Prelim Bits 16-03-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

McMahon Line

The United States recognises the McMahon Line as the international boundary between China and India in Arunachal Pradesh.

- The bipartisan resolution introduced in the upper chamber of Congress reaffirms that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India.
- **McMahon Line** - The McMahon Line serves as the *de facto* boundary between China and India in the Eastern Sector.
- It specifically represents the boundary between Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet, from Bhutan in the west to Myanmar in the east.
- China has historically disputed the boundary and claims the state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).
    - **India's stand:** India recognises Simla Convention (1914) and Arunachal is controlled by India.
    - **China's position:** China calls Arunachal Pradesh as '*Zangnan*' and refers to 'South Tibet'.



- **History of McMahon Line** - It is named after Sir Henry McMahon, foreign secretary of British India, who drew the line.
- McMahon line is an 890-km border drew between British India and Tibet.
- It was drawn at the ***1914 Simla Convention*** between the Great Britain, China, and Tibet.
- The border was drawn largely along the crest of the Himalayas, following the 'highest watershed principle'.
- The People's Republic of China occupied Tibet in the 1950s, never recognized the McMahon Line.
- Further China claims approximately 90,000 sq. km of territory in Arunachal Pradesh of India as its own.
- The McMahon Line is in alignment with the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Eastern Sector.

Line of Actual Control
• The LAC separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
• It is divided into 3 sectors:
- Eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim)
- Middle Sector (Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh)
- Western Sector (Ladakh)

References

1. IE - What is the McMahon Line?
2. IE - The disputed LAC and China's claims over Arunachal

Willow Project

The Joe Biden-led United States administration formally approved the controversial Willow project in Alaska.

- Willow Project is a massive and decades-long oil drilling venture on Alaska's North Slope in the National Petroleum Reserve.
- The National Petroleum Reserve is owned by the federal government.
- It is located about 320 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle.
- The area where the project is planned holds up to 600 million barrels of oil.
- The project is yet to be constructed and the oil would take years to reach the market.



- **Project Timeline** - The project was proposed by ConocoPhillip, a Houston-based energy company exploring in Alaska.
- It was originally approved by the Trump administration in 2020 for 5 drill pads, which was reduced to 3 by the Biden administration.
- **Controversy** - The project is hugely controversial for its likely environmental impact.
- The project would generate enough oil to release 278 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year.
- It also raises concerns about danger to freshwater sources and threats to migratory birds, caribou, whales and other animals that inhabit the region.

References

1. Down To Earth - Biden approves the Willow project
2. CNN - The Willow Project has been approved

Cyclone Freddy

Cyclone Freddy dissipated over Malawi in March 2023 after a record-breaking 37-day stint over the southern Indian Ocean and Africa.

- **Traverse Path** - Cyclone Freddy first developed off the North Australian coast and tracked across the entire southern Indian Ocean.
- Cyclone Freddy covered a total distance of more than 8,000 km during its lifetime and periodically weakened below the tropical storm status.
- **Landfall** - The cyclone made landfall thrice — once in Madagascar and twice in Mozambique.



- **Records** - The records made by Cyclone Freddy are yet to be validated by WMO.
- Cyclone Freddy is the longest lived tropical cyclone ever recorded in any of Earth's oceans.
- It lasted for 37 days and broke the record of 31 days set by Hurricane John in 1994.

- It also broke the record for the highest accumulated cyclone energy (ACE) at 87.01 units, breaking the record of 85.27 units by Hurricane Ioke in 2006.
- Cyclone Freddy is the first tropical cyclone ever to experience 7 phases of rapid intensification (RI) over its lifetime. (previous record - 4 RI phases)

Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) is the total wind energy generated by a tropical cyclone throughout its lifetime and is calculated as the square of peak wind speed, observed, calculated and added every 6 hours.

Rapid Intensification (RI) is when a tropical cyclone gains wind speeds of more than 55 kilometres per hour in a period of 24 hours.

References

1. Down To Earth - The cyclone that lived longest: Cyclone Freddy

Doha Political Declaration

The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) concluded with adoption of the 'Doha Political Declaration'.

The Sustainable Development Report 2022 flagged that the LDCs are the worst performers on the progress made towards achieving SDGs.

- To know about UN list of Least Developed Country - Click here.
- The Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) for the Decade (2022-2031) was agreed upon during the first part of the LDC5 conference at New York in 2022.
- The second part of LDC5 conference held under the theme 'From Potential to Prosperity' at Qatar in March, 2023.
- The declaration adopted in the second part of LDC5 focuses on implementing the DPoA.
- The DPoA is the 10-year plan to put the world's 46 most vulnerable countries back on track to achieving the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- **Focus Area** - DPoA (2022-2031) consisted of 6 key focus areas including

- **Deliverables** - The 5 key deliverables from the DPoA are - an online university, a graduation support package, a food stock holding solution, an investment support centre and a crisis mitigation and resilience building mechanism.
- They will answer key challenges facing the LDCs, and set the path for a more prosperous, equitable future.

References

1. Down To Earth - Doha Political Declaration adopted at LCD5

2. United Nations - LDC5 - Doha Programme of Action

Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

The Oscar for Best Documentary Short was announced for 'The Elephant Whisperers' which revolves around a family who adopts 2 orphan baby elephants in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and rears them.

- Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) is located in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu.
- It is at the tri-junction of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- The Tiger Reserve comprises of the wildlife sanctuary and the national park of the same name.
- It forms a part of the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve.
- It has a common boundary with Wyanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) on the West, Bandipur Tiger Reserve (Karnataka) on the North.
- The Moyar River flows downstream into the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and is the natural line of division between Mudumalai and Bandipur Sanctuary.

Theppakadu Elephant Camp

- Theppakadu Elephant Camp is located deep inside the Mudumalai National Park in the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu.
- The Elephant camp located on the bank of the river Moyar, was established way back in 1927.
- It is the oldest elephant camp in Asia.
- The Camp elephants consist of rescued and captured conflict animals.
- They are tamed at this camp and trained to become '*kumki*' elephants meant to help in the capture of wild elephants.
- These elephants are mainly used in Human- Wild animal conflicts, Forest Mansoon patrolling, eco-tourism, elephant conservation, Education etc.

References

1. The Hindu - Elephant whisperers Bomman, Bellie move on
2. The Hindu - Theppakadu camp in Mudumalai
3. Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

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