

Gharials

❖ Context

- The state government is pursuing a policy for the **reintroduction of the gharial in Orang National Park that became locally extinct more than six decades ago.**

❖ Key Highlights

- Recently, The Assam government had issued a preliminary notification for **adding 200.32 sq. km to the 78.82 sq. km Orang National Park.**
- Much of the **area to be added comprises the Brahmaputra river** and the sandbars or islands in it.
- Govt **reintroducing the gharial in the area to be added to Orang.**

❖ About Gharials

- Gharials (or gavials) are a type of **Asian crocodilian** distinguished by their **long, thin snouts.**
- Crocodilians are a **group of reptiles** that includes **crocodiles, alligators, caimans, and more.**
- In comparison to Crocodiles, Gharials are very shy and unharmed species.
- India's three species of Crocodilians and their conservation status are as follows :
 - ❖ Gharial:
 - **IUCN Red List- Critically Endangered**
 - **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 Schedule I**
 - **CITES- Appendix I**
 - **Mugger crocodile: IUCN- Vulnerable.**
 - **Saltwater crocodile: IUCN- Least Concern.**
 - All the three are listed on Appendix I of CITES and Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- However, **Saltwater Crocodile populations of Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea are included in Appendix II of CITES.**
- **Habitats include:** Fresh waters of northern India – **Chambal river, Ghagra, Gandak river and the Sone river (Bihar).**
- **Population of Gharials** is a good **indicator** of clean river water.
- **Conservation Efforts:** Breeding Centres of Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, National Chambal Sanctuary (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).

❖ About Orang National Park

- Also known as **Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park.**
- It is **located on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River**
- The **Pachnoi river and the Dhansiri rivers** flow along the eastern and western boundaries of Orang National Park respectively. **Both these rivers are tributaries of the Brahmaputra.**
- It was **established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1985** but was declared as National Park in 1999. It is also the **49th Tiger Reserve** of the country, being notified in 2016.
- Also known as the **mini Kaziranga National Park** (IUCN site) since the two parks have a similar landscape made up of marshes, streams, and grasslands.
- The park has a rich flora and fauna, including **great Indian one-horned rhinoceros, pigmy hog, elephants, wild buffalo and tigers.** It is the only stronghold of rhinoceros on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river.
- **more than 60% of the Park is under grasses**



Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013

❖ Context

- Petition has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging guidelines issued by the Bombay High Court in cases under the **Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013.**

❖ Key Highlights

- The provision that challenged pertains to **blanket bar on parties and advocates from sharing records, including orders and judgments, with the media.**
- The **guidelines were formed by Justice G.S. Patel** of the Bombay High Court ostensibly to protect the identities of the parties in a case under the POSH Act.

❖ Background of POSH Act

- The SC in a landmark judgement in the **Vishakha and others v State of Rajasthan 1997** case gave 'Vishakha guidelines'.
- These guidelines formed the **basis for the The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013** ("Sexual Harassment Act").

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❖ SHE BOX

- **Developed By-** Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India
- It's **online complaint management system** titled Sexual Harassment electronic-Box (SHe-Box) for registering complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace by women, including government and private employees.

❖ Mechanism

- The Act defines sexual harassment at the workplace and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints.
- Every employer is required to constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee** at each office or branch with **10 or more employees**.
- The Complaints Committees have the **powers of civil courts** for gathering evidence.

❖ Penal Provisions

- **Penalties** have been prescribed for employers. Non-compliance with the provisions of the Act shall be punishable with a fine.
- Repeated violations may lead to higher penalties and **cancellation of license or registration** to conduct business.

