

Kuki Tribe

❖ Context

- Recently, The Manipur government decided to withdraw from the **Suspension of Operations (SoO)** agreement with two hill-based tribal militant groups, alleging they were “influencing agitation among forest encroachers”.



❖ Key Highlights:

- The state government claimed that a protest rally organised recently, **defying Section 144**, was influenced by the two groups, **Kuki National Army (KNA)** and **Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA)**.
- Militant outfits such as Kuki National Organization and United People's Front were demanding a **separate state for the Kuki tribe in Manipur**.
- The SoO pact was **signed on August 22, 2008**, with the primary objective of initiating political dialogue.

❖ Terms Suspension of Operations Pact:

- To oversee the effective implementation of the SoO pact, a committee called the **Joint Monitoring Group (JMG)**, with representatives from all the signatories, has been formed.
- Security forces including state & central forces, are not to launch any operations nor can the underground groups.
- The signatories of **Kuki National Organisation (KNO)**, and **United People's Front (UPF)** shall **abide by the Constitution of India**, the laws of the land and the territorial integrity of Manipur.
- They are prohibited from committing all kinds of atrocities, extortion, among others.

- As a rehabilitation package, the UG cadres living in the designated camps are given a monthly stipend of Rs 5000.
- **Financial assistance** is also being provided to maintain the designated camps.

❖ About Kuki Tribe:

- The Kuki people are an **ethnic group native to the Mizo Hills** (formerly Lushai) a mountainous region in the southeastern part of Mizoram.
- The Kuki constitute one of several hill tribes within India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.
- In northeast India, they are present in all states **except Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The term 'Kuki' was given by the British and Bengalis of India, though the group is descended from the Zo/Zomi.
- Some fifty tribes of Kuki people in India are recognised as scheduled tribes, based on the dialect spoken by that particular Kuki community as well as their region of origin.
- The ethnic Kuki population in Manipur is about 30 percent of the **28.5 lakh population, according to the 2012 Census**.

India At Oscars

❖ Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed his delight at the country's achievements at the Oscars in Los Angeles recently.



❖ Key Highlights:

- 95th Academy Awards ceremony, India's 'Naatu Naatu song' from SS Rajamouli's film RRR made history by becoming the first Indian film to win an Oscar for best original song.
- The song, was choreographed by Prem Rakshith .
- Another Indian entry in the Academy Awards 'The Elephant Whisperers' also won an Oscar in the Best Documentary Short Film category.
- This 41 minutes short documentary movie of filmmaker Kartiki Gonsalves and producer Guneet Monga, explores the bond between Raghu, an orphaned baby elephant, and his caretakers.

❖ Here is a list of Indian winners at the Oscars:

- Bhanu Athaiya - Best Costume Design for Gandhi (1982).
- Satyajit Ray - Honorary Academy Award (1992).
- R. Rahman - Best Original Song and Best Original Score for Slumdog Millionaire (2008).

- Gulzar - Best Original Song for *Jai Ho* from Slumdog Millionaire (2008).
- Resul Pookutty - Best Sound Mixing for Slumdog Millionaire (2008).
- Rasool Pookutty - Best Sound Mixing for Slumdog Millionaire (2008)
- Vikas Khanna - Best Documentary Short Subject for *The Last Color* (2020).

❖ About Oscars:

- The Oscars, also known as the Academy Awards, is an annual awards ceremony honoring outstanding achievements in the film industry.
- The awards are presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and the ceremony is typically held in late February or early March.
- The first Academy Awards ceremony was held in 1929, and since then, it has become one of the most prestigious awards ceremonies in the world.

Antiquity

❖ Context

- An investigation in association with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and Finance Uncovered, has found that the catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, includes at least 77 items with links to Subhash Kapoor, who is serving a 10-year jail term in Tamil Nadu for smuggling antiquities.

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Key Highlights:

- The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, defined “antiquity” as :
 - “Any coin, sculpture, painting, epigraph or other work of art or craftsmanship; any article, object or thing detached from a building or cave; any article, object or thing illustrative of science, art, crafts, literature, religion, customs, morals or politics in bygone ages; any article, object or thing of historical interest” that “has been in existence for **not less than one hundred years.**”
- For “manuscript, record or other document which is of scientific, historical, literary or aesthetic value”, this duration is “not less than seventy-five years.”
- International Conventions:**
 - The UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property** defined “cultural property” as the property designated by countries having “importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science.”
 - An INTERPOL report in 2019 said that almost 50 years after the UNESCO convention, “the illicit international traffic of cultural items & related offences is sadly increasingly prolific.”
- Indian Laws:**
 - In India, **Item-67 of the Union List, Item-12 of the State List, and Item-40 of the Concurrent List** of the Constitution deal with the country’s heritage.

