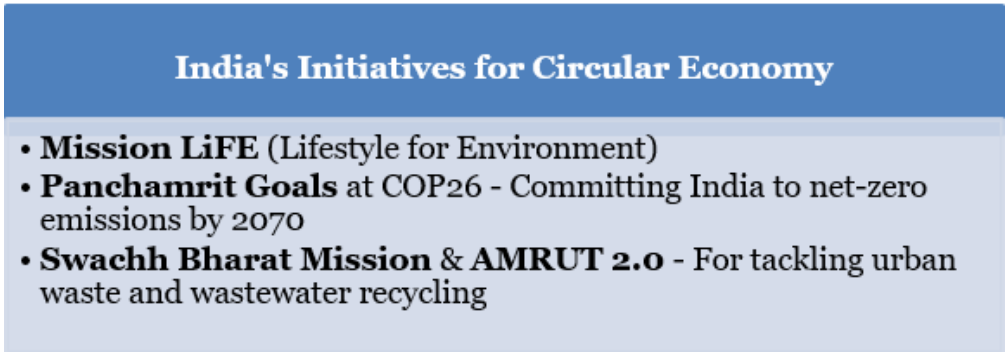
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Cities Coalition for Circularity (C-3)

Why in News?

India launches C-3 initiative at the 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific that held in Jaipur.

- **C-3** – It is a multi-nation alliance for *city-to-city collaboration*, knowledge-sharing, and *private sector partnerships*.
- It is a critical platform for policymakers, industry leaders, researchers, and development partners to discuss and implement *sustainable solutions for waste management* and resource efficiency as economies in the Asia-Pacific region
- **Role** – It will act as a *catalyst for resource efficiency* and a low-carbon economy, strengthening collaboration between policymakers, industry leaders, and researchers to build a sustainable future.
- **Significance** – It is expected to be a game changer in the city- city partnerships across nations.



Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific

- **Launched in** – 2009, under the aegis of *United Nations*.
- The word 'Circular Economy' was added to the conference title from the 10th forum (2020).
- **Objective** – To chart pathways and opportunities for realizing *circular and zero waste societies* in the Asia-Pacific region.
- To provide strategic policy *advices to national government* authorities in mainstreaming 3Rs.
- To address policies, programs, measures, tools and technologies in the context of achieving
    - Resource efficiency
    - Sustainable production and consumption
    - Integrated solid waste management

    - Sound material-cycle
    - Low-carbon and zero waste society
- To provide a *knowledge sharing platform* for disseminating and sharing best practices in 3R areas, including new and emerging issues of concern in waste management.

> ***Jaipur Declaration (2025-2034)*** *is a non-political, non-binding commitment that will guide the next decade of efforts towards resource efficiency and sustainable urban growth.*

References

1. The Hindu| Launch of Cities Coalition for Circularity
2. PIB| 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum

National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

Why in News?

Recently, Indian PM chaired the 7th meeting of National Board for Wildlife in Gir National Park in Gujarat.

- **Establishment** – It was constituted as a ***statutory body*** under the *Wildlife Protection Act, 1972*.
- **Aim** – To promote the conservation and development of wildlife and forests.
- **Composition** – *47 members* including the Prime Minister.
    - **Chairman** – *Prime Minister* of India.
- **Term of office** – 3 years for the members other than those who are member's ex-officio.
- **Powers** – It recommends on the setting up of and management of ***national parks, sanctuaries, and other protected areas*** and on matters relating to restriction of activities in those areas.
- **Meeting** – It shall ordinarily ***meet once in a year***, presided by chairperson or Vice-chairperson in chairperson's absence.
- The *Member-Secretary shall prepare agenda* items for the meetings, obtain approval of the Chairperson and circulate it.
- Quorum shall be one-half of the total number of members.
- **Standing committee** – If constituted, it shall consist of the *Vice-Chairperson* (Union Minister in charge of Forests and Wildlife), the Member Secretary and *not more than 10 members* to be nominated by the Vice-Chairperson from amongst the members of the NBWL.

Key takeaways from the 7th meeting

- **Dolphin Estimation** – *1st ever riverine dolphin estimation* conducted in India, estimated a total of ***6,327 dolphins***.
- *Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest* numbers, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam.

- **Asiatic Lion estimation** – It announced the initiation of the *16th cycle of lion estimation* to be conducted in 2025.
- It is carried out *once every 5 years*
- **National Referral Centre for Wildlife** – The foundation stone was laid *at Junagadh*, which will function as the hub for coordination and governance of various aspects related to wildlife health and disease management.
- **Preserving traditional knowledge and manuscripts** – For conservation and management of forests and wildlife.
- There are plans to the success story of *Gir in Lion and Leopard conservation*.