Prohibition of use of animals in circus

❖ Context

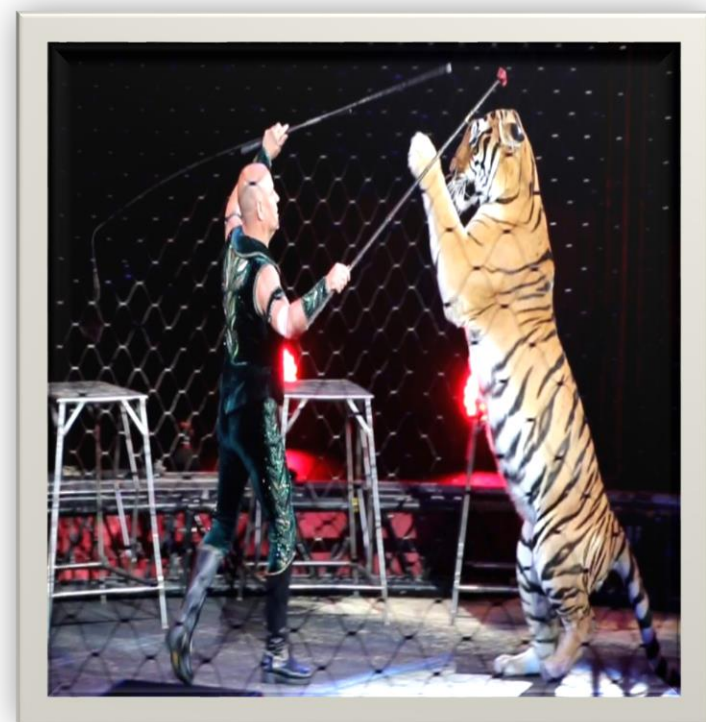
- More than 100 veterinarians across the country have petitioned the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, for notifying rules to prohibit the use of all animals in circuses.

❖ Key Highlights

- According to PETA, the draft of the **Performing Animals (Registration) Amendment Rules** had been pending since 2018, prolonging the cruelty, pain and suffering endured by circus animals
- The Animal Welfare Board of India, in 2017 and 2019, advised the Central government to pass legislation prohibiting animals in circuses.
- Countries like **Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Greece, Guatemala, Italy, and Malta** have prohibited the use of animals in circuses.
- **Circuses, are also breeding grounds for zoonotic diseases** (those that can jump from other animals to humans), including **tuberculosis (found in elephants), glanders (found in horses), parrot fever (found in birds), and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome**, which is caused by COVID-19 and can be transmitted to humans from camels.
- Currently, use of **bears, monkeys, panthers, tiger and lions**, are prohibited but animals like **horses, hippos, elephants and dogs** are allowed

❖ Animal Welfare Board of India

- It is a **statutory body** established in 1962 under **Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty's Act 1960**
- Well-known humanitarian **Rukmini Devi Arundale** was instrumental in setting up the board and was its first chair.
- The board grants recognition to Animal Welfare organizations and oversees them
- Under **Section 22 of the Act**, no person can exhibit or train any performing animal unless he is registered as per rules (**Performance Animal Rules 1973**) and the Central Government can also prohibit exhibition or training of any animal by notification
- As per the law, circuses performing with animals in India are required to be registered with the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) under the **Performing Animal Registration Rules, 2001**, as well as with the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) under the **Recognition of Zoo Rules, 2009**, if performing with exotic animals.



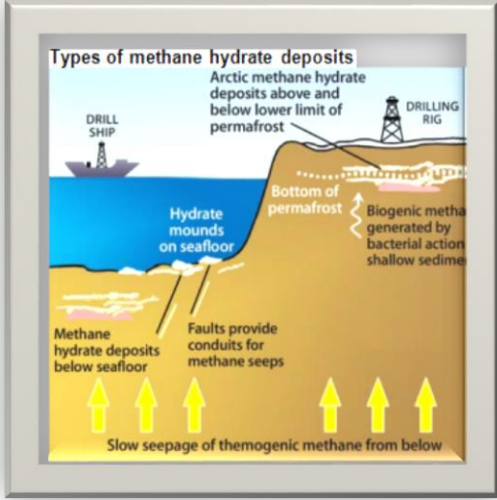
❖ Central Zoo Authority

- Statutory body constituted in 1992 under **Wildlife protection Act amended in 1991**
- **Chaired by Environment Minister**
- Recognize and regulates zoos
- Regulates **exchange of animals of endangered category listed under Schedule - I & II of WPA** among zoos.
- Recently, the **Central Zoo Authority cancelled its recognition of the Great Golden Circus** that was using elephants, a protected wildlife species, for performances.

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News in Between the Lines

NATURAL GAS HYDRATE (NGH)



❖ Context

- Bangladesh has discovered huge potential natural gas hydrate deposits of **0.11 to 0.73 trillion cubic feet (TCF)** in its exclusive economic zone area.

