# Prelim Bits 23-08-2022| UPSC Daily Current Affairs

## Dimapur – Kohima rail section

*The railway as part of connecting each part of the northeast with the other parts of the country has expedited works for the completion of the 85-km-long new Dimapur-Kohima rail project.*

- For the first time, Kohima, the capital city of Nagaland, would be on India's railway map after the construction of the Dimapur-Kohima rail section.
- The track will pass through four districts of Nagaland, and its work will finish in three phases.
- On the entire stretch of this first-of-its-kind rail project passing through the toughest hilly terrain the route will have 8 railway stations and 22 rail bridges in addition to 21 tunnels.
- One of the 22 rail bridges is being built would be around 51 feet in height.
- The region not only has a difficult terrain, it is also part of seismic zone 5 making it highly prone to earthquakes.
- The last railway station of this rail line to connect Kohima first time with rail link would be Zubza, near Kohima city.
- The rail line will have the **country's longest tunnel of 6.5 km** long.

### Reference

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- https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/travel-tourism/travel-to-nagaland-in-train-soon-indian-railways-work-on-dimapur-kohima-project-going-on-in-full-swing/2638314/

## Soft release centres

*Jharkhand forest officials have chalked out plans to set up soft release centres in order to ensure enough food for tigers, which will help in increasing their numbers in the Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR).*

- The soft release centres are those where animals are placed in pre-release cages located close to the location where they will be released.
- After some time, the animals are allowed to go out, but they have the option of returning to the cage for shelter, water and food.
- Initially, the PTR had good tiger counts, which came down to three in the 2014 census and zero in the latest report.
- PTR officials, however, claimed that the presence of two tigers have recently been

confirmed on the basis of the scat found by them in the jungles.
- The idea is to spread deer population in entire PTR, which currently is concentrated in Betla forests only.
- The number of deer shrunk to less than 4,000 from 10,000 in the last one decade, resulting in the decrease of tiger count in the PTR.
- The proposal for two soft release centres has already been approved by the Government of India.
- Each soft release centres at Baresadh, Lukaiya, Mundu and Dhardharia will be spread over 10 hectares, which will provide an amicable atmosphere for the breeding of deer.

**Palamau Tiger Reserve (PTR)**

- The Palamau Tiger Reserve is located in the western side of Latehar district on the Chhotanagpur plateau in Jharkhand.
- The forest is surrounded by the Netarhat Forest in the South, Auranga River in the North, Latehar Forest Division on the East and Garhwa Forest Division and Sarguja District of Chhattisgarh on the West.
- The reserve zone is the watershed area for 3 important rivers Koel, Burha and Auranga.
- The Palamau Tiger Reserve was constituted in the year 1974 under PROJECT TIGER.
- It is one of the first 9 tiger reserves created in the country at inception of 'Project Tiger'.
- Palamau Tiger Reserve has the distinction of being the first sanctuary in the world in which a tiger census was carried out as a pugmark count, as early as 1932.

**Reference**


1. https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2022/aug/23/palamu-reserve-to-develop-soft-release-centres-to-improve-tiger-population-2490456.html
2. http://forest.jharkhand.gov.in/ptr/About.aspx


## Tomato flu

*Doctors have sounded an alarm over the "emergence of new non-life-threatening" virus called tomato flu among the children below five years of age.*

- Tomato flu or fever is a viral disease. The flu gets its name because of the red blister it causes.
- The fever is affecting children below the age of five.
- Symptoms include red rashes, skin irritation and dehydration.
- It also includes tiredness, joint pain, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, coughing, sneezing, runny nose, high fever, and body ache.
- In some cases, it may also change the colour of the legs and the hands.
- **Spread** - Like other cases of flu, tomato fever is also contagious.
- If someone is infected with this flu, they need to be kept in isolation as this could spread rapidly from one person to another.
- It is essential to prevent children from scratching the blisters caused by the flu. Proper

rest and hygiene is also advised.
- **Treatment** - Tomato flu is a self-limiting one and there is no specific drug for this.
- This means that the symptoms will resolve overtime on their own if supportive care is given.
- Fluid intake would also help counteract dehydration.

