was enacted in **1999** and **replaced** the previous Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA).

- FEMA is aimed at facilitating **external trade and payments**, promoting orderly development and maintenance of the foreign exchange market in India, and preserving the stability of India's external financial sector.
- FEMA covers **all transactions involving foreign exchange**, foreign security, and immovable property located outside India by Indian residents or entities.
- It also provides **guidelines for penalties and enforcement mechanisms** for violations of its provisions.

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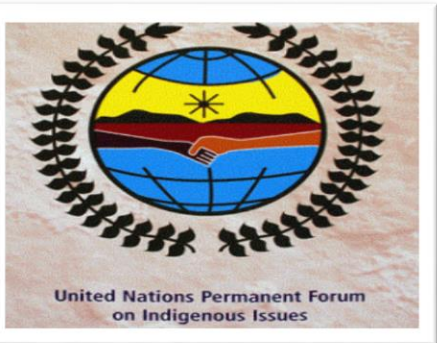
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News in Between the Lines

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues



❖ Context

- 22nd session of UNPFII was held recently.

❖ About UNPFII:

- The **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** (UNPFII) is an advisory body to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that focuses on issues related to the rights and well-being of Indigenous peoples around the world.
- The forum was established in 2000 and meets annually **for two weeks** at UN headquarters in New York.
- It provides a platform for Indigenous peoples to share their perspectives, experiences, and concerns with UN member states and other stakeholders.
- It also advises **ECOSOC and other UN bodies** on Indigenous issues and promotes the implementation of international standards and agreements, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Net Zero Innovation Virtual Centre

❖ Context

- India and the UK are set to jointly establish the India-UK 'Net Zero' Innovation Virtual Centre.

❖ Key Highlights:

- It will facilitate collaboration between stakeholders from both nations to work on focus areas such as the decarbonization of manufacturing processes and transportation systems and green hydrogen as a renewable energy source.



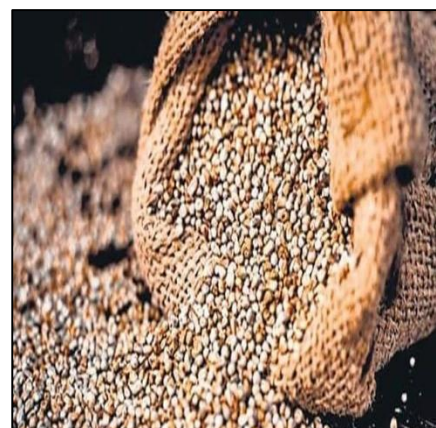
Millets Experience Centre

❖ Context

- Agriculture Minister recently launched the first of its kind 'Millets Experience Centre (MEC)' at Dilli Haat in New Delhi.

❖ Key Highlights:

- National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) has established the Millets Experience Centre in collaboration with the Agriculture Ministry.
- It aims to raise awareness of Millets and encourage its adoption among the general public.



Abetment of Suicide



❖ Context

- Recently, a special CBI court on cleared actor Sooraj Pancholi of the charge of abetting the suicide of actor Jiah Khan in 2013 due to lack of evidence.

❖ Abetment of Suicide:

- Abetment is defined as including **instigating, engaging in a conspiracy or assisting in committing the offence.**
- If any person commits suicide, whoever abets the commission of such suicide shall be punished with imprisonment and shall also be liable to fine.
- The Indian Penal Code, 1860 makes abetment of suicide a punishable offence.
- **Section 306 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)** prescribes either a jail term of up to 10 years or a fine or both.
- Abetment of suicide is a serious offence that is tried in a Sessions court and is cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable.
- **Cognizable Offense :**
 - In such offences a police officer can make an arrest without a warrant from a court.
- **Non-bailable Offense :** It means bail is granted to the accused at the discretion of the court and not as a matter of right.
- **Non-Compoundable Offense :** Such offense is one in which the case cannot be withdrawn by the complainant even when the complainant and the accused have reached a compromise.

Face to Face Centres

Nano DAP (Liquid)



❖ Context

- **Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO)** has launched **Nano DAP (Liquid)**, a next-generation fertilizer with **nanoparticles of Nitrogen and Phosphorus**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The nanoparticles have a size **between 1 to 100 nanometers**.
- DAP is a phosphate-based fertilizer made by reacting Ammonia with Phosphoric acid.
- A bottle of Nano DAP is equivalent to one bag of conventional DAP.
- Using Nano-DAP has several advantages, including reduced fertilizer subsidy burden, lower input cost for agriculture, improved agriculture sustainability through higher nutrient uptake, lower water consumption, and higher use efficiency.
- Nano DAP (Liquid) is a type of fertilizer that is designed to provide plants with the **essential nutrient phosphorus**.
- DAP stands for "**diammonium phosphate**," which is a common form of fertilizer used in agriculture.
- Nano DAP is a liquid form of this fertilizer that is intended to be applied directly to plant roots or leaves.

Hemis Monastery



❖ Context

- The **Y20 pre-summit meeting under G20** started in Leh of Ladakh on Wednesday. More than 100 delegates from 30 countries visited the Hemis and Thiksey monasteries as part of this pre-summit.

❖ Hemis Monastery:

- Hemis Monastery is a **Himalayan Buddhist monastery (gompa) of the Drukpa Lineage, in Hemis, Ladakh, India**. Situated 45 km from Leh, it was **re-established in 1672** by the Ladakhi king Sengge Namgyal.
- The **annual Hemis festival honouring Padmasambhava** is held there in early June.
- **History of Hemis Monastery :**
 - The history of Hemis Monastery states that it is considered to have existed before the 11th century.
 - The monastery of Hemis is connected with Naropa, the pupil of the yogi Tilopa, and teacher of the translator Marpa.
 - It is believed that Naropa and yogi Tilopa met at Hemis and together from here they proceeded to the ancient kingdom of Magadha.
 - Naropa was the founding father of the Kagyu-lineage of the Himalayan esoteric Buddhism.
 - Therefore, Hemis Monastery is the main seat of the Kagyu lineage of Buddhism.

PRET Initiative



❖ Context

- Recently, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** launched a new initiative to be **better prepared for future outbreaks** of a similar scale and devastation as the COVID-19 pandemic.

❖ About PRET Initiative:

- The **Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats (PRET)** Initiative is aimed at providing "guidance on integrated planning for responding to any respiratory pathogen such as influenza or coronaviruses".
- The initiative was announced at the Global Meeting for Future Respiratory Pathogen Pandemics held on 24-26 April 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The current **focus of PRET will be on respiratory viruses**.
- The PRET monitoring framework, which is expected to be outlined soon, lists a host of actions which countries will be expected to work on with progress being achieved by December 2025.
- **It involves three-pronged approach which includes -**
 - Updating preparedness plans that affirm priority actions,
 - Increase connectivity among stakeholders in pandemic preparedness planning through systematic coordination and cooperation
 - Dedicate sustained investments, financing and monitoring of pandemic preparedness with a special focus on bridging the lacunes highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MCQ Quiz

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