

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs 08 Jul 2021

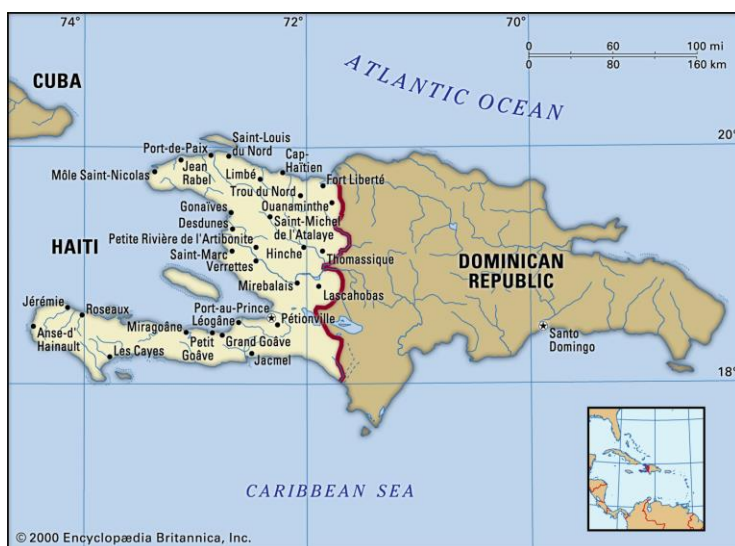
### 1. Haiti

(Topic- GS Paper I-Geography, Source- AIR)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Haiti's President Jovenel Moïse has been killed in an attack on his home in the nation's capital, Port-au-Prince.

About Haiti



- It is a country in the Caribbean Sea that includes the western third of the island of Hispaniola and such smaller islands as Gonâve, Tortue (Tortuga), Grande Caye, and Vache.
- It occupies the western three-eighths of the Hispaniola Island (the second largest island in the Greater Antilles) which it shares with the Dominican Republic.
- It is the third largest country in the Caribbean behind Cuba and the Dominican Republic.
- The capital is **Port-au-Prince**.

### 2. OPEC's output pact proposal

(Topic- GS Paper II-International Organisation, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news

- Recently, the OPEC+ group of countries had, in April 2020, entered into a two-year agreement, which entailed steep cuts in crude production to deal with a sharp fall in the price of oil as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The latest round of meetings among the OPEC+ group of oil-exporting countries has stalled as the UAE has pushed back proposals making an increase in crude oil supply conditional on an extension to an output agreement.

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## Background

- The OPEC+ group of countries had, in April 2020, entered into a two-year agreement, which entailed steep cuts in crude production to deal with a sharp fall in the price of oil as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The price of Brent crude hit an 18-year low of under \$20 per barrel in April 2020 as economic activity around the world crashed as countries dealt with the pandemic.

## Impact on India

- India is currently facing record-high prices of petrol and diesel, with pump prices of the former exceeding Rs 100 per litre in 13 states and Union Territories.
- India is the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer stated that the delay in decision can threaten the consumption-led-recovery in some countries.
- India imports about 84 per cent of its overall crude needs with over 60 per cent of that coming from Middle Eastern countries, which are typically cheaper than those from the West.

## Posing fiscal challenges for India

- Rising oil prices are posing fiscal challenges for India, where heavily-taxed retail fuel prices have touched record highs in some parts of the country, threatening the demand-driven recovery.

## Related Information

### About OPEC



- It is a permanent, intergovernmental organization, headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

### Founding Members

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was founded in Baghdad, Iraq, with the signing of an agreement in September 1960 by five countries namely Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. They were to become the Founder Members of the Organization.
- Currently, the **Organization has a total of 14 Member Countries.**

### Objective

- To coordinate and unify petroleum policies among Member Countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers;

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- An efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations; and
- OPEC membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and which shares the ideals of the organization.

#### About OPEC+

- OPEC+ refers to the alliance of crude producers, who have been undertaking corrections in supply in the oil markets since 2017.
- OPEC plus countries include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.
- The OPEC and non-OPEC producers first formed the alliance at a historic meeting in Algiers in 2016.
- The aim was to undertake production restrictions to help revive a swinging market.

#### Note:

- Recently, the United States overtook Saudi Arabia as India's second biggest oil supplier in February 2021.

### 3. Pegasus spyware

(Topic- GS Paper III-Science and Technology, Source- The Hindu)

#### Why in the news?

- An online database on spyware Pegasus' use was recently launched by **Forensic Architecture, Amnesty International and Citizen Lab to document attacks against human rights defenders.**

#### 'Digital violence' of Pegasus spyware



- The interactive platform - Digital Violence: How the NSO Group Enables State Terror - showed the connections between 'digital violence' of Pegasus spyware and the real-world harms faced by lawyers, activists, and other civil society figures.

