NEWS TODAY

INTERNATIONAL RHINO FOUNDATION (IRF) RELEASED STATE OF THE RHINO 2023 REPORT

- Founded as International Black Rhino Foundation in 1991, IRF is now **dedicated to survival of all five living rhino** species.

- **Key findings**

  - **Greater one-horned rhino** (aka Indian rhino) **population** in India and Nepal **continues to grow** due to strong protection, wildlife crime law enforcement and habitat expansion.

  - **Black rhino** populations are **increasing** despite constant poaching pressure.

  - Population of **white rhinos and sumatran rhinos** are **decreasing.**

- **About Rhino**

  - There are **five species** of rhino (refer image). Out of them, **three rhino species are found in Asia** namely Sumatran rhino, Javan rhino and Indian rhino.

    - Asian rhinos are **excellent swimmers** and can easily swim across rivers.

  - Indian rhino **is largest of all rhino species** and commonly found in **India** (Assam, West Bengal and Utter Pradesh), **Nepal, Bhutan, and Pakistan.**

  - **Indian rhino** is protected under **Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**

- **Threat:** Habitat loss, poaching for rhino horn and climate change.

- **Rhino conservation initiatives**

  - **National Rhino Conservation Strategy 2019** to conserve **Indian rhinoceros.**

  - **New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019.**

  - **Indian Rhino Vision 2020** is a joint program of **Assam Forest Department, World Wide Fund for Nature – India** (WWF-India) and **IRF** to increase rhinos population.

WHITE RHINO — *Ceratotherium simum* — IUCN STATUS: NEAR THREATENED
GREATER ONE-HORNED RHINO — *Rhinoceros unicornis* — IUCN STATUS: VULNERABLE
BLACK RHINO — *Diceros bicornis* — IUCN STATUS: CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
JAVAN RHINO — *Rhinoceros sondaicus* — IUCN STATUS: CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
SUMATRAN RHINO — *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* — IUCN STATUS: CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

DEPARTMENT FOR PROMOTION OF INDUSTRY AND INTERNAL TRADE (DPIIT) RELEASED DRAFT PATENTS (AMENDMENT) RULES 2023

- **Draft rule** is released under **Patents Act of 1970** and **proposes amendments** to **Patents Rules 2003** which form the basis for **patent governance system** in India.

  - A patent is a **government-granted right to an inventor,** allowing them **to exclude others** from **making, using, or selling** their invention for a **limited time** in exchange **for disclosing the invention's details.**

  - **Granted by: Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks** (CGPDTM) under the **DPIIT** (Ministry of Commerce & Industry).

- **Key Provisions:**

  - **Fee:** Dynamic **fee will be applicable** on **Pre-Grant Opposition** (PGO) **filing which was free earlier.**

    - PGO is a **pre-grant opposition** filed by **anyone after patent** publication but before its grant.

  - **PGO filing** which can be done by anyone, will **now be determined** by CGPDTM.

  - **Notice time period:** time period for **applicants to reply to notice on PGO** has been **reduced from 3 to 2 months.**

  - **Timeline** for filing **Requests for Examination (precondition to examine the patent,)** is **reduced from 48 to 31 months.**

  - **Working Statements (annual statement by** patent holders about his/her patent) is to be submitted **once in 3 years.**

  - **Disclosure of patented product's** manufacturing **location and price** is no longer required.

- **Concerns with Draft rule:** Transparency issues, financial burden on organisations filing PGOs, **creation of monopolies,** Increased prices of medicines etc.

NASA'S OSIRIS-REX ASTEROID SAMPLES CAPSULE FROM ASTEROID BENNU LANDS ON EARTH

- OSIRIS-REx **(Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security- Regolith Explorer),** launched in 2016, is the NASA's first mission to **collect a sample from near-Earth asteroid Bennu.**

  - In 2020, OSIRIS-REx spacecraft collected **samples of dust and pebbles** from asteroid Bennu.

    - Asteroids are **rocky objects that orbit the Sun.** They are the remnants from formation of solar system over 4.6 billion years ago.

