




01 April 2024

National and International News

<p>Meghayan 2024</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The METOC seminar 'Meghayan 2024' was conducted on 28th March 2024 by the School of Naval Oceanology & Meteorology (SNOM) and Indian Naval Meteorological Analysis Centre (INMAC) at Southern Naval Command. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The seminar commemorated World Meteorological Day, which marks the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on 23rd March 1950. The theme for the seminar was 'At the Frontline of Climate Action', aligning with WMO's focus for 2024. An indigenous mobile application, INDRA (Indian Naval Dynamic Resource for Weather Analysis), was launched to facilitate weather-related decision-making. The application was developed by BISAG (Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics) in coordination with the Directorate of Naval Oceanology and Meteorology, Indian Navy.
<p>Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telangana is currently grappling with forest fires in the Tadvai region of the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary in Mulugu and the Amrabad Tiger Reserve. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state's dry season, typically from March to June, has exacerbated the situation due to increased temperatures and reduced rainfall, creating ideal conditions for wildfires. <p>Causes of the fires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly include human activity, such as campfires left unattended by people fishing in the nearby river, which can easily ignite the dry vegetation. Chenchu tribes in the region sometimes burn



trees to collect mahua flowers more easily.

About:

- Established in 1952, the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary stands as one of Telangana's oldest sanctuaries, revered for its ecological significance.
- Originating in the sanctuary, the Dayyam Vagu River intricately divides the sanctuary into two distinct sections.
- The sanctuary is graced by the presence of the Godavari River, further enhancing its natural allure.
- The sanctuary boasts a rich flora, predominantly adorned by deciduous teak trees, interspersed with axlewood, palas, tendu, and dhobi trees, forming a diverse canopy conducive to supporting various animal species.
- Among its diverse wildlife inhabitants are tigers, panthers, gaurs, sambar deer, spotted deer, nilgai, blackbucks, jackals, foxes, mongoose, and rodents.
- The indigenous Gond and Pardhan tribes harmoniously coexist with the sanctuary, actively participating in conservation efforts and responsibly utilizing forest resources for sustenance.
- The majestic Bogatha Waterfall graces the sanctuary's core area with its mesmerizing presence.
- Additionally, the sanctuary hosts the biennial festival of Sammakka Saralamma Jatara, a tribal commemoration honoring the valor of tribal warriors Sammakka and Sarakka.

Onyx Missile



Context:

- Russia's P-800 Onyx supersonic cruise missile, utilized in attacks on Ukrainian targets, is set to become deadlier with a new target seeker.

New Seeker for Enhanced Accuracy

- Upgraded with new active homing heads for increased precision in hitting ground targets of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU).
- Development aimed at ensuring Onyx's invulnerability to electronic warfare systems of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Overview of P-800 Onyx

- Developed by Reutov NPO Mashinostroeniya, it targets surface ship groups and ground targets amidst severe fire and electronic

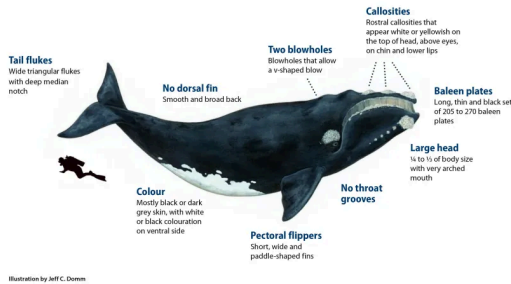


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	<p>countermeasures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carried by Russian Navy surface ships and submarines, utilized in Syria against terrorist ground targets.
<p>Central Pollution Control Board</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has only utilized 20% of the funds collected for mitigating air pollution in Delhi-NCR and environmental protection. Only Rs 156.33 crore out of Rs 777.69 crore collected has been disbursed. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds are collected under two categories: Environment Protection Charge (EPC) and Environmental Compensation (EC). <p>Environment Protection Charge (EPC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandated by the Supreme Court, dealers/manufacturers pay a one percent EPC on the ex-showroom price of new diesel vehicles with engine capacity of 2000cc and above, registered only in Delhi and NCR. <p>Environmental Compensation (EC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordered by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), used to rejuvenate and protect the environment through various means such as strengthening laboratories, monitoring networks, and compliance with NGT orders. <p>CPCB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), statutory organisation, was constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. Further, CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
<p>North Atlantic Right Whale</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recent study has highlighted that even minor tangles in fishing gear can significantly decrease the chances of female North Atlantic right whales reproducing. These whales inhabit the cold waters of the North Atlantic Ocean and are considered critical for conservation due to their struggle for survival.