#### Bhima Koregaon case

- The platform, available at **digitalviolence.org**, lists out "targets" of the spyware in India that include activists Bela Bhatia and Anand Teltumbde.

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- In 2020, Amnesty and Citizen Lab revealed that the spyware was used on nine human rights defenders who were accused in the Bhima Koregaon case.

### About Pegasus spyware

- It is an Israeli-origin spyware that got into the phones of activists and journalists via WhatsApp.

### Who developed it?

- It has been developed by the Israeli cyber arms firm, NSO Group.
- The NSO Group is a Tel Aviv-based cybersecurity company that specialises in “surveillance technology” and claims to help governments and law enforcement agencies across the world fight crime and terrorism.

### Transmission

- The code is transmitted via WhatsApp call.
- The code enters the phone even if the call is not answered.

### Who was targeted?

- According to reports, over 100 activists, lawyers, and journalists were targeted.
- Among them were several Indian lawyers and journalists

### What does it do?

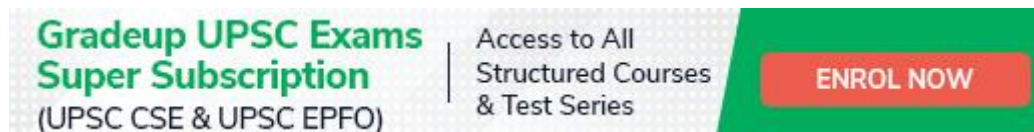
- It sends the target's contacts, calls and messages to its controller.
- It can also turn the phone into a spy device by switching on the camera or microphone

### Related Information

#### Cerberus malware

- The Central Bureau of Investigation has recently sent alerts to all the States, Union Territories and the Central agencies on a malicious software threat called the **banking Trojan known as Cerberus** that uses an update related to the COVID-19 pandemic

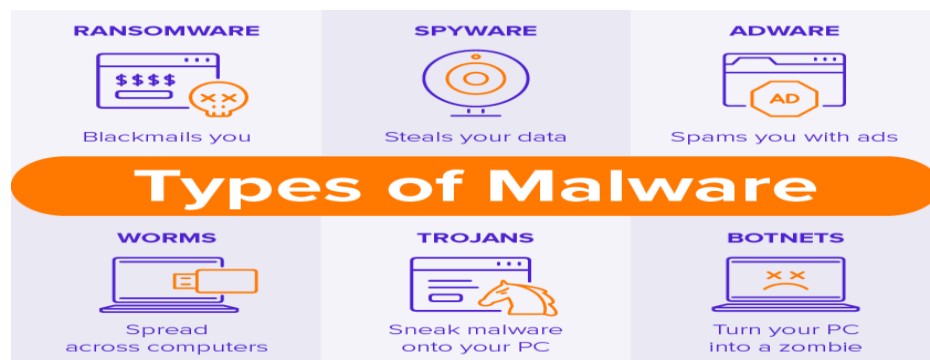
### Other types of Computer Malware



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## Spyware

- Spyware is software that monitors the actions carried out on a PC and other devices.
- That might include web browsing history, apps used, or messages sent.
- Spyware might arrive as a Trojan malware or may be downloaded onto devices in other ways.

## Trojan malware

- It is one of the most common forms of malware -- the Trojan horse -- is a form of malicious software that often disguises itself as a legitimate tool that tricks the user into installing it so it can carry out its malicious goals.

## Ransomware

- It is often delivered via a malicious attachment or link in a phishing email, ransomware encrypts the infected system, locking the user out until they pay a ransom -- delivered in bitcoin or other cryptocurrency, in order to get their data back.

## Computer worm

- A worm is a form of malware that is designed to spread itself from system to system without actions by the users of those systems.
- Worms often exploit vulnerabilities in operating systems or software, but are also capable of distributing themselves via email attachments in cases where the worm can gain access to the contact book on an infected machine.

## Botnet

- A botnet -- short for robot network -- involves cybercriminals using malware to secretly hijack a network of machines in numbers, which can range from a handful to millions of compromised devices.
- While it is not malware in itself, these networks are usually built by infecting vulnerable devices.

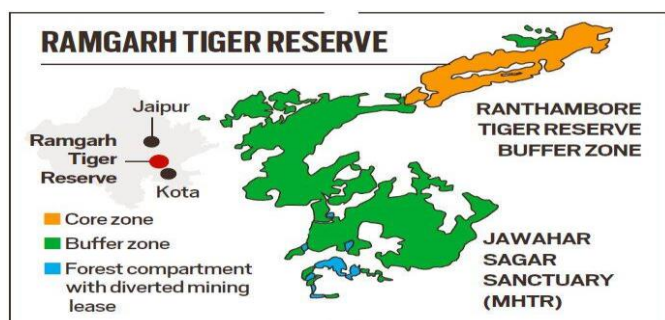
#### 4. Rajasthan to develop corridor connecting 3 tiger reserves

(Topic- GS Paper III-Environment, Source- Indian Express)

##### Why in the news ?

- The Rajasthan government has recently proposed to develop a tiger corridor connecting three tiger reserves passing through districts including Sawai Madhopur, Kota and Bundi.
- The three tiger reserves are Ranthambore National Park, Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve.

