

Saltwater Crocodile

❖ Context

- A record number of saltwater crocodiles laid eggs during the nesting season this year in **Bhitarkanika National Park** situated in Odisha's Kendrapara district.

❖ About the Crocodile

- Its scientific name is ***Crocodylus porosus***.

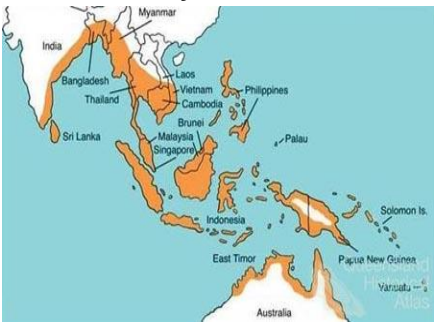


- It is also known as the estuarine crocodile, Indo-Pacific crocodile, marine crocodile, sea crocodile or informally as saltie.
- It is the **largest of all crocodilians, and the largest reptile in the world.**

- Males grow to a length of up to 6 m (20 ft) or a weight of 1,000–1,300 kg (2,200–2,900 lb). Females are much smaller and rarely surpass 3 m (10 ft).
- With its long, powerful tail, webbed hind feet, and long, powerful jaws, the saltwater crocodile is a superbly adapted aquatic predator.

❖ Distribution

- Apart from the **eastern coast of India**, the saltwater crocodile is extremely rare on the Indian subcontinent.



- A large population is present within the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary of Odisha while smaller populations occur throughout the **Sundarbans** and within the mangrove forests and other coastal areas of the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** in India.

- The saltwater crocodile is also found in **Bangladesh**. They were once present throughout most of the island of Sri Lanka.

❖ Conservation Status

- IUCN : Least Concern.
- IWPA : Schedule I.
- CITES : Appendix I.

❖ Threats

- Illegal hunting for its meat and eggs, as well as for its commercially valuable skin.
- Habitat loss and habitat alterations.
- Negative attitudes towards the species make conservation measures difficult to implement.

❖ Government Measures

- The Odisha forest department bans the entry of people into the park from May 1-July 31 every year, during the mating and breeding of crocodiles.
- The Ministry of forest and environment had, in 1975, started a crocodile breeding and rearing project in Dangamala within Bhitarkanika, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme which led to the increase in its population.

CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership

❖ Context

- High level diplomats from **17 African nations** have visited India for participation in 17th edition of the CII-Exim bank conclave and other bilateral engagements.

❖ Key Highlights

- The conclave was launched in **2005** with the support of the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- Its aim is to encourage the development of private investment from India in African countries.

❖ Significance

- Trade between Africa and India increased from \$ 7.2 BN in 2001 to **\$59.9 BN in 2017**.
- India is now the **continent's fourth-largest national trading partner**. Trade with India accounted for more than 6.4% of the total African trade in 2017.
- India has a negative trade balance with sub-saharan Africa.
- 38 African nations have benefited from India's **Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme** which provides duty free access to 98.2% of India's total tariff lines.
- **Lines of Credit worth of \$12.6 BN** have been extended to African countries so far making them the second largest recipient of India's concessional loans.

- **India's cumulative investment in Africa stands at \$70 BN.**

❖ Key Countries

- Some sessions of the conference were country-specific - **Mauritius, Namibia and Ghana**.
- Mauritius has emerged as a **financial hub** and a gateway to the African continent for India.
- It is the **first and only African country so far to have a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECPA)** with India. Namibia is attractive for investment for its resource richness. The country has rich deposits of uranium, diamonds, copper, phosphates etc.
- The country is the **continent's largest producer of uranium** and ranked third globally in 2021 behind Kazakhstan and Australia.
- Ghana was the first colonised country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence. **India is the largest destination for its exports.**
- Ghana is rich in gold, bauxite, diamonds, oil and gas. It produces the world's finest cocoa.

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Dormant Blackhole

Context

➤ Scientists have discovered a dormant blackhole in the Milky Way's neighbourhood.

Key Highlights

- The stellar black hole (VFTS 243) was discovered in the **Large Magellanic Cloud**.
- It is a small galaxy that is gravitationally entangled with the Milky Way.
- A black hole is usually formed when the core of a star collapses on itself and explodes to create a structure with such large gravity that nothing — not even photons - can escape it.
- But in the case of the VFTS 243, the **dying star collapsed directly without a supernova explosion**.

- It has been called 'dormant' because it doesn't emit **high levels of X-rays**.
- In the absence of light, **black holes are identified only by X-rays and Gamma-rays** emitted when matter from nearby, orbiting stars is sucked in.
- Black holes normally orbit another bright star that was part of a binary with the star that died to form the black hole.
- **The scientists used VFTS 243's companion star** — a hot, blue star 25 times heavier than the Sun — **to locate it**.
- The newly found black hole is the **first dormant one observed outside our galaxy with absolute certainty**.

