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Virunga National Park

- Six rangers have been killed in the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- Virunga National Park stretches from the Virunga mountains in the south, to the Rwenzori mountains in the north.
- It borders Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda and Rwenzori Mountains National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda.
- Established in 1925, it is Africa's first national park, which is famous for its **mountain gorillas**.
- It is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (UNESCO)-designated World Heritage Site since 1979.

'Indian Cities in Post-Pandemic World' Report

- This report was carried out by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- It highlights the country's most pressing urban challenges that were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It said that the unfolding pandemic has been catastrophic for cities.
- But these cities will also be a key to India's post-pandemic growth as they account for nearly 70% of India's GDP.
- The study found that an average of 25-30 people migrate to cities from rural areas every single minute.
- However, most big cities in India have a wide economic disparity, with expansive slums and a large urban poor population.
- The study further said that about 35% per cent of all urban households cannot afford housing at market prices.

Heliophysics Missions

- NASA has approved two heliophysics missions to explore the Sun and the system that drives space weather near Earth.
- Understanding the physics that drive the solar wind and solar explosions could help in predicting these events.
- Together, NASA's contribution to the following will help in understanding the Sun and Earth as an interconnected system,
    1. Extreme Ultraviolet High-Throughput Spectroscopic Telescope Epsilon

Mission (EUVST) and
2. Electrojet Zeeman Imaging Explorer (EZIE)

- Funding comes from the Heliophysics Explorers Program, managed by the Explorers Program Office at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

EUVST

- The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) leads the EUVST Epsilon Mission (Solar-C EUVST Mission), along with other partners.
- Targeted for launch in 2026, EUVST is a solar telescope.
- It will study how the solar atmosphere releases solar wind and drives eruptions of solar material.
- These phenomena propagate out from the Sun and influence the space radiation environment throughout the solar system.
- EUVST will take comprehensive UV spectroscopy measurements of the solar atmosphere at the highest level of detail to date.
- This will allow scientists to tease out how different magnetic and plasma processes drive coronal heating and energy release.

EZIE

- To be launched in 2024, EZIE will study electric currents in Earth's atmosphere linking aurora to Earth's magnetosphere that responds to solar activity and other factors.
- EZIE is an investigation comprising a trio of CubeSats that will study the source of and changes in the auroral electrojet (AE).
- [AE is an electric current circling through Earth's atmosphere around 60-90 miles above the surface and extending into the magnetosphere.
- They are generated by changes in the structure of the magnetotail.]
- The interaction of the magnetosphere and the solar wind compresses the Sun-facing side of the magnetosphere.
- This drags out the night-time side of the magnetosphere into what is called a magnetotail.
- The same space weather phenomena that power the aurora can cause interference with radio and communication signals and utility grids on Earth's surface, and damage to spacecraft in orbit.

Pre-packs

- The government may amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to introduce pre-packs as a resolution mechanism.
- A pre-pack is an agreement for the debt resolution of a distressed company through an agreement between secured creditors and investors instead of a

public bidding process.

- In India, such a system would require that financial creditors agree on terms with potential investors and seek approval of the resolution plan from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).
- Pre-pack would act as an important alternative resolution mechanism to the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) of the IBC.
- This process would be completed much faster than the traditional CIRP.
- [CIRP requires the creditors of the distressed company allow for an open auction for qualified investors to bid for the distressed company.]
- In 2020, the government formed a committee led by **MS Sahoo**, chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, to look into including pre-packs as a resolution mechanism under the IBC.

Cherry Blossom Mao Festival

- In Manipur, this Festival was held at Mao area of Senapati district marking the beginning of pink season in the district.
- The Mao area is known for Cherry Blossom, a plant which is popularly known as Sakura in Japan.
- Manipur government started organizing the festival from 2017 onward.
- The festival featured the picturesque landscape of Mao town adorned with Cherry Blossom flowers.

Culling

- It is the mass slaughter of domestic poultry birds to contain the spread of bird flu.
- During culling operations, all domestic birds in an infected area are slaughtered and their remains buried.
- In India, culling is done in a radius one kilometre from the site of infection, which is called the ‘infected zone’.
- Cervical dislocation or neck-wringing method is to be used for culling.
- Culling was earlier done only to stop the viral disease from spreading to birds in other farms outside the infected zone.
- It is now aimed at protecting humans, ever since the first transmission to humans in 1997.

Source: AIR, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Down To Earth, Financial Express, NASA



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