##### Reasons for developing the corridor



- Tigers have always frequented the area demarked for the Ramgarh Vishdhari tiger sanctuary and even now, tigers regularly pass through this area from the direction of Ranthambore.
- It is adjoining the buffer area of the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve.
- This newly proposed tiger reserve in Bundi district will connect the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve -in Sawai Madhopur district with the Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve in Kota district.
- It will be a functional corridor which will help in dealing with the issue of overpopulation of tigers which Ranthambore is facing currently.

##### About Ranthambore National Park

- It is located at the junction of the Aravali and Vindhya hill ranges.
- It was established initially as Sawai Madhopur Game Sanctuary in 1955 by the Government of India.
- It was declared as one of the Project Tiger reserves in India in 1973.
- It was in 1980 that Ranthambore was declared a national park, while the forests located beside it were named Sawai Man Singh Sanctuary & Keladevi Sanctuary.

##### About Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve

- It is the third tiger reserve of Rajasthan.
- It is located on the eastern bank of Chambal River and its tributaries touch this area.
- The park is situated between two parallel mountains viz. Mukundra and Gagrola
- It declared Mukundra Hills National Park in 2004.

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It consists of three wildlife sanctuaries namely

- a. Darrah wildlife sanctuary
- b. Chambal wildlife sanctuary
- c. Jaswant Sagar wildlife sanctuary.

### **About Sariska Tiger Reserve**

- It is well nestled in the Aravali Hills covering 800 sq km area divided into the grasslands, dry deciduous forests, sheer cliffs and rocky landscape.
- It was declared a sanctuary in 1955 and attained the status of a National Park in 1979.
- It is home to numerous carnivores including Leopard, Wild Dog, Jungle Cat, Hyena, Jackal, and Tiger.

### **Conservation efforts- National and Global**

#### **Monitoring System for Tigers – Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-STrIPES)**

- It has been launched by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- It is a mobile monitoring system for forest guards.

#### **T X 2**

- At the Petersburg Tiger Summit in 2010, leaders of 13 tiger range countries resolved to do more for the tiger and embarked on efforts to double its number in the wild, with a popular slogan ‘T X 2’.

### **Global Tiger Initiative**

- The Global Tiger Initiative (GTI) program of the World Bank, using its presence and convening ability, brought global partners together to strengthen the tiger agenda.

### **Project Tiger**

- Project Tiger is an ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change providing central assistance to the tiger States for tiger conservation in designated tiger reserves.
- It has been launched way back in 1973.

### **Census of Tiger**

- India now has as many as 2,967 tigers in the wild, with more than half of them in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, according to the latest tiger estimation report for 2018.
- The population of tigers has increased by 33% since the last census in 2014 when the total estimate was 2,226.

**Note:**

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- Recently, the Ramgarh Vishdhari wildlife sanctuary received a nod from the National Tiger Conservation Authority's (NTCA) technical committee to become the 4th Tiger reserve of Rajasthan.

## 5. Black leopard

(Topic- GS Paper III-Environment, Source- Indian Express)

### Why in the news ?

- Recently, a rare melanistic leopard, popularly called black leopard, was spotted in the Navegaon block of the Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) in the Gondia district of Maharashtra.

### About Black Leopard



- They are also called Melanistic leopards or black panthers.
- The black color variants of cats like leopards, jaguars and ocelots are known by experts as melanism.
- Melanism is a genetic condition in which an animal overproduces melanin, the dark colour pigment in skin or fur.
- The Black coat coloration is attributed to the expression of recessive alleles in leopards and dominant alleles in jaguars

### Conservation status

- It is listed as '**Vulnerable**' under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- It is protected in **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**

### About Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve

- It is the fifth tiger reserve of Maharashtra.
- It is situated in Gondia and Bhandara districts of Maharashtra.



- It has connectivity with major tiger reserves in central India like Kanha and Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra and Indravati Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh.

#### Other Protected Areas in Maharashtra:

- Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary.
- Karnala Bird Sanctuary.
- Sanjay Gandhi National Park.
- Sahyadri Tiger Reserve.
- Melghat Tiger reserve.

### 6. China goes malaria-free with multi-pronged health strategy

(Topic- GS Paper III-Health, Source- Indian Express)

#### Why in the news ?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has recently declaring that China was “malaria-free” followed a seven decade-long, multi-pronged health strategy that was able to entirely eliminate indigenous cases for four straight years.