North Atlantic Right Whale IDENTIFICATION FEATURES



Habitat and Migration Patterns

- They are migratory, moving between feeding and calving grounds.
- In **summer**, they feed in **cooler waters near Canada and the northeastern US**, and in **winter**, they migrate south to warmer waters off the coasts of Florida and Georgia for breeding.

Unique Characteristics

- They have **rough, raised patches of skin on their heads called callosities**, which are used for identification.
- Right whales are **slower swimmers**, making them more prone to ship strikes.
- Unlike most whales, they lack a dorsal fin, making them easily distinguishable.

Role in Marine Ecosystem

- Right whales feed by filtering plankton from the water, which **helps cycle nutrients and promotes healthy phytoplankton growth**.

Threats to Survival

- Entanglement in fishing gear, **particularly lobster trap lines, is a major threat**.
- Collisions with ships are also significant due to their slow speed and shallow-water preference.
- Climate change impacts on ocean temperatures and currents could affect their food sources and migration patterns.

Protection Status

- The IUCN Red List categorizes them as **"critically endangered," with fewer than 360 individuals remaining**.
- Various **international agreements and laws aim to protect them, including regulations on fishing gear and designated shipping lanes**.



Kerala Regional News

<p>Blindness Prevention Week</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blindness Prevention Week is observed annually from April 1st to 7th • It is an initiative by the Indian government to raise awareness about preventable causes of blindness and promote eye care. • Aim: Educate the public about eye health, early detection of eye diseases, and the importance of regular eye checkups. • Significance: India has a high prevalence of blindness, and many cases are preventable. This week aims to address this issue. • Activities: Eye screening camps, awareness programs, and distribution of informative materials are organized during this week. <p>Theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme for 2024 Blindness Prevention Week is “Taking timely treatments for age-related eye conditions”
<p>Genetic profiling of captive elephants of Kerala to begin shortly</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities in Kerala, are gearing up to begin genetic profiling of the state's estimated 400 captive elephants. • This initiative is being carried out by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) to create a national database for these elephants. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The profiling process will involve collecting DNA samples from the elephants. • The Wildlife Institute has already provided the necessary forensic kits to the Kerala Forest Department. • This data will be instrumental in the Species protection. • It will help curb the illegal trade of wild elephants. • This project is a significant step towards better conservation and management of captive elephants in Kerala.
<p>Swell waves inundate coastal areas in southern, central Kerala</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swell waves inundated coastal areas in central and southern districts of Kerala, giving anxious moments to coastal communities and




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	<p>prompting district-level disaster management machineries to be in alert mode.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swell waves flooded beaches along the coastal areas in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, and Thrissur districts. • The phenomenon, referred to as ‘Kallakkadal’ locally, is likely to persist for one or two days more along the Kerala coast, according to the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA). <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swell waves are long, rolling waves that travel across the ocean after being generated by distant winds. • These waves are not directly affected by local winds and can travel long distances, sometimes thousands of kilometers. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generated by strong winds from storms or gales far away • Not affected by local winds • Longer wavelength than wind waves • Can travel long distances • Responsible for good surfing conditions
<p>Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Odisha to adopt PM-Shri scheme</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Odisha will adopt the central government’s Pradhan Mantri Schools For Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme by signing memorandums of understanding • There were earlier reports that Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Odisha were hesitant to adopt the central government's PM-SHRI scheme. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) is a centrally sponsored scheme launched by the Indian government in September 2022. It aims to develop over 14,500 existing schools managed by central/state governments, local bodies, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) into model institutions. <p>Key Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students. • Foster a safe and stimulating learning atmosphere. • Offer a diverse range of learning experiences. • Provide good physical infrastructure and resources. • Nurture well-rounded individuals with 21st-century skills.



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	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students: Over 20 lakh students will directly benefit from improved learning experiences. • Education System: PM SHRI schools will serve as exemplars for the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), informing and guiding education practices throughout the country.
<p>International Day of Zero Waste</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Day of Zero Waste is celebrated annually on 30th March. • It highlights the importance of bolstering waste management globally and the need to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns. • It was adopted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on 2nd March 2022. • The theme for the International Day of Zero Waste 2024 is "Towards a Circular Future." <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero-waste initiatives can foster sound waste management and minimize and prevent waste generation. • To eliminate the WastePollution, one must bolster waste management while improving resource recovery and substantially reducing waste generation. • Prevention, reduction, reuse, repurposing and recycling are critical to this endeavor.

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