

NEWS TODAY

ALL INDIA TIGER ESTIMATION -2022 REPORT RELEASED ON INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY (29TH JULY)

- India has a **network of 53 Tiger Reserves** spread across **18 States**.

Key Highlights of the report

➤ **Number of tigers increased from 2,967 in 2018 to 3,682** (average number) in 2022, an annual rise of about 6%.

- India currently harbors **almost 75% of world's wild tiger population**.

➤ **Central India and Shivalik Hills and Gangetic Plains** witnessed a notable **increases in tiger population**, particularly in states of Madhya Pradesh (MP), Uttarakhand, and Maharashtra.

➤ Certain regions, such as **Western Ghats**, experienced **localized declines**.

➤ **States with highest tiger population:** MP (785), Karnataka (563) & Uttarakhand (560).

➤ **Reserves with highest tiger population:** Jim Corbett (260), Bandipur (150), Nagarhole (141).

➤ **Reserves with no tigers:** Dampa (Mizoram), Kamlang (Arunachal Pradesh), Kawal (Telangana), Satkosia (Odisha), Sahyadri (Maharashtra).

➤ Approximately **35% of tiger reserves urgently require enhanced protection measures**, habitat restoration, subsequent tiger reintroduction etc.

- Also, a report on **Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE)** of tiger reserves (5th cycle) was released.

➤ Based on MEE, 51 **tiger reserves have been classified into four categories: Excellent(12), Very Good(21), Good(13) and Fair(5)**.

INDIAN COMPANIES TO LIST DIRECTLY ON INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTRE (IFSC), SAYS FINANCE MINISTER

- After **initial listing on IFSC** at Gift City in Gandhinagar, later, they **will be permitted to list in seven or eight specified overseas jurisdictions**.

- Presently**, Indian companies **cannot directly list their securities** abroad **without** getting themselves **listed in domestic stock exchanges**

➤ In 2020, **Centre amended Companies Act**, allowing **direct listing of Indian companies on foreign stock exchanges**, but **framework has not been put in place** so far.

➤ It was announced as **part of a pandemic relief package**.

- Currently, **Indian companies can raise money abroad through American Depository Receipts (ADR) and Global Depository Receipts (GDR)**.

➤ Depository Receipt (DR) is an **instrument used by domestic companies** to raise money outside the country. These shares are **held by a foreign bank that provides DRs to companies** in return for shares.

➤ **Both GDR and ADR are used** to raise **funds from foreign market**.

- However, **ADRs are traded on US stock exchanges while GDRs are traded mostly on European Exchanges**.

- Significance of direct listing on IFSC**

➤ Transformation of **GIFT City into global financial hub**.

➤ Help in **raising large capital and better valuations** for Indian companies.

➤ It will **promote reverse flipping** (Companies moving back to India).

About Management Effectiveness Evaluation

- It is the **assessment of how well protected areas** such as national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation reserves, community reserves and tiger reserves **are being managed**.

- MEE is adopted **based on the framework of IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas**.

- Since its inception in 2006, it is jointly **conducted by NTCA and Wildlife Institute of India (WII)**.

About IFSC

- An IFSC **caters to customers outside the jurisdiction** of the domestic economy. Such centres **deal with flows of finance, financial products and services** across borders.

- It can provide several services including **fund-raising, Asset management** and global portfolio diversification, **wealth management** etc.

INDIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR MISSION (ISM) IS NOT LIMITED TO THE DOMESTIC DEMAND: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER (EAM)

- EAM stated that **ISM also aims to meet global requirement** to create a **new supply chain of semiconductors** that is currently **dominated by Taiwan**.
 - Taiwan **produces over 60%** of the **world's semiconductors** and over **90%** of the **most advanced ones**.
- **Significance of a new supply chain**
 - Possible escalation in **military tension between China and Taiwan will jeopardise global semiconductors supply chain**, which can cripple multi-sectoral digital structures worldwide.
 - Chip shortage may cause **massive inflation on a range of products** and services, including cars, phones and healthcare equipment.
 - **For national security** as advanced chips are used in **satellites, stealth jets, and supercomputers**.
- **Initiatives taken by India**
 - Signed a **MoU on 'Semiconductor Supply Chain' with US**.
 - **Joined US led Minerals Security Partnership** that aims to catalyse public and private investment in critical mineral supply chains globally.
 - Initiative on **Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) with US**.
- **About ISM**
 - It is an **independent Business Division within Digital India Corporation** that aims to build a **vibrant semiconductor and display ecosystem** to enable **India's emergence as a global hub for electronics manufacturing and design**.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT ON GOVERNMENT ACTIONS FOR INDIA'S SOFT POWER AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) defines **soft power** as the **ability to influence others through appeal and attraction, using non-coercive means**.

