

4th Asian Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation

❖ Context

- Organized by Malaysia and Global Tiger Forum for reviewing progress towards the Global Tiger Recovery Programme

❖ Key Highlights

- India said that it will facilitate Tiger Range Countries towards finalization of **New Delhi declaration** for the **Global Tiger Summit to be held at Vladivostok, Russia** later this year

❖ Global Tiger Forum

- The only inter- governmental international body members from willing countries (*UK a non-tiger range country member since 1999*) to embark on global campaign to protect tiger
- Formed in 1993 on recommendations from an international symposium on Tiger Conservation at New Delhi, India.
- The GTF has a General Assembly (consisting of NGOs also) meeting every 3 years and Standing committee meetings at least once a year.
- A Chairperson, usually a Minister from one of the Tiger Range countries, heads GTF for a fixed tenure of 3 Years. The Secretariat of GTF is headed by a Secretary General and is located in New Delhi, India.
- The 13 Tiger Range Countries (TRCs) are Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.

❖ Global Tiger Recovery Programme (2010-2022)

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- **To solve the tiger crisis**, the TRCs, international organizations, and civil society had come together on a collaborative platform **within the framework of the Global Tiger Initiative (GTI)**.
- **After a two-year process** of sharing knowledge and best practices and developing a common vision, the **GTRP was developed in 2010**, with the shared goal of **doubling the number of wild tigers globally by 2022 from 3200 to 7000**
- **India has already achieved its target 4 years ahead**. 14 tiger reserves in India have received accreditation Global Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA/Ts) in July 2021
- The **success model** of India's tiger governance is now being **replicated for other wildlife** like the Lion, Dolphin, Leopard, Snow Leopard and other small wild cats, while the country is on the threshold of introducing Cheetah in its historical range.

❖ Global Tiger Initiative

- **launched in 2008** as a global alliance of governments, international organizations, civil society, the conservation and scientific communities and the private sector
- The GTI's **founding partners** included the **World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, the Smithsonian Institution, Save the Tiger Fund, and International Tiger Coalition (representing more than 40 non-government organizations).
- The initiative is **led by the 13 tiger range countries (TRCs)**.
- The World Bank hosted the GTI Secretariat until 2015
- In **2013**, the scope was broadened to **include Snow Leopards**.



Anti-Defection Law

❖ Context

- Recently, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief **called for a more stringent anti-defection law** amid a string of politicians switching parties ahead of the Uttar Pradesh assembly election beginning next month.

❖ About Anti-Defection Law

- The anti-defection law was **passed in 1985 through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act**.
- It added the **Tenth Schedule** to the Indian Constitution.
- This provision **prevents elected members from joining another political party** due to reward of office or other similar considerations.

Face to Face Centres



- It lays down the process by which a legislator may be disqualified on grounds of defection.
- The decision on questions as to disqualification on ground of defection are referred to the **Chairman or the Speaker of such House**.
- The decision of the presiding officer can be **challenged in a court of law**.
- The law **does not specify a time frame** in which such a decision has to be made.
- Last year, the Supreme Court observed that anti-defection **cases should be decided by Speakers in three months' time**.

❖ Grounds of Disqualification

- If an elected member from a party **voluntarily gives up the membership of his party**.
- If a member **votes against the directive of the party** or ignores the whip.
- An **independent member joins a political party** after getting elected.
- A **nominated member joining a political party after six months** of getting nominated.

❖ Exceptions

- The law will not be applicable if **2/3rd members of a party** have given their consensus for merging with another.
- **On being elected as the presiding officer** of the House, if a member voluntarily gives up the membership of his party or rejoins it after he ceases to hold that office, he won't be disqualified.

❖ Significance

- The anti-defection law has **provided stability to elected governments across the country**.
- It has **prevented ruling parties from indulging in horse trading** that was seen before the law.

Northern River Terrapin

❖ Context

- Recently, for the first time, **10 northern river terrapin were released into the wild from a breeding center** in the Sunderbans in West Bengal by the experts of **Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA)** and **Sundarban Tiger Reserve (STR)**
- They have been reared for **nine years** in the ponds.

❖ Key Highlights

- The species was once **widespread in the mangroves and estuaries** of West Bengal and Odisha.
- **Unsustainable harvesting and overfishing** led to a rapid decline in their population.
- In 2009, the **STR and the TSA started a breeding programme at Sajnekhali**.
- These turtles have been **fitted with GPS transmitters** and would allow experts to track them and know about their home range and the habitat.



