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National & International News

<p>Black Sea Grain Initiative</p>	<p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is associated with the Russia-Ukraine war. It was set up to resume vital food and fertilizer exports from Ukraine to the rest of the world. It was brokered between Russia and Ukraine by the United Nations and Turkey. <p>Do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Initiative allowed exports of grain, other foodstuffs, and fertilizer, including ammonia, to resume through a safe maritime humanitarian corridor from three key Ukrainian ports: Chornomorsk, Odesa, and Yuzhny/Pivdennyi, to the rest of the world.
<p>African Union to join G-20 as Sherpas reach a deal</p>	<p>African Union</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. It was officially launched in 2002 and replaced its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was founded in 1963. Primary Objective: To promote unity, cooperation, and development among African nations while advancing the continent's interests on the global stage. It aims to strengthen political, economic, and social integration among African countries, with a vision of achieving an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa. Headquarters: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
<p>G-20 Structure</p> <p>Do you know? The G20 works in three major tracks — two of them are official and one is unofficial</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sherpa Track Finance Track Engagement groups or civil society groups (Unofficial) 	<p>Finance Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is headed by the finance ministers and central bank governors, who usually meet four times a year, with two meetings being held on the sidelines of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings. It mainly focuses on fiscal and monetary policy issues such as the global economy, infrastructure, financial regulation, financial inclusion, international financial architecture, and international taxation. <p>Sherpa Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was established after the forum became a leaders' summit in 2008.



- It consists of representatives of heads of state, and it focuses on socio-economic issues such as agriculture, anti-corruption, climate, digital economy, education, employment, energy, environment, health, tourism, trade, and investment.

The unofficial track comprises engagement or civil groups.

Clear illegal constructions in ESZ, buffer zone of Bandipur



What are eco-sensitive zones (ESZ)?

- An area around a protected area like a national park or wildlife sanctuary
- To conserve the biodiversity and ecosystems of protected areas by regulating human activities
- The government can regulate and restrict certain activities in ESZs through guidelines and laws

Bandipur Tiger Reserve

- It was **established in the 1930s** as a wildlife sanctuary, which became a tiger reserve in 1973 **under Project tiger**.
- It is **situated in Karnataka** and located at the tri-junction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- This area has the River Kabini in its north and River Moyar in its south.
- It comprises diverse vegetation of dry deciduous to tropical mixed deciduous. It includes rosewood, Indian kino tree, sandalwood, Indian laurel, clumping bamboo and giant clumping bamboo etc.
- It is a shelter for the largest population of wild Asian elephants in South Asia. It comprises other mammals such as Bengal tiger, gaur, sloth bear, golden jackal, dhole and four-horned antelope etc.

Water Hyacinth



Key points:

- Water hyacinth (*Pontederia crassipes*) is an **invasive species native to South Africa**.
- The plant has naturalised itself in many other parts of the world.
- Water hyacinth **acts as a water purifier by removing heavy metals from water** when present in small quantities.
- However, the **plant is a prolific spreader** and when it covers the entire surface of a water body, it does not allow sunlight to penetrate the water and also starts depleting oxygen.
- This **leads to death of aquatic animals and plants**, which in turn decompose and further reduce oxygen levels
- **The presence of water hyacinth indicates that there are high nitrogen levels in the water.**



