

NEWS TODAY

NITI Aayog unveils inaugural delta ranking for Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)

- **Tiriyani Block** of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district, **Telangana** and **Kaushambi Block** of Kaushambi District, Uttar Pradesh secured **1st and 2nd ranks respectively** in the first delta ranking.
 - ⊖ Delta Ranking captures **incremental change in blocks** ranked based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) categorized into five themes.
- **About ABP**
 - ⊖ Launched in January 2023 by NITI Aayog, **ABP** is built on the success of the **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)**.
 - ⊖ It focuses on **improving governance** to enhance the quality of life of citizens in the **most difficult and relatively underdeveloped blocks of India**.
 - ◆ **500 blocks** from 7 states and 4 UTs are part of the programme.
 - ⊖ Each block is expected to focus on **monitoring key socio-economic indicators** categorized under **major themes**:
 - ◆ Health and Nutrition,
 - ◆ Education,
 - ◆ Agriculture and Allied Services,
 - ◆ Basic Infrastructure,
 - ◆ Social Development.
 - ⊖ **Programme strategy includes**:
 - ◆ **Convergence** (of Central and state Schemes)
 - ◆ **Collaboration** (between NITI Aayog, Central Ministries, State Departments, District and block Administration)
 - ◆ **Competition** among blocks driven by a spirit of mass Movement
 - ⊖ Programme identifies **Block Officials as Leaders of Change**, who work under the guidance of their respective **state and district administrations to achieve their defined strategies and output**.

About ADP

- ADP was **launched in 2018** and **initially covered 112** most underdeveloped districts **across the country**.
- With States as the main drivers, this program **focuses on the strength of each district, identifying low-hanging fruits for immediate improvement** and measuring progress by ranking districts.

10 Years of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) or POSH Act 2013

- **Act aims to provide safe and secure work environment** to women.
 - ⊖ It was enacted on the basis of **Vishakha Guidelines (1997)** of Supreme Court.
- **Key Provisions of Act**:
 - ⊖ **A clear definition of sexual harassment**: Encompassing unwelcome acts or behaviour that are sexually colored, creating a hostile work environment.
 - ⊖ **Applicability**: To all workplaces, including government, private, and non-governmental organizations.
 - ⊖ **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)**: Act mandates **every workplace** employing more than 10 persons to constitute an ICC.
 - ◆ ICC headed by woman, must have a **minimum of four members**.
 - ⊖ **Local Complaints Committee (LCC)** : States to constitute LCCs in every district to receive complaints from **organisations having less than 10 workers or if the complaint is against the employers**.
 - ⊖ **Timeframe**: **Written Complaint** should be filed within **3 months (extendable by 3 months)** of sexual harassment incident.
- **Issues in Implementation**:
 - ⊖ **ICC is not formed** in all organizations as mandated.
 - ⊖ **Lacunae in existing ICCs** like inadequate members or lacked mandatory external member.
 - ⊖ **No centralised data** regarding cases of harassment of women at workplaces.
 - ⊖ Largely **inaccessible to women workers in the informal sector**.

Other Initiatives Related to Women's Safety

- Sexual Harassment electronic-Box (**SHe-Box**) for registering complaints related to sexual harassment
- **One Stop Centres**, Universalization of Women Helplines (Both under **Nirbhaya Fund**).
- Ujjawala Scheme, Swadhar Greh Scheme etc.
- In **1993, India ratified UN Convention** on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

State of Finance for Nature 2023 Report Released by UN Environment Programme

- It tracks **public and private finance flows to Nature based Solutions (NbS)** to tackle global challenges related to **biodiversity loss, land degradation and climate change.**
 - ⊖ It first time estimated **global scale of public and private nature-negative finance.**
- **Key Findings of Report**
 - ⊖ **Current finance flows to NbS: Around US\$200 billion** which is only one third of NbS finance needed by 2030.
 - ⊖ **Nature-negative finance flows: Estimated at almost US\$7 trillion per year.**
 - ◆ **Nature-negative financial flows** refer to finance flows for activities that could potentially have a negative effect on nature. Like fossil fuel subsidies.
 - ⊖ **Future investment needs: To meet Rio Convention targets** finance flows to NbS must almost **triple from current levels to reach US\$542 billion per year by 2030.**
- **Recommendations**
 - ⊖ **Greening finance:** Reducing public and private **nature-negative finance flows.**
 - ⊖ **Financing green:** Scaling public funding and private **investment into NbS.**
 - ◆ Like create **non-traditional revenue streams**, for example, **biodiversity and carbon credits.**
 - ⊖ **Green and inclusive financial systems:** Ensuring a **just transition to a green and inclusive financial system for vulnerable groups, women and Indigenous Peoples.**

About Nature based Solutions (NbS)

- **NbS are actions** to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems **that address societal challenges** effectively and adaptively, simultaneously **benefiting people and nature.**
- **Examples of NbS are Reforestation and Afforestation, Wetland Restoration, Green Infrastructure etc.**

