

NEWS TODAY

ONE YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT CHEETAH IN INDIA

- Project Cheetah was started with the goal of **establishing viable cheetah metapopulation in India** that allows cheetah to perform its functional role as a top predator.
 - **Kuno Palpur National Park**, Madhya Pradesh (MP) was selected for introduction because of its **suitable habitat and adequate prey base**.
- **Key features**
 - **At least 50 Cheetahs** (mostly from southern Africa) will be introduced **in various National Parks over five years**.
 - **Implementation by:** National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a statutory body under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
 - **Funding of project:** From Project Tiger as well as Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management & Planning Authority (CAMPA).
- **Progress made**
 - **Out of 6 criteria** for assessing **short-term success**, project has already **met four criteria namely: 50% survival** of introduced cheetahs, **Establishment of home ranges, Birth of cubs** in Kuno, **Revenue to local communities**.
 - **Restorative investments in other selected areas** (Nauradehi and Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuaries in MP) have commenced.
- **Cheetah**, world's fastest mammal, is a **keystone species** (helps define an entire ecosystem) of **dry forests, scrub forests, and savannahs**.
 - Protected under **Appendix 1 of CITES**.
 - **IUCN status:** African Cheetah (Vulnerable); Asiatic Cheetah (Critically endangered).

INDIA MARKS ONE YEAR OF THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL LOGISTICS POLICY (NLP)

- NLP addresses the **soft infrastructure** and **logistics sector** development aspect, inter alia, including process reforms, **improvement in logistics services, digitization**, and skilling.
- It complements **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (NMP)**, which addresses **integrated development** of the **fixed infrastructure** and **network planning**.
- **Targets of the NLP** are to:
 - **Reduce logistics costs** in India;
 - Improve **Logistics Performance Index** ranking among top 25 by 2030,
 - **Create a data-driven decision** support mechanism for an efficient logistics ecosystem.
- **Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan** was launched to achieve above stated targets covering **8 action areas** (see infographic).
- **Progress under NLP**
 - **Unified Logistics Interface Platform** for digital integration in the logistics sector was launched.
 - **Comprehensive port connectivity plan** has been developed to address last and first-mile infra gaps.
 - **22 States** have notified their respective **State Logistics policies**.
 - **Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS)' index** for logistics performance monitoring across states has been developed.
 - **Coal Logistics Plan** for efficient **coal evacuation** has been developed by Ministry of Coal.
 - **Logistics Data Bank (LDB)** for traces of EXIM cargo, and its **predictability, to monitor congestion** has been developed.





“TACKLING FOOD INFLATION: IS RESTRICTING EXPORTS AND IMPOSING STOCKING LIMITS THE OPTIMAL POLICY?” PAPER BY ICRIER

● ICRIER (a public-private partnership) paper talks about **drivers of prevailing food inflation in India, steps taken by government** and also proposes **several alternate solutions to high food inflation** issue.

➤ **Soaring vegetable prices**, especially of tomatoes, **high prices for cereals, spices, milk and dairy products** contributed to high food inflation in India.

● Steps taken to curb inflation

➤ **Ban on export of wheat, broken rice**, and non-basmati white rice.

➤ **Implementation of stocking limits** on wheat traders and millers.

➤ **Imposition of export duty** on par-boiled rice, onions etc.

● Impact of these steps

➤ Indicates a **bias in favour of urban consumers** and hurts farmer's earnings.

➤ **Created panic among India's trading partners**, especially the export of non-basmati rice.

➤ **Impacts global food security**, as it has hit the African countries most.

● Recommendations

➤ **Import price should ideally not be lower than MSP** to ensure that farmers at least get that minimum prices.

➤ **Build buffer stocks for volatile vegetables** such as tomatoes, onions, and potatoes (TOP) during harvest **season**, which would **help farmers get stable prices** during periods of glut.

➤ **Other**: expansion of cold storage infrastructure, facilitating farmer producer organisations etc.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE CELEBRATES WORLD OZONE DAY

● World Ozone Day is **celebrated (16th September)** each year to **commemorate signing of Montreal Protocol**.

● **Montreal Protocol** is an **international environmental treaty** for **phasing out the production and consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS)** that came into force in **1987**.

➤ It was implemented under the **Vienna Convention (adopted in 1985)**

● **ODS** are Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) **Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs)**, Carbon tetrachloride, Halons, etc.

