

## Kalvari Class Submarine Vagir

### ❖ Context

- Fifth kalvari class submarine **Vagir** to be commissioned on 23 Jan 2023.

### Key Highlights:

- These submarines are being built in India by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai, under collaboration with M/s Naval Group, France.
- Four of the Kalvari class of submarines has already been commissioned into the Indian Navy.

### Glorious Past and Inception:

- The erstwhile Vagir was commissioned on 01 Nov 1973 and undertook numerous operational missions including deterrent patrols.
- The submarine was decommissioned on 07 Jan 2001 after serving the nation for about three decades.
- Launched and named 'Vagir' on 12 Nov 20, the submarine in its new avatar has the distinction of having the lowest build time among all indigenously manufactured submarines till date.
- It undertook its maiden sea sortie on Feb 22, marking the commencement of sea trials and has gone through a series of comprehensive acceptance checks and, stringent and demanding sea trials prior to being commissioned.
- The submarine was delivered to Indian Navy by M/s MDL on 20 Dec 22.

### Vagir - Ferocious Fifth:

- Vagir will boost the Indian Navy's capability to further India's maritime interests and is capable of undertaking diverse missions including anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying and surveillance missions.

### Vagir - Sand Shark:

- The Sand Shark represents 'Stealth and Fearlessness', two qualities that are synonymous with the ethos of a submariner.
- The induction of Vagir is another step towards the Indian Navy, consolidating its position as a builder's Navy, as it also reflects MDL's capabilities as a premier ship and submarine building yard.

### What's Project 75?

- Project-75 includes the indigenous construction of six diesel-electric attack submarines of Scorpene design.
- The submarines are being constructed at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai in collaboration with the Naval Group of France.



- The Navy has commissioned four Scorpenes, INS Kalvari, INS Khanderi, INS Karanj & INS Vela, till now.

## Eco-Sensitive Zone

### ❖ Context

- Creation of Ecologically sensitive zones (ESZ) across the country has led to protests in states such as Kerala and other regions.

### Key Highlights:

- In June, 2022, the Supreme Court gave its directions on ESZs.
- Court said that the MoEFCC guidelines are to be implemented in the area proposed in the draft notification awaiting finalisation and within a 10-km radius of yet-to-be-proposed protected areas.
- The Court also allowed States to increase or decrease the minimum width of ESZs.
- It vested the powers to ensure compliance with the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and the Home Secretary of the State.
- This effectively meant that all the activities can continue only if the PCCF grants permission.
- The new structures that are banned could include electric poles, buildings, walls, roads and bridges.
- Millions of forest-dwellers living on forest land and on the fringes of forests are the most affected.

### About Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ)

- As per the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016), land within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries is to be notified as eco-fragile zones or Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ).
- While the 10-km rule is implemented as a general principle, the extent of its application can vary.

- Areas beyond 10-km can also be notified by the Union government as ESZs, if they hold larger ecologically important "sensitive corridors."
- The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 does not mention the word "Eco-Sensitive Zones".

### Significance of ESZ:

- ESZs are created as "shock absorbers" for the protected areas.
- They help minimize the negative impact on the "fragile ecosystems" by certain human activities taking place nearby.
- These zones would act as a transition zone from areas of high protection to those involving lesser protection.
- ESZs are not meant to hamper the daily activities of people living in the vicinity.
- They are meant to guard the protected areas and "refine the environment around them".
- **Prohibited Activities**
  - Commercial mining, saw mills, commercial use of wood, etc.
- **Regulated Activities**
  - Felling of trees etc.
- **Permitted Activities**
  - Ongoing agricultural or horticultural practices, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, among others.

**Side Note**

- Protected areas cover 5.26% of India's land area as 108 national parks and 564 wildlife sanctuaries.

- They are notified under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
- Protected areas do away with even the activities permitted in 'reserve forests'.

## News in Between the Lines

### Asian Water Bird Census 2023



❖ **Context**

- A bird survey was conducted in Alappuzha, Kerala and Soor Sarovar (UP) as part of the Asian WaterBird Census 2023.

