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HABITAT GUILDS



- Uttarakhand is home to the Western Himalayan temperate forests which harbour a large number of endemic bird species.
- A new study that analysed these natural oak-dominated forests and modified forests has noted that there was a drastic loss of bird species in all modified landscapes.
- Six major land-use types which included natural oak forest, degraded oak forest (lightly used), lopped oak forest (intensively used), pine forest, agricultural cultivation area and sites with buildings were studied.
- The results showed that there was a low diversity of species in monoculture areas and urban sites.
- It also noticed strong decline in some of the habitat guilds in the areas that experienced land-use change.
- Habitat guilds are groups of bird species that have common habitat preferences.

SURYAKIRAN



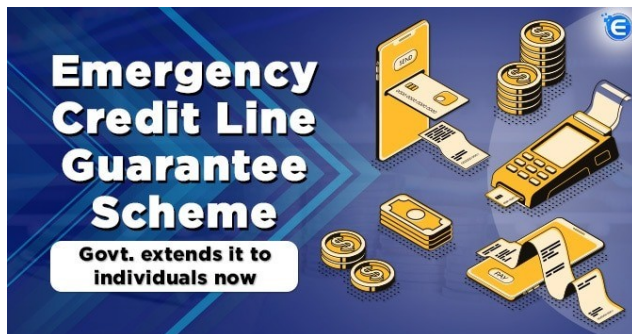
- The Suryakiran aerobatic display team of the Indian Air Force (IAF), which has enthralled crowds across the country with their hair-raising manoeuvres with their aircraft in red and white, has just completed 25 years.
- One of the few nine aircraft display teams in the world and the only one in Asia, the team has carried out over 600 displays across the country and south east Asia.
- “Suryakiran”, which means ‘rays of the sun’ in Sanskrit, was raised in May 27, 1996, at the IAF air base in Bidar, Karnataka, with six Kiran MkII trainer aircraft.
- It carried out its first display on September 15, 1996 for the golden jubilee celebrations of the Air Force Administrative College in Coimbatore.
- However, the team was disbanded in 2011 after the Aero India show due to shortage of training aircraft in the IAF and was resurrected in 2015 on advanced jet trainer Hawk Mk-132 aircraft.
- This team, which has been the brand ambassador of the IAF, is also the 52 squadron of the IAF and is the youngest fighter squadron with the motto “Always the Best”.

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS)



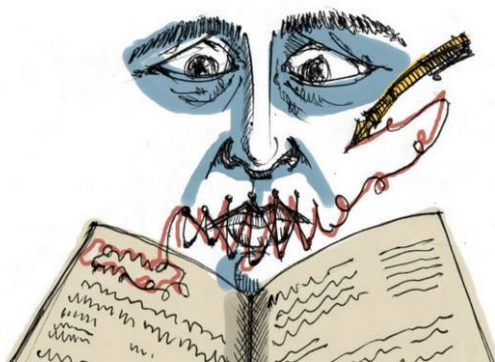
- On June 3, NASA will send 128 glow-in-the-dark baby squids and some 5,000 tardigrades (also called water bears) to the International Space Station for research purposes
- The water animals, which will be launched aboard SpaceX's 22nd cargo resupply mission to the ISS, are part of experiments that could help scientists design improved protective measures for astronauts going on long-duration space travel.
- One of these studies involves looking at how the water bears— tiny animals (around 1mm long) that can adapt to extreme conditions on Earth, including high pressure, temperature and radiation— would behave in a spaceflight environment.
- Scientists also want to look at how microgravity conditions affect the relationship between the bobtail squid —which are also tiny (3 mm long)— and beneficial microbes, as part of a study called UMAMI, short for Understanding of Microgravity on Animal-Microbe Interactions.
- Edible oil prices have risen sharply in recent months
- The prices of six edible oils — groundnut oil, mustard oil, vanaspati, soya oil, sunflower oil and palm oil — have risen between 20% and 56% at all-India levels in the last one year, data on the Department of Consumer Affairs website show.
- With rising incomes and changing food habits, consumption of edible oils has been rising over the years.
- While mustard oil is consumed mostly in rural areas, the share of refined oils —sunflower oil and soyabean oil — is higher in urban areas.
- In 2019-20, domestic availability of edible oils from both primary sources (oilseeds like mustard, groundnut etc.) and secondary sources (such as coconut, oil palm, rice bran oil, cotton seed) was only 10.65 million tonnes against the total domestic demand of 24 million tonnes — a gap of over 13 million tonnes.
- Thus, India depends on imports to meet its demand. In 2019-20, the country imported about 13.35 million tonnes of edible oils worth Rs 61,559 crore, or about 56% of the demand.
- The major sources of these imports are Argentina and Brazil for soyabean oil; Indonesia and Malaysia palm oil; and Ukraine and Argentina again for sunflower oil.