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a symptom of an underlying problem and how the water nutrients behave.
<p>Major security threat reported from Idukki Dam</p>	<p>Idukki Dam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Idukki Dam is a double curvature Arch dam constructed across the Periyar River in a narrow gorge between two granite hills located in Idukki District in Kerala. At 168.91 metres it is one of the highest arch dams in Asia. This dam was constructed along with two other dams at Cheruthoni and Kulamavu. Together, the three dams and Two saddle dams, Kulamavu Saddle Dam (Near Junction) and Kulamavu Saddle Dam (Right Bank) have created an artificial lake in the area.
<p>Crocodiles</p> <p>CROCODILES OF INDIA WILDLIFE SOS</p> <p>GHARIALS <i>Gavialis gangeticus</i> Male gharials are easily distinguished due to the presence of a bulb on their snouts, like earthenware pots called gharas. They are used to vocalise and blow bubbles to attract females. Habitat: They are found in clear freshwater river systems, congregating at river bends. Threats: Illegal poaching, egg collection, fishing nets, sand mining, prey base depletion, and habitat loss and degradation.</p> <p>SALTWATER CROCODILE <i>Crocodylus porosus</i> The Earth's largest living reptile, saltwater crocodiles have the greatest bite pressure of any animal. Males are much larger than females, weighing even upto 1,000 kilograms! Habitat: They inhabit coastal brackish mangrove swamps and river deltas. Threats: Illegal hunting and habitat loss and degradation.</p> <p>MUGGER CROCODILE <i>Crocodylus palustris</i> Also called marsh crocodile, Mugger Crocodiles are one of the most adaptable crocodylian species in India. With the broadest snout of all, they are keystone species of their habitat. Habitat: They are found in freshwater habitats including rivers, lakes, marshes, and estuarine. Threats: Illegal poaching, egg collection, fishing nets, and habitat loss and degradation.</p> <p>IUCN STATUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LC Least Concern Saltwater Crocodile NT VU Vulnerable Mugger Crocodile EN CR Critically Endangered Gharial EW EX <p>GLOBAL POPULATION of mature individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gharials 🐊 650 Mugger Crocodiles 🐊 5700-8700 Saltwater Crocodiles 🐊 500,000 	<p>Mugger or Marsh Crocodile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An egg-laying and hole-nesting species, also known to be dangerous. Mainly restricted to the Indian subcontinent where it may be found in a number of freshwater habitat types and also in coastal saltwater lagoons and estuaries. It is already extinct in Bhutan and Myanmar. IUCN List of Threatened Species: Vulnerable CITES: Appendix I Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I <p>Estuarine or Saltwater Crocodile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered as the Earth's largest living crocodile species, infamous globally as a known man-eater. Found in Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park, the Sundarbans in West Bengal and the Andamans and Nicobar Islands. Also found across Southeast Asia and northern Australia. IUCN List of Threatened Species: Least Concern CITES : Appendix I (except the populations of Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, which are included in Appendix II). Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 : Schedule I <p>Gharial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes called gavials, are a type of Asian crocodylian distinguished by their long, thin snouts which resembles a pot (ghara in Hindi). The population of Gharials is a good indicator of clean river water. Known to be a relatively harmless, fish-eating species. Mostly found in fresh waters of the himalayan rivers.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chambal river in the northern slopes of the Vindhya mountains (Madhya Pradesh) is known as the primary habitat of gharials. • Other himalayan rivers like Ghagra, Gandak river, Girwa river, Ramganga river and the Sone river are secondary habitats. • IUCN List of Threatened Species: Critically Endangered • CITES: Appendix I • Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule
<p>Important fact:-</p>	<p>As per a report by UNESCO in 2018, 42 languages are heading towards extinction in India.</p>
<p>Heat Index</p>	<p>Heat Index will calculate the temperature along with the humidity levels to provide a more accurate measure of what the temperature actually feels like.</p>
<p>Food Processing sector to create 9 million jobs by 2024.</p>	<p>India's household consumption will quadruple, making it the world's 5th largest consumer of food and food technology.</p>
<p>Philippines opposes 'militia vessels' in South China Sea</p>	<p>South China Sea (SCS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An arm of the western Pacific Ocean that borders the Southeast Asian mainland. • Bordered by Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. • It is connected by the Taiwan Strait with the East China Sea and by the Luzon Strait with the Philippine Sea (both marginal seas of the Pacific Ocean). • Comprise three archipelagoes, namely, the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas Islands and Macclesfield's Bank and Scarborough Shoal. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Disputed claims in the South China Sea</p> <p>Claims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — China — Philippines — Malaysia — Brunei — Vietnam <p>Area: South China Sea covers more than 3 million sq km</p> <p>Trade: Over \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes through the sea annually</p> <p>Oil and gas: Major unexploited oil and gas deposits are believed to lie under the seabed</p> <p><small>Sources: CSIS/AMTI/D.Rosenberg/MiddleburyCollege/HarvardAsiaQuarterly/Phil govt/ChinaMaritimeSafetyAdministration</small></p> <p><small>AFP</small></p> </div>



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