Prelim Bits 27-10-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Satellite Phones

A senior executive of Saudi Arabian Oil Company was arrested for using an unauthorised satellite phone during his visit in India.

- Satellite phone connectivity relies on satellites, whereas, connectivity to regular cell phones relies on cell phone towers.
- Satellite phones are much more expensive than regular cell phones.
- Satellite phones work in remote areas where there are no cell phone towers and therefore, no cellular connectivity.
- Satellite phones usually cover most of the planet with fairly robust connectivity.



- Few well known satellite connectivity providers are Iridium, Inmarsat, Thuraya and Globalstar.
- Each satellite phone device works only with a specific provider, which means a Thuraya phone will not work on the Iridium network.

Satellite phones in India

- Indian Telegraph Act 1885 and the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933 governs the possession of satellite phones in India.
- The Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act makes it illegal to possess satellite phones.
- However, the Act allows the Central Government to make rules for any exemptions and providing license.
- So, it is **illegal to carry satellite phone without permission** in India.
- Thus, any individual found to be in possession of an unauthorized satellite phone in India is liable to be prosecuted as per Indian law.
- Restrictions on the possession and use of these phones were tightened after the terrorists who attacked Mumbai in 2008 used these devices.

References

1. Indian Express - Satellite phones: What are they, and why is their use restricted in India?

Blue Flag Beaches In India

Two Indian beaches, Minicoy Thundi beach and Kadmat beach, both located in Lakshadweep, have received the International eco-label 'Blue Flag'.

Both the Thundi beach and the Kadmat beach have designated staff for beach cleanliness and maintenance; and for safety and security of swimmers.

Thundi Beach

- The Thundi beach is located in the Minicoy Island of Lakshadweep archipelago.
- The white sand beach is lined by turquoise blue water of the lagoon.
- It is a paradise for swimmers and tourists.

Kadmat Beach

- The Kadmat Island is also known as Cardamom Island, is located in the Amindivi group of Islands.
- The Kadmat Beach is popular with cruise tourists who visit the island for water sports.
- It is a paradise for nature lovers with its pearl white sand, blue lagoon waters, its moderate climate and friendly locals.

Blue Flag Beaches in India

- With the newly added 2 beaches, India now has 12 Blue Flag certified beaches. The 10 other beaches are -



- The Blue Flag certificate is given by the **Foundation for Environment Education** in Denmark (FEE) to for beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism operators.
- The mission of Blue Flag is to promote sustainability in the tourism sector, through environmental education, environmental protection and other sustainable development practices.
- To receive the certificate, the beaches must comply with all the 33 criteria as mandated by the Foundation for Environment Education (FEE).
- To know more about Blue Flag Certification, click here
- **Similar topic** - BEAMS

References

1. PIB - Two more Indian Beaches enter the coveted list of Blue Beaches
2. Live mint - Two more Indian Beaches enter the coveted list of Blue Beaches
3. Hindustan times - The 10 Blue Flag beaches in India

Glyphosate

The Centre has restricted the use of glyphosate in agriculture by mandating only authorised Pest Control Operators (PCOs) to apply in the field.

> *Pest Control Operators (PCOs) are licensed to use deadly chemicals for treating pests such as rodents.*

- Glyphosate is an herbicide and weedicide.
- It is applied to the leaves of plants to kill both broadleaf plants and grasses.
- The sodium salt form of glyphosate is used to regulate plant growth and ripen specific crops.

- **Properties of Glyphosate** - It binds the soil very tightly and therefore it is generally not available for uptake by roots of nearby plants.
- For the same reason, its residues are not likely to leach into groundwater and only limited amounts of glyphosate are found in runoff surface water.
- **Usage** - Glyphosate is a widely used herbicide due to the above properties.
- Glyphosate has been majorly used in tea plantations in India.
- It is used in farms, orchards, vineyards and agro-forestry for non-selective vegetation control.
- The chemical is also used on non-crop areas to control unwanted growth.
- **Threats** - The use of glyphosate rose manifold once HT BT cotton started getting illegally cultivated in India.

