Prelim Bits 06-02-2022 & 07-02-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Indian Gaur

A six-years-old Indian gaur died after consuming plastic waste which was improperly disposed of near Ooty, Tamil Nadu.

- Indian Gaur or Indian Bison (*Bos gaurus*) is a bovine species native to South and Southeast Asia.
- It belongs to the family of wild oxen and is the tallest living and the second heaviest among oxen. It is considered as the largest living bovine.
- Gaur's estimated population is around 13,000 to 30,000 in the world with approximately 85% of the population present in India.
- In the southern part of India, they are found abundantly in the Wayanad-Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarhole range and the Nilgiris.
- **Threats** - Habitat Loss, Poaching for meat, Human-Animal Conflict and food Scarcity.

Protection Status	
IUCN Red List	Vulnerable
Wild Life Protection Act, 1972	Schedule I

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Coimbatore/indian-gaur-dies-after-consuming-plastic-near-ooty/article38387963.ece
2. https://india.mongabay.com/2020/12/oh-my-gaur-living-alongside-the-indian-bison-thats-moving-out-of-forests/

Aviation Turbine Fuel

The Union Finance Minister said that the government will take up the issue of inclusion of the Aviation Turbine Fuel in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system before the next GST Council meeting.

- Jet fuel or Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) is a specialized by-product of crude or petroleum used to power aircraft.
- It is kerosene-based fuel used for powering jet and turboprop engine aircraft.
- It must meet performance guidelines for both the rich mixture condition required for take-off power settings and the cleaner mixtures used during cruise to reduce fuel consumption.
- The primary functions of aviation turbine fuel are to power an aircraft, energy content and combustion quality.
- Apart from being a source of energy, other significant performance properties of ATF are stability, lubricity, fluidity, volatility, non-corrosivity and cleanliness.
- It is also used as hydraulic fluid in engine control systems and as a coolant for certain fuel

system components.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/sitharaman-to-discuss-aviation-fuels-inclusion-in-gst-regime/article38390092.ece
2. https://www.dnaindia.com/business/report-aviation-turbine-fuel-inclusion-under-gst-to-be-discussed-at-next-council-meet-2932647
3. https://petrobazaar.com/aviation-turbine-fuelatf-10445.html

Leveraging

- Leveraging means borrowing money to make an investment.
- Leverage refers to the use of debt (borrowed funds) to amplify returns from an investment or project.
- The result is to multiply the potential returns from a project.
- At the same time, leverage will also multiply the potential downside risk in case the investment does not pan out.
- When one refers to a company, property, or investment as "highly leveraged," it means that item has more debt than equity.
- **Uses** - Investors use leverage to multiply their buying power in the market.
- Companies use leverage to finance their assets—instead of issuing stock to raise capital, companies can use debt to invest in business operations in an attempt to increase shareholder value.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/leveraging-can-lead-to-a-bitter-domino-effect/article3838516ece
2. https://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/leverage.asp

Ghost Army

The US President signed into law a bill titled, "Ghost Army Congressional Gold Medal Act", essentially providing recognition to the 'Ghost Army'.

- The 'Ghost Army' is a tactical deception unit deployed by the US during World War II.
- The Ghost Army refers to the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Company Special.
- The existence of the 'Ghost Army' was unknown for about 50 years after it was formed by the US War Department in January 1944.
- The unit had a "strange mission", to keep enemy troops in the dark about the number and location of American troops.
- The units were assembled and members trained fairly quickly in Tennessee.
- A year and a half later, the unit was on its way back home after having served with four US armies in France, Belgium, England, Luxembourg, Holland and Germany.
- Its existence was declassified in 1996, when the official history, first written in 1945 by Captain Fred Fox also became available.

Reference

https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-was-the-ghost-army-deployed-by-the-us-i

n-world-war-ii-7757175/

National Security and Judicial Review

In the Kerala High Court, the Union government has cited national security reasons for cancelling telecast permission to the Malayalam news channel 'MediaOne TV'.

- In the MediaOne TV channel case, there is a question whether the state can use 'national security' as a ground to limit judicial scrutiny has come up for scrutiny again barely weeks.
- Recently, in its Pegasus case order, the Supreme Court observed that it is a settled position of law that in matters pertaining to national security, the scope of judicial review is limited.
- However, this does not mean that the State gets a 'free pass' from the courts as soon as it raises the spectre of 'national security'.
- The court concluded that the mere invocation of national security by the State does not render the court a mute spectator.

One of the major concerns raised by citizens recently is the "chilling effect" such State actions endure to have on free speech, especially in the media. The principle of 'chilling effect' is based on comparative harm.

Chilling Effect

The Anuradha Bhasin case is concerned internet restrictions in Jammu and Kashmir in the backdrop of the abrogation of Article 370.

- In this case, the Supreme Court explained that one possible test of chilling effect is comparative harm.
- In this framework, the court is required to see whether the restrictions, due to their broad based nature, have had a restrictive effect on similarly placed individuals during the period.
- In short, the test is whether action of the State on one entity freezes others in their footsteps or deters them from following the same course.
- Any order of the State which restricts the fundamental rights of speech or expression should be backed by reasons.
- These reasons should be made transparent. The State is accountable.
- The courts should be convinced that the State acted in a responsible manner and did not take away rights in an "implied fashion or a casual or cavalier manner".

Reference

https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/scs-remark-that-national-security-cannot-be-used-as-a-free-pass-in-pegasus-order-is-relevant-to-mediaone-case/article38387708.ece

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