

NEWS TODAY

Rat Hole Mining method used to rescue workers in Uttarkashi Tunnel Collapse

- This method was used for horizontally drilling for the remaining 10 - to 12 - meter stretch of debris in the **collapsed section of the under-construction Silkyara tunnel** on the Char Dham route in Uttarakhand.
- **Rat Hole Mining** involves digging of **narrow pits dug into the ground, typically just large enough** for one person to descend and extract coal.
 - ⊕ It is mostly **prevalent in Meghalaya** because of **thinness of coal found there**.
 - ⊕ Once the pits are dug, miners descend **using ropes or bamboo ladders to reach the coal seams**.
 - ⊕ The coal is then **manually extracted using primitive tools** such as pickaxes, shovels, and baskets.
- However, **rat hole mining has various issues like:**
 - ⊕ **Soil erosion** - excavation of rat hole causes the removal of vegetation.
 - ⊕ **Water pollution** - contaminate water sources with pollutants and runoff from exposed mining areas
 - ⊕ **Poor Ventilation** - Cases have been reported of miners succumbing to death.
 - ⊕ **Involvement of children** - underage labour in rat-hole mining is a prevalent issue.

Banning Status

- The **National Green Tribunal had banned Rat hole mining in 2014** on grounds of the practice being unscientific and unsafe for workers.
- However, **in 2019 Supreme Court stated that if coal mining is done under Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act and Mineral Concession Rules 1960, then NGT ban will not be applicable.**

1st Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid: Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South

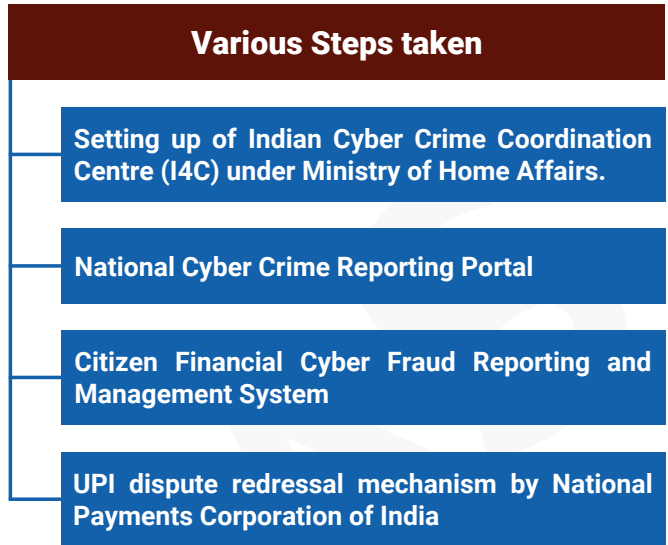
- Organized by **National Legal Services Authority**, in association with **International Legal Foundation, United Nations Development Programme, and United Nations Children's Fund**.
- The initiative aims to tackle the issues related to **providing quality legal aid services in the Global South**.
 - ⊕ The term "**Global South**" is used to **describe developing or under-developed countries** primarily located in **Asia, Africa, and Latin America**.
- The conference highlighted **New Delhi Principles on Role of Judiciary**, which consider:
 - ⊕ **Codification of the right to legal aid**
 - ⊕ **Funding of legal aid institutions**
 - ⊕ **Trans judicial Communication**, and
 - ⊕ **Provision of legal aid services**
- **Significance of Legal Aid**
 - ⊕ It is an **essential component** of the **Right to a Fair Trial** and the **Right to Defence**.
 - ⊕ It can reduce **pretrial detention rates** and **ensure equal access to justice for the accused**.
 - ⊕ It provides a foundation for a justice system based on the **Rule of law**.
- **About Free Legal Aid in India**
 - ⊕ Under **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**- free legal aid is entitled to:
 - ◆ A member of a **Scheduled Caste or Tribe**
 - ◆ A **victim of trafficking**
 - ◆ An **industrial workman**
 - ◆ A **woman** or a **child or mentally ill** or **disabled person** or a **victim of disaster/violence**.
 - ◆ Individuals with an **annual income less than a state-specified amount** for **non-Supreme Court cases**, and less than **Rs.5 Lakhs** for Supreme Court cases.

About National Legal Services Authority

- It is constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.
- **Functions:**
 - ⊕ It provides free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society and
 - ⊕ Organizes Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes.
- **Chief Justice of India** acts as the Patron-in-Chief and
- **Senior Most Judge of the Supreme Court** acts as the Executive Chairman of the Authority.
- Under the act **State and District Legal services authorities** are constituted in every **state and district respectively**.


