UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 11-01-2025

Indo-Burmese Pangolin

Why in News?

Recently, scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata have identified a new species of Indo-Burmese pangolin.

- **Pangolins** – They are the *only mammals wholly-covered in scales* and they use those scales to protect themselves from predators in the wild.
- **Indo-Burmese pangolin** – It is a distinct phylogenetic species of Asian pangolin, *diverged from the Chinese pangolin* around 3.4 million years ago, during the Pliocene Epoch.
    - **Scientific name** – Manis Indoburmanica.

***Phylogenetic species** is the smallest set of organisms that share an ancestor and can be distinguished from other such sets.*

- **Distinct species** – It has a genetic distance of 0.038 and a barcode gap of 3.8% which reinforced its status as a distinct species.
- It is influenced by geoclimatic changes in the Indo-Burma region.

***Genetic distance** is a measure of the genetic divergence between species or between populations within a species, whether the distance measures time from common ancestor or degree of differentiation.*

***Mitochondrial genomes** include mitochondrial DNA are inherited to offspring from their mother.*

- **Distribution –** Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.
- **In India** – Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.
- It is home to 2 species,
    - **Indian Pangolin** – Found across the subcontinent.
    - **Chinese Pangolin** – Found across a larger area in south Asia.
- Bihar, West Bengal and Assam have both species in their States.
- **Threats –** Pangolins are among the *most trafficked wild mammals globally* due to poaching and habitat degradation.
- **Conservation Status** –It hasn't yet been concluded.



World Pangolin Day *is observed every year on February 18.*

Reference

The Hindu| Scientists Discovered New Species of Indo-Burmese Pangolin

Kurukop Echo Art

Why in News?

A recent study by the researchers in South Africa suggested a distinct echo attracted the ancient artists to one site, Kurukop.

Kurukop
• It is an *archaeological site*. • **Located in** - Nama Karoo region of *South Africa*. • **Geological formation** – Began to accumulate from about 300 million years ago, before the breakup of super continent Gondwanaland. • **Historical formation** – It is an *eroded sandstone hill*, transformed by volcanic activity. • **Signs of human evidence** – It is marked by *112 petroglyphs* and other signs of human presence, such as ostrich eggshell fragments and pottery, dating from c. 11 500 before present. • **Petroglyphs** – It depicts images of Eland, elephants, zebra, ostriches, wildebeest, rhinoceros and animal-human hybrids. • The depiction were made by *hunter-gatherer San and Khoe herder people* who visited Kurukop repeatedly.

Petroglyphs *engraved on rocks, have an obvious visual attraction.*

- **Kurukop echo –** This place *provides a distinctive echo* that ensured the hunter gatherers to repeatedly visit this place.
- **Echo Art** – Evidence shows that those people created rock art combined with performances like clapping, singing, dancing, which in this case was enhanced by echoes.

Echo *refers to the repetition of sound caused by the reflection of sound.*

- It also provides a reference point for a mythological story from the region that speaks about the relationship between echo, wind, mountain and breath.
- **Cultural relevance** – Petroglyph distribution data and Echo pattern, shows *60% of the petroglyphs created directly in the echo zone*.
- This suggests that Kurukop people were most likely to create images in the area that echoed strongly.



Reference

The Hindu| Kurukop Echoed Art

Depersonalization and Derealization Disorder (DPDR)

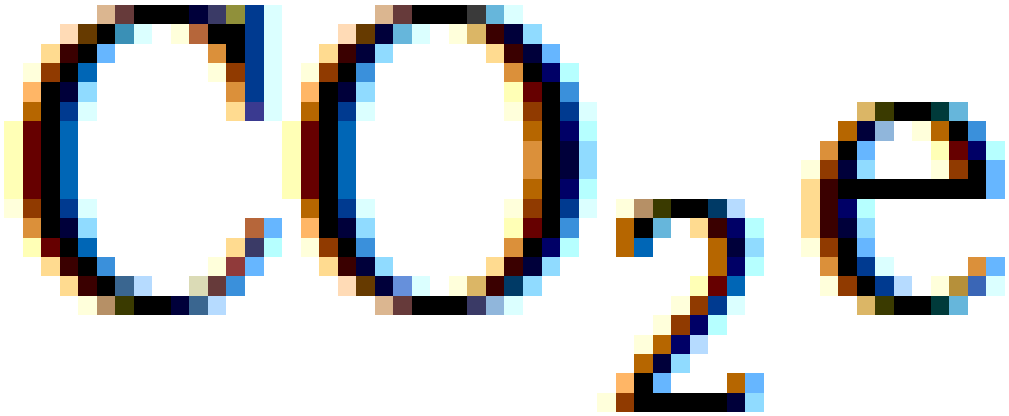
Why in News?

