

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road that curves through a dense, lush green forest. Several cars are visible on the road, including a white car, a blue car, and a dark car. The road has white dashed lines for lane markings. The overall scene is vibrant and scenic.

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**DAILY NEWS DECODE**

**30.12.21**

# Tequila fish returned to the wild in Mexico after being declared extinct 18 years ago



- Tequila fish, which disappeared from the wild in 2003, has been successfully reintroduced in a Mexico river following a decades-long partnership between Michoacana University of Mexico and Chester Zoo.
- In 1998, the zoo sent five pairs of fish to the Mexican university.
- The fish established a new colony within the university's laboratory, which scientists maintained and expanded over the years.

# Quantum Lab set up in MP by Indian Army to boost research, training



- The Indian Army has set up a Quantum Laboratory at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh to boost research and training at the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE).
- The National Security Council Secretariat helped the Indian Army in setting up the lab.
- A press release from the Army said, "Training on cyber warfare is being imparted through state-of-the-art...cyber security labs."

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# PANDU SHIP REPAIR FACILITY



- The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways met the top officials of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), Cochin Shipyard Limited & IIT, Madras to review the progress on the Pandu Ship repair facility in Guwahati.
- The announcement of the new ship repair facility was made on 26th August, 2021. The minister said that the technical work is being completed as the construction of the facility is slated to commence from May, 2022. The project is aimed to be completed within two years; i.e. by 2024.
- The design and implementation of this project is being done jointly by IWAI and Cochin Shipyard Limited. The technical support is being provided by IIT, Madras.
- The facility - also referred as 'Slipway' - is going to be developed on 3.67 acre of land which is provided by Government of Assam.

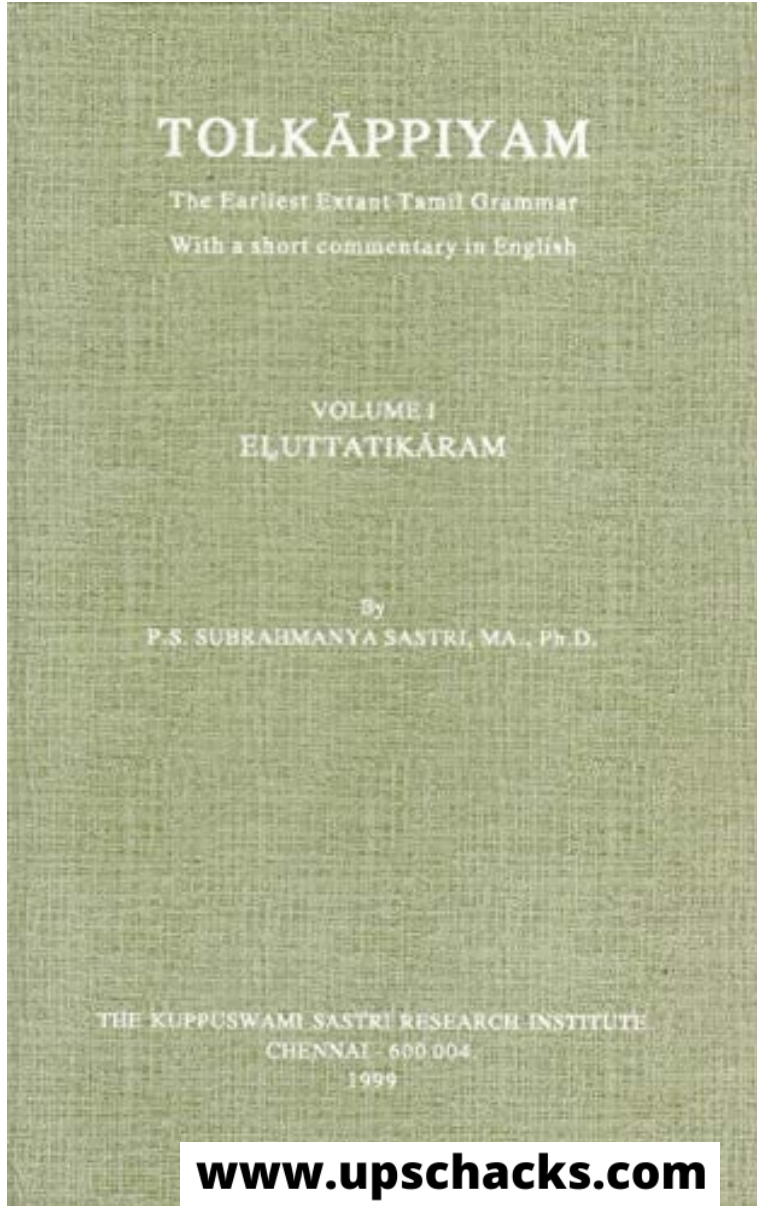
# Indravati Tiger Reserve



- For the first time, a large area (400 square kilometers) of the Indravati Tiger Reserve which is a Maoist-affected area, has been covered in tiger census work.
- The tiger reserve is located in the Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh.
- The perennial river 'Indravati' forms the boundary of the reserve on the Northern and Western side, which also happens to be the inter-state boundary between Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra.
- It is one of three Project Tiger sites in Chhattisgarh, along with Udanti-sitanadi, and is home to one of the last remaining populations of the endangered wild water buffalo.