- The use of Glyphosate involves health hazards and risk to human beings and animals.
- Glyphosate has been found to be carcinogenic in a study by the World Health Organization (WHO).

HT BT cotton is a GM variety which is yet to be approved by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC).

- **Restriction on Glyphosate** – The chemical is already banned in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Punjab.
- Earlier, for manufacture or sale of glyphosate, companies have to get certificate of registration.
- To implement the new order, all certificates of registration for the chemical have to be returned within 3 months.
- Appropriate action will be taken under the Insecticides Act of 1968 on failure of return within the stipulated time.

References

1. The Hindu Business Line - Centre curbs glyphosate use, only professional pest controllers are allowed to spray
2. Business-Standard - Centre restricts use of herbicide glyphosate over health hazards
3. Business-Standard - Governments move on glyphosate use leaves all unhappy, may not curb rampant use

Khangkhui Cave In Manipur

The forest officials denied the planned extermination of the colony of bats from a Manipur cave system as stated by the zoological study.

- The Khangkhui Cave is a **natural limestone** cave locally called as Khangkhui

Mangsor.

- Khangkhui Mangsor caves consists of four major caves.



- The cave was used as a shelter by the local people during World War II, after the Japanese forces advanced to Manipur and the adjoining Nagaland.
- The folklore of the **Tangkhul community**, believed the cave was the abode of a protective deity.

> *Tangkhul Nagas is an ethnic group living in the Indo-Myanmar border areas of Ukhrul and Kamjong districts of Manipur.*

- The cave housed large populations of bats belonging to the Rhinolophidae and Hipposideridae families.
- Researchers recorded Blyth's horseshoe bat in the Khangkhui cave which was one of 12 new species added to Manipur's mammals.
- Archaeologists have discovered many important artefacts, dating back to the **Palaeolithic** culture from this cave.
- Other Palaeolithic sites in Manipur are

1. Songu Cave in Chandel District,
2. Machi in Chandel District and
3. Nongpok Keithelmanbi in Senapati District.

References

1. The Hindu - Bats evicted from prehistoric Manipur cave for tourism: Study
2. Ukhrul District - Government of Manipur

Subsuming National Anti-profiteering Authority

The Centre has decided to subsume the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA), the GST anti-profiteering watchdog, into the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

- The National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) was originally set up for two years till November 2019 under GST Act, 2017.
- However, the tenure was extended till November 30, 2022.
- The GST law needs some amendment in order to subsume the NAA into the CCI.
- The proposed amendments to Anti-Profiteering Regulations under the GST Act will require the GST Council's approval.
- Changes could be made in respect of cases, timeframe, appointing of members and eligibility criteria of members.

National Anti-profiteering Authority

- The National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) is the statutory mechanism under GST Act, 2017.

- The Authority was set up to check the unfair profiteering activities by the registered suppliers under GST law.
- The Authority's main function is to ensure that the registered suppliers under GST law are not profiteering by charging higher prices from recipients in the name of GST.
- The legal mandate of NAA is to examine and check such profiteering activities and recommend punitive actions including cancellation of Registration.
- To know more about NAA, Click here

Competition Commission of India

- Competition Commission of India (CCI) is the statutory commission under the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007.
- The CCI regulates anti-competitive behaviour and conduct that may stifle competition by way of abuse of dominance.
- The CCI consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.
- The functions of the Commission is to

    1. Eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition,
    2. Promote and sustain competition,
    3. Protect the interests of consumers,
    4. Ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India,
    5. Give opinion on competition issues,
    6. Undertake competition advocacy,
    7. Create public awareness,
    8. Impart training on competition issues.

References

1. Business-Standard | Centre plans to provide legal power to CCI ahead of merger with NAA
2. Competition Commission of India
3. National Anti-profiteering Authority

