UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 13-11-2024

Booker Prize, 2024

British writer Samantha Harvey recently won the Booker Prize in 2024 for her space station novel Orbital.

- The Booker Prize is open to novels ***originally written in English and published in the U.K. or Ireland.***
- **Founded in** - 1969.
- **Awarded by –** Booker Prize Foundation.
- It has been awarded ***annually.***
- **Nationality -** Any nationality.
- **Publication –** The novel must be published by a registered UK or Irish publication, self-published novels are ***not eligible.***
- **Award -** The winner receives ***50,000 pounds*** as well as the 2,500 pounds awarded to each of the 6 shortlisted authors.
- Both the winner and the shortlisted authors are guaranteed a global readership and can expect a dramatic increase in book sales.
- **Recognition** - Being shortlisted or nominated for the Booker Prize is considered a mark of distinction for authors.
- **Shortlisted candidates -** Held, Creation Lake, Orbital, James, The Safekeep, Stone Yard Devotional.

International Booker Prize
• It is an annual award that recognizes the ***best translated work*** of fiction published in the United Kingdom or Ireland. • The award honors the best novels and short story collections in translation. • International Booker Prize began life in 2005 as the Man Booker International Prize. • It was initially a ***biennial prize*** for a body of work, and there was no stipulation that the work should be written in a language other than English. • In 2015, after the rules of the original Booker Prize expanded to allow writers of any nationality to enter as long as their books were written in English and published in the UK. • Since then it has been awarded ***annually*** for a single book, written in another language and translated into English. • The prize money is divided equally between the author and the translator. The winning title receives a ***£50,000 prize***.

References

1. The Hindu | Booker Prize 2024
2. Times of India | Booker prize, 2024

Amorphophallus Titanum

People in Geelong city have beelined to witness an unusual event, the blooming of the Amorphophallus Titanum.

- Amorphophallus Titanum (called Titan Arum in short) is a rare species, blooms once in a decade.
- It is also called the ***'corpse flower'.***
- **Size** - It is one of the largest in the world, growing over 10 ft. in height.
- It was first described by Italian botanist ***Odoardo Beccari*** in 1878.
- **Native -** It is native to western Sumatra, Indonesia.
- **Fragrance -** The flower smells like putrid dead bodies, only release this smell for 24-48 hours.
- It mimics the stench of rotting flesh to attract its pollinators, carnivorous bees and flies that feed on corpses (tactic called 'sapromyophily').
- **Features –**The massive inflorescence of the titan arum consists of an inner flower spike, known as a spadix, surrounded by a petal-like collar known as a spathe.
- The large furrowed spathe is green to cream-colored on the outside and tightly encloses the spadix before opening to reveal its deep crimson to purple interior.
- The upper, visible half of the spadix is smooth and yellowish to brown in color, and the entire spadix can reach more than 3 meters in height.
- At the base of the phallic structure is the 'corm', an underground structure that stores energy over the decade that it takes for it to bloom and the 6 more months it needs to fruit.
- This corm can weigh around 45 kilograms, the heaviest in the plant kingdom.
- Just one green shoot (that grows to be as tall as a tree) appears every year till the flower blooms to gather energy for it to survive.
- Each Titan Arum produces around 400 reddish-orange fruits containing two seeds each.
- **Habitat -** It blossoms on limestone hills in the rainforests of western Sumatra, Indonesia, where it is called *bunga bangkai* (*bunga* means flower and *bangkai* means corpse).
- Titan Arum doesn't bloom in the wild in Australia.
- **Conservation status –** IUCN- Endangered
- **Other similar species**
  - **Rafflesia arnoldi -** The largest individual flower in the world.
  - **Dracunculus vulgaris, Stapelia gigantea, Hydnora africana and Helicodiceros muscivorus**, as well as varieties of the Titan Arum, also emit a strong smell of decaying flesh to attract pollinators.



