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Tamil Nadu: 20-04-2024

<p><b>Chithirai festival</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <b>Public Works Department</b> released <b>1,000 cusecs of water</b> from the <b>Vaigai dam</b>.</li><li>• This release is in view of the <b>Chithirai festival</b> currently underway in <b>Madurai</b>.</li></ul> <p><b>Key points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Lord Kallazhagar</b> is scheduled to enter the <b>Vaigai river</b> on April 23, a <b>significant event of the annual Chithirai festival</b>.</li><li>• For the first two days, the same amount of water would be released and the flow would be reduced gradually in the coming days.</li><li>• The <b>release of water</b> is expected to <b>replenish wells and rejuvenate riverbeds along the stretch</b>.</li></ul> <p><b>About Chithirai festival:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It's <b>one of the longest festivals in the world</b>, lasting for about a month, and is celebrated during the <b>Tamil month of Chithirai (April-May)</b>.</li><li>• The <b>focal points of the Chithirai Festival are two major events:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ The <b>celestial wedding</b> of Lord <b>Sundareswarar (Shiva)</b> and Goddess <b>Meenakshi</b> (a form of <b>Parvati</b>), and</li><li>◦ The <b>journey of Lord Alagar</b> (a form of <b>Vishnu</b>, who is the brother of Goddess <b>Meenakshi</b>) from <b>Kallazhagar Temple</b> in <b>Alagar Koyil</b> to <b>Madurai</b>.</li></ul></li></ul>
<p><b>Megalithic site in Karai</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <b>megalithic site in Karai</b>, discovered 78 years ago by the <b>Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)</b>, is in a state of neglect.</li><li>• The site, which spans 25 acres, contains funeral artefacts from the Megalithic period, including burial urns, dolmens, cists, and menhirs.</li></ul> <p><b>Key points:</b></p>



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- Despite being declared a protected monument and fenced off, **no excavations have been carried out at the site.**
- Artefacts, including **burial urns**, have been lying in neglect for decades, and encroachments have threatened the integrity of the site.
- Burial urns scattered across various villages remain undocumented and vulnerable to destruction, underscoring the need for comprehensive preservation efforts.

### About megalithic period:

- The megalithic period in India refers to a **phase of prehistoric culture** characterized by the **use of large stone structures for burial or ceremonial purposes.**
- This period is generally dated from around **1500 BCE to 500 BCE** and is notable for the variety of megalithic monuments found across the Indian subcontinent.
- The megaliths in India include various forms such as **menhirs (large upright stones), dolmens (stone tables), and cairns (heaps of stones).**
- Megalithic sites are found throughout India, with a **higher concentration in the southern part** of the country, such as in Karnataka, **Tamil Nadu**, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh. Other significant sites are located in **central and northeastern regions.**

### Filariasis

### Why in news?

- **Tamil Nadu, once a state with high filariasis prevalence, is now preparing dossiers to claim elimination status for the disease.**
- Three rounds of transmission assessment surveys conducted in 2014, 2016, and 2018 showed the microfilaria rate was 0.18%, 0.21%, and 0.10%.

### Key points:

- The state is preparing the dossiers, which will be submitted for verification before Tamil Nadu is certified a lymphatic filariasis-free state.
- Lymphatic filariasis, also known as **elephantiasis**, is a debilitating disease **caused by parasitic worms**



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	<p>transmitted through adult female culex mosquito bites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The state issued protocols for the management of patients with swelling on the legs (lymphoedema) in addition to giving them financial assistance of ₹1,000.</li></ul> <p><b>About Filariasis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Filariasis is a parasitic disease caused by an infection with roundworms of the Filarioidea type.</li><li>Filariasis is primarily caused by three different species of parasitic worms: <b>Wuchereria bancrofti</b>, <b>Brugia malayi</b>, and <b>Brugia timori</b>.</li><li>These worms are transmitted to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes.</li></ul>
<p><b>Veeranam Lake</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Veeranam Lake, a primary water source for Chennai, has run dry due to intensifying summer heat.</li><li>The supply from Veeranam Lake was halted due to lack of inflow from the Mettur dam.</li></ul> <p><b>About Veeranam Lake:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Location:</b> Veeranam Lake is situated in the Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu, India.</li><li><b>Purpose:</b> It primarily serves as a water reservoir for irrigation and drinking purposes.</li><li><b>Historical Significance:</b> The lake was constructed during the 10th century by the Chola king Parantaka I.</li><li><b>Source of Water:</b> The lake is fed by the Kollidam River, which is a distributary of the Cauvery River.</li></ul>
<p><b>Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Dholes</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A pack of wild dogs, or Dholes, in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) are suffering from a severe exfoliating mixed skin infection.</li><li>This is an alarming fungal and bacterial infection.</li><li>The infection could potentially spread to other species, including tigers and leopards.</li><li>There is a possibility of the infection spreading to humans.</li></ul>



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### About Mudumalai Tiger Reserve:

- **Location:** Located in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu, at the tri-junction of Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. It's part of the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve, the first biosphere reserve in India.
- **Boundaries:** Shares boundaries with Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala), Bandipur Tiger Reserve (Karnataka), the Nilgiris North Division, and Gudalur Forest Division.
- **River:** The Moyar River runs through the reserve.
- **Flora:** Home to tall grasses (known as "Elephant Grass"), giant bamboo, and valuable timber species like Teak, Rosewood. It also has wild relatives of cultivated plants like wild rice, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, and features swampy areas (Vayals) and grasslands.
- **Fauna:** Inhabited by a variety of animals including elephants, gaur, sambar, Four Horned antelope, spotted deer, barking deer, blackbuck, wild pig, mouse deer, and predators like tigers, leopards, and wild dogs.
- **Notable Mention:** The Oscar-winning 'Elephant Whisperers' was filmed at the Theppakadu Elephant Camp, located inside the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.

### About Dhole:

- Dhole (**Cuon alpinus**) is a wild carnivorous animal, a member of the family **Canidae** and the class **Mammalia**.
- In India, they are found in the **Western and Eastern Ghats, central Indian landscape, and North East India**.
- Dholes play an important role as **apex predators in forest ecosystems**.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - IUCN List of Threatened Species: **Endangered**
  - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): **Appendix II**
  - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule II**



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- They may also be found in **small numbers** in the area of **Ladakh**.
- **Threats to the Population of Dholes:**
  - Habitat Loss
  - Decreasing population of ungulates, their main prey, due to excessive hunting and habitat loss
  - Persecution due to livestock predation and disease transfer from domestic and feral dogs
- **World Dhole Day** is celebrated annually on **May 28**.
- The **first World Dhole Conference** happened in February **2019**.
- The **Dhole conservation breeding centre** was sanctioned by the Government of India in 2014, in the **Indira Gandhi Zoological Park** in **Vishakhapatnam**.