Stakeholders discuss strategies to tackle cyber frauds in financial sector

- This was done in the backdrop of **increasing digital payment frauds**.
 - ⊖ **70 lakh mobile connections involved in cybercrime** were reported through digital intelligence platforms.
- **Cyber threats involved in digital transactions**
 - ⊖ **Money-Mule issue:** In this fraudsters contact customers via emails, etc, and convince them to receive money into their bank accounts, in exchange of attractive commissions.
 - ⊖ **SIM Swap Scam-** Fraudulent way to get OTP.
 - ⊖ **Phishing-** Stealing personal information such as Credit/Debit Card number, CVV number, etc.
 - ⊖ **Impersonation and Identity Theft.**
- **Issues in tackling cyber frauds in financial sector**
 - ⊖ **Lack of coordination between Police, Banks and Financial Entities** for real time tracking and blocking of defrauded money.
 - ⊖ **Lack of cyber security professionals** in financial Institutions.
 - ⊖ **Employees with access to sensitive information** may accidentally compromise data.
- **Strategies to tackle can include:**
 - ⊖ **Implementation of recommendations of the Digital Lending Working Group** including setting up of Digital India Trust Agency (DIGITA)
 - ⊖ Bringing a new legislation '**Banning of Unregulated Lending Activities (BULA) Act**
 - ⊖ **Improving the response time** in handling the alerts on online financial frauds.




Report titled Gender-Related Killings of Women and Girls (Femicide/ Feminicide)

- Published by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** and **UN Women**.
- **Femicide** can broadly be defined as **intentional killings** committed on the grounds of **gender-related factors**.
 - ⊖ It includes the **ideology of men's entitlement and privilege over women**, social norms regarding **masculinity**, and the need to **assert male control or power**, etc.
- **Key findings of the report**
 - ⊖ In 2022, about **88,900** women and girls were homicide victims **worldwide**.
 - ⊖ **Around 55% of total female homicide** victims are **killed by family**.
 - ⊖ In India deaths related to dowry, accusations of witchcraft, and gender-related factors **have been slowly declining** over the past decade.
- **Recommendations:**
 - ⊖ Address **social norms** at individual, community, and institutional level,
 - ⊖ Provide victim support and assistance.
 - ⊖ Enable **evidence-based comprehensive response**.
- **Measures to check femicide in India**
 - ⊖ **Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987**
 - ⊖ **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**
 - ⊖ **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956**
 - ⊖ **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**
 - ⊖ Provisions under the **Indian Penal Code [Section 376 (Rape), Section 304-B (Dowry death), etc.]**



UN Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC)



- 🔦 **Genesis:** Established in 1997 by merging the **United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention** and the **United Nations International Drug Control Programme**.
- 📄 **Composition:** It has 20 field offices covering over 150 countries and works directly with Governments and non-governmental organizations.
- 🚀 **Objective:** It is committed to achieving **security and justice for all by making the world safer from drugs, crime, and terrorism**.

Animal use in drug research is alarmingly high

- Animal experiments are widely used to develop new medicines and test other products safety.
- **Regulation of animal testing in India**
 - ⊖ **New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules (2023):** Aims to replace the use of animals in research, especially in drug testing.
 - ◆ It also authorizes **use of non-animal and human-relevant methods**, such as **3D organoids, organs-on-chip**, etc., to test the safety and efficacy of new drugs.
 - ⊖ **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**, makes provisions to enforce anti-cruelty provisions for experiments on animals.
- **Ethical issues in animal experiments**
 - ⊖ **Ability to feel pain and stress:** Harm to animals arising out of basic physiological need deprivation, invasive procedures, social deprivation, etc.
 - ⊖ **Psychological capabilities of animals:** Some animals also exhibit **empathy, self-awareness, and language-like capabilities**.
 - ⊖ **No proven benefits:** Benefits to human beings are not proven.
- **Ethical guidelines for animal experimentation**
 - ⊖ **4Rs principles for laws governing utilization of animal experimentation during research:** Reduction, Refinement, Replacement, and Responsibility for the experimental animal.

Supreme Court orders Survey of India to assess Kerala's mega parking project Near Mullaperiyar Dam

- **Survey of India** will determine if the mega parking project encroaches on **Periyar Lake Lease Agreement (1886) territory**.
- **Mullaperiyar dam**
 - ⊖ It was constructed during 1887-1895 and **owned, operated, and maintained by Tamil Nadu Government**.
 - ⊖ It is **located in upper reaches** of river **Periyar**, which flows into Kerala after originating in Tamil Nadu.
 - ◆ The reservoir is within **Periyar Tiger Reserve**.
- **About the dispute**
 - ⊖ The Dam was **constructed based on Periyar Lake Lease Agreement (1886) for a lease of 999 years**.
 - ◆ Agreement signed between **Maharaja of Travancore and Secretary of State for India** (during British rule).
 - ⊖ Earlier, Kerala Government claimed that **dam is unsafe** and a **threat to people living downstream** and pitched for **building a new dam**.
 - ⊖ Whereas, **Tamil Nadu government denies** it and is **utilising the dam to its full capacity** after structural strengthening.
- **Importance of Dams and Dams Safety**
 - ⊖ Dams play a vital role in the **overall water security and energy needs of a country**.
 - ⊖ India's **third-largest number of dams in the world**, and many of them are **aging, and seismically vulnerable**, thus safety becomes paramount.
 - ⊖ Unsafe dams **expose downstream** areas to risks of **catastrophic flooding, and displacement**.

Survey of India

- **Survey of India** is the **National Survey and Mapping Organization**.
 - ⊖ It was **set up in 1767**.
- It works under the **Department of Science & Technology**.

Also in News



Shettihalli Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS)

- Recently, National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the state government to resolve the issues in the **delay in the notification of eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) status for SWS**.
 - ⊖ **ESZ** is a designated area around a protected area where certain activities are regulated to minimize human impact and protect the surrounding environment.
- **About SWS**
 - ⊖ **Location-** Shimoga District of **Karnataka**.
 - ⊖ Declared **Wildlife Sanctuary in 1974**.
 - ⊖ **Main rivers-** Thunga and Kumadwhathi
 - ⊖ **Fauna-** Sambar, Indian Gaur, **Tiger, Elephant, Sloth bear**, etc
- **Mandagadde Natural Bird Sanctuary**, is also a part of this Sanctuary.



Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

- **IOTC** is an **intergovernmental organization responsible for the management of tuna** and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean.
- Its objective is to ensure the **conservation and appropriate utilization of fish stocks** and encourage the sustainable development of fisheries.
- It was established **within the framework of FAO by the Agreement for the establishment of the IOTC** in 1993 and entered into force in 1996
- Its key functions and responsibilities are **drawn from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**.
- **Headquarter-** Victoria, Seychelles
- **India** is also a **Member**.



Anganwadi Protocol for Divyang Children

- **Ministry Of Women & Child Development** launched the National Outreach Programme on the Anganwadi Protocol.
- Protocol embodies a **Social Model for Divyangjan** inclusive care under the POSHAN Abhiyan, with a step-by-step approach:
 - ⊖ **Screening for early disability signs**
 - ⊖ **Inclusion in community events and empowering families**
 - ⊖ **Referral support** via ASHA/ANM & Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) teams.
- The protocol is in line with the **National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022**.



Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project

- **Ministry of Power** reviews the construction progress and safety aspects **Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project (SLHP)** sites.
- **About SLHP**
 - ⊖ It is a **2000 MW hydropower project**, located on the border of **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.
 - ⊖ It is located on the **Subansiri River- a north-bank tributary of the Brahmaputra River**.
- It includes the construction of a **surface powerhouse** and a **116m-high concrete gravity dam**.



Yard 12706 (Imphal)

- Ministry of Defence recently unveiled crest of **Yard 12706 (Imphal)**, the **third amongst the four Project 15B stealth guided missile destroyers**.
- It is a **potent and versatile platform equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors**, including surface-to-air missiles, anti-ship missiles, and torpedoes.
- It is **designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau** and built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).
- **Project 15B** is a **follow-on of the Kolkata class (Project 15A) destroyers** commissioned in the last decade
 - ⊖ The first ship of the Project-**INS Visakhapatnam** was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 2021.



Tritonal

- Israel has been accused of using **Mk-84 bombs** in the ongoing conflict in Gaza which are generally filled with Tritonal.
- Tritonal is a mix of one part **Aluminium** and three parts **trinitrotoluene or TNT**.
- It is a **dangerous explosive**, especially when exposed to heat.
- **Transport of Tritonal by aircraft or railways is forbidden** due to its explosive characteristics.



Swine Flu Strain H1N2

- UK has Confirmed the **First Human Case of Swine Flu Strain H1N2**
- **About Swine Flu Strain H1N2**
 - ⊖ It is caused by **swine influenza viruses**
 - ⊖ **Transmission: direct or indirect exposure to pigs** or contaminated environments carrying the pathogen.
 - ⊖ **Symptoms:** similar to **regular flu** and include fever, cough, etc.
- In 2009, there was a **pandemic of swine flu in humans** caused by a **virus spreading** in pigs, birds, and humans.



Kalbelia Dance

- **Kalbeliya dance** performed in Jodhpur during the **Rajasthan International Folk Festival**.
- **Kalbelia** is a **dance form** associated with Kalbelias tribes- a nomadic group of snake charmers.
- It is also known as the **Sapera dance**.
- **Both males and females** participate in this dance.
 - ⊖ The **females** are the **dancers** while the **males** accompany them on a variety of **musical instruments**.
- **Musical instruments used:** Pakhawaj, dholak, jhanjhar, harmonium, and sarangi.
- It was included in the **UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** in 2010.

Places in News



Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)

- From December, Malaysia has allowed Visa free entry for Indians for stay up to 30 days.
- **Political Boundaries:**
 - ⊖ **Thailand and Brunei (north), Singapore (south), Indonesia (southwest)**.
 - ⊖ Malaysia consists of **two non- contiguous regions** i.e
 - ◆ **Peninsular Malaysia** (West Malaysia) located in Malay Peninsula bordering South China Sea in the east.
 - ◆ **Malaysia Timur** (East Malaysia) located on the Island of Borneo.
 - » It border **South China Sea in the northwest**, the Sulu Sea in the northeast, and the Celebes Sea in the southeast.
- **Geographical Features:**
 - ⊖ **Major Rivers:** Pahang, Sarawak, Rajang, Kinabatangan.
 - ⊖ **Highest Point:** Mt Kinabalu (4100m).