- **Indravati attained the status of a national park in 1981 and a tiger reserve in 1983.**
- **The topography of the park mainly comprises undulating hilly terrain.**
- **The vegetation of the Indravati National Park is mainly of the tropical moist and dry deciduous type with predominance of bamboo, sal and teak.**
- **The most common trees in the park are teak, lendia, salai, mahua, tendu, semal, haldu, ber and jamun.**
- **It is home to gaur (Indian bison), nilgai, blackbuck, chausingha (four-horned antelope), sambar, chital, Indian muntjac, Indian spotted chevrotain, wild boar, tigers, leopards, sloth bears, dholes (wild dog) and striped hyenas.**

# Tolkāppiyam



- The Minister of State for Education released the Hindi translation of Tolkāppiyam and the Kannada translations of 9 books of Classical Tamil literature
- Tolkappiyam is the most ancient extant Tamil grammar text and the oldest extant long work of Tamil literature.
- It is a comprehensive text on grammar, and includes sutras on orthography, phonology, etymology, morphology, semantics, prosody, sentence structure and the significance of context in language.
- The surviving manuscripts of the Tolkappiyam consists of three books, each with nine chapters, with a cumulative total of 1,612 sutras in the nūrṣpā meter.
- The three books are -the Eluttatikaram (“Eluttu” meaning “letter, phoneme”), the Sollatikaram (“Sol” meaning “Sound, word”) and the Porulatikaram (“Porul” meaning “subject matter”, i.e. prosody, rhetoric, poetics).

- There is no firm evidence to assign the authorship of this treatise to any one author.
- Tholkapiyam, some traditionally believe, was written by a single author named Tholkappiyar, a disciple of Vedic sage Agastya mentioned in the Rigveda (1500–1200 BCE).
- Some in the Tamil tradition place the text in the mythical second sangam, variously in 1st millennium BCE or earlier.
- According to the traditional legend, the original grammar was called Agathiam written down by sage Agastya, but it went missing after a great deluge.

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# Nilgai



- The State government of Bihar has chalked out a plan to sterilize the nilgais instead of culling them to control their population in view of repeated demand by farmers to save their crops
- The nilgai is the largest Asian antelope and is ubiquitous across the northern Indian subcontinent.
- The scientific name of the nilgai is *Boselaphus tragocamelus*. The nilgai is the sole member of the genus *Boselaphus* and placed in the family *Bovidae*.
- It is also called the Blue Bull, ghurparas in Bihar.
- The vernacular name "nilgai" comes from the fusion of the Hindi words nil ("blue") and gai ("cow"). The word was first recorded in use in 1882.

- **Sexual dimorphism is prominent; the males are larger than females and differ in colouration.**
- **They live in dry areas with a variety of land types. They range from grassy, steppe woodlands, to hillsides.**
- **It occurs in India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Significant numbers occur in the Terai lowlands in the foothills of the Himalayas.**
- **It is indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, and Hindus accord it the same sacred status as cattle (both belong to the subfamily Bovinae).**
- **Accordingly, the nilgai is the only one of the four Indian antelopes that is still abundant.**
- **It comes under Schedule III of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**
- **IUCN status: Least Concern.**

# Golan Heights



- Israel's government approved a \$317 million plan to double the Jewish settler population in the Golan Heights, 40 years after it annexed the territory captured from Syria.
- Golan Heights, also called Golan Plateau is a hilly area overlooking the upper Jordan River valley on the west.
- The area's name is from the biblical city of refuge Golan in Bashan.
- Geographically, the Golan is bounded by the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee on the west, Mount Hermon on the north, the seasonal Wadi Al-Ruqqād (a north-south branch of the Yarmūk River) on the east, and the Yarmūk River on the south.

- It is roughly boat-shaped and has an area of 1,150 square km.
- The area was part of extreme southwestern Syria until 1967.
- Israel occupied it in the 1967 Mideast war and later annexed the territory, promoting settlement and agriculture there as well as creating a thriving local tourism industry.
- The US was the first country to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the Golan, which the rest of the international community regards as Israeli-occupied.
- A disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria, signed following the Yom Kippur War of October 1973, established a United Nations buffer zone in the Golan Heights, monitored by a UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).
- The UNDOF mandate was renewed every six months thereafter.