❖ Key Highlights

- It is **equivalent to 17-103 TCF of natural gas reserves.**
- The finding of the huge reservoir of the natural gas hydrate is a **landmark event in resolving the energy crisis in future.**

❖ About NGH

- Gas hydrates are a **crystalline solid formed of water and gas.**
- It **looks and acts much like ice**, but it **contains huge amounts of methane.**
- it is known to **occur on every continent**; and it exists in huge quantities in marine sediments in a layer several hundred meters thick directly below the sea floor and in association with permafrost in the Arctic.
- It is **not stable at normal sea-level pressures and temperatures**, which is the primary reason that it is a challenge to study.
- Gas hydrates are **important for three reasons**:
 - They may contain a **major energy resource**
 - It may be a **significant hazard** because it alters sea floor sediment stability, influencing collapse and landsliding
 - The hydrate reservoir may have **strong influence on the environment and climate**, because methane is a significant greenhouse gas

National Water Awards



❖ Context

- The National Water Awards is **presented annually (Since 2018) by Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.** The third round of the awards, for the year 2020 was recently announced.

❖ Key Highlights

- **Uttar Pradesh has been awarded the first prize, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.**
- These award were **instituted to recognize and encourage exemplary work and efforts made by States, districts, individuals, organizations, etc** across the country in attaining the government's vision of a "'Jal Samridh Bharat'
- It is given with the objective of encouraging the **stakeholders to adopt a holistic approach towards water resources management** in the country as well as create awareness among people.

Aadhar Enabled Payment System



❖ Context

- **National Payments Corporation of India** has introduced limits for cash withdrawals and mini statements.

❖ Key Highlights

- According to the guidelines, **acquiring banks** will have to implement a **maximum limit of five approved cash withdrawal transactions per customer per terminal per day.**
- Presently, Cash withdrawal from micro ATMs of AePS has a limit of **Rs 10,000 per transaction.**
- **AePS** is a bank led model which **allows online interoperable financial inclusion transaction at PoS through the business correspondent** of any bank using the Aadhar authentication
- **Business Correspondents** are **retail agents engaged by banks** for providing banking services at locations other than a bank branch/ATM.
- **AePS is provided by NPCI.** Only inputs required for a customer to do a transaction are: **Bank Name, Aadhar Number and Fingerprints.**

Collective Investment Schemes



❖ Context

➤ SEBI released a **consultation paper** aimed at regulation of Collective Investment Schemes (CIS)

❖ Key Highlights

- **CIS is an arrangement where people pool their money to invest in an asset, with return and profits shared as per their agreement**
- **Collective Investment Management Company (CIMC)** are entities that organize, operate and manage a CIS. SEBI intends to empower CIMC to effectively discharge their responsibilities. With **no limit on investments, retail investors are primary target** of CIS schemes
- Many companies in India are raising money through agro bonds and plantation bonds in the form of CIS, but not providing adequate protection to investors
- The objective is to bring them on par with mutual funds by introducing **“skin-in-the-game” type regulations** like making it mandatory for investing minimum 20% of the salary/perks/bonus etc of the employees of CIMC to be invested in CIS.

Code Repositories



❖ Context

➤ Bulli Bai controversy has brought the attention to the online platform, GitHub, which hosted the application

❖ Key Highlights

- GitHub is the largest **open source code repository platform** used by developers, startups and even big technology companies to harness the entire coding community's efforts to develop an app.
- Developers **can download the source code for an OS or any app and use it to build their own version.** A startup can quickly get codes that would help them add a new feature to their app or service through a code repository
- Apps downloaded off GitHub are **not finished products**, and can often have bugs. But unlike social media, GitHub **doesn't have filtering algorithms.**

2 Vs 2 market access



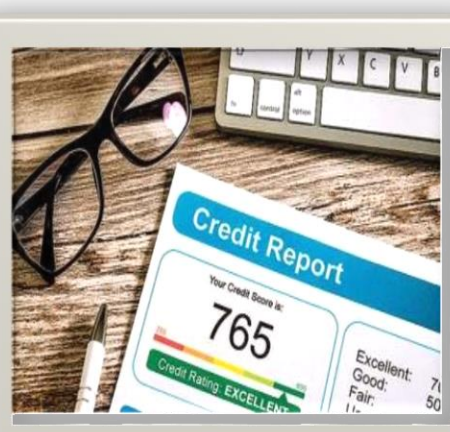
❖ Context

➤ In pursuant to the 12th India-USA Trade Policy Forum meeting, India and USA have signed a framework agreement for implementing 2 vs 2 market access

❖ Key Highlights

- It covers USA's market access for **India's mangoes and pomegranate & pomegranate arils**
- While India's market will be accessible for **USA's cherries and alfalfa hay**
- Mango and pomegranate exports will start from Jan – Feb 2022 and pomegranate aril exports from Apr 2022. Exports of Alfalfa hay and cherries from USA will begin in Apr 2022.

