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Indian eagle owl

The Indian eagle owl was classified as a separate species recently, distinguishing it from the Eurasian eagle owl.

- The Indian eagle owl is a is a large horned owl species native to hilly and rocky scrub forests in the Indian Subcontinent.
- **Other names –** It is also called the rock eagle owl or Bengal eagle owl.
- **Scientific name –** Bubo bengalensis
- **Characteristic features –** It is splashed with brown and grey, and has a white throat patch with black small stripes.
- It was earlier treated as a subspecies of the Eurasian eagle owl.
- It is usually seen in pairs.
- **Female –** The slightly larger female can reach a total length of two and a half feet, with a wingspan of six feet.
- Prominent ear tufts that look like horns are seen to project from its head.

Reference

1. The Hindu – The enigmatic Indian eagle owl

Saudi Arabia Peace Summit

China tells Russia it will uphold 'impartial' position on Ukraine.

- The international talks in Saudi Arabia on finding a peaceful resolution to the Ukraine crisis is known as the Saudi Arabia Peace Summit.
- **Jeddah Talks –** More than 40 countries, including China, India, the United States and European countries, but not Russia, took part in the Jeddah talks.
- Ukraine welcome the wide range of countries represented in the talks, including the developing countries.
- The developing countries are hit hard by the surge in food prices triggered by the war.
- On the other hand, Russia halted its participation in a United Nations-brokered grain deal.
- The deal enables the shipment of Ukrainian produce through the Black Sea to parts of the world.

References

1. The Hindu – Saudi Arabia peace summit
2. Aljazeera – Saudi Arabia kicks off Ukraine talks that exclude Russia

Emblems and Names Act, 1950

Delhi HC sought responses from the Centre, the Election Commission of India, and an alliance of 26 opposition parties in a public interest litigation against these parties' use of the acronym I.N.D.I.A.

- It prevents the improper use of emblems and names for professional and commercial purposes.
- **Restrictions –** It prohibits the improper usage of the name, emblem, seal of the Government of India or of any state, the World Health Organisation, or the United Nations Organisation.
- It also bars such usage of the national flag, the Prime Minister, the President, and the Governor's seal, name, and emblem.
- Besides this, using names, emblems, or seals of historical figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Indira Gandhi is also prohibited.
- **Section 2 –** Section 2 of the Act defines emblem as any emblem, seal, flag, insignia, coat-of-arms, or pictorial representation specified in the Schedule.
- Name includes any abbreviation of a name.
- **Section 3 –** Section 3 of the Act prohibits the improper use of certain emblems and names.
- It stipulates that except in cases prescribed by the Central Government, no person shall use or continue to use, any name or emblem specified in the Schedule or any colorable imitation.
- **Section 4 –** It prohibits the registration of certain companies by a competent authority, if it bears a title containing any name or emblem in contravention of Section 3.

References

1. The Indian Express – PIL against Opposition alliance's 'INDIA' name
2. The Hindu – Complaint against Opposition parties for naming alliance INDIA

Vaquita Porpoises

The plight of the Vaquita forces International Whaling Commission to issue first extinction alert.

Vaquita porpoise

- Vaquita porpoise is the world's rarest and the smallest marine mammal.
- It is also known as the panda of the sea for the distinctive black circles around its eyes.
- This porpoise was discovered in 1958.
- It is unique among the porpoises as it is the only species of that family found in warm waters, and the size of the dorsal fin is believed to be an adaptation to that, allowing for extra body heat to dissipate.
- **Habitats –** Found only in the northern Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez) in Mexico.
- They are found most commonly seen in shallow waters up to 50 metres deep.

- **Threats –** They are caught and drowned in gillnets set up by poachers to catch totoaba, an endangered species of marine fish sought by Chinese buyers on the black market for its prized swim bladders.
- This species die more each year in fishing nets than are being born.
- **IUCN Status –** Critically Endangered

International Whaling Commission

- It was established under the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling.
- It provides or the proper conservation of whale stocks and orderly development of the whaling industry.
- The Commission meets this mandate in part by reviewing and, as necessary, revising the measures outlined in the legally binding Schedule included in the Convention.
- The Commission also conducts activities related to cetacean (e.g., whale, dolphin) conservation.

References

1. Down To Earth – The Plight of Vaquita porpoise
2. NOAA – International Whaling Commission

Havana Syndrome

The Central government has told the Karnataka High Court that it will look into the matter of Havana Syndrome in India.

The Syndrome

- Havana Syndrome refers to a set of mental health symptoms that are said to be experienced by United States intelligence and embassy officials in various countries.
- It is worth noting that in general, the word syndrome simply means a set of symptoms.
- It does not mean a unique medical condition, but rather a set of symptoms that are usually experienced together whose origins may be difficult to confirm.
- What is known as the Havana Syndrome typically involves symptoms such as hearing certain sounds without any outside noise, nausea, vertigo and headaches, memory loss and balance issues.
- As the name suggests, it traces its roots to Cuba in late 2016.
- **Causes –** No one is entirely sure, however, there were suspicion on Cuban intelligence.
- The victims may have been subjected to high-powered microwaves that either damaged or interfered with the nervous system.
- The waves said to have built pressure inside the brain that generated the feeling of a sound being heard.

Situation in India

- In India, first such case was reported in the year 2021, when a US intelligence officer

travelling to New Delhi with CIA director William Burns reported symptoms of Havana Syndrome.
- Sources in the Indian security establishment said in 2021 that they were not aware of any weapon with such capacities being in the possession of an Indian agency.

References

1. The Indian Express – Centre to look into 'Havana Syndrome'
2. Wall Street Journal – Havana Syndrome
3. BBC – Havana Syndrome unlikely to have hostile cause

