

Indian Rhinoceros

❖ Context

- Recently, Assam Chief Minister announced on January 1 that **no rhinos were poached in the state in 2022.**

Key Highlights

- Rhinos have been **poached for their horn**, which is prized in some cultures.
- Ground rhino horn is **used in traditional Chinese medicine** to cure a range of ailments, from cancer to hangovers, and also as an aphrodisiac.
- In 2019, the Assam government constituted a **Special Rhino Protection Force** to keep a check on rhino poaching and related activities at Kaziranga National Park (KNP).

Rhinoceroses

- It is **second largest land mammal** after the elephant.
- Also known as the **square-lipped rhinoceros** due to their square (not pointed) upper lip.
- Two genetically different subspecies exist, **the northern and southern white rhino and are found in two different regions in Africa.**
- **IUCN Protection Status.**
 - **Northern White Rhino:** Critically Endangered.
 - **Southern White Rhino:** Near Threatened.
- **Indian rhinoceros IUCN Status-** Vulnerable.
- There is also a **Javan rhino**, which too, has one horn, and a **Sumatran rhino which, like the African rhinos**, has two horns.
- Both Javan and Sumatran Rhino are critically endangered in the IUCN Red list.

Indian Rhinoceros

• About

- The Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is the **biggest of the three rhinos of Asia**, and, along with the **African white rhino**, is the biggest of all rhino species.
- Its **single black horn** identifies it, along with its gray-brown hide and skin folds, giving it an **armor-plated look.**

• Distribution

- The Indian rhinoceros is **found only in the Brahmaputra valley**, parts of North Bengal, and parts of southern Nepal.
- In India, rhinos are mainly found in Kaziranga NP, Pobitora WLS, Orang NP, Manas NP in Assam, Jaldapara NP and Gorumara NP in West Bengal Dudhwa TR in Uttar Pradesh.

• Population

- According to the **WWF**, there are around 3,700 Indian rhinos in the wild today.
- Assam's Kaziranga National Park (KNP) alone has 2,613 animals.
- There are more than **250 other rhinos in the Orang, Pobitora, and Manas parks.**

• Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List-** Vulnerable.
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972-** Schedule I
- **CITES-** Appendix I .

Festival "VIRAASAT:

❖ Context

- The **second phase of the Sari Festival "VIRAASAT"**- Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India will begin from 3rd to 17th January 2023 at Handloom Haat, , New Delhi.

Key Highlights:

- The **Ministry of Textiles** is organizing the festival.
- The second phase, **having 90 participants** from different parts of the country, brings enhanced attraction by participation of famous **Handcrafted varieties.**

About Festival "VIRAASAT"

- **The first phase of "VIRAASAT"**- Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India started on 16th December 2022 and concluded on 30th December 2022.
- The event was **inaugurated by** Hon'ble Finance Minister on 16th December 2022.
- In the 1st Phase from 16th to 30th December 2022, **70 Participants took part in "VIRAASAT" event.**
- A social media campaign has been launched under common hashtag **#MySariMyPride** to support our handloom weavers. Coinciding with the 75 years of Independence, "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav".
- There **will be an exhibition-cum-sale of Handloom Saris by 75 handloom weavers.**
- A series of activities are planned to for the visiting public such as:
 - **Viraasat-Celebrating the heritage:** Curated display of handloom saris.

States	Prominent sari varieties
Andhra Pradesh	Uppada Jamdhani Sari, Venkatagiri Jamdani Cotton Sari, Kuppadam Sari, Chirala Silk Cotton Sari, Madhavaram Sari and Polavaram Sari
Kerala	Balaramapuram Sari and Kasavu Sari
Telangana	Pochampally Sari, Siddipet Gollabamma Sari and Narayanpet Sari
Tamilnadu	Kancheepuram Silk Sari, Arni Silk Saris, Thirubuvanam Silk Sari, Vilandai Cotton Sari, Madurai Sari.
Maharashtra	Paithani Sari, Karvath Kathi Sari and Nagpur Cotton Sari
Chhattisgarh	Tussar Silk Sari of Champa
Madhya Pradesh	Maheshwari Sari and Chanderi Sari

Face to Face Centres



03 January 2023

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Viraasat-Ek Dharohar: Direct retail of saris by weavers. ▪ Viraasat Ke Dhage: Live loom demonstration. ▪ Viraasat–kal se kal tak : Workshops and talks on sari and sustainability. ▪ Viraasat–Nritya Sanskriti: Famous Folk dances of Indian culture. <p>• The event is likely to bring renewed focus on the age-old tradition of Sari weaving and thereby improve earnings of the handloom community.</p>	Gujarat	Patola Sari, Tangaliya Sari, Ashawali sari and Kuchchi Sari/ Bhujodi sari
	Rajsthan	Kota Doria Sari
	Uttar Pradesh	Lalitpuri Sari, Banaras Brocade, Jangla, Tanchoi, Cutwork, and Jamdani

News in Between the Lines

New Technology for Filtering Microplastics



❖ Context

➤ Recently, Scientists from **South Korea** have developed a **new water purification system** that can quickly and efficiently filter out microplastics.