❖ **Key findings:**

- A shift in migration patterns of water birds appears to be taking place as revealed by a recent survey conducted in the northern parts of Alappuzha.
- The survey conducted at Soor Sarovar Wildlife Sanctuary found that lesser migration of winter migratory water birds from far Central Asia and North Asia, including Russia and Siberia, was recorded this year in comparison to previous years.
- Climate change has affected the number of birds visiting the region.

❖ **About the Asian WaterBird Census(AWC)-**

- The AWC is an integral part of the global waterbird monitoring programme, the International Waterbird Census (IWC), coordinated by Wetlands International.
- The AWC was initiated in 1987 in the Indian subcontinent and since has grown rapidly to cover major regions of Asia.
- It runs in parallel with other regional programmes of the International Waterbird Census in Africa, Europe, West Asia, the Neotropics and the Caribbean.
- Wetlands International-It is the only global not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands.

### National Beekeeping & Honey Mission



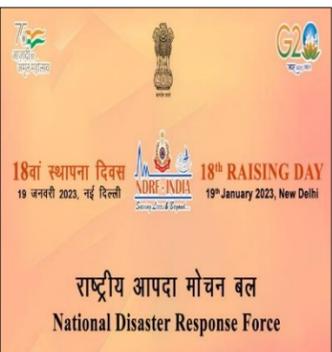
❖ **Context**

- KVIC Initiative- Chairman distributes 300 Bee-boxes at Malavalli District, Karnataka.

❖ **National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM):**

- National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM) was launched as a component of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat package by the Union Government in 2020.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India, is in charge of the NBHM.
- The program is being executed by the National Bee Board (NBB).
- In order to accomplish the goals of the Sweet Revolution, the project aims at the general advancement and promotion of scientific beekeeping in India.
- It is a Central sector scheme and 100 percent funded by Central Government.
- The programme will collaborate with a number of other beekeeping initiatives, including the KVIC Honey Mission, the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), and programmes from the rural development, MSME, AYUSH, commerce and industry, tribal affairs, etc.

### National Disaster Response Force



❖ **Context**

- The Prime Minister has greeted the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) on their Raising Day.

❖ **About NDRF:**

- The Disaster Management Act 2005 has statutory provisions for the constitution of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) for the purpose of specialized response to natural and man-made disasters.
- In the beginning, the personnel of NDRF were deployed for routine law & order duties also.
- In a meeting of the NDMA with the Prime Minister on October 25, 2007, the need for NDRF to be made a dedicated force was highlighted and accepted.
- This led to the notification of NDRF Rules on February 14th, 2008, making NDRF a dedicated force for disaster response related duties, under the unified command of DG NDRF.
- Today NDRF is a distinguished, unique Force across the country functioning under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

## Face to Face Centres



## FITUR -Largest International Travel Exhibitions



### ❖ Context

- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is participating in FITUR in Madrid which is one of the **world's largest international travel exhibitions**.

### ❖ Key Highlights:

- FITUR is the **global meeting point for tourism professionals** and the leading trade fair for inbound and outbound markets in Latin America.
- The event serves as a **global communication platform** in order to develop future strategies taking into account the changes in consumer demand and thus generally promoting the tourism business.
- **India's participation at FITUR** is significant to step up the recovery of inbound tourism to pre-pandemic levels.

### ❖ Context

- Recently, The '**Spot Bellied Eagle Owl**' (Bubo Nipalensis) sighted for the first time in **Seshachalam forest range**.

### ❖ Key Highlights:

- **Characteristics**
  - The bold predatory bird, measuring **20-25 inches in length** and weighing between 1.5 kg and 2 kg.
  - The bird **makes a strange scream** similar to humans and it is hence called the '**Ghost of the Forest**' in India and '**Devil Bird**' in Sri Lanka.
- **Habitat and Distribution**
  - The bird's habitat, found on **large trees in thick forests**, is spread across the Indian sub-continent.
  - It was **sighted only twice in the State earlier**, and both the times it was at **Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve(NSTR)**.
  - It is found in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN Red List**- Least Concern.
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**- Schedule IV .
  - **CITES**- Appendix II.