- Before Independence, an Antiquities (Export Control) Act had been passed in April 1947 to ensure that “no antiquity could be exported without license.”
- In 1958, The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites & Remains Act was enacted.
- Then in 1971, Parliament saw an uproar over the **theft of a bronze idol from Chamba** and some important sandstone idols from other places.
- This, along with the UNESCO convention, prompted the government to enact **The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 (AATA), implemented from April 1, 1976.**
- The AATA states:
 - “It shall not be lawful for any person, other than the Central Government or any authority or agency authorised by the Central Government in this behalf, to export any antiquity or art treasure.
 - No person shall, himself or by any other person on his behalf, carry on the business of selling or offering to sell any antiquity except under and in accordance with the terms and conditions of a licence/
- This licence is granted by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).**
- After the AATA was implemented, the Centre asked traders in antiquities and art objects to declare their possessions of antiquities by June 5, 1976, and individual owners by July 5, 1976.

News in Between the Lines

Red Tide



❖ Context

- Red tide is a phenomenon that has recently occurred on the coast of Florida, causing significant damage to marine life and posing a threat to human health.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Red tide is a type of harmful algal bloom (HAB) that occurs when there is an overgrowth of red-coloured algae in the ocean.
- This phenomenon can have devastating effects on marine life and human health, as the algae produce toxins that can cause respiratory problems, skin irritations, and even death in some cases.
- Red tide occurs during the summer and spring when the water is warm and slow-moving, and there is an abundance of nutrients.
- It has been found in the Gulf of Mexico since the 1800s, and it generally disappears by spring.
- Algal blooms also occur in India, with the west coast being more prone to them than the east coast.
- Algae such as diatoms, cyanobacteria, haptophytes, and raphiphytes cause algal blooms in India, mostly during the retreat of southwest monsoon and the pre-monsoon period.
- The temperature and water currents on the west coast are more favourable for algal bloom, while the east coast is more nutritious due to more rivers draining into the sea.

Glacial Retreat

❖ Context

- Recent studies on Himalayan glaciers have shown that the **retreat rate and mass balance of glaciers vary** across different sectors of the mountain range.

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❖ Glacial Retreat:

- Glacial retreat refers to the **process of a glacier shrinking or receding in size over time.**
- This occurs when the amount of ice melting or sublimating from the glacier exceeds the amount of new snow or ice accumulation.
- **Causes:**
 - The causes of glacial retreat can be complex and are often interrelated.
 - One primary cause is **rising global temperatures**, which are largely attributed to human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.
 - This increase in temperature leads to **more intense melting of the glacier.**
 - **Changes in precipitation patterns** can also impact glacial retreat, as less snowfall or rainfall means less ice accumulation.
 - Additionally, **changes in the geography** of the surrounding landscape, such as the **movement of tectonic plates** or the **erosion of mountains**, can impact glacial retreat.
 - The **topography of a region** affects the amount of sunlight that it receives, which in turn affects the melting of glaciers.
 - Glaciers in areas with more **steep slopes and narrow valleys** are more prone to melting due to increased solar radiation absorption.
 - On the other hand, **glaciers in areas with wider valleys** and gentler slopes tend to be more stable.



Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy



❖ Context

- NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) has made a groundbreaking discovery by detecting Oxygen-18 in Earth's mesosphere and lower thermosphere, marking the first time heavy oxygen has been detected outside of a laboratory.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Oxygen-18 is a stable isotope of oxygen, with 10 neutrons compared to the eight neutrons in the more common isotope found in the air we breathe.
- It is commonly used in the Arctic and Antarctic to determine temperature and ice formation.
- SOFIA was a telescope mounted on a Boeing 747 SP aircraft that used infrared light to observe the universe.
- The project was a joint effort between NASA and the German Aerospace Center, aimed at making observations of complex molecules, new solar systems, and planets in the solar system.
- SOFIA has made significant contributions to scientific research, including the detection of water on the Moon and evidence of the existence of a supernova remnant in the Milky Way.

Bobbili Veena

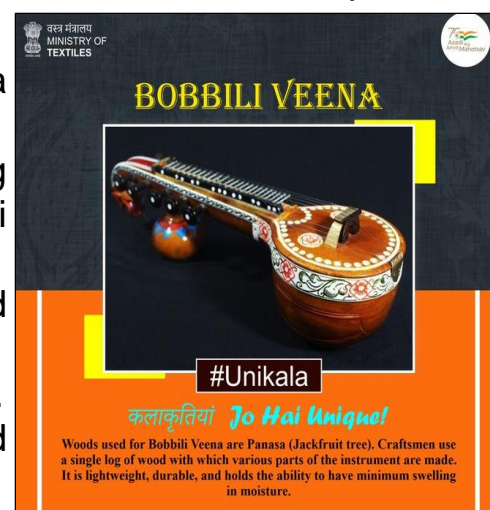


❖ Context

- The famous Bobbili Veena is likely to get global attention as the Andhra Pradesh government is preparing to present its replicas as part of cultural exchange to the delegates of G-20 conference, which will be held on March 28 and 29 in Visakhapatnam.