➤ **ODS contains** Chlorine and bromine atoms reach the stratosphere and **repeatedly break apart ozone molecules** in the stratosphere, a **process known as catalytic cycles** resulting in destruction of ozone.

● Later, **Kigali Amendment** to the **Montreal Protocol** was **adopted in 2016**; to phase **down the production** and consumption of **Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)**.

➤ HFCs were introduced as a **non-ozone-depleting** alternative to CFCs and **HCFCs**, but it has huge global warming potential **thousands of times** that of carbon dioxide.

● **India's achievements in the implementation of Montreal Protocol**:

➤ **Phased out CFC**, Carbon tetrachloride, Halons, etc. for controlled uses.

➤ **HFCs Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP)** Stage- II is currently under implementation from 2017 (till 2024).

➤ **Phased out the use of HCFC- 141b** in the manufacturing of **rigid foam**.

➤ **India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)** aims at **reducing cooling demand, refrigerant transition**, enhancing energy efficiency and adopting **better technology options by 2037-38**.

ABOUT OZONE LAYER

● **Ozone Layer** exists in the Stratosphere, **between 10 KM and 40 KM** above the Earth's surface, and protects Earth from **UV radiation from the Sun**.

● **Ozone formed** in the **Troposphere** is called '**bad ozone**' created by chemical reactions between **oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and reactive volatile organic compounds (VOC)** in the **presence of sunlight**.

PM LAUNCHES VISHWAKARMA SCHEME

● To enhance **accessibility and quality of products and services** offered by **traditional artisans**, ensuring their integration with **domestic and global value chains**.

● Objectives

➤ **Skill upgradation** of artisans and craftspeople.

➤ Access to **collateral-free credit** and **reduced cost of credit** through **interest subvention**.

➤ Incentives for **digital transactions** and **brand promotion**.

● **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

● Key features

➤ **Type**: Central Sector Scheme.

➤ **Coverage**: **18 trades** including carpenters, blacksmiths, potters, masons, etc.

➤ Benefits:

■ **Collateral-free credit support** up to **₹1 lakh (first tranche)** and **₹2 lakh (second tranche)** at a concessional **interest rate of 5%**.

■ **Free registration** using the **biometric-based portal**.

■ **Recognition** through **PM Vishwakarma certificate** and ID card.

● **Eligibility**: Artisan/craftsperson **working with hands and tools** and **engaged in one of the 18 family-based** traditional trades.

➤ Benefits shall be **restricted to one member of the family**.

➤ **Minimum age**: **18 years** on the date of registration.

● **Exclusion**: Existing beneficiaries of **PM Employment Generation Programme**.

➤ '**Beneficiaries of** **PM Mudra Scheme** or **PM-SVanidhi** can apply for credit **only after repayment**.

● **Lending institutions**: **Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Cooperative Banks, NBFCs** and **Micro-Finance Institutions**.

SANTINIKETAN INSCRIBED ON THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST

• Santiniketan becomes the **41st UNESCO World Heritage Site in India** and **third in West Bengal**, after Sundarbans National Park and Darjeeling Mountain Railways.

• About Santiniketan

- Established in **early 1860's by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore as a house**, later Santiniketan **denoted the entire area**.
- In 1901, **Rabindranath Tagore started his Brahmacharyasrama** (became known as Patha Bhavana in 1925) at Santiniketan.
- He **also established Sriniketan** (for rural reconstruction) **Kala Bhavan, Sangit Bhavan** (cultural institutions) and **Visva Bharati university** at Santiniketan.
- Santiniketan was a **residential school and centre for art** based on ancient Indian traditions and a **vision of unity of humanity** transcending religious and cultural boundaries.
 - **Education was provided in a natural setting**, fostering a strong connection between students and their environment.
- Santiniketan **drew upon ancient, medieval and folk traditions** of India as well as Japanese, Chinese, Persian, Balinese, Burmese and Art Deco forms.
 - It is also **associated with Bengal School of Art**.
- With Santiniketan, **Tagore envisioned** to establish in child a **sense of oneness with nature, integration of fine art and music** to academics, **rural reconstruction**, establishing **cultural relation between Indian and other cultures**.

