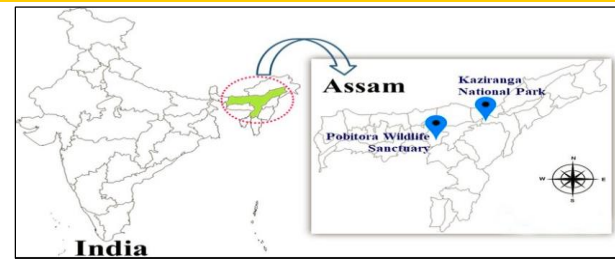


25 February 2023

Kaziranga National Park

❖ Context

- Recently, The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change sought a “factual report” on the rhino population enumeration, conducted in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in March 2022.



❖ Key Highlights:

- Data sheets from the enumeration across the 84 compartments of the national park showed that the actual count of rhinos was 2,042.
- But this figure was “adjusted” after a sample survey in some randomly selected compartments to show 2,613 rhinos - an increase of 200 from the 2,413 rhinos estimated in 2018.

❖ Kaziranga National Park:

- **Location :**
 - It is situated in the Golaghat, Karbi Anglong & Nagaon districts of the state of Assam, India.
 - The entire area of Kaziranga - formed by alluvial deposits from the Brahmaputra & its tributaries - is centered on the river.
 - The **Diphlu River passes through the Kaziranga National Park.**
- **International Status :** The sanctuary, which hosts two-thirds of the world's great one-horned rhinoceroses, **is a World Heritage Site.**
- **Legal Status :** It was declared as a **National Park in 1974** by Govt of India.
 - Kaziranga is home to the **highest density of tigers** among protected areas in the world, and was **declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006** (now the highest tiger density is in **Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand**).
- **Flora :** **Alluvial inundated grasslands, alluvial savanna woodlands, tropical moist mixed deciduous forests,** and tropical semi-evergreen forests can be found here.
 - **Kumbhi, Indian gooseberry, cotton tree, & elephant apple** are just a few of the park's well-known trees.

• Fauna : Indian Rhinoceros.

- It is famous for the charismatic ‘**BIGFIVE**’ **Great Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros, Asiatic Wild Buffalo, Asiatic Elephant, Swamp Deer, and Royal Bengal Tiger** are among them.

❖ 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 .**

Hate Speech

❖ Context

- Recently, The Supreme Court granted interim bail to a political party member who had been arrested for alleged **hate speech** by Assam Police earlier in the day.



❖ Key Highlights:

- He was booked under IPC sections including 153A, 505, and 295A.
- The invocation of these laws are often criticised for restricting free speech and misusing the legal processes for political purposes.
- ❖ **Indian Laws With Respect to Hate Speech:**
 - There is **no specific legal definition** of ‘hate speech’.
 - In the **267th Report of the Law Commission of India**, hate speech is stated as an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and the like.

- **Sections 153A and 153B of the IPC:** Punishes acts that cause enmity and hatred between two groups.
- **Section 295A of the IPC:** Deals with punishing acts which deliberately or with malicious intention outrage the religious feelings of a class of persons.
- **Sections 505(1) and 505(2):** Make the publication and circulation of content which may cause ill-will or hatred between different groups an offence.
- **Section 8 of RPA Act 1951:** Prevents a person convicted of the illegal use of the freedom of speech from contesting an election.
- **Sections 123(3A) and 125 of the RPA:** Bars the promotion of animosity on the grounds of race, religion, community, caste, or language in reference to elections and include it under corrupt electoral practices.

Face to Face Centres

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25 February 2023

Norms For Jute Packaging Materials

❖ Context

- Government of India approved **Reservation norms for mandatory use of jute in packaging** of rice, wheat and sugar for the Jute Year 2022-23.



❖ Key Highlights:

- **The Mandatory norms provide** for 100% reservation for packaging of foodgrains and 20% reservation for packaging of sugar in jute bags.
- It will be a **big boost for West Bengal** here nearly 75 jute mills operate and provide livelihood to lakhs of workmen
- It will support 40 lakh farm families in the jute sector.
- The decision will **also help the jute sector in** Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

❖ About JPM Act 1987:

- The reservation norms under the JPM Act provide for direct employment to 3.70 lakh workers & protect the interest of approximately 40 lakh farm families in the jute sector.
- **JPM Act, 1987 protects** the interest of Jute farmers, workers and persons engaged in jute goods' production.
- **75% of the total production** of the Jute Industry is Jute Sacking Bags of which 85% is supplied to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and State Procurement Agencies (SPAs) and remaining is exported/sold directly.
- **Govt. purchases** Jute sacking bags worth approximately Rs. 9,000 Cr. every year for packing of foodgrains.
- **This ensures** a guaranteed market for the produce of Jute Farmers and Workers.
- **The reservation norms** would further the interest of domestic production of raw jute and jute packaging material in India.
- It will also **help protect the environment** because jute is a natural, bio- degradable, renewable & reusable fiber and hence fulfills all sustainability parameters.

