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Important News: India

Two more Ramsar sites announced in India on World Wetlands Day



Why in News

- Two new Ramsar sites — **Khijadiya wildlife sanctuary in Gujarat and Bakhira wildlife sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh** — were announced on the occasion of World Wetlands Day.

Key Points

- India now has a network of 49 Ramsar sites covering an area of 10,93,636 hectares, the highest in South Asia.
- Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance as per UNESCO's 1971 Convention on Wetlands held in Ramsar, Iran.

Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh:

- The Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary is the largest natural flood plain wetland in the district of Sant Kabir Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. Established in the year 1980, the sanctuary's lake is important for the migratory birds who fly down here in the winter season.
- Migratory birds from Tibet, China, Europe, and Siberia visit the place between November to January. Birds like Indian purple moorhen in addition to more than 30 fish species can be found here.

Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat:

- Located 12 km away from Jamnagar District headquarters, Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary is a freshwater wetland, heaven for birds. It supports marine and freshwater birds, has marshy lands, mangroves, prosopis areas, mudflats, salt pans, creeks, forest scrub, sandy beaches, and farmlands bordering the area. The sanctuary is home to 309 species of birds- resident and migratory birds.
- Endangered bird species such as Dalmatian Pelican, Asian Open Bill Stork, Black-Necked Stork, Darter, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian spoonbill, and Indian Skimmer can be spotted here.

Source: Indian Express

Chandrayaan-3 scheduled for launch in August 2022



Why in News

- Recently, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh said in the Lok Sabha that **Chandrayaan-3** is scheduled for launch in August 2022.

Key Points

Chandrayaan 3 Mission:

- The Chandrayaan 3 mission is the third planned lunar exploration mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It follows ISRO's Chandrayaan 2 mission, which successfully deployed its orbiter around the Moon but failed to soft-land its lander.
- Similar to Chandrayaan 2 mission, Chandrayaan-3 will also include a modified lander and rover. The mission will not include an orbiter, due to the success of the Chandrayaan 2 orbiter. It will use the Chandrayaan 2 orbiter to communicate with the earth.

Note: The number of missions planned during 2022 (Jan to Dec'22) are 19 viz., 08 Launch Vehicle Missions, 07 Spacecraft Missions and 04 Technology Demonstrator Missions.

Source: TOI

Khelo India Scheme allocation increases by 48% in Budget 2022-23



Why in News

- The Government has decided to continue the Scheme of “Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports” over the 15th Finance Commission Cycle (2021-22 to 2025-26) at an outlay of Rs 3165.50 crore.

Key Points

- The allocation in Khelo India Scheme has increased by 48 percent in Budget 2022-23 and it has been included in the PM's Awards Scheme.
- The Khelo India Scheme is the flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

Note:

- Recently, the Union Government has approved continuation of Scheme of Assistance to National Sports Federations (NSFs) with an outlay of Rs. 1575 crore for XV Finance Commission Cycle (2021-22 to 2025-26).
- The Scheme of Assistance to NSFs is the flagship Central Sector Scheme and the main source of funding for preparation of national teams for all major national and international competitions, including the Olympic Games, Para-Olympics, Asian Games, Para Asian Games, Commonwealth Games (CWG) and other major international tournaments.

Source: PIB

Coal Gasification



Why in News

- The Centre's announcement on coal gasification-pilot projects in the Union Budget 2022-23 is contrary to Delhi-based non-profit, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)'s assessment about the process not being attractive from a climate change point of view.
- "Four pilot projects for coal gasification and conversion of coal into chemicals required for the industry will be set up for technical and financial viability," Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said while presenting the budget 2022 in the Lok Sabha.

Key Points

- **Coal gasification:** It is a process in which coal is partially oxidised with air, oxygen, steam or carbon dioxide to form a fuel gas. This gas is then used instead of piped natural gas, methane and others for deriving energy.
- However, coal gasification actually produces more carbon dioxide than a conventional coal-powered thermal power plant, according to CSE's assessment.
- Also, coal gasification plants are costlier than conventional power plants.
- According to CSE estimates, one unit of electricity generated by burning gasified coal generates 2.5 times more carbon dioxide than what would result when burning the coal directly.

