Prelim Bits 25-11-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Israel- Hamas Deal

Recently, the mediation efforts facilitated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States between Israel and Hamas resulted in an agreement for a humanitarian pause for 4 days, subject to extension.

- **Deal –** 50 hostages could be freed in return for 150 Palestinian women and teenagers in Israeli detention.
- Israeli *warplanes would not fly* over southern Gaza for 6 hours each day.
- Each day of the pause, Israel and Hamas will *receive lists of the hostages and prisoners* to be released.
- **Mediation** – Qatar, the US, Egypt, etc.
- **Implementation - *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*** would be designated to receive the hostages.

> ***ICRC*** *is an independent and neutral organization whose mandate stems from the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It was established in 1863 to help people affected by conflict and armed violence and promote the laws that protect victims of war.*

- **Opposition to ceasefire** – Israel, and its allies opposes ceasefire as it will allow Hamas to regroup.

	Humanitarian Pause	Ceasefire
Definition	Temporary cessation	Suspension
Initiation	Mutual negotiation	Unilateral or mutual
Purpose	Humanitarian purposes	Political process
Time period	Limited to a defined period	Longer-term arrangement
Coverage	Limited to a specific area	Relatively larger part
Military gains	It doesn't affect it	It affects it

References

1. Indian Express| Israel- Hamas Deal
2. Indian Express| Humanitarian Pause vs. Ceasefire

Pneumonia

Recently, World Health Organization (WHO) has requested China for a detailed report of a widespread outbreak of an undiagnosed pneumonia like respiratory illness affecting

children.

- Pneumonia is an ***acute respiratory infection*** that affects the lungs.
- **Causes** – Infectious agents like *viruses, bacteria and fungi*
  - **Bacteria** – *Streptococcus pneumonia*, *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
  - **Virus** – Respiratory syncytial virus
- **Transmission** - By ***direct contact*** with infected people via air-borne droplets (cough or sneeze) and through blood, especially during and shortly after birth.
- **Pathology** – ***Alveoli (air sacs) are filled with pus and fluid***, making breathing painful and limits oxygen intake.
- **Symptoms** – ***Wheezing*** is more common in viral infections.
- Severely ill may be unable to feed or drink and may experience unconsciousness, hypothermia and convulsions.
- **Risk factors** – Pre-existing illness like HIV, children and old age people who are above 65 years of age.

Pneumonia is the single largest infectious cause of death in children worldwide.

- **Treatment** - Pneumonia caused by bacteria are ***treated with antibiotics, amoxicillin tablets*** is used as 1st line of treatment.
- **Prevention** – It can be prevented by immunization (vaccines), adequate nutrition, and by addressing environmental factors.

References

1. Down To Earth| Mysterious pneumonia like illness in China
2. WHO| Pneumonia
3. Cleavelandclinic| Image

Hornbill Festival

The 24th Hornbill Festival, a vibrant celebration of culture, music and dance will be held in Nagaland's misty mountains in 2023.

- It is an ***annual*** event which is called as the ***festival of festivals***.
- **Origin** – It ***began in 2000*** and is named after hornbill, a bird that symbolises beauty and grace in Naga folklore and ritual.
- **Held at** – The heritage village of Kisama, Nagaland.

December 1 is Nagaland Statehood Day, thus the hornbill festival begins on that day and goes on for 10 days.

- **Aim** – To *revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland* and display its extravaganza and traditions.
- It ***unites 16 Naga tribes*** of Nagaland to celebrate in colourful costumes, pulsating rhythm, and musical stories.
- **24th Edition, 2023** – It will host a wrestling championship, dance competition, exhibition, food festival among others.
- **Partner Countries –** USA, Germany and Columbia

The Great Indian Hornbill is the State bird of both Kerala and Arunachal Pradesh.

Nagaland – The Land of Festivals	
Festival	**Tribes**
Tsukhenyie	Chakhesangs
Mimkut	Kukis
Bushu	Kacharis
Sekrenyi	Angami
Aoling	Konyak
Moatsu	Aos
Tuluni	Sumis
Nyaknylum	Changs

References

1. The Hindu| 24th edition of Hornbill Festival
2. Hornbillfestival| Festivals of Nagaland

Onattukara Sesame

Onattukara Vikasana Agency in Kerala, plans to increase the area under sesame cultivation to 2,000 hectares from current 600 hectares.

- **Grown in –** 3 districts of Alappuzha, Kollam and Pathanamthitta in Kerala
- *The Kerala Agriculture University (KAU)* acquired the ***geographical indication (GI) tag*** in 2023 for its medicinal value and quality.
- **Onattukara Vikasana Agency** – It is the ***registered owner*** of the GI-tagged sesame seeds with *Agriculture Minister of Kerala as its Chairman*.
- **Geographical uniqueness** – The specific climate and nutrients of the soil of the region is generating medicinal value for the oilseeds
    - It contains high levels of *Vitamin E and antioxidants* and also contains *oleic acid, linoleic acid, palmitoleic acid*.
- **Medicinal property** - From the 18th century, Ayurvedic doctors' utilised Onattukara sesame oil for the treatment of diseases related to rheumatism and to protect the skin.

Other GI tagged agricultural products from Kerala includes, Marayur jaggery, Chengalikodan nendran banana, Central Travancore jaggery, Kaipad rice, etc.