    - They are also called **minor planets** as they are much smaller than planets.

- Bennu is a **B-type asteroid,** i.e., it contains **significant amounts of carbon** and various other minerals. Hence, it reflects **about 4% of the light that hits it** (Earth reflects about 30% and Venus reflects about 65 %).

  - Bennu was formed in first 10 million years of solar system's creations.

  - It has not gone through a lot of composition-altering change through billions of years, which means that **below its surface lie chemicals and rocks** from the birth of the solar system.

- **Significance of asteroid samples**

  - To better understand **planet formation** and **origin of organics and water** that led to life on Earth.

  - **Benefit humanity** by learning more about potentially hazardous asteroids.

> ### OTHER MISSIONS TO BRING ASTEROID SAMPLES TO EARTH
> - **Stardust spacecraft (USA)** delivered comet dust samples.
> - **Hayabusa2 (Japan),** only other country to bring back asteroid samples, collected sample from asteroid Ryugu.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROMOTING NETWORKING AND TELECOM EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURING (NATEM) SECTOR RELEASED BY TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

- **NATEM sector** involves production of various **hardware** for **communication** and data transmission e.g., **routers, modems,** Terminals antennas, **cables,** etc.

- **Challenges of NATEM sector:**

  - **High cost: upfront payment for imports,** customs duty, etc

  - **Import preference:** toward **established global vendors/Original Equipment Manufacturers.**

  - **Relative cost disadvantages** such as **cost-differentials** vis-a-vis other countries e.g., China, Vietnam.

  - **Supply Chain issues** in terms of **on-demand availability** of supplies for **silicon-based components.**

  - **Market access** in terms of **difficulty** in **accessing telecom networks** for **technology trials.**

- **Key Recommendations:**

  - **Dedicated Telecom Software Development Fund** with an initial corpus of Rs1,000 crore should be established under the **PPP model.**

  - **Concurrent PLI scheme** focussing on components/sub-assembly manufacturing **for collaborated activities.**

  - **Telecom Service Providers** should be **nudged to deploy indigenously manufactured equipment** by reducing their **Applicable Gross Revenues** on an **annual net basis.**

  - **Liberalization of export control regimes,** as a support to exporters of indigenous equipment.

  - **Create a daughter fund** for interest subvention, tax relief for IPR-driven firms, etc.

  - **Develop automation tools** based on **AI/ML (Machine learning),** etc.

  - **Others:** Skill development, promotion of India as a repair hub, etc.

> ### NATEM SECTOR IN INDIA
> - **India's contribution** to the global telecom equipment market is only **1.4%-1.5%.**
> - More than **67% of India's import of telecom equipment** originates from a few East Asian countries.
> - **Need:** adoption of 5G, **Cloud Computing, Data centers/ Edge Data centers, Geo-navigation techniques relies** on requires Telecom Equipments.

SUSTAINABILITY-DRIVEN NON-TARIFF MEASURES: ASSESSING RISKS TO INDIA'S FOREIGN TRADE' REPORT RELEASED BY COUNCIL ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

- The report seeks to **assess the impact of EU's non-tariff measures (NTMs)** on **India's exports.**

- NTMs are policy measures **other than ordinary customs tariffs** that have an economic effect on trade e.g., EU's **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM),** United States Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), etc.

- **NTMs are broadly divided** into **two groups viz:**

  - **Technical Measures,** including regulations, standards, and testing, **Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)** and **Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)** measures.

  - **Non-technical measures,** include quantitative restrictions **(quotas, non-automatic import licensing),** and **price measures.**

- **Key findings**

  - India's export of **affected sectors** to the **EU is approximately USD 9.5 billion,** as of 2022.

  - **Products at risk are** textiles, **chemicals, selected consumer electronics products,** etc.

  - Adding **CBAM sectors,** exports **of at-risk sectors are** nearly **43% of India's exports** to the EU as of 2022.

- **Policy recommendations**

  - **Use bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs)** to develop **mutual recognition** of compliance assessment.