❖ Key Highlights

- The Korean team's breakthrough system **requires lower levels of energy**, making it ideal for solar-based use.
- **Material in Use**
 - The key is a material known as a **covalent triazene framework (CTF)**.
 - This is a **highly porous material** with a large surface area, meaning they have plenty of room inside to store molecules they capture.
 - Crucially, the polymer used is relatively inexpensive with excellent adsorption performance and good photothermal properties.
- In the experiment, over **99.9 percent of contaminants were taken out** of the water in just **10 seconds**.
- **Significance**
 - This is particularly useful for developing countries where power supply is inconsistent.
 - While some traditional carbon-based filters can filter out microplastics, they have limitations — the adsorption rate is slow and they are not energy-efficient.

❖ Microplastics

- Microplastics are **tiny plastic debris** that are **smaller than 5 mm** in length, tinier than even a grain of rice.
- Microplastics have inundated the world, finding their way into the human food chain.

Prajjwala Challenge



❖ Context

Recently, **Ministry of Rural Development** launched Prajjwala Challenges under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (**DAY-NRLM**).

❖ Key Highlights

- It is one of the platforms where ideas are invited from individuals, Social Enterprises, Start up, Private Sector, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Academic Institution, Investors etc **having potential to transform the rural economy**.
- The Mission is looking for ideas and solutions around Innovative Technology Solution, Inclusive Growth, Value Chain Interventions, Enhanced Women Entrepreneurship, Cost effective Solutions.
- The broad contours fall into following categories:
 - Focus on Women and Marginalized section of community.
 - Localised Models.
 - Sustainability.
 - Cost Effective solutions.
 - Multi sectoral ideas and solutions etc.
- **DAY-NRLM aims at mobilizing rural poor households into SHGs** and provide them **long-term support** such that they diversify their livelihoods, improve their incomes etc.

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GNB1 Encephalopathy



❖ Context

- Researchers from India, Israel, US have been trying to develop drug to treat rare disease **GNB1 Encephalopathy**.

❖ Key Highlights

- Researchers are from **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras, Tel Aviv University and Columbia University**.
- GNB1 Encephalopathy is a kind of **brain disease or neurological disorder which affects individuals in the foetus stage**.
- It has **less than 100 documented cases** worldwide.
- A single nucleotide mutation in the **GNB1** gene that makes one of the G-proteins, the "Gβ1 protein," causes this disease.
 - This mutation affects the patient since they are a foetus.
 - Children born with GNB1 mutation experience mental and physical developmental delay, epilepsy (abnormal brain activity), movement problems.
- **Symptoms**
 - Delayed physical and mental development, intellectual disabilities, frequent epileptic seizures, are among the early symptoms of the disease.
 - Since genome sequencing is an expensive exercise, not many parents opt for it early on.

Wassenaar Arrangement



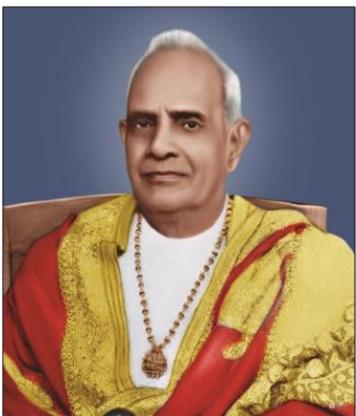
❖ Context

- Recently, **India assumed the chairmanship of the plenary of the Wassenaar Arrangement** on 1 January 2023 for one year.
- At the 26th annual plenary of the Wassenaar Arrangement held in Vienna last month, **Ireland handed over the chairmanship to India**.

❖ Wassenaar Arrangement

- The **Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies** is a multilateral export control regime (MECR).
- The plenary of the Wassenaar Arrangement is the main decision-making body that operates on consensus.
- The body works to **promote transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms** and dual-use goods and technologies through regular exchanges of information among its members.
- The name comes from Wassenaar, a suburb of The Hague, where the agreement to start such a multi-lateral cooperation was reached in 1995.
- **Established** in 1996.
- **Participating States**- 42.
- India joined the Wassenaar Arrangement in December 2017 as its 42nd participating state.

Sri Mannathu Padmanabhan



❖ Context

- The Prime Minister has paid tributes to Sri Mannathu Padmanabhan on his birth anniversary.
- The Prime Minister also acknowledged his **contributions to social reforms, rural development and India's freedom movement**.