Reference

The Hindu| Expanding the cultivation of Onattukara Sesame

E-prime Layer

According to a new study, Earth core's mysterious new layer was formed due to surface water diving deep.

- **Inner Earth –** It has 4 primary layers
  - Inner core (innermost layer)
  - Outer core
  - Mantle (middle layer)
  - Crust (outermost layer)
- **E-prime layer** – It is the ***new enigmatic layer*** which is formed at the Earth's outer core as a result of surface water penetrating deep into the planet.
- It is more than 60 miles (100 kilometers) thick, relatively slim compared with other sections of Earth's interior.

- **Formation**

- **Impact** – Modifications in the liquid metallic layer could potentially result in ***reduced density and altered seismic characteristics***.
- **Significance** – The transformed layer in the core holds significant implications for the interconnected geochemical processes linking surface water cycles with the deep metallic core.

Reference

Hindustan Times| Formation of new layer in Earth's Outer Core

Other Important News

Lachit Borphukan

• Lachit Borphukan was the commander of the ***Ahom forces*** and an icon of Assamese nationalism.
• In the Battle of Saraighat (Naval battle) on the River Brahmaputra, he thwarted an invasion by the Mughal Forces under the command of Ramsingh I.
• On 24th November each year, Lachit Diwas is celebrated in Assam to commemorate the heroism of Lachit Borphukan and the victory of the Assamese army at the Battle of Saraighat.

International Sugar Organization (ISO)

• India becomes Chair of International Sugar Organization (ISO) for 2024 to lead global sugar sector.
• ISO is an intergovernmental organization with 90 member countries, based in ***London***, which was established by the ***International Sugar Agreement of 1968***, as the body responsible for administering the Agreement.
• ISO represents (based on data for 2022) - 87% of world sugar production, 64% of world sugar consumption, 34% of world imports, 92% of world exports.
• India is the largest consumer and 2nd largest producer of sugar, 3rd largest country in the world in ethanol production after USA and Brazil.

SURYA KIRAN- XVII

• The 17th edition of ***Joint Military Exercise*** SURYA KIRAN between India and Nepal conducted in Pithoragarh, ***Uttarakhand*** recently.
• It is an annual event and conducted alternatively in the two countries.

National Gopal Ratna Awards

• It is one of the highest National Awards in the field of ***livestock and dairy sector*** to be conferred as a part of National Milk Day celebration 2023.
• **Aim -** To motivate farmers to rear indigenous breeds, increase their population, and improve their production and productivity.
• **National Milk Day** is celebrated every year on November 26 to honor the birth anniversary of Dr. Verghese Kurien (Father of White Revolution).

Krishi Sakhis (Farmer's Friends)

• Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare jointly launched training of ***Krishi Sakhis*** for promotion of Natural Farming.
• Krishi Sakhis are Community Agriculture Care Service Providers (CASPs).
• They are trained para extension professionals and practicing farmers at the grass root level.
• The Krishi Sakhis initiative was launched under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods.

Consortium for Research on Agroecosystem Monitoring and Modeling from Space (CREAMS)

• CREAMS is a laboratory that monitors crop conditions in extreme weather, established in 2013 by the ***Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi***.
• CREAMS provides data on the number of *Active Fire Events (AFE)* caused by burning paddy crop residue.
• CREAMS also provides data on ***stubble-burning incidents*** in northern India.
• In 2023, the number of stubble-burning incidents in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, and NCR areas of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh decreased from 13,964 in 2022 to 6,391.

CERT-In

• The Central government recently exempted the *Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)* from the ambit of the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005.
• CERT-In, established in 2004, is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur.
• It functions under the *Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.*
• According to RTI Act, organisations listed under Schedule II of RTI Act are exempted.
• With this, there are 27 other intelligence and security organisations such as the IB, R&AW, Directorate of Enforcement, National Technical Research Organisation that are exempt under RTI.

G20 Summit on Israel-Palestine Conflict

• Against the backdrop of the Israel-Hamas conflict, Prime Minister of India chaired a virtual summit of G20 leaders recently.

Bannerghatta National Park (BNP)

• Bannerghatta National Park (BNP) was declared in 1974.
• It is situated in Bengaluru, ***Karnataka*** and borders with Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in the South and with Javalagiri Reserved Forests in the Tamil Nadu State on its South-Eastern boundaries.
• There are 4 ranges in the national park, namely, Anekal, Bannerghatta, Harohalli and Kodihalli wildlife ranges.
• Bannerghatta's Sloth Bear Rescue Centre completes 18 years.

Sloth Bear

• A Sloth Bear (Melursus ursinus) is an ***omnivorous mammal*** that can live up to 40 years.
• Sloth bears are the only bears to routinely carry their young on their backs and are native to India, Sri Lanka and Nepal.
• **Conservation Status**
  - IUCN - Vulnerable
  - CITES - Appendix I,
  - Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 - Schedule I (Highest Protection)

Australia-India Leadership Dialogue (AILD)

• The 6th annual Australia India Leadership Dialogue 2023 held in Melbourne, Australia recently.
• The Australia India Leadership Dialogue is the premier forum for informal diplomacy between Australia and India.
• The dialogue used Bridges of Bharosa (trust) as one of its themes.
• It provides an opportunity to deepen mutual understanding between Australian and Indian leaders.
• It also paves way for addressing Australia-India bilateral relations in the wider context of the Indo-Pacific region.