  - **Utilise WTO framework** to raise **specific trade concerns (STCs)** with **respect to NTM.**

  - **Develop independent product standards** in line with **National Strategy for Standardization in 2018.**

  - **Strengthen compliance mechanisms** to prepare industry to comply with NTM regulations.

  - **Make export firms** aware of such regulations.

PARLIAMENTARY PANEL ON HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE PRESENTED "IMPLEMENTATION OF PRADHAN MANTRI TB MUKT BHARAT ABHIYAN (PMTBMBA)" REPORT

- Tuberculosis (TB) is **communicable infectious disease caused by bacteria (Mycobacterium tuberculosis)** and it most often **affects the lungs.**
  - As per WHO Global TB report 2022, around **one-quarter of world's population (~2 billion) is latently infected** with TB.
  - **3 in every 1000 people have active TB** in India.
- Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan (PMTBMBA) **aims to eliminate TB by 2025,** five years ahead of Sustainable Development Goals 2030.
  - Under it, **Ni-kshay Mitra shall provide additional support to all on-treatment TB patients** who have given consent for support in selected health facilities.
- **Key observations**
  - BCG vaccine (Bacille Calmette-Guerin- vaccine for TB) does **not provide adequate protection to adolescents and adults** who are at high Risk of developing TB disease.
  - **De-contamination of biomedical waste** is critical in preventing transmission of TB disease.
  - Ni-Kshay adoption model alone cannot be considered the mainstay of fighting the disease under PMTBMBA.
- **Recommendations**
  - Expediting **research programme to study BCG effectiveness** and consider **booster dose of recombinant BCG vaccine** in universal immunisation programme.
  - **Establish robust selection process for Ni- kshay Mitra** and effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure their diligent fulfillment of responsibilities.

INITIATIVES TO CONTROL TB
- **NIKSHAY Portal:** National TB information system which acts as **one-stop solution to manage TB patients' information.**
- **Find. Treat. All. #EndTB:** Joint Initiative of WHO, Stop TB Partnership, and Global Fund to **diagnose treat and report 40 million people with TB.**
- **Moscow Declaration 2017.**

ALSO IN NEWS

Nari Adalats	• **Nari Adalat** is a part of **Sambal sub-scheme under Mission Shakti,** which operates under **Ministry of Women and Child Development.**
	   ➤ Mission Shakti aims to strengthen women's safety, security, and empowerment
	• Nari Adalat **provides women with an alternate Grievance Redressal Mechanism for resolving cases** of petty nature (harassment, curtailment of rights etc.) faced by women at Gram Panachayat level.
	   ➤ This platform will be utilized for **engaging with public for awareness generation,** getting **feedback for improvement in schemes** and for **effective public delivery** of service.

India-UN Capacity-building Initiative (IUN-CBI)	• India and UN have launched an IUN-CBI **to operationalize development-relevant deliverables** of India's G20 Presidency. • Aim: **Share country's best practices** with partner countries in the Global South. • **Deliverables: G20 Action Plan for Accelerating Progress on the SDGs, building Digital Public Infrastructure,** etc. • **Partner:** The **UN India team** and the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** will partner to **leverage India's Technical** and Economic Cooperation platform. • It will also complement the **India-UN Development Partnership Fund (IUN-DPF).** ➤ IU-DPF supports southern-owned and led transformational sustainable development projects across the developing world.

Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities	• **COFEPOSA Act, 1974** was enacted to give powers to the executive to **detain individuals** on the apprehension of involvement in smuggling activities.
	   ➤ Based on the concept of **Preventive Detention (Article 22).**
	• **Empowers central and state governments** to detain individuals **including foreigners** involved in smuggling activities.
	   ➤ Any **order by state government** shall be **forwarded to the centre government within 10 days.**

Exercise in news	• **Yudh Abhyas- 23:** It is an **annual exercise** conducted jointly by **Indian Army and United States Army.** • **Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise (FTX) 2023:** It is a **multinational joint military exercise** conducted by ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus Expert Working Group. ➤ **India participated** in the exercise being **held in Russia.**

Galactic tides	• Galactic tides result from **gravitational forces within a galaxy,** and occur during interactions between celestial objects such as stars and gas clouds.
	• These tidal forces influence various aspects of a galaxy's evolution.
	   ➤ They can **reshape a galaxy structure by promoting star formation, and disrupting smaller star systems.**
	   ➤ They **affect the supermassive black holes** located at the centre of galaxies.
	   ➤ In astronomy, understanding galactic tides is crucial to **understand the complex dynamics and evolution of galaxies** over cosmological time.

