Prelim Bits 26-11-2019

Sumatran Rhino

- The Sumatran rhino has become extinct in Malaysia after the last remaining individual died on November 23, 2019, due to natural causes.
- It is the smallest of all rhino species and one of the most endangered land mammals on the planet.
- It is the only Asian Rhino with two horns.
- Its IUCN status is Critically Endangered.
- Earlier, it has occurred in the parts of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.
- Now, it exists only in four isolated regions of rainforests on the Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Borneo.

Malabar Tree Toad

- It is a very rare species of amphibian endemic to the Western Ghats.
- It is an endangered species that spends most of its life on trees, coming to the ground only during the first monsoon showers to mate.
- Its population is shrinking mainly due to habitat loss, climate change and *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, a deadly fungus that has been decimating entire amphibian populations worldwide.
- The Metastring Foundation, a citizen-based conservation non-profit based in Bengaluru, was awarded a grant of Rs 15 lakh for one year for its project on the Malabar Tree Toad.
- It is working to train and equip citizens for mapping the range of an extremely rare species of toad as only sporadic records are available.

Wooden Breast Syndrome

- Researchers have recently found that the Wooden Breast Syndrome affects broiler chickens by making the meat hard and chewy.
- It is a metabolic disorder characterised by abnormal fat accumulation in the breast muscle tissue.
- It involves inflammation of the veins in the breast tissue and accumulation of lipid around the affected veins.
- It is followed by muscle cell death and replacement by fibrous and fatty tissue.

- An enzyme called lipoprotein lipase is behind the syndrome and it is crucial for fat metabolism.
- At the onset of wooden breast syndrome, lipoprotein lipase was higher in affected chickens, leading to more fat accumulating in the breast muscles.
- This is an irregularity because breast muscle fibres in chicken typically rely on sugar molecules for fuel, not fat molecules.
- It can render the birds unmarketable and cause losses for growers.

Gamosa

- It is a symbol of Assamese culture. It is equivalent to towel by meaning 'Ga' means 'body' and 'mosa' means 'wipe' (literally meaning a towel but multi-functional in practice).
- It is mostly woven out of white threads with colourful and intricate inlays in red.
- There are different varieties woven for religious and auspicious occasions.
- It is also known as ‘Bihuwaan’ and it is an essential part of Bihu festival of Assam.
- It is valued as a gift for visitors, used as a scarf, anti-dust mask, wrapped around the head as a turban.
- It has been assigned a new function for conservation of rare freshwater turtles.
- Conservationists are using this cultural icon to carry forward the message of turtle conservation, with *gamosas* woven with turtle images.

MILAN 2020

- It is a biennial naval exercise held under the command Indian Navy.
- The Last (10^{th}) edition was held in 2018 and the next (2020) is going to be held in Vishakhapatnam.
- In its forthcoming edition, 41 countries have been invited for the participation.
- USA and Russia have been invited while Pakistan and China are not.
- The areas of cooperation include Capacity Building, Marine Domain Awareness, Training, Hydrography, Technical Assistance, Operational Exercise etc.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express



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