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>Brandt Line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brandt Line (developed in 1980s) is a way of visualizing the world that highlights the disparities and inequalities between the wealthy North and the poorer Global South. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Richer countries are almost all located in the Northern Hemisphere, except for Australia and New Zealand. ➤ Poorer countries are mostly located in tropical regions and in the Southern Hemisphere. • It is based on the North-South: A Programme for Survival, a report addressing the problems of international inequality. 
 <p>United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India hosts inaugural UNCITRAL South Asia Conference. • UNCITRAL (established in 1966) is a subsidiary body of General Assembly of UN with a mandate to further harmonization and unification of law of international trade. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is composed of 70 Member States elected by General Assembly. ➤ Members are elected for terms of six years (India is member till 2028). • UNCITRAL is not a part of WTO. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ WTO deals with trade policy issues whereas UNCITRAL deals with laws applicable to private parties in international transactions and is not involved with "state-to-state" issues.
 <p>Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About IFC-IOR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Established in 2018 in Gurugram. ➤ Objective: To enhance maritime domain awareness and share information on vessels of interest. ➤ Region covered: Indian Ocean Region and adjoining Seas. ➤ Significance: vital role in enhancing global efforts to combat maritime security threats including Piracy & Armed Robbery, Contraband Smuggling, Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing, etc.
 <p>'Pralay' Ballistic Missiles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Defence granted approval for acquisition of a regiment of Pralay ballistic missiles. • About 'Pralay' Ballistic missiles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Type: Surface-to-Surface short-range ballistic missile that is capable of being launched from a mobile launcher. ➤ Developed by: DRDO ➤ Operational range: 150 to 500 kms ➤ Payload capability: 350 to 700 kgs of conventional warhead. • Unlike intercontinental ballistic missiles that exit the Earth's atmosphere, short-range ballistic missiles stay within it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ While it has a low trajectory and is largely ballistic, it can manoeuvre in flight.

 <p>Dhanush Artillery Guns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dhanush is a 155 mm, 45-calibre towed artillery gun. ● Range: with a range of 36 km, and it has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialized ammunition. ● It is the first indigenously built long-range artillery gun. ● Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Equipped with an inertial navigation-based sighting system, auto-laying facility. ➢ Onboard ballistic computation, an advanced day-night direct firing system. ➢ Self-propulsion unit allows the gun to deploy itself in the field.
 <p>Cryosphere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cryosphere comprises frozen parts of the earth such as glaciers, snow, ice found in water, frozen rivers and lakes, permafrost etc. ● This sphere helps maintain Earth's climate by reflecting incoming solar radiation back into space. ● Of the total freshwater found on earth, over 68 percent is locked up in ice and glaciers and another 30 percent of freshwater is in the ground.
 <p>Inverse Vaccine (IV)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Researchers developed an Inverse Vaccine against autoimmune diseases in which the immune system attacks healthy tissue e.g., psoriatic disease, etc. ● Mechanism of IV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It makes the immune system forget a specific molecule by using a special property of the liver- naturally marks certain molecules as not harmful to the body. ➢ Vaccine combines two things: an antigen (a molecule that the immune system attacks) and a molecule that looks like a part of an old cell. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liver recognition of old cell parts as "friends" tricks the immune system, and does not attack antigens.
 <p>Juno mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NASA's Juno mission completed its 53rd close flyby of Jupiter. ● About Juno mission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Launched in 2011 for a 5-year journey. ➢ Aim: probe beneath Jupiter's dense clouds and the origin and evolution of Jupiter, solar system, and giant planets in general across the cosmos. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It will also study Jupiter's faint rings for scientific investigations. ➢ In its extended mission, it continues its investigation of Jupiter through September 2025, or until the spacecraft's end of life.
 <p>Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awards are national honours given by the government to performing artists, teachers and scholars in the field of performing arts. ➢ Honour carries a purse money of Rs. 1,00,000/- besides a Tamrapatra and Angavastram. ● Sangeet Natak Akademi, apex body in the field of performing arts, was set up in 1953 for the preservation and promotion of intangible heritage of India's diverse culture expressed in forms of music, dance and drama.
 <p>Places in News</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three Sahel nations-Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger- have signed a defence pact to cooperate against threats of armed rebellion or external aggression. ● About Sahel Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It is a semi-arid region of western and north-central Africa that stretches from Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea along Sahara desert's southern rim. ➢ Countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. ➢ It forms a transitional zone between Sahara desert to the north and savannas to the south. 