➤ These include, cultural heritage **evident in arts, dances, literature, cuisine, yoga, traditional medicine** etc.

- **Challenges in implementing India's soft power**

➤ Lack of timely, adequate **budget allocation**.

➤ **Lack of coordination and consultation** among multiple institutions.

➤ Lack of clarity on the **mandate of ICCR**.

➤ Shortage of **skilled, motivated manpower**.

- **Recommendation of the committee**

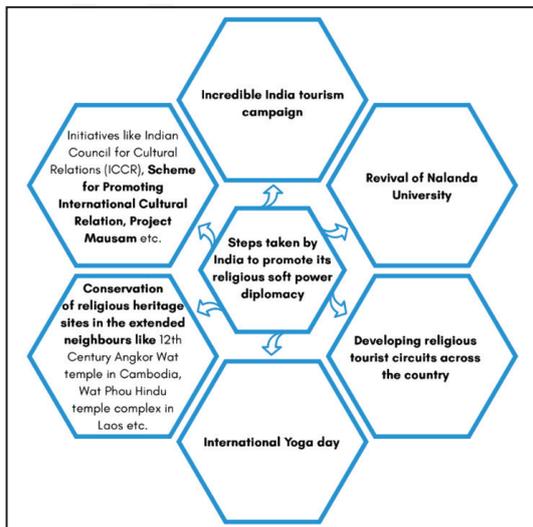
➤ Prepare a **policy document** consist of **vision statement** on India's **soft power projections**.

➤ Increase budgetary allocation of **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** and establishing a **coordination mechanism between the MEA/ICCR** and other line ministries.

➤ Undertake a formal **study of international best practices in soft power projection**.

➤ Adopt a multi-pronged approach to **religious and medical tourism** through infrastructure and skilled expertise.

➤ Create study group that **could assess the ICCR's working compared** to foreign counterparts like the **British Council, American Centre** etc.



PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE RELEASED REPORT ON PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)

- **PMGSY scheme was launched in 2000** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** to assist the **States in providing all-weather road connectivity to all eligible unconnected habitations** in rural areas.

- It aims to **connect areas** with a population of up-to **500 persons in plain areas, 250 and above** in Special category States, **Desert areas, Tribal (Schedule V)** areas and selected tribal and backward districts.

- **Present Status:** around 96.24 % and 97.01 % of sanctioned project have been completed under PMGSY-I (2000) and PMGSY-II (2013), respectively.

- **Challenges:** Poor Road materials, **subletting of work to petty contractors**, delay due to **logistics issues** or non-timely fund release.

- **Recommendations**

➤ Both **Centre and State nodal agencies** need to have a collaborative **approach**.

➤ Scheme should be **converged with MGNREGA**.

➤ Border Road Organisation (BRO) should envisage **innovative measures** for road construction in left wings extremism affected areas.

➤ Stricter compliance with the provision of **onsite road quality testing Labs**.

➤ **Release adequate funds** to ensure the **post construction maintenance** of roads.

➤ Ensure that **unspent amount shall** be spent on a faster rate.

➤ Exploring feasibility of taking **Panchayats** as reference point/unit.

EDUCATION IN MOTHER TONGUE INITIATING A NEW FORM OF SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR STUDENTS: PM

- PM recently pitched for education in the mother tongue, at the Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam (ABSS).
- **Significance of education in mother tongue**
 - Foster **inclusion and quality learning and avoiding knowledge gaps**, thus fulfilling social justice.
 - Promotes **mutual respect for language and its understanding**.
 - Preservation of **cultural and traditional heritage**.
 - Improves **learning outcomes and** develops essential skills such as critical thinking and literacy skills
- **Challenges in using mother tongue:** Preference to English, difficulty in industry placements of graduates, availability of teachers, high initial investment need for developing new learning material etc.
- **Other Initiative**
 - **PM-SHRI** (PM ScHools for Rising India) is a **centrally sponsored scheme** to showcase all components of the NEP 2020, schools will act as exemplar schools and offer mentorship to other schools in their vicinity.
 - **ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) app** launched by (Ministry of Education) for learners to engage in diverse learning resources through DIKSHA portal of NCERT.

INITIATIVES TAKEN FOR PROMOTION OF EDUCATION IN MOTHER TONGUE

- **Right to Education Act, 2009** advocates for **mother tongue as medium of instruction**.
- **National Curriculum Framework 2022** for **foundational stages recommended use of mother tongue** as primary medium of instruction till eight years of age.
- **National Translation Mission** for translating text books of various subjects in 8th Schedule languages.
- **NIPUN Bharat Mission** suggests mother tongue in teaching learning process and learning material.
- **NEP 2020** envisages **mother tongue/ local language** as medium of instruction **until at least Grade 5, preferably till Grade 8 and beyond**.