# Maharashtra's Shakti Act



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MAHARASHTRA'S 'SHAKTI' ACT

CREDITS: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

- The Maharashtra Assembly recently passed the Shakti Criminal Laws (Maharashtra Amendment) Act unanimously.
- The bill has made changes to the laws on rape, gangrape, acid attacks, sexual harassment under the Indian Penal Code, provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act as well as changes in relevant provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).
- It amends the existing criminal laws to include death penalty as punishment in cases of rape and gangrape, it says that in cases which have the characteristic of offence is heinous in nature and where adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment, with death.

- The existing law on rape had provisions for death penalty only in cases of repeated offences.
- The Act has also enhanced fines and punishment for offences of sexual violence against women and minors.
- Under the POCSO Act too, punishment for penetrative sexual assault in heinous cases has been enhanced to death penalty.
- The Act requires the trial in these cases to be conducted on a day-to-day basis and completed within 30 working days from the date of filing of the chargesheet.
- It also requires for the investigation to be completed within a month of the FIR which can be extended by another month by the concerned Special Inspector General of Police or Commissioner of Police only for specific reasons given in writing.
- In cases of grievous hurt caused due to acid attacks under Section 326A, the punishment has been enhanced to a minimum of 15 years which can be extended to the remainder of the natural life of the perpetrator along with fine.
- In cases of voluntarily throwing acid or attempting to throw it, punishment under section 326B has been enhanced to a minimum of seven years and a maximum of ten years.

- **The fine amount in these cases will be towards medical expenses including plastic surgery and face reconstruction.**
- **Section 354E has been inserted to the IPC for intimidation of women by any mode of communication, in addition to insulting modesty.**
- **In the category of persons who are liable to aggravated punishment for rape, the Act has included those staffers or contractual employees who are providing security or maintenance to a building.**
- **The Act has also made it mandatory for social media platforms, mobile data companies to share data sought for the purposes of investigation in cases of rape, sexual harassment, acid attacks and relevant provisions under the POCSO Act within three working days or face imprisonment for a maximum of three months and/or a fine of Rs 25 lakh.**
- **The Act has also included a provision under for punishment between 1-3 years and a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh for any person “who makes false complaint or provides false information against any person solely with the intention to humiliate, extort, threaten, defame or harass” in cases of rape, sexual harassment and acid attacks.**

- **The Act states that bail in cases of acid attacks, rape and gangrape can be decided only by sessions court and higher courts. Grant of anticipatory bail in such cases has also been prohibited.**
- **With the passage of the Bill, it became the second state in India after Andhra Pradesh to approve death penalty for heinous offences of rape and gangrape**

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# **Diplomat Vikram Misri named as Deputy National Security Advisor**



- Diplomat Vikram Misri has been appointed as deputy national security adviser in the national security council secretariat.
- The appointment of Misri, a 1989-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, came after he served as the Indian ambassador to China for nearly three years.
- He served in various capacities at the headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as well as in the Prime Minister's Office.
- Misri will report to national security adviser Ajit Doval. At present, Rajinder Khanna, Pankaj Saran and Dattatray Padsalgikar are serving as deputy NSAs.

- **Misri has also served in various Indian Missions in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America.**
- **The government has already appointed Pradeep Kumar Rawat as India's new envoy to China.**

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# Japan introduced the world's 1st Dual-Mode Vehicle



- Japan has introduced a minibus lookalike world's first dual-mode vehicle (DMV) in its town of Kaiyo.
- The vehicle can run on normal rubber tyres on the road but its steel wheels, which are in its underbelly, descend when it hits the rail tracks.
- The DMV can carry up to 21 passengers and runs at a speed of 60km/h on rail tracks and can go as fast as around 100km/h on public roads.
- The front tyres are lifted off the track and the rear wheels stay down to propel the DMV onto the railway.
- This feature of effectively changing into a train-like module easily on a rail track is the first of its kind.

- **Powered by diesel, the small fleet of vehicles comes in different colours.**
- **It runs along part of the coast of Shikoku island in southern Japan, connecting several small towns and offering passengers attractive seaside scenery.**

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# **E.O. Wilson, Known as 'Father of Biodiversity,' passes away**



- **E.O. Wilson, the former Harvard University biologist and Pulitzer Prize winner whose study of ants and human behaviour made him one of the world's most influential scientists and prompted his calls for action to protect millions of species on the planet, has passed away.**
- **He was 92. To protect Earth earned him the nickname "Darwin's natural heir".**
- **He was the author of hundreds of scientific papers and more than 30 books, two of which won him Pulitzer Prizes for nonfiction: 1978's On Human Nature, and The Ants in 1990.**

- The “father of biodiversity,” as Wilson was also known, attempted to unify the natural sciences with the humanities and said there was still time to reverse a “sixth extinction” of most species on the planet if environmental degradation was halted.

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