**Reference**


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2. https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(22)00300-9/fulltext
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## Tasmanian tiger

*Scientists are working on a project to reintroduce Tasmanian tiger in its native habitat.*

- Project thylacine of USA and Australia aims to reintroduce thylacine or Tasmanian tiger to its native place Tasmania to revive the region's lost ecological balance.
- Tasmanian tiger (Thylacinus cynocephalus) is the only surviving animal in the Thylacinidae family in modern times.
- It got its name because of the black stripes along its back

**Key features of the species -**

- **Marsupial mammal - raises young ones in a pouch.**
- Slow-paced carnivore
- Hunts alone or in pairs at night.
- Feeds on kangaroos, other marsupials, small rodents, and birds.
- **Geographiocal Spread –** Grass and woodlands of continental Australia extending north to New Guinea and south to Tasmania

**Reason for extinction –**

- The animals were reported to have eaten poultry of farmers, and were killed following official authorisation.
- An official bounty of 1 pound was put on its head.
- Apart from this, competition with another animal, the Dingo, is also considered a reason for its extinction.
- **The last wild thylacine was killed between 1910 and 1920**.
- Following this, the Australian government declared the thylacine a protected species in July 1936.
- However the **last captive animal, died** at the Beaumaris Zoo and was declared extinction in **1980s.**

**Ecological contribution -**

- Being a top predator it played a significant role in balancing the ecosystem and maintaining species diversity.
- Its disappearance from the food chain resulted in Trophic Downgrading which led to disruption of biogeochemical cycles, wildfires, growth of invasive species, spread of the transmissible diseases and carbon sequestration, among other effects.

**The resurrection process –**

- Despite being extinction many of its embryos and young specimens of have been preserved.
- For the de-extinction project genome sequenced from a DNA specimen will be used.
- This genome will be compared with the closest living animal of the species– the fat tailed dunnart — to identify all the differences.
- Once the differences are identified, scientists will engineer the DNA of the living species to bring back the extinct species.
- Following this stem cell and cloning techniques will be used to turn those cells back into a living animal
- The fat-tailed dunnart is a mouse-like species in the Dasyuridae family in Australia.
- De-extinction will not be complete until the success of the rewilding process.
- **Concerns raised -** One of the challenges of de-extinction is that reintroducing the species to its former habitat may make it an invasive species, which will also impact the balance of the current ecological system.

**References**


1. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-sci-tech/tasmanian-tiger-de-extinction-project-explained-8098355/
2. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/commentisfree/2022/aug/21/resurrecting-the-tasmanian-tiger-may-be-a-noble-idea-but-what-about-preserving-existing-species


## Kerala Savari

*Recently Kerala government has launched its online taxi service Kerala Savari'*

- Kerala has launched its online taxi service named 'Kerala Savari'.
- It the country's first online taxi service owned by a State government.
- It is operated by the Motor Workers Welfare Board under the aegis of the Labour Department.
- It aims to ensure fair, safer and decent service to passengers along with fair remuneration to auto-taxi workers.
- The fares are approved by government without any 'surge pricing'
- The initiative was launched against the backdrop of unfair trade practices and consumer rights violation by private app-based cab aggregators have come as a major concern for governments.
- Recently, Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) had issued notices to cab aggregators Ola and Uber for unfair trade practices and violation of consumer rights.
- Various concerns raised include

    - deficiency in services
    - charging exorbitant fares during peak hours
    - unprofessional behaviour of drivers
    - lack of proper response from customer support
    - Undue levy of cancellation charges.

- The service-oriented scheme will be a win-win situation for both passengers and taxi-auto drivers and owners.
- **Main attractions of Kerala Savari-**
- No fluctuation in fares irrespective of day or night or rain.
- Service charges of 8% against 20 to 30% set by private players.
- Of this 8% service charge 6% will go to the technical partner, and the remaining 2% will go to the implementation of this scheme and for providing promotional incentives to passengers and drivers.
- Fare renumeration for cab owners.
- **Security-related features –**

- Kerala Savari is claimed as a safe and reliable online service for women, children, and senior citizens.
- A police clearance certificate is mandatory for drivers joining the scheme.
- A panic button system in the app can be pressed in the event of a car accident or in cases of any other danger.
- One can do it completely privately. If the driver presses the panic button the passenger will not be alarmed and the same goes for when the passenger presses the panic button.
- On pressing the button, there is an option to select the Police, Fire Force, and Motor Vehicle Department numbers.
- In case of unprecedented situation pressing the button for a few seconds will directly connect us to police control room.
- GPS will be installed in vehicles at a subsidised rate in a phased manner.
- A 24-hour call centre has been prepared for this purpose.

**References**


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