❖ Jute Production In India:

- India is the largest producer of Jute followed by Bangladesh and China.
- It is also **known as the golden fiber** and is one of the most significant industries after cotton in India
- Bangladesh tops the list in terms of acreage and trade as it accounts for three-fourths of the global jute exports in comparison to India's 7%.
- The **major jute producing states** are West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura.
- However **99% of India's total production** is held by West Bengal, Bihar and Assam.
- It **grows in a warm and humid climate** with temperatures between 24° C to 37° C.
- It is **totally biodegradable and recyclable**. It not only consumes carbon dioxide and releases oxygen but also increases soil fertility if grown in crop rotations.

❖ Initiatives Taken For Jute Sector:

- The government brought the **Jute Packaging Materials Act, 1987** to protect the interests of about 4 lakh workers and 40 lakh farm families.
- In 2016, an **e-government initiative**, Jute SMART, was launched to bring transparency to the jute sector.
- **The Jute Geo-Textiles (JGT)** can be made through the special treatment and weaving processes.
- **JGT can be applied to many fields** including soil erosion control, civil engineering, protection of river banks and road pavement construction.

News in Between the Lines

International Monetary Fund (IMF)



❖ Context

- Recently, IMF's Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said that the **Indian economy will alone contribute 15 per cent of the global growth** this year, as the country continues to remain a relative "bright spot" in the world economy.

❖ International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- **About:**
 - The IMF is an **international financial institution**, It was **set up along with the World Bank** at the **Bretton Woods Conference in 1944**.
 - **Headquarter** - Washington, D.C.
 - It consists of **190 countries**.
 - It works to foster **global monetary cooperation**, secure financial stability and facilitate **international trade**.
- **Areas Of Involvement :**
 - Exchange rate, currency, liquid asset, Special Drawing Right
 - Plays a **central role in the management of balance of payments difficulties** and international financial crises.
- **Publications :** Global Financial Stability Report ,World Economic Outlook, Regional Economic Outlook , Managing Director's Global Policy Agenda.

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25 February 2023

Malabar Exercise



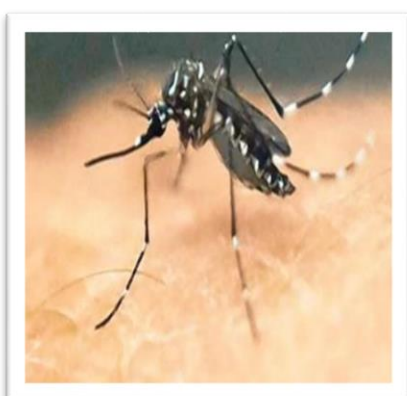
❖ Context

- Australia will host the Malabar multilateral naval exercise, consisting of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., for the first time this year.

❖ About Malabar Exercise:

- Japan hosted the last edition of Malabar which was held in November 2022 which also marked 30 years of the exercise.
- Malabar is a **multilateral war-gaming naval exercise** that was started in **1992**.
- It began as a bilateral exercise between the navies of India and the United States.
- Two more editions of the exercise were carried out in 1995 and 1996, after which there was a break until 2002 in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests.
- **From 2002 onward, the exercise has been conducted every year.**
- Japan and Australia first participated in 2007, and since 2014, India, the US and Japan have participated in the exercise every year.
- Australia was included as a permanent member of Ex Malabar in 2020 amid the standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh.

Emergency Over Dengue Outbreak



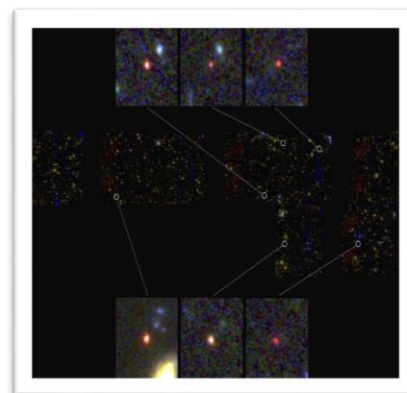
❖ Context

- Peru has declared a "**health emergency**" in 13 departments in the country's north, centre and southeast due to an outbreak of dengue.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Earlier its neighbour** Bolivia also declared a health alert with a cumulative number of more than 6,800 cases and 26 deaths.
- According to the **World Health Organization**, dengue fever is one of the top ten global health threats and is also the most rapidly spreading threat.
- There has been a **30-fold increase in global incidence** over the past 50 years.
- Dengue fever is caused by a virus transmitted primarily by **Aedes Aegypti mosquitoes**.
- These mosquitoes **bite during the day**, usually just after sunrise and around sunset.
- Common symptoms of dengue include fever, rash, nausea and aches and pains, lasting up to a week. Some people with dengue develop **complications that can result in internal bleeding, shock and even death**.
- Around 2.5% of people affected by severe dengue die from the disease. **There is no cure for infection.**

James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)

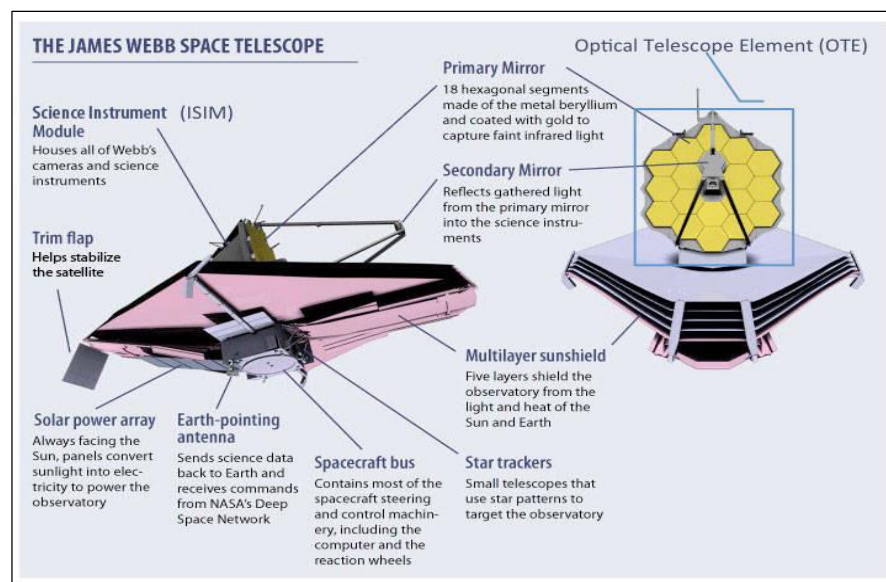


❖ Context

- Recently, James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) discovered six extraordinarily massive first-generation galaxies, formed roughly 500-700 million years after the Big Bang.

❖ James Webb Space Telescope

- The telescope has been developed under an international partnership between **NASA**, the European Space Agency (**ESA**) and the Canadian Space Agency (**CSA**).
- It was launched aboard a rocket on December 25, 2021.
- It headed to an outpost 1.5 million kilometers (9,30,000 miles) from Earth.
- It is currently at a point in space known as the Sun-Earth **L2 Lagrange point**.
 - L2 is approximately 1.5 million km beyond Earth's orbit around the Sun.
- It is a successor of the **Hubble Telescope**.
- The telescope will study the **atmospheres of a wide diversity of exoplanets**
- It will also **search for atmospheres similar to Earth's**, and for the signatures of key substances such as **methane, water, oxygen, carbon dioxide**, and **complex organic molecules**, in hopes of finding the building blocks of life.

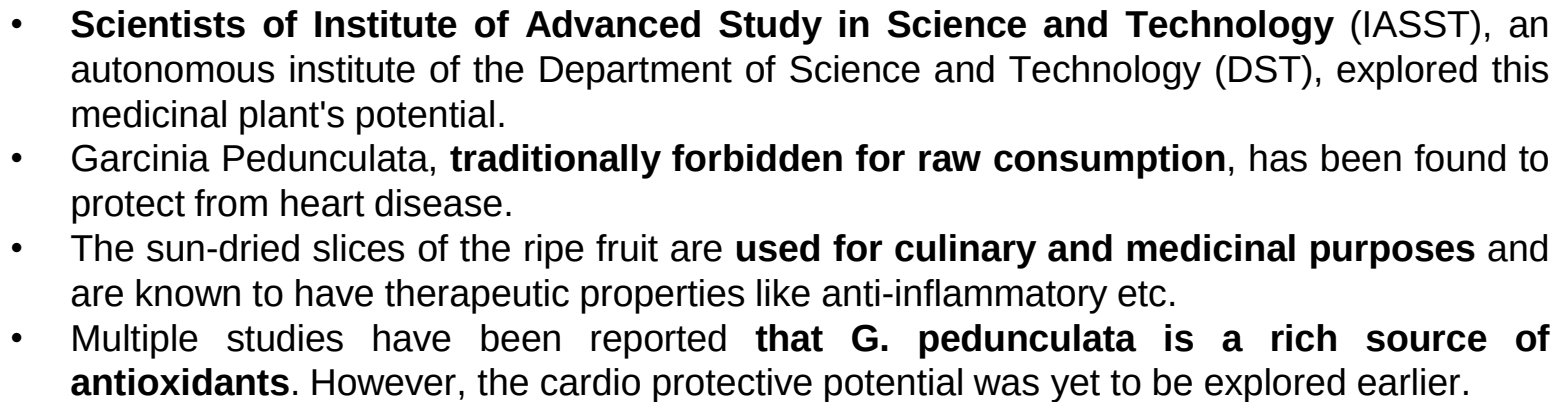


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- Amid the **rapidly rising mercury levels** across the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had cautioned that the recent temperature spike witnessed by Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan **might put the wheat crops in peril**.
- This was followed with the Union Agriculture Ministry **setting up a committee to monitor the developing situation** and its impacts on the current wheat crop.
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research **has developed a new wheat variety**
- **It can overcome the challenges** arising out due to changes in weather patterns and rising heat levels.
- This new wheat **variety called HD-3385** is amenable to early sowing, escaping the impact of heat spikes and can be harvested before March end.

- **It is predicted that** reconstruction of infrastructure and buildings destroyed or damaged during the war could emit 49 million tonnes of CO₂.
- The potential carbon costs for reconstruction, is roughly equivalent to the **carbon footprint of Greece or Belarus in 2020.**

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