❖ About Northern River Terrapin (Batagur baska)

- **Physical features**- It is a 60 cm long turtle, recognized by 4 claws in front feet whereas other turtles have 5.
- **Habitat**- Terrestrial & highly aquatic (freshwater & brackish); lives in tidal areas of the estuaries of medium and large rivers and also in mangrove habitat.
- It is presumed to be **extinct in several Southeast Asian countries**.
- It is described as the **world's second most endangered turtle** (Yangtze giant soft shell turtle being the most endangered freshwater turtle).

❖ Protection Status

- **IUCN Red List - Critically Endangered (CR)**
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972) - Schedule I**
- **CITES - Appendix I**

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- Of six large freshwater turtles of the genus Batagur, three are found in India:
 - **Batagur kachuga** (Red-crowned roofed turtle)
 - **Batagur dhongoka** (Three-striped roofed turtle) – found in the tributaries of the Ganga, such as Chambal.
 - **Batagur baska** (The Northern river terrapin) – the most endangered of the three species.

❖ About Sundarbans

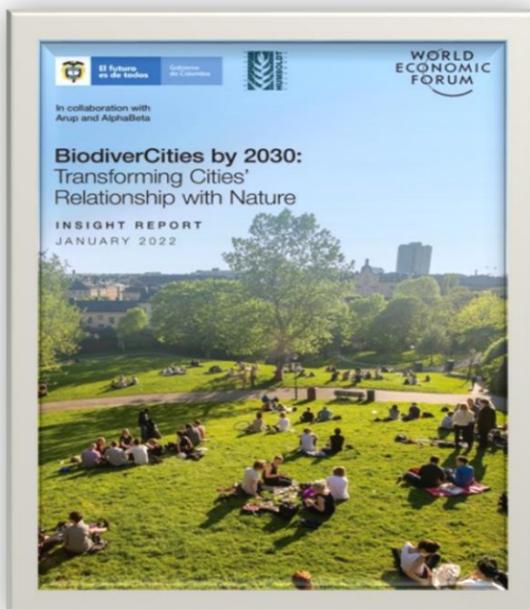
- Sundarbans is a **vast contiguous mangrove forest ecosystem** in the coastal region of Bay of Bengal spread over India and Bangladesh on the delta (world's largest) of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers.
- It contains the **world's largest mangrove forests**.
- It is the **only mangrove forest in the world inhabited by tigers**.
- **Sundarbans Tiger Reserve and National Park was created in 1973 and 1984 respectively**.
- It was **designated a UNESCO World Heritage site** in 1987 and designated as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2001.
- Sundarban Wetland, India was recognised as the **'Wetland of International Importance'** under the Ramsar Convention in January 2019.

❖ Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA)

- **Established in 2001 as an IUCN partnership** for sustainable captive management of freshwater turtles and tortoises.
- It was **formed in response to the Asian Turtle Crisis**.
- Since then it has become a recognised force in turtle and tortoise conservation globally.

News in Between the Lines

BiodiverCities by 2030



❖ Context

- Recently, **Global Commission on BiodiverCities** sponsored by the World Economic Forum (WEF) published its report on BiodiverCities by 2030 aiming to enable cities to live in harmony with nature.

❖ Key Highlights

- **Report title- BiodiverCities by 2030: Transforming cities**
- Produced in **collaboration with Arup and AlphaBeta**, the report published on January 17 is a key output of the BiodiverCities by 2030 initiative, **led jointly by the World Economic Forum and the Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute**, and **championed by the Government of Colombia**.
- The initiative **aims to support city governments, businesses and citizens, to make choices that enable cities to live in harmony with nature by 2030**.
- This report calls on **cities, as one of the crucial players** in reversing nature loss and climate change, to become BiodiverCities by 2030.

❖ Key Findings of The Report

- Cities **contribute nearly 80% to the global economy**, but they also account for nearly **three-fourths of greenhouse gas emissions**.
- Around **44% of global GDP in cities** (\$31 trillion) is estimated to be at risk of disruption from nature loss.
- More than **1.4 billion people living in the world's largest urban centres are threatened by natural hazards**.
- **Investing in 'Nature-positive' investments** – such as Nature-based Solutions for infrastructure or returning land to nature can enhance nature.
 - It can also secure significant economic benefits as cities become more resilient, liveable and competitive.



Chintamani Padya Natakam



❖ Context

- The Andhra Pradesh government has brought the **curtains down on the popular 'Chintamani Padya Natakam'**, which has enthralled people for almost 100 years.

❖ Key Highlights

- The decision was taken in view of **objections raised by the Arya Vysya community** over some "objectionable dialogues and characters" in the play.
- Began as a social sermon, this **play has been increasingly vulgar**.
- Subbi Shetty, who resembles a person of a transgender community, is used to portray the social group in a bad way.
- Obscene dialogues are added to the play in the name of creativity.