#### More in the news

- China is the first country in the Western Pacific region to be declared malaria-free in more than 30 years, following Australia in 1981, Singapore in 1982 and Brunei in 1987.

#### Steps taken by China

- The effort began in the early 1950s, a time when China was reporting millions of cases annually, starting with a multi-pronged approach of providing anti-malarial medicines while targeting mosquito breeding grounds and using insecticide spraying.

#### The 523 Project

- It was launched in 1967 involving more than 500 scientists from 60 institutes for the discovery of artemisinin in the 1970s, which is “the core compound of **artemisinin-based combination therapies, the most effective antimalarial drugs available today**”.

#### ‘1-3-7 strategy’

- It credited China’s public health system offering free of charge diagnosis and treatment of malaria in bringing down cases to zero, as well as a “1-3-7 strategy” referring to a one-day deadline to report a malaria diagnosis, confirming a case and determining the spread by the third day, and measures taken to stop the spread by the seventh day, along with continued surveillance in high-risk areas.

#### Related Information

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- Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified 25 countries, including three from Africa, with the potential to eradicate malaria by 2025 under its '**E-2025 Initiative**', ahead of World Malaria Day 2021.

### About E-2025 Initiative

- This has been launched by WHO in 2017 to support a group of countries to achieve zero indigenous cases of malaria by 2020.
- Some 21 countries across five regions were identified as having the potential to reach the milestone of eliminating malaria.
- Of the 21 countries, eight reported zero cases of malaria, as of April 2021.
- The countries included, Algeria, Belize, Cabo Verde, China, El Salvador, Iran, Malaysia, and Paraguay.
- In February 2021, El Salvador became the first Central American country to achieve the milestone of being classified as malaria-free.
- **The number of cases fell from more than 9,000 in 1990 to less than 30 in 2010.**
- The report '**Zeroing in on malaria elimination**' brings out the progress made through the **E-2020 initiative of WHO.**
- The E-2025 countries will receive technical and on-the-ground support by WHO and its partners.
- In return, they are expected to audit their elimination programmes annually, participate in elimination forums, conduct surveillance assessments, and share malaria case data periodically.

The new countries were selected based on four criteria:

- a. the establishment of a government-endorsed elimination plan;
- b. meeting the threshold of malaria case reductions in recent years;
- c. having the capacity of malaria surveillance and a designated governmental agency responsible for malaria elimination;
- d. and being selected by the WHO Malaria Elimination Oversight Committee.

### Initiatives Taken by Indian Government

#### National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) 2016-2030

- It outlines India's strategy for elimination of the disease by 2030.
- The objectives of the national framework are:
  - Eliminate malaria from all low (Category 1) and moderate (Category 2) endemic states/UTs (26) by 2022;
  - Reduce incidence of malaria to less than 1 case per 1000 population in all States/UTs and the districts and malaria elimination in 31 states/UTs by 2024;
  - Interrupt indigenous transmission of malaria in all States/ UTs (Category 3) by 2027;

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- Prevent re-establishment of local transmission of malaria in areas where it has been eliminated and to maintain malaria-free status of the country by 2030.

### **Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India)**

- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recently established '**Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India)**' which is a conglomeration of partners working on malaria control.

### **Malaria Mukht Abhiyan**

- Malaria Mukht Abhiyan in the Bastar Region of Chhattisgarh was successfully carried out wherein 3.78 million people were screened for malaria.

## **7. Bhalia variety of Wheat**

**(Topic- GS Paper III-Agriculture, Source- Indian Express)**

### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, the first shipment of Bhalia variety of wheat was exported to Kenya and Sri Lanka from Gujarat.

### **About Bhalia Wheat**



- It is a Geographical Indication (GI) certified variety of wheat.
- It received the Geographical Indication (GI) status in 2011.
- It is grown mostly across Bhal region of Gujarat which includes districts of Ahmadabad, Anand, Kheda, Bhavanagar, Surendranagar and Bharuch.

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### Unique characteristic

- It has high protein content and is sweet in taste.
- Its unique characteristic is that it is grown in the rainfed condition without irrigation and cultivated in around two lakh hectares of agricultural land in Gujarat.

### 8. Matsya Setu

(Topic- GS Paper III-Economics, Source- PIB)

#### Why in the news ?

- Recently, the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying has launched an **app** called ‘Matsya Setu’.

#### About Matsya Setu



- It is Online Course Mobile App which has been developed by the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar, with the funding support of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad.
- It aims to disseminate the latest freshwater aquaculture technologies to the aqua farmers of the country.
- It has species-wise/ subject-wise self-learning online course modules, where renowned aquaculture experts explain the basic concepts and practical demonstrations on breeding, seed production and grow-out culture of commercially important fishes.

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