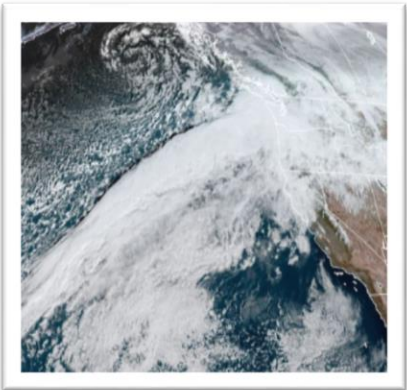
❖ About Bobbili Veena:

- Bobbili Veena, popularly known as Saraswati Veena, a large plucked string instrument is used in Carnatic music.
- The making of the veena began in the 17th century during the reign of Pedda Rayudu, the king of Bobbili Samsthanam who was a great patron of music.
- It has earned a GI tag in 2012 for its unique design and high-quality craftsmanship.
- However, it is gasping for its survival due to lack of artisans.
- Only 40 families of Sarwasiddi artisans from Gollapalli and Vadada are into the business.



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Atmospheric River

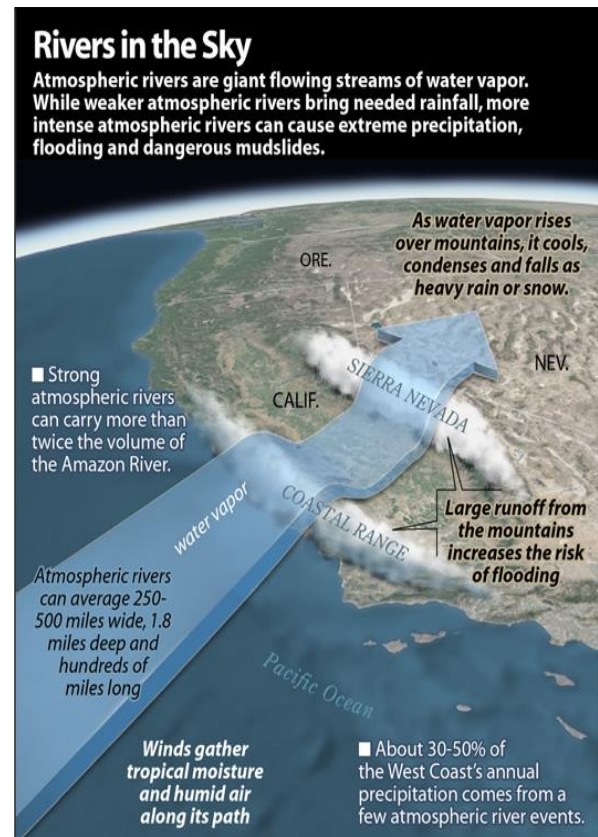


❖ Context

- Recently, California has been bracing for the arrival of atmospheric rivers that are expected to bring heavy rain, flooding, and heavy snowfall.

❖ Key Highlights:

- An atmospheric river is a long, narrow region in the atmosphere that carries a substantial amount of water vapor.
- These rivers can be thousands of kilometers long and transport water vapor equivalent to the average flow of water at the mouth of the Mississippi River.
- Researchers first coined the term 'atmospheric river' in the 1990s, and it is also known as a tropical plume, moisture plume, water vapor surge, and cloud band.
- Scientists identify atmospheric rivers by looking for corridors that are almost uniform in terms of color, temperature, moisture content, and other aspects that are around 2,000 km long.
- The ocean wind speeds right below the atmospheric rivers are different, as are the sea ice cover and precipitation intensity.
- Climate change is having an impact on atmospheric rivers. As the global temperature increases, the capacity of the atmosphere to hold more moisture is also increasing.
- This means that atmospheric rivers are becoming more intense, growing longer and wider.
- While atmospheric rivers can help to quench wildfires during dry conditions, they can also cause floods and landslides during the rainy season.
- Note: It is important to note that atmospheric rivers do not occur in the tropics, but rather beyond the tropics.



Guidelines to Bring in a Blood Transfusion Service



❖ Context

- The Centre recently told the Supreme Court, that **the exclusion of transgenders, gay people, and female sex workers as blood donors** by including them in the "at risk" category for HIV, Hepatitis B, or C infections is based on due consideration of scientific evidence.

❖ About the Guidelines:

- The governing body of **National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC)** on June 1, 2017, approved the Guidelines to bring in a Blood Transfusion Service.
- It offers a "safe, sufficient and timely supply of blood and blood components to those in need."
- The guidelines were designed to promote best practices in Blood Transfusion Services to ensure donations from the "lowest risk donors possible".
- In the present case, **clauses 12 and 51 of the Guidelines** are being challenged as "violative of Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution of India to the extent they exclude transgender persons, men having sex with men and female sex workers from being blood donors".
- **Clause 12** (Risk Behavior) falls under the "Blood Donor Selection Criteria',
 - It mandates that the donor be free from any determinable disease transmissible by blood transfusion and "not be a person considered at risk for HIV, Hepatitis B or C infections", such as transgender and gay people, female sex workers, injecting drug users etc.
- **Clause 15 :**
 - It permanently defers those "at risk for HIV infection", including gay and transgender people, from donating blood.
 - Permanent deferral refers to blood donors who will never be allowed to donate blood.

MCQ Quiz

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