Prelim Bits 11-12-2022 & 12-12-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Great Hornbill

The logo for India's G20 presidency was officially unveiled at the Hornbill festival in Nagaland.



- The Great Hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*) is also known as Great Pied Hornbill.
- This hornbill is huge with distinctive with a large yellow bill and casque (a horny outgrowth over the skull).
- **Range** - Found in the Himalayan foothills, the Northeast and the Western Ghats.



- **Significance**- Hornbills prefer tall trees for their nests and has mutualism between them.
- They play a vital role in dispersing the seeds of about 80 rainforest trees.
- It is the state bird of Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala.
- **Threats** - illegal logging, hunting
- **Conservation Status**
    1. IUCN – Vulnerable
    2. CITES - Appendix I
    3. Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 – Schedule I

Hornbill Festival

- Hornbill festival is known as 'Festival of Festivals' is celebrated in Nagaland during the month of December on an annual basis.
- The festival pays tribute to Hornbill, the most admired and revered bird for the Nagas for its qualities of alertness and grandeur.
- The festival showcases the art, culture and cuisine of Nagaland.

References

1. The Hindu - Those fascinating hornbills
2. IUCN Red List - Great Hornbill

Angkor Wat Temple

The Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia is being restored by India.

- Angkor Wat temple complex is located at Angkor, Cambodia.

- Angkor Wat is the world's largest religious structure, covering some 400 acres.
- The temple is dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu.



- The temple was built in the 12th century by King Suryavarman II, one of the greatest kings of the Khmer dynasty.
- Angkor Wat has unusual orientation of facing west, rather than the traditional east.
- Theravada Buddhist monks maintained Angkor Wat after it was abandoned in early 15th century.
- Angkor Complex including Angkor Wat is an UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1992.

Other Temples that India restores outside India

- Thiruketheeswaram Temple in Mannar, SriLanka.
  - One of the five sacred Ishwarams dedicated to Lord Shiva.
  - This temple was closed for 12 years.
- Shreenathji Temple in Manama, Bahrain.
  - It is a 200-year-old Sri Krishna temple in Bahrain.
  - India launched $4.2 million project for the redevelopment of the temple.

References

1. The Hindu - India restoring Angkor Wat temple
2. Britannica - Angkor Wat

HAKUTO-R Mission 1

Japan's ispace launches world's first commercial moon lander.

> *The name HAKUTO refers to the white rabbit that lives on the moon in Japanese folklore.*

- HAKUTO-R is moon lander launched by ispace Inc., a Japanese space start-up.
- SpaceX's Falcon 9 carried HAKUTO-R lander, NASA's Lunar Flashlight CubeSat and the UAE's rover.
- The M1 lander will deploy two robotic rovers,
  1. A two-wheeled, baseball-sized device from Japan's JAXA space agency and
  2. The four-wheeled Rashid explorer made by the United Arab Emirates.
- The M1 lander is expected at soft landing at Atlas Crater, which is located on the south-eastern edge of the moon's Mare Frigoris ("Sea of Cold").
- Only the space agencies of the United States, China and the Soviet Union have achieved soft landings on the lunar surface.
- The success of this mission would make Japan the 4th country to make soft landing on the lunar surface and the first private company to do so.
- ispace plans to launch Mission 2 to the moon in 2024.

Rashid

- It is the UAE's first moon rover.
- The 22-pound (10 kilograms) robot named Rashid, will deploy from HAKUTO-R.
- Rashid will study its environs in the lunar surface for about 14 Earth days (one lunar day).

References

1. The Hindu - ispace launches world's first commercial moon lander
2. Space - SpaceX launches Japanese lander

Namami Gange and Arth Ganga

The Union Minister for Jal Shakti chaired the 10th meeting of the Empowered Task Force (ETF) of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

- The Prime Minister urged for a shift from Namami Gange as a flagship project to clean the Ganga, to the model of Arth Ganga.
- **Arth Ganga** focuses on the sustainable development of the Ganga and its surrounding areas, by focusing on economic activities related to the river.
- Ghat Mein Haat initiative and Jalaj Livelihood Model are launched under Arth Ganga.
- The Union Minister of Jal Shakti directed the States and central ministries/departments to expedite the work being done for the holistic rejuvenation of River Ganga.

Ministries	Work Being Done
Ministry of Tourism	Developing comprehensive plan for development of tourism circuits along Ganga in line with Arth Ganga.
	Exhibitions & Fairs across 75 towns along Ganga River planned as part of *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.*
Ministry of Power	To reuse treated wastewater of thermal power plants by adopting cluster approach
Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare	To build organic farming and natural farming corridors along River Ganga.
	Promoting eco-agriculture and improving water-use efficiency in Ganga villages.
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs	Mapping of urban drains and management of solid and liquid waste in Ganga towns under SBM 2.0 and AMRUT 2.0
Ministry of Environment and Forests	Scaling up of afforestation activities in the Ganga belt.
	A detailed plan to take 'Project Dolphin' forward

Namami Gange

- Namami Gange Programme is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as a

'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014.
- It is to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.
- It is being operated under the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The program is being implemented by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

References

1. PIB - 10th Empowered Task Force Meeting of NMCG
2. The Hindu - 'Clean Ganga' changes course
3. Live Mint - 10th meeting of ETF of Clean Ganga Mission

IUCN Red List New Entries

29 new threatened species assessed in India are added to the updated IUCN Red list.

- The IUCN Red List is a critical indicator of the health of the state of the world's biodiversity.
- It provides information about the global extinction risk status of species and is a key tool to help define and inform conservation targets.

White-cheeked Dancing Frog

- The white-cheeked Dancing Frog (*Micrixalus candidus*) is considered to be uncommon frog species.
- **Range** – Endemic to Western Ghats.
- **Distribution** - Small range with an extent of occurrence of 167 km^2 in the Western Ghats of Karnataka.
- **Threats** - Habitat loss due to conversion of forest to areca nut and coffee plantations.
- Endangered with extinction due to pollution, changes in temperature, diseases, pests and invasive species among others.
- Reports say that 30% of dancing frogs are found to live in the unprotected regions.
- **IUCN Status** - Endangered

Andaman Smoothhound

- The Andaman Smoothhound (*Mustelus andamanensis*) is a small fish (shark) discovered in 2021.
- **Range** - Only known from the Andaman Sea and endemic to India.
- **Threats** - Fishing pressure across its spatial and depth range, overfishing, bycatch in industrial and artisanal fisheries.
- **IUCN Status** - Vulnerable

Yellow Himalayan Fritillary plant

- The Yellow Himalayan Fritillary plant (*Fritillaria cirrhosa*) is a large group of mostly-spring flowering plants in the lily family.
- **Range** - Mostly found in the Himalayas. It occurs in Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar,

Nepal and Pakistan.

- **Threats** - unorganised harvest, over-extraction, unsustainable and premature harvesting of bulbs, coupled with illegal hidden markets.
- It is harvested and traded in disguise with a new trade name ‘Jangli lehsun’
- **IUCN Status** - Vulnerable

References

1. The Hindu - 29 new threatened species in India: IUCN
2. PTI - 29 new threatened species in India

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering