Prelim Bits 02-09-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Super Typhoon Hinnamnor

The Super Typhoon 'Hinnamnor' has been barreling across the western Pacific Ocean and is presently hurtling back towards the islands of Japan and South Korea, packing wind speeds of upto 241 kmph.

- The Super Typhoon 'Hinnamnor' is the strongest tropical storm of 2022.
- It is the **category 5 typhoon** - the highest classification on the scale.
- As it inches towards the Japanese islands, the typhoon is expected to develop further.
- The storm is expected to move towards parts of Southwestern Japan, Eastern China and South Korea over the next few days.
- While the effects of the typhoon aren't expected to be felt as intensely in China and Taiwan, heavy rains have been predicted across South Korea.
- **Reason for the typhoon intensifying -** One of the factors contributing to the Super Typhoon rapidly intensifying and expanding is the fact that it has started absorbing other local meteorological systems.
- Warm tropical waters and other pre-existing meteorological disturbances have led to the system's escalation.

Reference

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2. https://weather.com/en-IN/india/news/news/2022-09-01-super-typhoon-hinnamnor-eats-up-local-system-to-become-stronger
3. https://www.livemint.com/news/world/explainer-super-typhoon-hinnamnor-strongest-storm-of-2022-batters-japan-1166207855425html

Megadrought

A megadrought in the US state of Texas has unveiled the footprints of Acrocanthosaurus, an ancient dinosaur that lived 113 million years ago.

> *Like the Tyrannosaurus Rex, the Acrocanthosaurus was an apex predator, weighing approximately 4 metric tons. However, the Acrocanthosaurus lived in the early Cretaceous period, 50 million years before its T. Rex.*

- The Mega droughts are characterized by prolonged periods of dryness that span more than two decades.

- Within that period, there may be occasional better, wet, years, but the respite is brief.
- The dryness soon returns and drought maintains its long-term grip.
- Long before human industry, water availability ebbed and flowed naturally. But, that variability has been intensified by the climate crisis.
- **Facts** - Soil moisture deficits doubled in the last 22 years compared with levels in the 1900s.
- Human-caused warming accounted for a 42% increase in severity.
- Worryingly, the west is experiencing a point on an upward trajectory.

Researchers have found the evidence for the megadroughts in the annual growth rings in the trunks of ancient trees. Rings that are close together are a sign of stunted growth.

Reference

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2. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/feb/15/us-west-megadrought-worst-1200-years-study
3. https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-a-megadrought.html

Mary Roy Case

Educator and women's rights activist Mary Roy, who was the mother of Man Booker Prize-winning author Arundhati Roy, has passed away.

- The "Mary Roy" case was the prolonged legal battle that ensured equal property rights for women from Kerala's Syrian Christian families.
- In 1983, Mary Roy was denied equal rights to her deceased father's property. Therefore, Mary Roy sued her brother under Article 32 of the Constitution.
- Under the Travancore Succession Act 1917, women belonging to the Syrian Christian community had no right to inherit property.
- The petition filed before the Supreme Court by Mary Roy said that the Travancore Succession Act 1917 violated Article 14 and 15 of the Constitution by discriminating on the basis of gender.
- The key question before the Supreme Court was whether, in territories that once a part of the erstwhile Travancore state, matters of intestate succession to the property of Indian Christians were governed by
    1. By the Travancore Christian Succession Act 1917 (deals with the succession rights of Syrian Christians in the Travancore and Cochin provinces), or
    2. By the Indian Succession Act 1925.

Intestate is a person who has died without leaving a will.

- In its 1986 judgment, the Supreme Court upheld the supremacy of the Indian

Succession Act, 1925.

- It said that in case the deceased parent has not left a will, the succession will be decided as per the Indian Succession Act, 1925. This will also apply to the Indian Christians in the erstwhile Travancore state.
- The verdict put an end to the socially-sanctioned practice in Syrian Christian families to deny women their rightful share in inheritance.

Reference

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3. https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/mary-roy-s-epic-legal-battle-gave-equal-property-rights-syrian-christian-women-167459

UN Report on Human Rights Abuses by China

The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) has accused China of serious human rights violations that may amount to "crimes against humanity" in a report examining a crackdown on Xinjiang's Uighurs and other ethnic groups.

- The assessment from the Geneva-based UN HRC largely corroborated earlier reporting by researchers, advocacy groups and the news media.
- For years, the Chinese government has said the Uighurs are terrorists.
- The assessment concluded that China has committed serious human rights violations under its anti-terrorism and anti-extremism policies.
- It has called for "urgent attention" from the UN, the world community and China itself to address them.
- **Related Links** - Uighur Crisis of China

Xinjiang

- Xinjiang is an autonomous region of China, occupying the northwestern corner of the country.
- It is a vast region of deserts and mountains.
- It's home to many ethnic minority groups, including the Turkic Uyghurs.
- The ancient Silk Road trade route linking China and the Middle East passed through Xinjiang, a legacy that can be seen in the traditional open-air bazaars of its oasis cities, Hotan and Kashgar.
- Xinjiang was on the front line of their Cold War rivalry and remains important as an assertion of Chinese influence in Moscow's back yard.

Reference

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2. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/explainer-why-is-china-so-angry-over-un-report-on-xinjiang-8125648/

3. https://www.britannica.com/place/Xinjiang

Impact of Noida Twin Tower Demolition

The demolition of the Supertech twin towers in Noida is expected to affect the local flora and fauna in more ways than one.

> *Many birds and mammals will leave the area for some time, while long-term effects will require some time to be assessed.*

- **Dust** - The demolition has produced large amounts of dust.
- Heavier dust particles will settle down soon but the light particulate matter will probably remain in the air for weeks.
- The settling of the dust particulate will depend on wind speed and wind direction.
- Dust will also remain in the air because of loading and unloading of trucks for clearing the debris.
- **Impact on Humans** - The debris from the explosion can cause and worsen pre-existing respiratory issues in people that might come in contact with it.
- **Impact on Flora** - The post-demolition dust has engulfed nearby trees and vegetation.
- Water has been sprinkled on trees, vehicles and smog guns were being operated to settle down the dust. This may have localized benefits but seem inadequate to douse the dust and other fine debris.
- When you have such fine particles that form in the aftermath of the implosion, all leaves and the canopy will be covered completely.
- Therefore, the rate of photosynthesis will come down. Once that happens, the plants' productivity will reduce.
- If there was continuous rain, the dust would be washed away and percolate into the soil and remain there for some time. However, it will take a long time for the plants and trees to be rejuvenated.
- Birds and insects, especially pollinators will be affected. The only way this situation can be changed is sprinkling water continuously.
- **Impact on Fauna -** The area where the implosion took place is home to several birds and some mammals such as Jackals and *nilgai* antelope.
- These would leave the area for some time and come back later.
- Squirrels have respiratory systems similar to humans. Therefore, the particulate matter floating for weeks will affect them as well.
- Due to the noise pollution created by the implosion, the birds living within cities may change the pitch and quality of their vocalization.

> *Vocalisation is used by birds for breeding and protection.*

Reference

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