ALSO IN NEWS



Measures to improve financial health of DISCOMs

- **Ministry of Power notified** additional measures including:
 - **Streamlining process of accounting, reporting, billing and payment of subsidy** by States to Distribution Companies (DISCOMs).
 - **Quarterly report shall be submitted by DISCOMs** and State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC) shall examine the report.
 - **Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) loss reduction trajectory** would be approved by State Commissions for tariff determination.
 - AT&C losses are **combination of energy loss and commercial loss**.



Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)

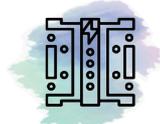
- Recent study calculated that **AMOC will collapse with 95% certainty between 2025 and 2095**.
- **AMOC is a system of ocean currents in the Atlantic Ocean** that circulates heat from the tropics towards the **North Pole** and **disseminates cold, saline**, dense waters towards the Tropics and even further south towards the South Pole
- **Consequences of a slowing AMOC:**
 - Sea level rise **across the U.S. East Coast**.
 - Would **cool the northern hemisphere** and decrease rainfall over Europe.
 - **Would cause droughts**.
- **Ocean currents** are the continuous, predictable, directional movement of seawater driven by gravity, wind (Coriolis Effect), and water density.



Cryptobiosis

- Scientists brought **microscopic worms back to life** after they were **frozen in the Siberian permafrost for 46,000 years by entering in to state called cryptobiosis**.
- **About Cryptobiosis**
 - **Cryptobiosis** is the **state of an organism** when it shows **no visible signs of life and when its metabolic activity becomes hardly measurable**, or comes reversibly to a standstill.
 - In this state **organisms can survive complete absence of water and oxygen and withstand other extreme conditions**.
 - Since metabolism is a **defining characteristic of life**, cryptobiosis can be termed as a **temporary death** of an organism.



 <p>cell-free DNA (cfDNA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CfDNA refers to small fragments of nucleic acids that are released from cells and found outside the cell in body fluids as plasma, urine, and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). • cfDNA quantity in the blood increases under pathological conditions such as auto-immune diseases, cancer etc. • Application of cfDNA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Detect genetic abnormalities in foetuses, ➤ Early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of cancers, ➤ Monitor immune response after organ transplantation and can be used as a biomarker.
 <p>De-orbiting of satellites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the PSLV-C56 carrying Singapore's DS-SAR satellite and six other satellites. • Launch conducted the fourth stage (PS4) de-orbiting experiment • De-orbiting of satellites is a technology to drag satellites to the graveyard orbit i.e., orbit 200 miles farther away from Earth than the farthest active satellites.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ De-orbiting systems can be passive (use of integrated spacecraft) and active systems (design to move satellites in the graveyard orbit). • De-orbiting experiment result in reduced space debris and sustainable use of space.
 <p>BPaL regimen Trial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For tuberculosis over 85% cure rate seen in modified BPaL regimen trial. • BPaL is a six-month, all-oral, three-drug regimen that is used to treat people with highly drug-resistant forms of TB (i.e., XDR TB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It consists of the antibiotic pretomanid, along with two other antibiotics: bedaquiline and linezolid. • XDR TB is a rare type of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) that is resistant to isoniazid, rifampin, a fluoroquinolone, and a second-line injectable (amikacin, capreomycin, and kanamycin)
 <p>Direct Methanol Fuel Cells (DMFCs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An alloy of Cobalt and Platinum when doped with Manganese has been found as an effective catalyst in DMFCs. • DMFC is an electrochemical energy conversion device that converts chemical energy of liquid methanol into electrical energy directly. • DMFCs have high energy density, high efficiency and low operating temperature and are safer to operate as they deal with liquid fuel (methanol). • Application: alternate power source for small vehicles, as battery chargers for mobile phones, digital cameras, laptops, and other small electronic gadgets etc.
 <p>Bhojpatra (Himalayan Birch)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM highlighted how business of bhojpatra calligraphy by women of Mana village (Uttarakhand) is helping them improve the economy of the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mana village near Badrinath is regarded as the last village before India-China border at Uttarakhand. • Found at a height of 3,000m or above, bhojpatra is a tree whose bark acts as paper on which text can be written. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Since ancient times, scriptures and books have been preserved on bhojpatras.
 <p>Places in news</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Navy aircraft visited Cocos Islands. • Cocos islands are external territory of Australia in the eastern Indian Ocean and is close to strategic maritime choke points. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Location: North-west of Perth in western Australia. ➤ It comprises two coral atolls made up of 27 smaller islands. • It can be an important base for refuelling and operational turnaround as India aims to increase its military-to-military engagement, deepening interoperability in region. 



AHMEDABAD



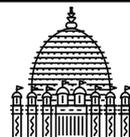
CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



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