Ephemerals	• Ephemerals are **certain plant species** wait throughout the year to **bloom only during the monsoon.**
	  ➢ **Ex: Ground orchids, lilies, wild yam** etc. These flowers act as an important source of nectar and pollen for native pollinators, **thus preserving ecosystem.**
	  ➢ **Blooming period:** End of May and throughout June, July, August, and September.
	• Ephemerals are of two types — **annual and perennial.**
	  ➢ Annual ephemerals **form new individuals every year** and are seen for a **very short period.** They **form seeds at the end of their life cycle,** remaining dormant till next year.
	  ➢ Perennials have the **same individual,** but **other parts (stem, flowers) are newly formed.**

Nilgiri tahr	• Tamilnadu and Kerala are planning to count Nilgiri Tahr.
	• Nilgiri tahr is the **only mountain ungulate** (animal with hooves) **in southern India** amongst the 12 species present in India.
	  ➢ It is the **state animal of Tamil Nadu.**
	  ➢ It is **endemic to Western Ghats** and locally known as Varaiaadu.
	  ➢ **Threat:** Habitat loss and hunting.
	  ➢ **Eravikulam National Park** in Anamalai hills, Kerala has **largest population** of Nilgiri tahr.
	• **Conservation Status**
	  ➢ IUCN Status: **Endangered.**
	  ➢ **Wildlife (Protection) Act of India, 1972: Schedule I.**

Kaobal Gali-Mushkoh Valley	• High-altitude passes within the **Gurez valley,** located in northern Kashmir, are now linked to the **Mushkoh valley.**
	• **Mushkoh Valley:**
	  ➢ Located in Dras, Ladakh, the **Mushkoh valley is also renowned as the "valley of wild tulips".**
	  ➢ Home to **Himalayan Yew.**
	• **Gurez Valley**
	  ➢ **Location:** is close to the **Line of Control (LoC)** with the **Kishanganga River demarcating the line in several parts.**
	  ➢ It is one of the sites of the Kargil war.
	  ➢ It is one of **few habitations in Kashmir** where villages with **only log houses exist.**

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve	• Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified **Veerangana Durgavati reserve as a Tiger reserve.** • It is the **7th Tiger Reserve in the State of Madhya Pradesh** and **54th** in the **country.** • **Location:** Approx. **20 kilometers from Bhopal** and spans three districts—Narsinghpur, Sagar, and Damoh. • **Areas: Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary.** ➢ Parts of the reserve fall under the **Narmada and Yamuna River basins.** • **Establishment of new Tiger Reserves in a state is governed by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.**

Personality in news	**Srimanta Sankaradeva**
	• He was a **Vaisnav-saint,** scholar, playwright, and social-religious reformer, **born in 1449.**
	• Propagated a form of **Vaisnavism,** called **Ek-Sarana-Hari-Naam-Dharma** (considered Lord Krishna to be one, eternal and absolute)
	• His religious system was **strictly monotheistic.**
	• **Poetic works:** Kirtana-ghosha, Harischandra-upakhyana, Kurukshetra-yatra, etc.
	• **Contribution**
	  ➢ **Fountainhead of Ankiya-Naat** (traditional Assamese one-act plays), Borgeets, Bhaonas, and **Sattriya dance (classical Indian Dance form).**
	  ➢ Began the practice of setting up **Namghars** or houses of recitation and prayers.
	  ➢ **Visual arts:** Sapta vaikuntha, Vrindavani vastra, etc.
	• **Values:** Humanism, **spiritualism,** scientism, egalitarianism, etc.