❖ Chintamani Padya Natakam

- This play was **written by the social reformer, writer and poet 'Kallakuri Narayan Rao'** about 100 years ago.
- Its **objective was to spread awareness about the effects of prostitution** on families and the **Devadasi system**.
- **The play quotes how the victims of social evils neglect their families**.
- The play is **named after the protagonist, Chintamani**, a woman born into a family involved in prostitution. Subbisetty, Bilvamangaludu, Bhavani Shankaram and Srihari are other characters in this play.
- The play focuses on how she attained salvation after repentance

VIKAS Engine



❖ Context

- Recently, the Indian space agency (ISRO) successfully conducted a **25-second qualification test for its liquid propellant-based Vikas engine** to be used under the Gaganyaan mission

❖ Key Highlights

- This test was done **to see how the engine performed in conditions that were not optimal**, such as change in the fuel-oxidiser ratio or pressure in the fuel chamber.

❖ About the Vikas Engine

- Vikas **belongs to a family of liquid fuelled rocket engines** conceptualized and designed by ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre in the 1970s.
- It is **used in the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)** series of expendable launch vehicles for space launch use.
- With the launch of the Gaganyaan mission into space, **India will become the fourth nation** in the world to launch a Human Spaceflight Mission **after the USA, Russia and China**.

The Vikas engine is aimed at improving the payload capability of PSLV, GSLV and GSLV Mk-III launch vehicles



• Vikas is a family of liquid fuelled rocket engines

▪ **Utility:** The engine is the workhorse liquid rocket engine powering the second stage of India's PSLV; second stage and the four strap-on stages of GSLV; and twin engine core liquid stage (L110) of GSLV Mk-III

▪ **Performance:**

Thrust 800 kN,
Specific impulse: 290 seconds

▪ **Dimension**
Length 3.70 m (12.1 feet)

▪ **Liquid-fuel engine:**
Propellant: N₂O₄

▪ **Cycle:** Gas generator

Face to Face Centres



Grand Challenge



❖ Context

- **Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL)** has sought request for proposal (named Grand Challenge) worth **Rs. 5500 crores** to procure **5580 electric buses** to be deployed across five major cities - Delhi, Surat, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kolkata

❖ Key Highlights

- The **biggest ever electric buses purchase plan**
- Aims to reduce the operating costs for cities and remove bottlenecks for e-buses
- Faster transition to green mobility
- Encourage synergy between government and private players
- Big step towards making India net zero or carbon neutral by 2050 and energy independent by 2047

❖ About CESL

- A **newly established subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Ltd** (itself JV of PSUs under **Ministry of Power**)
- Focus on energy solutions that lie at the **confluence of renewable energy, electric mobility and climate change**
- Employ **business models** to enable **commercializations** of these solutions at scale by using **blend of concessional and commercial capital, carbon finance and grants**

Banking on Electric Vehicles in India report



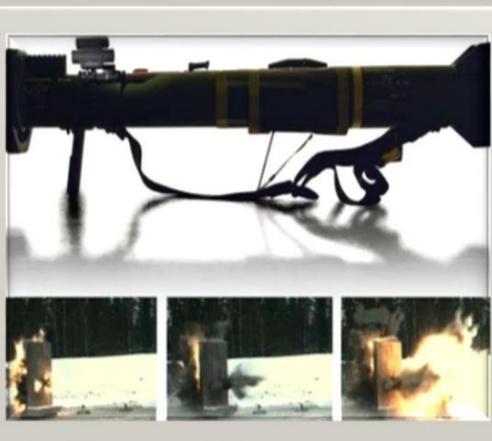
❖ Context

- Released by **NITI Ayog**, Rocky Mountain Institute & RMI India

❖ Key Highlights

- Highlighted the importance of **priority sector recognition** for retail lending in electric mobility ecosystem in acceleration in adoption of EVs in India
- Banks and NBFCs have the potential to achieve EV financing market size of **Rs. 40,000 crores** by 2025 and **Rs. 3.7 Lakh crore** by 2030
- **2-wheelers, 3-wheelers & commercial 4-wheelers** are early segments to prioritize under PSL
- Recommends a clear sub-target and penalty mechanism

AT4CS AST



❖ Context

- Saab's weapon system has been selected by the Indian Army and Indian Air Force through a competitive programme

❖ Key Highlights

- **A single shot weapon** to be operated by a single soldier
- The order includes AT4CS AST which can be fired from confined spaces like buildings, bunkers,
- Light weight (around 9 kg) and has an effective range of 200 m
- Fully disposable, easy to use, handle and combat-proven
- With breach or blast mode