## Spot Bellied Eagle Owl



### ❖ Context

- Recently, the rupee weakened sharply against the US dollar amid sparse trading volumes as some **foreign banks purchased the greenback**.

### ❖ Greenback

- Greenback is a slang term for U.S. dollars.
- Greenbacks were **emergency paper currency issued by the United States** during the American Civil War that were printed in green on the back.
- They were in two forms:
  - Demand Notes, issued in 1861–1862.
  - United States Notes, issued in 1862–1865.
- A form of fiat money, the **notes were legal tender for most purposes** and carried varying promises of eventual payment in coin, but **were not backed by existing gold or silver reserves**.
- Because they were not fully backed by gold, greenbacks lost value and **caused inflation in the northern economy**.
- These were later **replaced in the Legal Tender Act of 1862**, which authorized the paper notes that would eventually become the official currency.
- **Relevance in the Present Time**
  - Traders in the foreign exchange market use the term greenback to refer to the United States Dollar.
  - Hence it indicates the trading in the United States Dollar or U.S. dollar index.

## Greenback



## Face to Face Centres



## Disclosure of Journalistic Sources



### ❖ Context

- Recently, a Delhi court said there is “**no statutory exemption in India to journalists from disclosing their sources** to investigating agencies”.

### ❖ Legal Protection for Disclosure of Journalistic Sources:

- In India, there is **no specific legislation** that protects journalists from being asked to disclose their sources.
- **Article 19** of the Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression to all citizens.
- Investigative agencies can issue notice to anyone, including journalists, to provide information.
- Like any citizen, **a journalist can be compelled to give evidence in Court.**
- If he/she does not comply, the journalist **can face charges of Contempt of Court.**
- While the Supreme Court broadly recognises the freedom of the press, including the right of journalists to ensure protection of their sources, various courts have ruled differently on this issue.
- **Recommendations for a change in law.**
  - The **Law Commission of India in its 93rd Report in 1983** recommended recognising journalistic privilege by amending the Indian Evidence Act.

### ❖ Context

- A US Congressman has recently moved a Bill in the House of Representatives to revoke Pakistan’s designation as a Major Non-NATO Ally.
- The **Bill (HR80)** says that **Pakistan should be demoted from the major non-NATO ally status** till the US President can submit a certification that it has met certain conditions.

### ❖ Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) Status:

- The MNNA status was **first created in 1987.**
- The United States has **designated 30 countries as major non-Nato allies.**
- These non-Nato countries share a strategic working relationship with the US Armed Forces.
- The MNNA status is granted to countries from Korea to Argentina, depending upon US strategic interests.
- **Brazil was the latest country to be granted this status in 2020** by Donald Trump.
- The initial MNNA were Australia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, and South Korea.
- While MNNA status provides military and economic privileges, it does not entail any security commitments to the designated country.
- **NATO Alliance**
  - The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO ) is an **intergovernmental military alliance of 30 North American and European states.**
  - The alliance came into existence following the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty.
  - The aim of the alliance is to constitute a system of collective defence whereby members agree to mutual defence in response to an external attack.

## Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) Status

Named by George H. W. Bush	Named by George W. Bush
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australia (1985)</li> <li>• Egypt (1989)</li> <li>• Israel (1989)</li> <li>• Japan (1989)</li> <li>• South Korea (1988)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bahrain (2002)</li> <li>• Philippines (2003)</li> <li>• Taiwan (de facto) (2003)</li> <li>• Thailand (2003)</li> <li>• Kuwait (2004)</li> <li>• Morocco (2004)</li> <li>• Pakistan (2004)</li> </ul>
Named by Bill Clinton	Named by Barack Obama
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jordan (1996)</li> <li>• New Zealand (1997)</li> <li>• Argentina (1998)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afghanistan (2012)</li> <li>• Tunisia (2015)</li> </ul>

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