❖ Sri Mannathu Padmanabhan

- Sri. Mannath Padmanabhan dedicated his life to the **upliftment of the people in Kerala** in general and the Nairs in particular.
- He **was born in Perunna, on 02 January 1878 AD**, a small village in Kottayam district of Kerala.
- Sri Mannathu Padmanabhan, a revolutionary thinker in his own right, along with thirteen of his close associates formed the **Nair Service Society** which has its headquarters in Perunna, Changanacherry.
- In 1914 "**Nair Bhruthya Janasangham**" was formed to organise and bring social reformation to the **Nair community**.
- In 1924 he took part in the **Vaikom Sathyagraha** and led the famous "**Savarna Jadha**", an **anti-untouchability agitation**.
- On 1st of November 1929, he participated in the famous "**Guruvayoor Sathyagraham**".

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- Mannam became a member of the **Indian National Congress in 1947**.
- Sri Mannam **gave up his surname**, stating that name should not be an indicator of caste.
- The people of Kerala honoured him with the **title "Bharatha Kesari" [Lion of India]** for his outstanding and selfless social activities.
- He was also awarded the **"Padmabhushan"** by the Government of India.
- He is the **earliest leader in the world to bring down a Communist Government** by public peaceful and democratic movement.

Sammed Shikharji': The Jain Pilgrimage Site



❖ Context

- Members of the **Jain community** have been protesting in many parts of the country to overturn Jharkhand government's decision declaring it as a tourist spot.

❖ About Sammed Shikharji

- The reason that Sammed Shikharji is so important to the community, and why it does not want the place to turn into an eco-tourism spot, is because it is located on the **Parasnath hill** in the Giridih district of Jharkhand.
- It is considered to be the biggest pilgrimage site by both the Digambaras & the Svetambaras.
- It is believed that it is the place **where 20 of the 24 Jain Tirthankara, who are Jain spiritual leaders, along with many other monks attained 'moksha' or salvation after meditating.**
- Parsnath hill is known across the country to be the **highest mountain in the state of Jharkhand.**
- The word 'Shikharji' in itself means a 'venerable peak'. Interestingly, the word 'Parasnath' comes from '**Parshvanatha**', the **23rd Jain tirthankara** who attained moksha here.
- According to beliefs of the Jain community, **Shikharji is ranked with Ashtapad, Girnar, Dilwara Temples** of Mount Abu and Shatrunjaya as the 'Svetambara Pancha Tirth' or **the five principal pilgrimage shrines.**
- If someone wants to do a pilgrimage of Shikharji, they must start with Palganj on Giridih road, where there is a small **shrine dedicated to Parshvanatha.**
- Pilgrims have to cover a long trek of about 27km while doing a circumambulation of Shikharji.

Glacial Mass Loss Over Tibetan Plateau



❖ Context

- South Asian **black carbon aerosols** increase glacial mass loss over Tibetan plateau.
- The **South Asia region** adjacent to the Tibetan Plateau has among the highest levels of black carbon emission in the world.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Black carbon aerosols have **indirectly affected the mass gain** of the Tibetan Plateau glaciers by changing long-range water vapour transport from the South Asian monsoon region, a study has found.
- Black carbon aerosols in South Asia **heat up the middle and upper atmosphere**, thus increasing the North-South temperature gradient.
- Accordingly, the **convective activity in South Asia is enhanced**, which causes convergence of water vapour in South Asia.
- These changes in meteorological conditions caused by black carbon aerosols make more **water vapour form precipitation in South Asia**, and the northward transport to the Tibetan Plateau was weakened.
- **As a result**, precipitation in the central and the southern Tibetan Plateau decreases during the monsoon and leads to a decrease of mass gain of glaciers.

❖ Black carbon aerosols:

- Black carbon aerosols are produced by the **incomplete combustion of fossil fuels** and biomass, and are characterised by strong light absorption.
- Studies have emphasised black carbon aerosols from South Asia can be transported across the Himalayas to the **inland region of the Tibetan Plateau.**
- Black carbon deposition in snow **reduces the albedo of surfaces**, a measure of how much of Sun's radiations is reflected, which may accelerate the melting of glaciers and snow cover, thus **changing the hydrological process and water resources in the region.**

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SMART' Program For Ayurveda



❖ **Context**

- SMART' program for Ayurveda professionals to boost R&D in Ayurveda in the country.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), have launched 'SMART' (Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals) program.
- It was observed that the research potential of the large community of Ayurveda teachers remains under utilised mostly.
- The program is aimed to boost scientific research in priority healthcare research areas through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals.
- The 'SMART' program will have a deep long term rejuvenating impact on research in the field of Ayurveda.
- The 'SMART' program will certainly motivate teachers for taking up projects in designated areas of healthcare research and create a large database."
- The proposed initiative is conceptualised with an objective to identify, support and promote innovative research ideas in healthcare research areas including.
 - Osteoarthritis,
 - Iron Deficiency Anaemia,
 - Chronic Bronchitis
 - Dyslipidemia,
 - Rheumatoid Arthritis,
 - Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus,
 - Psoriasis,
 - Generalised Anxiety Disorder,
 - Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)

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