Incidence of Tax

Context

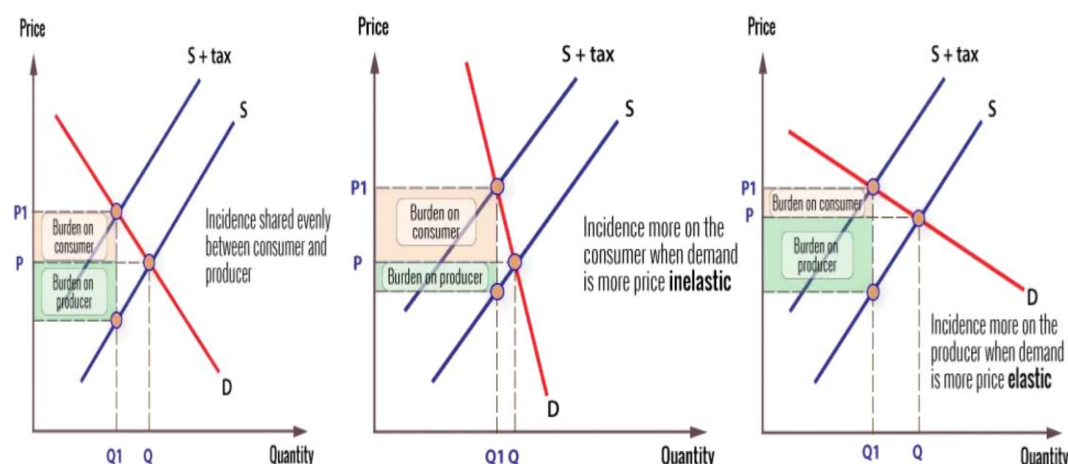
➤ Government officials have stated the incidence of tax has not turned higher than the pre GST regime in respect of 5% GST imposed on a range of food products which had remained exempted so far.



Key Highlights

- GST exemption has been withdrawn from prepackaged and labelled retail packs, weighing upto 25 kgs, of food items such as **curd, lassi, puffed rice, cereals, pulses, wheat flour, buttermilk**.
- Tax incidence shows **who or what ultimately bears the burden of a tax, as opposed to just who directly pays the tax**.
- It is generally defined with reference to a change in the system of taxation.
- Burden of a tax on a commodity is **shared between the consumers and producers** depending on the **price elasticities of demand and supply** of the commodity.

- When supply is more elastic than demand, the tax burden falls on the buyers. If demand is more elastic than supply, producers will bear the cost of the tax.



Kasturirangan Report

Context

➤ Recently Karnataka home minister opposed **Kasturirangan Report** on ESA, calls it 'unscientific'.

About the Report



- The report proposes **37%** of the total area of Western Ghats, which is about 60,000 square kilometers, should be declared as eco-sensitive area (ESA).



- Out of this, **20,688 square kilometers** will fall in Karnataka state covering 1,576 villages.
- The report has recommended prohibition on mining, quarrying, setting up of red category industries and thermal power projects.
- It also stated that the impact of infrastructural projects on the forest and wildlife should be studied before permission is given for these activities.
- The 39 sites are located across the Western Ghats and distributed across the states (**Kerala 19**), **Karnataka (10)**, **Tamil Nadu (6)** and **Maharashtra (4)**.
- The state of Karnataka has the highest percentage of the **ESA- 46.50 per cent**.

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Jawaharlal Nehru Port

❖ Context

- Jawaharlal Nehru Port has become the first 100 per cent Landlord Major Port of India having all berths being operated on PPP model.

❖ Key Highlights

- This project will improve the utilization in crane and berth productivity of the terminal.
- The total handling of JNPT will increase to 1.8 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) from the present handling capacity of 1.5 million TEUs in 2020-21.

- Terminal will also be handling **Ro-Ro vessels** which will not only lower the logistics cost and reduce transit time but will also contribute in reducing congestion on roads and promoting towards clean environment.
- PPP Model:** A **public-private partnership** (PPP) is a funding model for public infrastructure projects and initiatives such as a new telecommunications system, public transportation system, airport or power plant.