EMERGENCY CREDIT LINE GUARANTEE SCHEME (ECLGS)



- On account of the disruptions caused by the second wave of COVID 19 pandemic to businesses across various sectors of the economy, Government has further enlarged the scope of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme as under.
- ECLGS 4.0: 100% guarantee cover to loans up to Rs.2 crore to hospitals/nursing homes/clinics/medical colleges for setting up on-site oxygen generation plants, interest rate capped at 7.5%;
- Additional ECLGS assistance of upto 10% of the outstanding as on February 29, 2020 to borrowers covered under ECLGS 1.0, in tandem with restructuring as per RBI guidelines of May 05, 2021;
- Current ceiling of Rs. 500 Cr. of loan outstanding for eligibility under ECLGS 3.0 to be removed, subject to maximum additional ECLGS assistance to each borrower being limited to 40% or Rs.200 crore, whichever is lower;
- Civil Aviation sector to be eligible under ECLGS 3.0
- Validity of ECLGS extended to 30.09.2021 or till guarantees for an amount of Rs.3 lakh crore are issued. Disbursement under the scheme permitted up to 31.12.2021.
- Detailed operational guidelines in this regard are being separately issued by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC).

Proposals of T.K. Viswanathan Committee on Hate Speech



- Responsible speech is not just something that does not contain abuse, defamation or incitement to violence.
- It is increasingly seen as an expression that tends not to discriminate against or incite hatred towards groups based on race, gender, caste, religious belief, sexual orientation, nationality or immigration status.
- A committee appointed by the Union Home Ministry, tasked with recommending changes in criminal law, is now seeking to formulate new provisions that will make hate speech a separate offence.
- The term 'hate speech' may not be used, but the panel is examining recommendations made by the Law Commission and the Expert Committee headed by T.K. Viswanathan, on adding Sections 153C and 505A to the IPC.

- In 2017, a committee headed by former Lok Sabha Secretary General T.K. Viswanathan submitted a report recommending stricter laws to curb online hate speech
- Section 78 of the IT Act needs to be substituted and Section 153 and 505A of the Indian Penal Code need to be amended.
- It proposed inserting Sections 153 C (b) and Section 505 A in the IPC for incitement to commit an offence on grounds of religion, race, caste or community, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, place of birth, residence, language, disability or tribe.
- Section 78 primarily dealt with capacity building and needs to be relooked at with a view to sensitise law enforcement agency officers.
- Under it, a police officer of the rank of inspector or above was empowered to investigate offences.
- Each state should have a State Cyber Crime Coordinator which should be an officer not below the rank of Inspector General of Police.
- Each district should have a District Cyber Crime Cell headed by an officer not below the rank of sub-inspector.
- It proposed punishment of up to two years along with ₹5,000 fine.
- There is no clear definition of what constitutes a “hate speech” in the IPC
- Ever since Section 66A of the Information Technology Act was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015, some governments see a lacuna in the law concerning offensive messaging over the Internet.
- With Section 66A of the IT Act out of the picture, there is a pressing need for a piece of legislation that deals explicitly with online hate speech.
- Currently, offences

Natural indigo dye



- Scientists have found that the natural indigo dye extracted from leaves of a plant of the bean family is capable of protecting human eyes from harmful laser radiation.
- The blue dye is extracted from *Indigofera Tinctoria* or the famed Indigo plants that has been used over the years to colour clothes and clothing materials.
- Researchers from the Raman Research Institute (RRI), Bengaluru, and Kensri School and College, Bengaluru, studied the optical properties of the natural Indigo dye and found that it can act as a device to protect human eyes from harmful laser radiation.
- The study is funded by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and was published in the journal ‘Optical Materials’.
- The researchers extracted the dye and stored it in a refrigerator below 4° Celsius to preserve its natural properties.