Reference

PIB| 7th meeting of National Board for Wildlife

Narwhals (Unicorn of Sea)

Why in News?

Researchers from the Florida University, Canada's Department of Fisheries & Oceans, in partnership with Inuit communities of Canada used drones to provide new insights into narwhal behaviour.

- It is a medium-sized ***odontocete or toothed whale***.
- It is different from all other toothed whales in that it has *no teeth in its mouth*.
    - Scientific name - Monodon Monoceros (one tooth, one horn).
- **Nativity** – It is found *only in Arctic waters*, spend their lives in the Arctic waters of Canada, Greenland, Norway and Russia.
- **Habitat** – Most narwhals winter for up to 5 months under sea ice in the Baffin Bay-Davis Strait area.
- **Coloration** – They change color as they age.
    - Newborns are a blue-gray
    - Juveniles are blue-black
    - Adults are a mottled gray.
    - Old narwhals are nearly all white

*Narwhales coloration contributed to their name **"corpse whale"**, refers to how their skin colour resembles that of a drowned sailor.*

- **Diet** – They *change their diets seasonally*, feeding intensely in the winter and eating little during the ice-free summer season.
- **Tusks** – Some have up to 2 tusks, while others have none.
- The spiralled tusk juts from the head and can grow as long at 10 feet.
    - **Males** – They have a single long, straight tooth (or tusk) that *protrudes 2 to 3 meters* out of the upper left jaw.
    - **Females** – They *almost never have a tusk*.



- **Usage of tusks** – Used to investigate, manipulate and influence the behavior of Arctic char, a prey.
- **Tusking behaviour** – A situation where *2 or more of them simultaneously raise* their tusks almost vertically out of the water, crossing them in what may be a ritualistic behaviour.
- It is to assess a potential opponent's qualities or to display those qualities to potential mates.
- **Threats** – Oil and gas development and climate change pose threats to narwhals.
- **Conservation status**
  - IUCN – Least Concerned

References

1. Down To Earth| Study on Narwhals usage of their Tusks
2. WWF| Narwhals are Unicorns of Sea

Selenium Causes Hair Loss

Why in News?

ICMR interim report links high levels of selenium in wheat to hair loss.

- **Issue** – High levels of selenium in *wheat from Punjab and Haryana* have caused sudden hair loss in individuals.
- **Impacted people** - Between end-December 2024 and January, 2025, *over 300 cases of sudden hair loss* were reported in people living in 18 villages in Shegaon taluka in Maharashtra.
- **Diagnosis** – The amount of selenium detected in the blood of affected individuals was *about 31 times higher than controls*.
- The selenium content was also high in wheat samples collected from 2 ration shops and a few households of affected people.
- **Selenosis** – It is condition characterised by *sudden hair loss,* due to intake of excessive selenium.

Selenium and Health

• It is a *trace mineral*, which means that the body only needs a small amount of it.
• It is found naturally in foods or as a supplement.
• **Selenoproteins** - It is an essential component of various *enzymes and proteins*.
• **Storage** - Most selenium in the body is *stored in muscle tissue*.
• The *thyroid gland holds the highest concentration* of selenium due to various selenoproteins that assist with thyroid function.
• **Importance** – It helps to *make DNA* and protect against cell damage and infections
• It involves in *reproduction and the metabolism of thyroid* hormones.

> *The **Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of Selenium** for adult men and women 19+ years of age is 55 micrograms daily. Women who are pregnant and lactating need about 60 and 70 micrograms daily, respectively.*

Reference

1. The Hindu| High level of selenium cause Hair Loss
2. Nutrition Source| Selenium and Health

Women's Role in India's Financial Growth

Why in News?

Recently, a new report was released regarding the role of women in India's financial growth.

- **Report** - "From Borrowers to Builders: Women's Role in India's Financial Growth Story".
- **Launched by** – NITI Aayog.
- **Published by**
  - TransUnion CIBIL
  - Women Entrepreneurship Platform's (WEP) of NITI Aayog
  - MicroSave Consulting (MSC).
- **Findings** – It reveals that more women in India are seeking credit and actively monitoring their credit scores.
- **Increased financial awareness** – As of December 2024, *27 million women were monitoring* their credit, marking a 42% increase from the previous year.

