Prelim Bits 22-03-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations

After vandalism by pro-Khalistan protestors at Indian High Commission in London, The Ministry of External Affairs invoked the Vienna Convention.

- The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) provides the framework for the establishment, maintenance and termination of diplomatic relations on a basis of consent between independent sovereign States.
- The Convention was adopted by the United Nations Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities on the 18th April, 1961.
- It entered into force on April 24, 1964 and is nearly universally ratified, with *Palau* and *South Sudan* being the exceptions.
- **Diplomatic Immunity** - The Convention codifies the longstanding custom of diplomatic immunity.
- Under this immunity, diplomatic missions are granted privileges that enable diplomats to perform their functions without fear of coercion or harassment by the host country.
- It affirms the concept of '*inviolability*' of a diplomatic mission, which has been one of the enduring cornerstones of international diplomacy.
- **Article 22** - The 'receiving State' (host nation) has some basic obligations towards the diplomatic missions it hosts on its sovereign territory, under *Article 22* of the Convention.
- The security of any High Commission or Embassy is the responsibility of the host nation.
- While diplomatic missions can also employ their own security, ultimately, the host nation is accountable for security.
- Based on this, the Ministry of External Affairs demanded an explanation on the London incident.
- **In India** - The Diplomatic Relations (Vienna Convention) Act, 1972 was enacted in India to give effect to the Vienna Convention and to provide for matters connected therewith.
- The act extends to the whole of India.

References

1. IE - What is the Vienna Convention, invoked by MEA?
2. UN - UN Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities

National Chambal Sanctuary

Three States have commenced joint action to stop illegal sand mining in National Chambal Sanctuary.

- National Chambal Sanctuary is situated at the trijunction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- The *Chambal River* cuts through the mazes of ravines and hills in the sanctuary.
- **Significance -** The sanctuary is known for its population of gharials and Gangetic dolphins.
- The 5,400 sq. km. sanctuary is a fragile lotic ecosystem critical for breeding of gharials.

Gharials

Gharials are fish-eating fresh water crocodiles. Gharials are a good indicator of clean river water.

Protection	***Status***
Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972	*Schedule I*
IUCN	*Critically Endangered*
CITES	*Appendix I*

- **Threat -** Illegal sand mining is threatening the flora and fauna in some parts of the sanctuary.
- **Avian site -** The sanctuary is listed as an 'Important Bird and Biodiversity Area' and is also a proposed Ramsar site.
- About 320 species of resident and migratory birds inhabit the sanctuary, and migratory birds from Siberia form part of its rich avian fauna.
- The river sanctuary is the breeding site of Indian Skimmer.
- **Protection -** The sanctuary is protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

References

1. The Hindu - To stop illegal sand mining in the Chambal sanctuary
2. Ranthambhore National Park - National Chamabal Sanctuary

World Happiness Report 2023

On the occasion of 'International Day of Happiness', annually observed on March 20, 'World Happiness Report' unveiled its 11th edition this year.

- The World Happiness Report is based on people's own assessment of their happiness, as well as economic and social data.
- It was first published in 2012 and published annually since then. 2023 report is its 11th edition.
- The report is published by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN).
- The report considers 6 key factors: social support, income, health, freedom, generosity, and absence of corruption.
- It assigns a happiness score based on an average of data over a 3-year period.
- **2023 Rankings** - The 2023 report ranked 137 countries on the list.

- For the 6th year running, Finland was named the world's happiest country followed by Denmark and Iceland.
- Israel occupied fourth position, up 5 spots from last year.
- **Unhappiest:** War-scarred Afghanistan has occupied the bottom spot (137th) on the table since 2020.
- Its humanitarian crisis deepen since the Taliban government took power in 2021 following the US-led military pull-out.
- **Ukraine:** Ukraine's ranking improved from 98 to 92 this year, despite the Russian invasion.
- But Ukraine's overall score fell from 5.084 to 5.071, on a scale of zero to 10.
- **India:** India was ranked 126th on the report (136th in 2022).
- **India's Neighbours:** Nepal featured at 78, China at 64, Bangladesh at 118 and Sri Lanka at 112 and Pakistan at 108.

References

1. The Hindu - Finland happiest country in the world: U.N. report
2. Hindustan Times - Top 10 list of world's happiest countries
3. World Happiness Report 2023

India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline

Prime Minister of India and Prime Minister of Bangladesh jointly inaugurated the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFP) in a virtual mode.

- The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFP) is the first cross border energy pipeline between India and Bangladesh.
- IBFP is laid from Siliguri in North Bengal to Parbatipur in Banglaesh's Dinajpur province.
- Construction of the 131.5 kilometre long pipeline began in 2018.
- The pipeline was built with Rs 377 crore drawn from a line of credit offered by India to Bangladesh.



- This is the 2nd cross-border energy pipeline between India and its neighbours where the first one being Motihari-Amalekhgunj Petroleum Pipeline between India and Nepal.
- The energy pipeline will carry one million tonnes of high-speed diesel (HSD) from Numaligarh refinery in Assam to Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation's Parbatipur depot.
- The Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) is the recognised government to government (G2G) exporter of refined products to Bangladesh.

References

1. PIB - Indian PM and Bangladesh PM jointly inaugurated the IBFP
2. Swarajya - The New Diesel Pipeline From India To Bangladesh

Mice created with cells from 2 males

For the first time, scientists at Osaka University in Japan have created baby mice from two males.

- The baby mice created from two male mice opens up new avenues in reproductive biology and fertility research for animals and people.
- The scientists took skin cells from the tails of male mice and transformed them into stem-cell-like 'induced pluripotent stem cells'.
- Then they converted male mouse cells into female cells through a process and produced functional egg cells.
- The process involved growing the pluripotent stem cells and treating them with a compound called *reversine*.

  Pluripotent stem cells can develop into many different types of cells or tissues.

- Finally, they fertilized those eggs and implanted the embryos into female mice.
- About 1% of the embryos (7 out of 630) grew into live mouse pups.
- The pups appeared to grow normally and were able to become parents themselves in the usual way.
- **Synthetic mouse embryos** - In 2022, scientists in California and Israel created synthetic mouse embryos.
- These synthetic mouse embryos are created from stem cells without a dad's sperm or a mom's egg or womb.
- Those embryos mirrored natural mouse embryos up to 8 ½ days after fertilization, containing the same structures, including one like a beating heart.

References

1. The Hindu - Scientists create mice with cells from 2 males
2. IE - Scientists create mice with cells from 2 males for first time

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