News in Between the Lines

Varuna



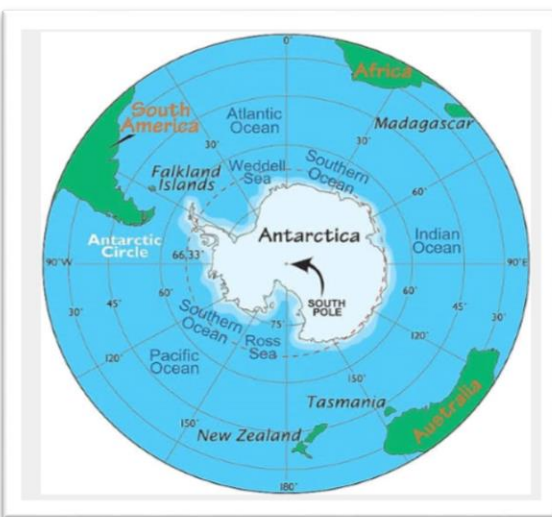
❖ Context

- The Prime Minister witnessed the demonstration of a pilot-less drone at the **Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO)** seminar 'Swavlamban'.

❖ Key Highlights

- The drone has been described as **India's first electronic human carrying platform**.
- An Indian private startup company has designed and developed it. The drone is currently in trials.
- The drone has been specially made for the **Indian Navy**, where the force can initially use it in transferring materials.
- It has a range of 25 km with a payload of 130kgs with 25-33 minutes of endurance.

The Indian Antarctica Bill: 2022



❖ Context

- The **Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022** was taken up for discussion in the Lok Sabha recently.

❖ About The Bill

- The Bill seeks to give effect to the **Antarctic Treaty**, the **Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources**, and the **Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty**.
- It seeks to protect the Antarctic environment and regulate activities in the region.
- Applicability:** The provisions of the Bill will apply to any person, vessel or aircraft that is a part of an Indian expedition to Antarctica under a permit issued under the Bill.
- Areas comprising of Antarctica include:
 - The continent of Antarctica, including its ice-shelves, and all areas of the continental shelf adjacent to it, and
 - All islands (including their ice-shelves), seas, and air space south of 60°S latitude.
- Prohibited Activities:** The Bill prohibits certain activities in Antarctica including:
 - Nuclear explosion or disposal of radioactive wastes,
 - Introduction of **non-sterile soil**, and
 - Discharge of garbage, plastic or other substance into the sea which is harmful to the marine environment.

Aurangabad Renamed Again

❖ Context

- The Maharashtra government recently gave its approval to rename Aurangabad and Osmanabad cities as **Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar** and **Dharashiv**, respectively.

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❖ Chhatrapati Sambhaji

- Sambhaji Bhosale was the **second Chhatrapati of the Maratha Empire**, ruling from **1681 to 1689**.
- He was the **eldest son of Shivaji**, the founder of the Maratha Empire.
- Sambhaji's rule was largely shaped by the ongoing wars between the Maratha Empire and the Mughal Empire, as well as other neighbouring powers such as the **Siddis, Mysore and the Portuguese in Goa**.

❖ Dharashiv Caves

- Dharashiv caves are the nexus of 7 caves located 8 km away from **Osmanabad** (now Dharashiv) city in **Balaghat mountains** in Maharashtra state of India.
- The caves were taken note by **Archaeological Department of India** and mentioned in the book **Archaeological survey of India by James Burges**.
- **Dharashiv caves** were originally a **Buddhists caves in 5th century AD**, while in **12th century some caves were converted to Jain caves**.

Namaste Scheme



❖ Context

- The Government has formulated a National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem **NAMASTE scheme** for cleaning of sewers and septic tank.

❖ Key Highlights

- The scheme is a joint venture of **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation**, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- **Aim:** It aims to achieve outcomes like zero fatalities in sanitation work in India, no sanitation workers come in direct contact with **human faecal matter** and all Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers have access to **alternative livelihoods**.
- The Ministry has shortlisted type of machineries and core equipments required for maintenance works, safety gear for Safai Mitras.
- The same is also available on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal for ease of their procurement by States and Urban Local Bodies.
- Development and trainings of **Safai Mitras** is being taken up with the support of the Ministry of **Social Justice and Empowerment** through the National Safai Karamchari **Finance Development Corporation**.

Mangal Pandey



❖ Context

- PM paid tribute to Mangal Pandey on his birth anniversary on 19th July.

❖ About Mangal Pandey

- Mangal Pandey was born in Nagwa, a village of upper Ballia district.
- Mangal Pandey was an Indian soldier who played a key part in the events immediately preceding the outbreak of the Indian rebellion of 1857.
- He was a sepoy in the **34th Bengal Native Infantry** regiment of the British East India Company.

Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign



❖ Context

- Union Home Minister reviewed the preparations of the campaign, to be carried out under the '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**'.

❖ Key Highlights

- The tricolour will be hoisted atop more than **20 crore houses** across the country for **three days** next month under the central government's '**Har Ghar Tiranga**' campaign.
- Campaign will take the spirit of patriotism to the highest level.



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