> ***Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is incubated in Niti Aayog,** works towards building an inclusive ecosystem that fosters financial literacy, access to credit, mentorship, and market linkages. It has also constituted Financing Women Collaborative (FWC) to achieve its goal.*

- **Increased self-monitoring** – Women's share of the total self-monitoring base *increased to 19.43%* in December 2024, up from 17.89% in 2023.
- More women *from non-metro regions are actively self-monitoring* their credit compared to those in metro areas,

    - Growth of 48% in non-metro regions and 30% in metro areas.
- In 2024, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana accounted for 49% of all self-monitoring women, with the *southern region leading at 10.2 million*.
- **Increase in women borrowers** – Since 2019, women's share in business loan origination *has increased by 14%.*
- Their share in gold loans has grown by 6%, with women *accounting for 35% of business borrowers* by December 2024.
- Northern and central states, including Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, saw the highest compounded annual growth rates (CAGR) in active women borrowers over the past 5 years.
- **Challenges** – Credit aversion, poor banking experiences, barriers to credit readiness and issues with collateral and guarantors persist.

Promoting women's entrepreneurship could create employment opportunities for 150 to 170 million people while driving greater participation from women in the labour force.

Reference

PIB| Niti Aayog Report on Women's role in India's Financial Growth

Related News- empowHER Biz | Boosting women entrepreneurship

One Liners 04-03-2025
Polity & Governance
EPIC Number • **EPIC –** Electors Photo Identification Card. • **Issued by** – Election Commission of India (ECI). • It is the voter ID card number, which serves as *identification proof for Indian citizens* over the age of 18. • **Challenges** - Duplication in EPIC number, caused by use of identical alphanumeric series by 2 different States/UTs. • Irrespective of the EPIC number, any elector can cast a *vote only at their designated polling station,* where they are enrolled in the electoral roll.
Sashakt Panchayat-Netri Abhiyan • **Launched in** – *2025*, by Ministry of Panchayati Raj. • **Aim** – To strengthen the capacity-building interventions for *women elected representatives of Panchayat* across the nation. • **Focus** – Leadership, decision-making capabilities, and reinforcing women's role in grassroots governance.

Jan Aushadhi Diwas, 2025

• **Celebrated on** – *7th March*, every year.
• **Theme** – Jan Aushadhi - Virasat Ke Saath.
• **Objective** – To enhance awareness about the scheme and promote generic medicines.
• More than 500 Free Health Camps (Jan Arogya Mela) organized especially for *senior citizens*.

ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Human Rights

• **ITEC** – Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Executive (ITEC) provide an opportunity to share and exchange each other's rich cultural diversity and human rights values.
• **Organized by** – National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
• **Beneficiaries** – National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of Global South.
• 14 out of *37 global south* countries participated.
• **Focus** – Women rights, gender equality, protecting marginalized communities and safeguarding vulnerable populations.

DISHA Program

• **DISHA** – Developing Innovations, Successful Harnessing, and Adoption.
• It is a step towards *building a knowledge-based economy* where research-driven solutions transform industries.
• **Aim** – To *support faculty members and students* working on disruptive technologies across disciplines, ensuring that India remains at the forefront of global innovation.
• **Aligned with** – Anusandhan National Research Foundation (*ANRF*), which seeks to create a unified research ecosystem bridging science, humanities, and social sciences.

Bilateral Relations

India and Nepal Ties in WASH

• **WASH** – Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH).
• **India-Nepal Ties** – They signed MoUs to strengthen cooperation in WASH Sector, including waste management.
• It aids in ensuring better access to clean drinking water and sanitation for their populations.

Economy

Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

• **TFR** – It is the average number of children a woman would have during her reproductive years.
• **Key indicator in** – Population growth and change.
• **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019-21:**
  - **India TFR at national level** – 2.0.
  - **States with TFR >1.8** – Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
  - **States with average TFR 2.4** – Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan.

Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)

• **PMI Data** – It is prepared on the basis of *responses from purchasing executives* of 400 firms.
• **Performances** – India's *PMI in services slipped* to *56.5* in January, the lowest level since November 2022.
• Manufacturing sales and output PMI was also down.

Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)

• **Established in** – *1963*, as an autonomous body.
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
• **Aim** – To impart knowledge through research and training in *international business and trade*.
• **Recognition** – It got University status, deemed to be University in 2002.
• National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) recognized it as *Grade 'A'* Institution in 2005 & 2015.

Science

Centre for Fuel Cell Technology (CFCT)

• **Objective** – To develop Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cells (*PEMFC*).
• **Nodal centre** – International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI).
• **PEMFC** – It is one of the *low temperature fuel cells*, in its entireness, demonstrate its application in decentralised power generation systems and transportation applications.

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