Prelim Bits 12-06-2022 & 13-06-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Kabini Backwaters

A tusker with arguably the longest tusks, which is rarely found in Asiatic elephants, at the Kabini backwaters is dead.

- The Kabini or Kabani, or Kapila River is one of the major tributaries of the River Cauvery.
- It originates in **Pakramthalam hills**, Kerala by means of the confluence of the Panamaram River and the Mananthavady River.
- It flows eastward to **join the Kaveri River** at Tirumakudalu Narasipura in Mysore district of Karnataka.
- The Kabini Dam, which is a masonry gravity dam, is built across the Kabini River near Beechanahally village.
- The **backwaters** of the Kabini Dam are found in **Karnataka**.
- These backwaters are very **rich in wildlife especially in summer** when the water level recedes to form rich grassy meadows. In summer, the river Kabini is home to India's largest elephant community.

Reference

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2. https://www.karnataka.com/kabini/river-kabini/
3. https://redearth.in/blog/2021/06/24/kabini-backwater-viewpoint/

Green Gold

Tribal residents of 50 villages in Chhattisgarh have filed an FIR against an official of the state forest department after he confiscated the tendu leaves that they had collected.

- **Tendu** (*Diospirus melanocaylon*) is also called '**green gold**'.
- It is a prominent **minor forest produce** in India.
- The tendu tree is commonly known as "abnus" in Andhra Pradesh, "kendu" in Orissa and West Bengal, "tembru" in Gujarat, "kari" in Kerala, "tembhurni" in Maharahstra, and "bali tupra" in Tamil Nadu.
- **Uses** - Tendu leaves are used as wrappers of tobacco to produce **bidi**.
- The wide-scale use of tendu leaves in Bidi industry is mainly based on their wide availability, enormous production, agreeable flavour, flexibility, its resistance to decay and capacity to retain fires.
- Off-cuts of leaves are burned and the ash is used in **tooth powder**.
- **Sale of tendu** - Before 1964, people were free to sell tendu leaves in markets across the country.
- In 1964, the trade in tendu leaves was **nationalised** in then-undivided Madhya Pradesh.

- Later, this system was adopted by Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.
- Under this arrangement, the state forest department collects tendu leaves from the collection centres or *phads* through the state minor forest produce federation.
- Then, the state forest department allows the transportation and sale of these tendu leaves to the traders.
- **Dispute** - There is dispute about who has the right to sell the leaves.
- The State governments say only they can do so due to nationalisation.
- On the other hand, tendu leaf collectors cite the following to say private collectors can sell them on their own,
    a. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and
    b. The 2013 Supreme Court verdict in the Niyamgiri case.
- The tribals, after having obtained **forest rights leases** under the FRA 2006, now want to sell tendu leaves on their own, with the **permission of Gram Sabhas** and make good profits.

Other minor forest produces that are collected and sold by tribals are Mahua, *Salbeej* or the seeds of the Sal tree (*Shorea robusta*) and *Chironji* or Almondette kernels (*Buchanania lanzan*).

Reference

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IMCCS Report on Decarbonising Defence Agencies

The International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS) has released a report on the need to decarbonise defence agencies across the world.

- The Russia-Ukraine war has re-exposed the risks and vulnerabilities and, the potential interventions that could be adopted for greener military operations.
- The risks posed by climate change towards security is realised by the security foreign policies body across the world.
- The world's defences are dominated by the **use of fossil fuels**, which serve as an efficient means to operate the forces across the world.
- Military fuel consumption pose a problem in terms of operations, and involves high expenses and dependence on external suppliers.
- The IMCCS panel recommended **high technology innovations** such as use of bio-fuel, could help to shift them to low-carbon alternatives thus evolving the modernisation process.
- Another recommendation comes to bring **hybrid vehicles** or **alternative fuel technologies** to reduce reliance on fossil energy.

International Military Council on Climate and Security

- The International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS) is a group of senior military leaders, security experts from the governmental and nongovernmental sectors, and security institutions across the globe.
- It is dedicated to **anticipating, analyzing, and addressing the security risks of a**

changing climate.

- It was launched in 2019 as a response to a growing demand from military professionals for sharing information and best practices on addressing the security and military dimensions of climate change.
- It was founded by
    1. The Center for Climate and Security (CCS), an institute of the Council on Strategic Risks,
    2. The French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS),
    3. The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS) and
    4. The Planetary Security Initiative of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael).
- **Governance** - The IMCCS is administered by the CCS.
- The IMCCS consists of three main entities - IMCCS Leadership, IMCCS Expert Group and IMCCS Institutional Partners.
- **Report** - The IMCCS Expert Group has been publishing an annual or biennial World Climate and Security Report since 2020.
- This report is a global assessment of the security risks of a changing climate and recommendations for addressing them.

Reference

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2. https://imccs.org/about/

Marijuana

Thailand becomes first Asian country to legalise the growing of Marijuana and its consumption in food and drinks, but smoking pot is still against the law.

- Marijuana is the **dried leaves and flowers** of the *Cannabis sativa* or *Cannabis indica* plant.
- Stronger forms of the drug include high potency strains - known as sinsemilla, hashish (hash for short), and extracts.
- **Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol** (THC) chemical of the marijuana is responsible for many of the drug's psychotropic (mind-altering) effects.
- This chemical distorts how the mind perceives the world. In other words, it's what makes a person high or stoned.
- Short-term side effects - Decrease in short-term memory, dry mouth, impaired motor skills, red eyes, and feelings of paranoia or anxiety.
- Long-term side effects - Addiction, decreased mental ability and behavioural problems in children whose mothers' used cannabis during pregnancy.

Reference

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3. https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320984#What-are-the-medical-benefits-of-cannabis?

Fernandina Galápagos Giant Tortoise

A giant tortoise, found alive in 2019, has been confirmed to belong to the Fernandina Island Galápagos species long believed extinct.

- The Fernandina Galápagos Giant Tortoise (*Chelonoidis phantasticus*) species was so far known only from a single individual, collected in 1906.
- Chelonoidis phantasticus means “fantastic giant tortoise”.
- It is one of the 13 species of Galápagos tortoises - 12 living, one extinct.
- The IUCN listed it as **critically endangered** & possibly extinct.
- **Habitat** is largely dry brush land at lower elevations, but much of that habitat has been destroyed by extensive lava flows.

Fernandina

- Fernandina or the Narborough Island stands alone on western most island of the Galapagos Archipelago.
- It is the **third largest and the youngest Galapagos Island** that is reputed to be the largest pristine island on Earth.
- It features the **La Cumbre volcano** (shield volcano), one of the most active in the world.
- The greatest threat to the flora and fauna of the Fernandina is the potential for future **introductions of aggressive exotic species**.

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4. https://www.galapagos.org/about_galapagos/about-galapagos/the-islands/fernandina/

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