- Their study on how much it absorbed light at different wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum showed that the absorption is maximum in the ultraviolet region of the spectrum.
- The absorption is comparatively high for the green light as well.
- The absorption's variation with wavelength indicated that chlorophyll, an organic compound that takes part in photosynthesis, is present in the dye.
- The team found that when the intensity of the laser pulse is increased, the dye absorbs more light.
- Thus it is more opaque to higher intensity light and is referred to as an 'optical limiter'.
- Optical limiters are useful in weakening the potentially harmful radiation emitted by powerful lasers and protecting both eyes and sensitive optical instruments

Mount Nyiragongo erupts in the Republic of Congo



- Mount Nyiragongo erupted in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mount Nyiragongo is one of several volcanoes near the DRC's border with Rwanda and Uganda.
- Its last major eruption, in 2002, killed 250 people and displaced thousands.
- Nyiragongo and nearby Nyamuragira are together responsible for 40 per cent of Africa's historical volcanic eruptions.
- Mount Nyiragongo is located inside Virunga National Park.

Scientist takes first-ever journey to 3rd deepest ocean trench, finds plastic



- Doctor Deo Florence Onda, a Filipino microbial oceanographer, discovered plastic during the first-ever journey to the third-deepest ocean trench on Earth.
- The 33-year-old microbial oceanologist had travelled more than 10,000 m below the surface to The Emden Deep, a part of the Philippine Trench.
- Onda said that he even mistook a piece of plastic for a jellyfish.

The 'Bell of Faith' scheme



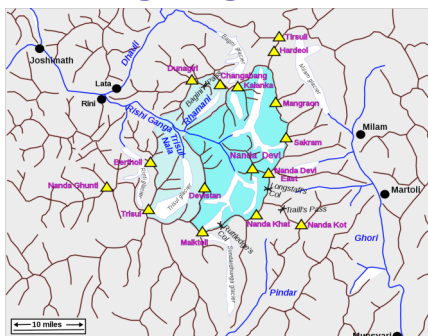
- The 'Bell of Faith' scheme will now be implemented for senior citizens staying alone in villages.
- Previously, this scheme was successfully implemented in a number of urban households in Kerala.
- Safety project conceived under Kerala's Community Policing Scheme.
- It will help elderly citizens attract the attention of their neighbours using a loud, remote-controlled alarm in emergencies.
- It has been under implementation in Kerala since 2018
- It sets an example for community participation to ensure the well-being and safety of the elderly.

Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve:



- The Assam government has approved a proposal to increase the firepower of the guards of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve and provide commando training to them. These measures are aimed at preventing poaching.
- Kaziranga is home to the highest density of tigers among protected areas in the world, and was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006
- Spread across the floodplains of the Brahmaputra River, its forests, wetlands and grasslands are home to tigers, elephants and the world's largest population of Indian one-horned rhinoceroses. Ganges River dolphins swim in the park's waters
- Kaziranga is crisscrossed by four main rivers — Brahmaputra, Diphlu, Mora Diphlu and Mora Dhansiri.

Rishiganga



- There was reports that Cracks had developed in glaciers at the origin of Rishiganga in Chamoli, a team of scientists carried out an aerial survey and found nothing wrong.
- Rishiganga or Rishi Ganga is a river in the Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, India.
- It springs from the Uttari Nanda Devi Glacier on the Nanda Devi mountain.
- It is also fed from the Dakshini Nanda Devi Glacier.
- Continuing through the Nanda Devi National Park, it flows into the Dhauliganga River near the village Rini

Cali



- The Colombian Army has tightened its control over Cali following the latest anti-government protests.
- Cali is the second-largest city in Colombia by area and the third most populous.
- It is the only major Colombian city with access to the Pacific Coast.
- Cali is located in the Cauca Valley to the west of the Cauca River.

Eight core sectors' output rises by 56% in April



- The output of India's eight core infrastructure sectors grew by 56% in April led by a low base effect, according to official data.
- Production of natural gas, refinery products and steel jumped by 25%, 30.9% and 400% respectively in comparison to the year-ago period.
- The eight infrastructure sectors had contracted by 37.9% in April 2020.
- The eight core industries included are- Coal, Crude oil, Natural Gas, Petroleum refinery products, Fertilizer, Cement, Steel, and Electricity generation.

China allows couples to have three children



- China on Monday announced that each couple would be permitted to have up to three children, marking the end of the two-child policy.
- It was approved during a politburo meeting chaired by Chinese President Xi Jinping, state media outlet Xinhua reported.
- It comes after China's once-in-a-decade census showed that the Chinese population grew at its slowest pace since the 1950s.

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