Note:

- Steel companies typically use coking coal in their manufacturing process.
- Most of the coking coal is imported and is expensive.
- To cut costs, plants can use syngas, which comes from coal gasification plants in the place of coking coal.

- Although they might be financially effective, these coal gasifiers using steel plants have higher greenhouse gas emissions than many of their counterparts.

Source: DTE

Important News: Economy

Virtual Digital Assets



Why in News

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget 2022 speech, announced a 30 percent tax on income from virtual digital assets.
- Additionally, she also proposed a TDS on payment made in relation to the transfer of virtual digital assets at 1 percent above a monetary threshold.

Key Points

- There has been a phenomenal rise in such transactions and the magnitude and frequency of these transactions have made it imperative to provide for a specific tax regime.

Virtual digital assets:

- In the explanatory memorandum of the Finance Bill, the government stated, “To define the term “virtual digital asset”, a new clause (47A) is proposed to be inserted to section 2 of the Act.
- As per the proposed new clause, a virtual digital asset is proposed to mean any information or code or number or token (not being Indian currency or any foreign currency), generated through cryptographic means.
- Digital currency and assets like NFTs (non-fungible tokens) have gained traction globally over the last couple of years. Trading in these assets has increased manifold with cryptocurrency exchanges being launched. However, India did not have a clear policy on either regulating or taxing such asset classes.

Note: It has been clarified by the Finance Minister that RBI will issue digital currency in the next financial year. It will be called Digital Rupee.

Source: Indian Express

Important News: Defence

India successfully flight-tests marine version of Rafale for INS Vikrant



Why in News

- The **marine version of the French-made Rafale fighter jet** has been successfully flight-tested at a shore-based facility in Goa where conditions similar to that on the indigenously-developed aircraft carrier INS Vikrant were simulated.

Key Points

- The Rafale-Marine (Rafale-M) is pitted against the US-made Super Hornet -- both of which are being evaluated for a possible purchase by the Indian Navy for deployment on the 44,000-tonne INS Vikrant that is undergoing trials in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal for likely commissioning in August.
- The Rafale-M jet was tested for 12 days last month at Goa's INS Hansa facility using a 283 metre mock ski-jump facility.

Note:

- India had in 2016 placed the order for the Rafale with Dassault in a fly-away condition.
- India has already received 35 Rafales and the 36th will be sent before the deadline in April 2022.

Source: The Hindu

Important News: Appointment

Dr. Madan Mohan Tripathi joins as Director General, NIELIT



Why in News

- Dr. Madan Mohan Tripathi has joined as Director General of National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT).

Key Points

- Before joining NIELIT, Dr. Madan Mohan Tripathi was working as Professor with Delhi Technological University (DTU), New Delhi.
- **National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT)** is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.

Source: PIB

Important News: Sports

Tokyo Olympics gold medallist Neeraj Chopra nominated for 2022 Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award



Why in News

- Tokyo Olympics gold medallist **Neeraj Chopra** has been nominated for **2022 Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award**.

Key Points

- India's first-ever winner of an Olympic athletics gold medal, Neeraj Chopra has been selected as one of the six nominees for the 2022 Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award.
- The other five sportspersons who have been nominated for the award are Australian Open runner-up Daniil Medvedev, British tennis star Emma Raducanu, Barcelona and Spain footballer Pedri, Venezuelan athlete Yulimar Rojas and Australian swimmer Ariarne Titmus.
- Neeraj Chopra is only the third Indian to be nominated for the award after wrestler Vinesh Phogat in 2019 and cricket star Sachin Tendulkar, who won the Laureus Sporting Moment Award 2000-2020.

Source: newsonair

Important News: Important Days

February 4, World Cancer Day



Why in News

- World Cancer Day is observed every year on February 4th, to increase the awareness of Cancer globally.

Key Points

- Close the Care Gap is the theme of World Cancer Day 2022-2024.
- World Cancer Day is led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to support the goals of the World Cancer Declaration, written in 2008.
- World Cancer Day was established on 4 February 2000 at the World Cancer Summit Against Cancer for the New Millenium, which was held in Paris.

Note:

- As per ICMR, cancer cases in India would increase by 12% in the next 5 years and about 1.5 million people may be suffering from the disease by the year 2025, up from 1.39 million in 2020.

Source: India Today