Recently, an article described about the Depersonalization and Derealization Disorder (DPDR).

- **A mental health condition** – A state where individuals experience persistent *feelings of detachment from themselves* or their surroundings.

	Derealization	Depersonalization
Conditions	• A sense of feeling of detachment from environment, objects & people in it.	• A feeling of detachment from themselves.
Symptoms	• Distortion of the distance from the size or shape of objects • A heightened awareness of surroundings. • Feeling as recent events happened in the distant past.	• An inability to recognize or describe emotions. • Feeling unconnected to body, mind and feelings. • Sense of body and limbs are distorted and head is wrapped in cotton.

- **Susceptible population** – It *affects 1 to 2% of the global population*, predominantly youngsters.



- **Symptoms** – Sensation of being in a dream or fog.
  - The world appears flat, colourless or artificial.
  - *Distortions in visual perception*, with objects appearing either blurred or unusually sharp.
  - Sounds that seem either amplified or muted.
  - An altered perception of time, which may seem to move too fast or too slow.
- The above symptoms can last for hours, days, weeks or even months.
- **Treatment** – It is *treatable* by addressing the root cause, whether it is anxiety, trauma or depression.

Reference

The Hindu| Understanding Depersonalization Disorder

One Liners 11-01-2025

Social Issues

Drug Trafficking and National Security Conference

• **Conducted in** – in New Delhi.
• **Organized by** – Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).
• **Aim** – To address the growing concern of drug trafficking and its impact on national security, with a *special focus on 8 states* and *Union Territories* of northern India.

Anti-Narcotics Measures in India

• Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is implementing a 3-pronged strategy to achieve a *drug-free India by 2047*.
• **MANAS portal** - National Narcotics Helpline.
• **ANTF** - Anti-Narcotics Task Force of States and Union Territories.
• **NCORD** - Narcotics Coordination Mechanism.
• **PIT-NDPS Act** - Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
• **Special NDPS courts** – For speedy trial of drug-related cases.
• **Policy** - Zero Tolerance Policy against drug trafficking.

Polity & Governance

National Financial Reporting Authority

• **Constituted in** - *2018* under Companies Act, 2013.
• **Functions and Duties** - Recommend accounting and auditing policies & standards to be adopted by companies for approval by the Central Government.
• Monitor and enforce compliance with auditing & accounting standards.

Environment

Cleanliness Measures at Mahakumbh 2025

• Under – Namami Gange mission.
• Over 28,000 toilets
  - *Fiber Reinforced Plastic (FRP) toilets*.
  - *Prefabricated steel toilets with soak pits*
• 20,000 community urinals.
• 37.75 lakh liner bags – For waste collection and disposal.

Miscellaneous

18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention

• **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** – It is also known as Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Day, is celebrated on January 9.
• **Commemoration day** – Of the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915.
• **1st celebrated in** – 2003.
• **Revised in** – 2015, to celebrate the event once every 2 years.
• **Importance** – To mark the contribution of overseas Indian Community towards the development of India.

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards

• **Award** – It is the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians.
• **2025 awardees** - It include, among others,
  - President of Trinidad & Tobago
  - Christine Carla Kangaloo in public affairs
  - Baroness Usha Kumari Prashar from the UK in politics
  - Dr Sharmila Ford from the U.S. in community service.

National Youth Day (12th January)

• **Commemoration** – On the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
• **Declared in** – 1984.
• Since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.

Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue

• Indian PM to interact with 3000 young leaders selected through a merit-based, multi-level selection process from over 30 lakh participants.
• **Aligns with** – Indian PM's Independence Day call to engage 1 lakh youth in politics without political affiliations.
• **Importance** – It provides them a national platform to make their ideas for Viksit Bharat, a reality.

World Hindi Day 2025

• **Day** – It is celebrated every year on January 10.
• It is an important day that celebrates the promotion of the Hindi language at a global level.
• **2025 theme** – A Global Voice of Unity and Cultural Pride.

Khelo India ASMITA Women's League

• **Conducted by** – Sports Authority of India (SAI), in collaboration with National Sports Federations (NSFs).
• **Objectives** - To increase the participation of women in sports by organising leagues in various disciplines.
• To provide competition exposure to women athletes of different age categories across the country.
• **Event** – ASMITA Khelo India Women's Yogasana League 2024-25 sees over 7000 participations.

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