Prelim Bits 26-08-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Tiger Census

During the 50th anniversary celebrations of Project Tiger, Prime Minister announced that the animal's population in India had increased to 3,167.

- The 5th cycle of India's Tiger Census report has revealed the Tiger numbers in the country has once again increased as of 2022.
- The National assessment for the Status of Tigers, co-predators, Prey and their Habitat is conducted by the:
    1. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NCTA)
    2. The State Forest Departments
    3. Conservation NGOs
    4. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII)
- The survey is being conducted for every four years once since the year 2006.
- The main objective of reviewing the status of Tigers in the country every four years was to ensure that the balance between forest and wildlife is not disrupted.
- If Tigers were to extinguish it would severely affect the forest and cycle of nature.
- **Latest Survey –** Among the country's 53 reserves, Corbett, in Uttarakhand had the highest number at 260.
- Madhya Pradesh's forests continued to account for the largest population for any state at 785.

References

1. Down To Earth – How robust is India's tiger census?
2. Hindustan Times – India's tiger count tops 3,600

Northern Sea Route (NSR)

Russia in talks with India to develop Northern Sea shipping route.

- The Northern Sea Route (NSR), the shortest shipping route for freight transportation between Europe and countries of the Asia-Pacific region, straddles four seas of the Arctic Ocean.
- The NSR route between Europe and Asia is just 13,000 km long, compared to the 21,000 km covered by the Suez Canal route.
- Running to 5,600 km, the Route begins at the boundary between the Barents and the Kara seas (Kara Strait) and ends in the Bering Strait.
- This reduces the travel duration from one month to less than two weeks.
- The whole path, which has been dubbed the Northeast Passage and is comparable to Canada's Northwest Passage, is located in the Arctic seas and within Russia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Distance savings along the NSR can be as high as 50% compared to the currently used shipping lanes via Suez or Panama.

- **Russia –** As the seas of the Arctic Ocean remain icebound during most of the year, the icebreaking assistance is organized to ensure safe navigation along the NSR.
- Russia is the only country in the world with a nuclear-powered icebreaker fleet, according to Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation, the NSR infrastructure operator.

Reference

1. The Hindu – India and the Northern Sea Route

Laser-Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis (LASIK) Surgey

Most insurance products in the market cover for LASIK surgeries when the refractory error power is => 7.5 dioptre.

- The surgical procedures aimed at improving the focusing power of the eyes are called refractive surgery.
- In LASIK surgery, precise and controlled removal of corneal tissue by a special laser reshapes the cornea changing its focusing power.
- When performed on both eyes, the entire procedure of LASIK surgery takes about 20 minutes.
- It helps the patients to get rid of the need to wear glasses or contact lenses.
- In order to undergo the LASIK procedure, one should be at least 18 years old.
- This is because the vision of people younger than 18 usually continues to change.
- The procedure helps to treat conditions such as myopia, hyperopia, and astigmatism.

Reference

1. Business Standard – Do health policies cover LASIK surgeries?

UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)

India and Iran drop foreign arbitration clause in Chabahar port issue.

- The UNCITRAL was established by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 1966.
- The UNCITRAL is the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law.
- It works with a mandate to further the progressive harmonization and unification of the law of international trade.
- UNCITRAL conducts its business at yearly sessions that alternate between Vienna, where it is headquartered, and New York City, New York, USA.
- UNCITRAL has 60 members who are chosen to serve terms of six years.

- The members are 14 from Asia, 14 from Africa, 10 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 8 from Eastern Europe, and 14 from Western Europe and other countries.
- India – India is a founding member of UNCITRAL and is the only country which have been a member of UNCITRAL since its inception.

International Trade Law

- The country's government uses international trade law as a tool to regulate and impose trade sanctions.
- International trade law is focused on adapting domestic laws to international trade laws and on implementing international trade law that is based on treaties.

References

1. Hindu – India-Iran drop foreign arbitration clause in Chabahar port
2. UN Web TV – UNCITRAL

Aditya L1 Mission

Following lunar successes, the upcoming Aditya L1 will portray ISRO not as a rising Sun, but as a Sun that has already risen high.

- **Aim –** To observe the Sun from a close distance, and try to obtain information about its atmosphere and magnetic field.
- **Payloads –** It is equipped with seven payloads on board to study the Photosphere, Chromosphere, Sun's corona, solar emissions, solar winds and flares, Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs).
- **Detectors –** It will carry out round-the-clock imaging of the Sun using electromagnetic and particle and magnetic field detectors.
- **Halo orbit –** The spacecraft shall be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system, which is about 1.5 million km from the Earth.
- Aditya L1 will perform continuous observations looking directly at the Sun.
- **Study –** Solar upper atmospheric (chromosphere and corona) dynamics.
- Chromospheric and coronal heating, physics of the partially ionized plasma, initiation of the coronal mass ejections, and flares.

References

1. Business Standard – ISRO's solar odyssey
2. WION – India's Sun mission Aditya-L1 to be launched in two weeks

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