Credit Information Companies



❖ Context

➤ **More entities will become eligible** to tap into information with Credit Information Companies (CICs), as the eligibility criteria prescribed by the **Reserve Bank of India** for entities to be categorized as specified users of CICs.

❖ Key Highlights

- **A company incorporated** in India or a Statutory Corporation established in India, having a **net worth of at least ₹2 crore**, will be eligible to be categorized as **Specified User** of Credit Information Companies (CICs)
- **Hitherto**, specified users included **insurance companies**; companies providing **cellular/phone services**; **credit rating agencies**; **brokers** registered with SEBI; a **trading member** registered with a recognised Commodity Exchange; **SEBI**; and **IRDA.**
- Currently, **there are four CICs** — Credit Information Bureau (India) Ltd (CIBIL), Equifax Credit Information Services Pvt Ltd, Experian Credit Information Company of India Pvt Ltd and CRIF High Mark Credit Information Services Pvt Ltd. These companies are governed by the **Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act (CICRA) in 2005.**

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- In addition to the **business of credit information**, a CIC can engage in businesses such as providing credit information to individual and corporate borrowers his/her/its own credit report;
 - providing data management services to the Credit Institutions who are its members;
 - collect, process, collate and disseminate data/information related to property mortgaged to credit institutions and investments made in Securities other than those issued by Central Government;

Surya Namaskar Demonstration programme



❖ Context

- Ministry of **AYUSH** to organise global Surya Namaskar Demonstration programme on Makar Sakranti

❖ Key Highlights

- The Ministry of AYUSH is organizing a global **Surya Namaskar Demonstration programme** on **14 January 2022** for 75 lakh people globally (on the day of **Makar Sakranti** to commemorate the journey of the **sun to the Northern Hemisphere**).
- This occasion commemorates thanksgiving to **'Mother Nature'** for bestowing **health, wealth and happiness**. On this day, the **'Surya Namaskar'** is offered as a **salutation to the Sun to exhibit one's gratitude** for each of its rays as it nurtures all living beings.
- The Sun, as the primary source of energy, is critical not only for the continuation of the **food-chain** but it also energizes the mind and body of human beings.
- Scientifically, the Surya Namaskar has been known to **develop immunity** and **improve vitality**, which is significant to **our health** during **pandemic conditions**.
- Exposure to the Sun further provides the human body with Vitamin D, which has been widely recommended in all medical branches around the world.
- The mass Surya Namaskar demonstration also intends to carry the **message of climate change and global warming**. In today's world where climate consciousness is imperative, the **implementation of solar e-energy (green energy)** in daily life will greatly **reduce carbon emissions** that threaten the planet.
- Further, the event will underline the **importance of Makar Sakranti** in **our cultural and spiritual heritage**. The **Surya Namaskar is a set of 8 Asanas performed in 12 steps** with coordination of the body and mind. It is preferably performed in the early morning.

Pravasi Bhartiya Divas 2022



❖ Context

- The **Non-Resident Indian Day** or also known as the **Pravasi Bhartiya Divas** is celebrated every year on **9th January** every year.

❖ Key Highlights

- The aim of the event is to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots.
- On the occasion of **2022 Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD)**, Union Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan will speak at a **virtual youth PBD conference** on the **"role of Indian diaspora"** in innovation and new technology.
- Its objective is to provide an open platform for NRIs to express their feelings, outlooks and perceptions about India.
- To create a network of NRIs in all the countries of the world and **connect the younger generation with immigrants**.
- 2015 marked 100 years** of the return of Mahatma Gandhi.

❖ Significance:

- On **9 January 1915**, Gandhi ji came to India from South Africa and became the **greatest Pravasi** who led India's Freedom Struggle and made India free from British or colonial rule.
- As a **Non-Resident Indian** or **Pravasi**, he is presented as a symbol of a change and development that could bring into India.

