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National & International News


<p>Survey on Women's Workforce Participation in India</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Union Ministries of Labour & Employment and Women & Child Development have initiated a joint survey to explore and enhance women's participation in the workforce. The announcement was made by Union Minister Smriti Irani during an event themed "Women in the workforce for Viksit Bharat." <p>Survey Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey aims to assess the prevalence of women-friendly practices within companies across the country. Concerns expressed by international agencies, including the International Labour Organization, have prompted this initiative. <p>Increasing Women Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The latest data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) reveals a positive trend. In 2017-18, the women participation rate was 23.3%, and by 2022-23, it has significantly increased to 37%. <p>Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is a crucial initiative conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). This quarterly survey is designed to gather data and generate estimates related to key employment and unemployment indicators at both the national and state levels. The PLFS was launched in April 2017.
<p>India's Snow Leopard Count: A Comprehensive Four-Year Survey</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results of a first-of-its-kind, four-year-long estimation exercise on India's snow leopard population were made public. India is home to an estimated 718 snow leopards. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI) initiative started in 2019.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative efforts involved the World Wide Fund for Nature-India, the Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru, and the Wildlife Institute of India. • The Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII), an autonomous body of the Union Environment Ministry, employed software and statistical methods to estimate the number of individual cats. <p>Geographical Distribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladakh emerged with the highest estimated number of snow leopards (477), followed by Uttarakhand (124), Himachal Pradesh (51), Arunachal Pradesh (36), Sikkim (21), and Jammu and Kashmir (9). • These estimates provide crucial insights into the distribution of snow leopards across various mountainous terrains in India. • The current estimate positions India's snow leopard population at 10% to 15% of the global population. <p>Conservation Status and Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN Red list Status: Vulnerable • Listed in Schedule-I species of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 • Threats to the species include free-ranging dogs, human-wildlife conflicts, and poaching.
<p>India's UNESCO World Heritage Nomination</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India has nominated the "Maratha Military Landscapes" for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List for 2024-25. • This nomination highlights a network of forts showcasing the strategic military powers during the Maratha rule. <p>List of Nominated Forts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 12 forts included in this nomination are the forts of Salher, Shivneri, Lohagad, Khanderi, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra and Gingee in Tamil Nadu. <p>Significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Maratha Military Landscapes" evolved between the 17th and 19th centuries. • These landscapes represent an exceptional fortification and military system envisioned



South China Sea



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by Maratha rulers.

- The forts vary in hierarchies, scales, and typological features, reflecting integration with distinctive landscapes—**Sahyadri mountain ranges, Konkan Coast, Deccan Plateau, and Eastern Ghats.**

Context:

- The **Philippines and Vietnam** signed crucial agreements on Tuesday to address incidents in the South China Sea and enhance cooperation between their coast guards.
- The alliance is expected to draw disapproval from China, which asserts extensive claims over the **South China Sea.**

Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea

- The South China Sea is a **hotspot for territorial disputes involving China, the Philippines, and other nations.**
- China claims almost the entire South China Sea as its sovereign territory.
- The Philippines, Vietnam, and other Southeast Asian nations claim various islands, islets, reefs, and shoals around their coasts.
- Approximately **\$5 trillion in international trade** flows through the South China Sea annually.

About:

- The South China Sea is situated just south of the Chinese mainland and is bordered by the countries of **Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.**
- The South China Sea is one of the most **important economic and environmental regions in the world.**
- More than **half of the world's fishing vessels** are in the South China Sea, and millions of people depend on these waters for their food and livelihoods.
- The major island and reef formations in the South China Sea are the **Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas, the Natuna Islands and Scarborough Shoal.**

Nine-dash line

- In 1947, the Kuomintang party, ruling the country at the time, introduced the concept of the **"nine-dash line" on a map.**
- This line was a territorial demarcation outlining



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China's claimed waters and islands in the South China Sea.

IMF's Global Economic Outlook (2024)



Context:

- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has recently upgraded its forecast for global economic growth.
- This positive adjustment applies to the **two largest economies, the United States and China**, attributing it to a faster-than-expected easing of inflation.
- The IMF forecast global growth of **3.1% in 2024**, 0.2 percentage point higher than its October projection.
- The historical average for the **2000-2019 period was 3.8%**. Global trade was expected to expand by 3.3% in 2024 and 3.6% in 2025, well below the historical average of 4.9%.

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