Prelim Bits 14-05-2022 UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Albino striped narrow snake

A specimen of an albino Striped Narrow Headed Snake (Xylophis perroteti) was collected from the Nilgiris forest division in Tamil Nadu.

- **Habitat -** The snake is endemic to the Southern Western Ghats.
- It usually occupies Shola-grassland mosaic ecosystems above 1,000 meters above sea level.
- It is also known as Striped wood-snake.
- **Food -** It feeds on earthworms, insect larvae and caecillians.
- For the first time albinism has been recorded in the species collected from Nilgiris forest.

Protection status	
Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972	Schedule- IV
IUCN	Least Concern

Albinism

- Albinism is an inherited disease characterized by a substantially lower rate of melanin production.
- People with albinism often have lighter colored skin and hair.
- Melanin normally protects the skin from damage due to UV radiation exposure, so people with albinism are more sensitive to sun exposure.
- Albinism has two main types:
    - Ocular albinism (OA) which primarily affects the eyes.
    - Oculocutaneous albinism (OCA) which affects the skin, hair, and eyes.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Coimbatore/albino-striped-narrow-snake-recorded-in-the-nilgiris/article65410364.ece
2. https://indiabiodiversity.org/species/show/238780
3. https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/245861#symptoms

Buddhavanam Project

- Buddhavanam is a Buddhist heritage theme park developed by the Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation at Nagarjunasagar in Nalgonda district.
- It is the largest Buddhist tourism centre in Asia spread across 274 acres.
- The park is divided into 8 segments
    1. Buddhacharitavanam (elegant entrance plaza)
    2. Jatakavanam (Bodhisattva Park)
    3. Dhyanavanam (Meditation Park)
    4. Stupavanam
    5. Mahastupa

6. Buddhist education centres such as monasteries, educational institutions
7. Buddhist art and craft village
8. Traditional Buddhist medical centre.

- **Main Tourist attractions –**
- Amaravati Stupa - At the Centre of Buddhavanam is a replica of the original Amaravati Stupa in its original dimensions, shape, and design.
- The Mahastupa is the main attraction of the Buddhist Theme Park.
- The Stupa is embellished with sculptures depicting major events from the life of Gautama Buddha and his previous birth stories and miniature stupas.
- Inside of Mahastupa upper-level dome ceiling is decorated with lotus petals and sky panels made in an aluminum acoustic system
- Under the dome of Maha Stupa, stands a massive brass-coated mandapam with eight statues of Buddha in five postures facing eight directions.
- 40 famous sculptures from Jataka tales, models of 13 Buddhist stupas from various countries, a 100-feet-tall Buddhist Stupa and 200-feet-wide Pradakshina Padam with thousands of sculptures can be seen.
- The Government of Sri Lanka has donated a replica of the Avukana Buddha statue and Dhamma bell under Indo-Sri Lankan Cultural Exchange programme.
- The Sri Lankan Government has also evinced interest in building 'Simhala Vihara' complex on the premises of the Buddhavanam.
- The theme park was developed to attract local as well as foreign tourists, particularly those coming from South-East Asian countries.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telangana/buddhavanam-project-unveils-an-exciting-prospect/article38321432.ece
2. https://telanganatoday.com/ktr-to-inaugurate-buddhavanam-project-on-may-14

35 million years old rare snake fossil

- Scientists have discovered a 35 million years old Madtsoiidae snake fossil from the molasse deposits of Ladakh.
- This reveals their prevalence in the subcontinent for much longer time than previously thought.
- Madtsoiidae is an extinct group of medium-sized to gigantic snakes.
- They first appeared during the late Cretaceous and mostly distributed in the Gondwanan landmasses.
- Their Cenozoic record is extremely scarce.
- From the fossil record we infer that the whole group disappeared in the mid-Paleogene across most Gondwanan continents.
- However in Australia the species survived with its last known taxon Wonambi till late Pleistocene.
- Geological Time Scale –

Eons	**Era**	**Period**	**Epoch**	**Age/ Years Before Present**

C A M B R I A N	Cainozoic (From 65 million years to the present)	• Quaternary	• Holocene • Pleistocene	• 0-10,000 • 10,000 - 2 million
		• Tertiary	• Pliocene • Miocene • Oligocene • Eocene • Palaeocene	• 2 - 5 million • 5 - 24 million • 24 - 37 million • 37 - 58 Million • 57 - 65 Million
	Mesozoic 65 - 245 Million Mammals	• Cretaceous • Jurassic • Triassic		• 65 - 144 Million • 144 - 208 Million • 208 - 245 Million

Reference

1. https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1825096
2. NCERT book

Rural Tribal Technical Training Program

- **Objective –** The Project envisages Skilling of Tribal Youth through Technical Training Program.
- It is implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.
- Training is provided for about 250 beneficiaries in 17 clusters of 17 districts selected from 6 states of India – Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Odisha and will be organized at Vikas Bharti, Gumla, Jharkhand.
- Training will be provided to the beneficiaries in 5 disciplines
    - electrical and solar energy
    - agricultural mechanization
    - e-governance
    - plumbing and masonry
    - two wheeler repair and maintenance.
- This training will enable the youth to start their own business, thus generating more employment opportunities for other youth as well.

Reference

1. https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1825147

National Data & Analytics Platform

- NITI Aayog has launched the National Data & Analytics Platform (NDAP) for open public use.
- Objective - To improve access and use of government data.
- It is a simple, interactive, visual, and robust platform that will host various Central and state government datasets.
- The platform aggregates and hosts datasets from across India’s vast statistical infrastructure

Key Features -

- **Making data accessible -** Democratize access to public government data.
- **Interoperable -** This enables users to merge datasets from different sectors and sources for easier cross-sectoral analysis.
- **Interactive function –** users can create flexible tables and visualizations like maps, bar

charts, line charts, pie charts for easy exploratory analysis.

- **User-friendly platform -** The platform follows a use-case based approach. This ensures that the datasets available on NDAP are relevant to the needs of real-life data users like government, academia, journalism, civil society, and the private sector.

Reference

1. https://ndap-beta.niti.gov.in/info?tab=about
2. https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1825145