40 years since India became Permanent Resident of Antarctica

- In 1983, **first Indian permanent research station** was established in Antarctica.
 - ⊖ Named **Dakshin Gangotri**, it was abandoned in 1990.
 - ⊖ India has set up **three research stations** up till now in Antarctica, of which **Maitri** (operational since 1988), **Bharati** (in 2012) are operational.
 - ⊖ Indian Antarctic expedition commenced in 1981.
- **Why research in Antarctica is significant?**
 - ⊖ Refining understanding of **Indian subcontinent's geological history** (India and Antarctica were once part of **supercontinent Pangaea**, called **Gondwanaland**).
 - ⊖ **Biological Research** to understand the molecular basis of cold adaptation.
 - ⊖ Understanding **impact of climate change** such as contribution towards global sea level, **ozone depletion**, variability in sea ice cover and **phenomenon like Antarctic haze** etc.
- **Other initiatives of India with respect to Antarctica**
 - ⊖ **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa**-an autonomous institute under **Ministry of Earth Sciences**-manages the **entire Indian Antarctic program.**
 - ⊖ India has successfully launched **over 40 Scientific Expedition to Antarctica.**
 - ⊖ India is **party to Antarctic Treaty**, which seeks it shall be used for peaceful purposes only.
 - ⊖ **Indian Antarctic Act, 2022**, provides measures for protecting Antarctic environment and associated ecosystems etc.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) celebrates its 75th anniversary

- **Motivated by past world wars**, UDHR was approved by the **U.N. General Assembly (UNGA)** on **Dec. 10, 1948.**
- **Key features**
 - ⊖ It recognises that **'the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'**.
 - ⊖ It declares that **human rights are universal** – to be enjoyed by all people, no matter who they are or where they live.
 - ⊖ **UDHR**, together with the following **International Covenants** make up **International Bill of Human Rights:**
 - ◆ **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**
 - ◆ **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**
 - ⊖ It outlines **30 fundamental rights** encompassing:
 - ◆ **Civil and political rights**, such as the **rights to life, liberty and privacy.**
 - ◆ **Economic, social and cultural rights**, such as the **rights to social security, health and adequate housing.**
 - ⊖ While **not a legally binding treaty** itself, its principles are part of **legally binding international agreements.**
- **India and UDHR: Hansa Mehta**, a member of India's Constituent Assembly, is credited with altering **"All men are born free and equal"** to **"All human beings are born free and equal"** in Article 1 of the UDHR.

“Climate Change & Migratory species: a review of impacts, conservation actions, indicators and ecosystem services” report released

- The report is released by the **conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS)**.
- **Key findings**
 - ⊖ **Ecosystem services:** Migratory species provide **essential ecosystem services to society**. For example,
 - ◆ **Antelopes can reduce the risk of wildfires** through their grazing patterns.
 - ◆ Migratory species also help in pollination, seed dispersal, nutrient cycling, and pest and disease control in an ecosystem.
 - ⊖ **Climate change threats to migratory species:** Threats includes **loss of suitable habitat, wide- scale changes in ecosystem functioning, etc.**
 - ◆ Major visible direct effects include **poleward range shifts, changes in the timing of migration, and reduced breeding success and survival.**
- **Recommendation:**
 - ⊖ Include **conservation needs of migratory species in nature-based climate change mitigation/adaptation strategies.**
 - ⊖ **Establish effective networks of protected areas** for migratory species, including a coherent and interconnected network of passage and safe stopover sites.
 - ⊖ **Foster international cooperation in the conservation** of migratory species to help the conservation and restoration of shared resources.
 - ⊖ Making use of new technologies for conservation, such as those that can **track species movements in real-time or model future scenarios.**



CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES



- 🔬 **Genesis:** CMS was signed in June 1979 and entered into force in November 1983.
- 📄 **About:** CMS, also referred to as Bonn Convention is an environmental treaty of the UN (UNEP provides Secretariat support).
- 🏠 **Role:** It provides a global platform for the conservation of migratory animals and their habitats.
- 👥 **Members:** CMS has 133 Parties ()
(Including India)
- CMS consists of two Appendices:**
 - ⊖ **Appendix I:** Includes migratory species that are in danger of extinction.
 - ⊖ **Appendix II:** Includes Migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international cooperation.

Also in News



Cloud Facility for the Financial Sector

- **RBI proposed to establish cloud facility** for financial sector data in India.
- **About Cloud Facility**
 - ⊖ Aims to enhance **security, integrity and privacy** of financial sector data.
 - ⊖ Initially to be operated by **Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS)**, a subsidiary of RBI.
 - ⊖ **Later to be transferred** to a separate entity owned by financial sector participants.
- **Significance**
 - ⊖ **Banks and financial entities** are maintaining **large volume of data.**
 - ⊖ **Cloud technology** is known to **enhance privacy** through its centralised security, and guard against **cybercrimes.**



Koya Tribe

- In recent time, **Koya Tribe** has made an exemplary transition by **shedding the use of bison horns** to make their traditional **Permakore flute.**
- **About Koya Tribe**
 - ⊖ **Geographical distribution:** Hilly and forested regions of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.
 - ⊖ **Language:** Mother tongue is **Gondi (Dravidian language)**, also speak Odia and Telugu languages.
 - ⊖ **Livelihood:** Traditionally they are **pastoralists and shifting cultivators.**
 - ⊖ **Culture:**
 - ◆ Practices **Kommu Koya dance.**
 - ◆ **Pendul** is commonly practiced form of **marriage.**



Banni Grassland (Gujarat)

- Central government has approved setting up a **cheetah breeding and conservation centre** in Banni Grassland.
- **About Banni Grassland**
 - ⊕ **Geography:** Arid grassland located in **Kutch district** with an area of **over 2500 sq.km.**
 - ⊕ **Biodiversity:** Consisting of **two ecosystems** in juxtaposition, viz., **wetlands and grasslands.**
 - ⊕ **Flora:** **Over 190 species** of plants like **invasive Prosopis juliflora tree.**
 - ⊕ **Fauna:** Mangrove dwelling **Kharai camel** (swimming camel); domesticated animals like **Banni buffalo, Kankrej cow** etc.
 - ◆ **Livestock breeders** of Banni are called **Maldharis.**



Unabated Fossil Fuel

- The **COP28 Climate talks in Dubai** call for phasing out of **"Unabated fossil fuels"**.
- **Unabated Fossil fuel** is believed to refer to **burning fossil fuels** and letting the **emissions be released** into the atmosphere.
 - ⊕ **Abated fossil fuel** is believed to refer to the burning of fossil fuels and simultaneously **neutralising the carbon dioxide emissions**
 - ⊕ It can be done **either by using them or securely storing the gas underground forever.**
- However, **precise definitions** of "abated" and "unabated" **remain unresolved.**



Pashupatinath Temple, Nepal

- **Meat, alcohol prohibited** around Pashupatinath Temple due to **Bala Chaturdashi festival.**
- **About Pashupatinath Temple**
 - ⊕ Situated on **banks of River Bagmati, on outskirts of Kathmandu.**
 - ⊕ Devoted to **lord Shiva.**
 - ⊕ **Earliest evidence** of the temple's existence dates back to **400 A.D.**
 - ⊕ **Current main temple complex** was built by **end of 17th century.**
 - ⊕ **Pashupatinath Temple** is part of **Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site, inscribed by UNESCO.**
- **Guhyeshwari**, one of famous **Shakti Peeths in Nepal**, is located near Temple.



Impatiens karuppusamy

- This new plant species was recently discovered by the Botanical Survey of India in **Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu.**
 - ⊕ Species is **named after Dr. S Karuppusamy** (Madhura College, Tamil Nadu) for his significant **contributions to the taxonomy of south Indian angiosperms.**
- **Morphology:** The species, resembling **Impatiens Bicornis**, distinguishes itself with **small leaves, six to eight-flowered, short scape, and small flowers.**
- **Distribution:** Although widely distributed in **tropical Africa, Madagascar, India, Sri Lanka, and China**, **Impatiens** are restricted to certain areas and can become **extinct due to climate change.**



Mission-Operation Storm Makers II

- It is the **first Interpol operation** specifically **targeting human trafficking-fuelled fraud.**
 - ⊕ **International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) helps police work together to make the world a safer place.**
- It **mobilized law enforcement** in 27 countries to **target human trafficking and migrant smuggling.**
- The operation has revealed that **Victims are often lured through fake job ads and forced to commit online fraud** on an industrial scale while enduring **abject physical abuse.**
 - ⊕ **The Telangana police registered one of the first cases in India of human trafficking committed to force victims to commit cyber fraud.**



Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA)

- **Odisha invoked ESMA** to ban strikes by **Health Department staff**
- The Act **empowers the Government to designate any activity or service as 'essential'**, whose disruption would **impact the normal life of people** (e.g., Hospital, Railways, Post, banking etc).
 - ⊕ **Maintenance of supplies and services essential** to the community is **placed under the Concurrent list of the Schedule VII** of the Constitution.
 - ⊕ It **empowers the states to choose** the essential services on which to enforce ESMA.
- It can be **imposed for a maximum period of 6 months** and can be **extended.**
- **Violators can be arrested without a warrant** under the act

Personality in News



Bhai Parmanand (1876-1947)

- He was **freedom fighter**, member of **Arya Samaj**, leader of **Hindu Mahasabha.**
- **Contributions :**
 - ⊕ **In 1905**, went to **South Africa** and **met Mahatma Gandhi.**
 - ⊕ **In 1911**, met **Lala Har Dayal** and persuaded him to go to **America** for propagation of ancient culture of **Aryan people.**
 - ⊕ Founder member of **Ghadar Party.**
 - ⊕ Was arrested in **Lahore conspiracy case.**
 - ◆ **Sentenced to death** in 1915, which was commuted to life imprisonment.
 - ⊕ **Books written:** **Tarikh-i-Hind** (in Urdu).
- **Values:** **Patriotism, Courage, Selflessness.**



Bhai Parmanand
(1876-1947)