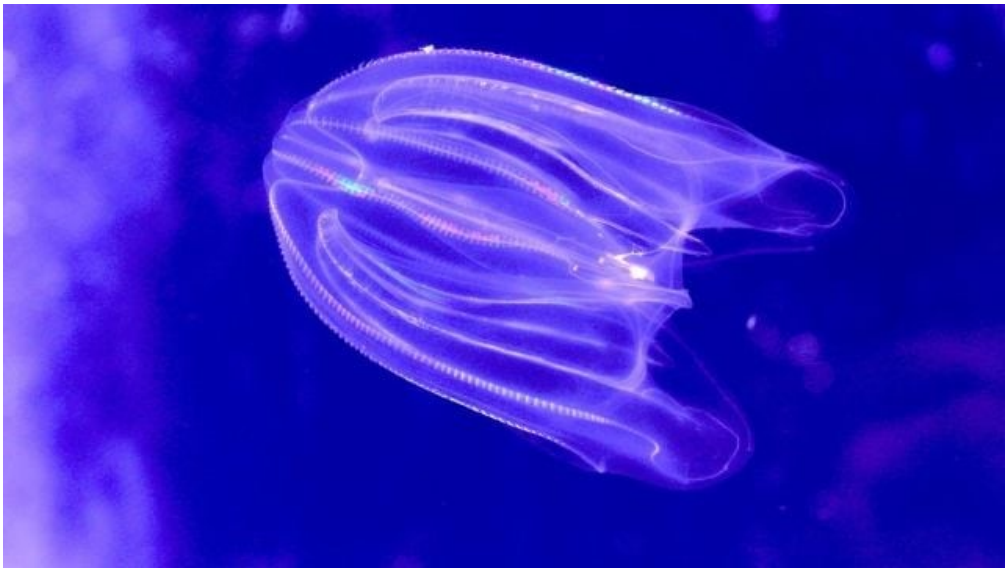
Reference

Down to Earth | Titan Arum

Comb jellies

Researchers recently discover new species of marine creatures that can age in reverse.

- Comb jellies are also known as ***ctenophore Mnemiopsis leidyi.***
- The comb jelly is an ***oval-shaped animal*** with 8 rows of tiny comb-like plates that it beats to move itself through the water.
- As it swims, the comb rows break up (diffract) light to produce a shimmering rainbow effect.
- Voracious predators of other jellies, some comb jellies can expand their stomachs to hold prey nearly half their own size.
- **Habitat -** Open waters
- **Diet -** Other ctenophores, some salps and siphonophores.
- **Research Findings -** It is a ***new species of marine invertebrate*** that breaks the traditional cycle of birth, ageing, and death to which most animals are bound.
- It can defy age and revert to younger versions of themselves, could be one of the first animals to have existed in the world as their presence goes back 700 million years.
- The adult comb jelly can regress and reach a larval stage if they are subjected to extreme stress.
- Over several weeks, the species not only reshaped their morphological features, but also had a completely different feeding behaviour, typical of a cydippid larva.
- ***Turritopsis dohrnii,*** known as the immortal jellyfish, have been observed to undergo reverse biological development too.



Reference

The Indian Express | Comb jellies

Agasthyamalai Bambootail

Recently, researchers have discovered a new species of damselfly in the Western Ghats of Kerala, near the Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary.

- The damselfly is a ***rare species*** belonging to the group of bambootails.
- **Scientific name** – Melanoneura agasthyamalaica.
- **Genus -** Melanoneura
  - It is ***only the second known species*** in the Melanoneura genus.
  - The other known species is Malabar Bambootail (Melanoneura Bilineata), closely related to the newly discovered species.
- Genetic analysis revealed over 7% variation in the ***mitochondrial cytochrome oxidase-I gene*** between the new species and its closest relative.
- The structural differences in its prothorax, anal appendages, and secondary genitalia further set it apart.
- **Unqiue Feature -** It has long black body with brilliant blue markings.
- **Appearance** – It has long cylindrical abdomen resembling a bamboo stalk, which inspired its common name.



- **Habitat –** The species was first observed in streams of the Karamana River, outside the reserved forest area.
- **Distribution –** It has also been recorded in Ponmudi Hills and Bonacaud within the Agasthyamalai landscape.

References

1. The India Today| Agasthyamalai Bambootail
2. The Money Control| Agasthyamalai Bambootail

World Intellectual Property Indicators (WIPI), 2024

India secures position in top 10 countries in Patents, Trademarks, and Industrial Designs in the recently released WIPI, 2024.

- **WIPI –** It is an ***annual statistical report*** published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
- It underscoring global trends in Intellectual Property (IP) statistics collected from ***the 193 member States of WIPO***.

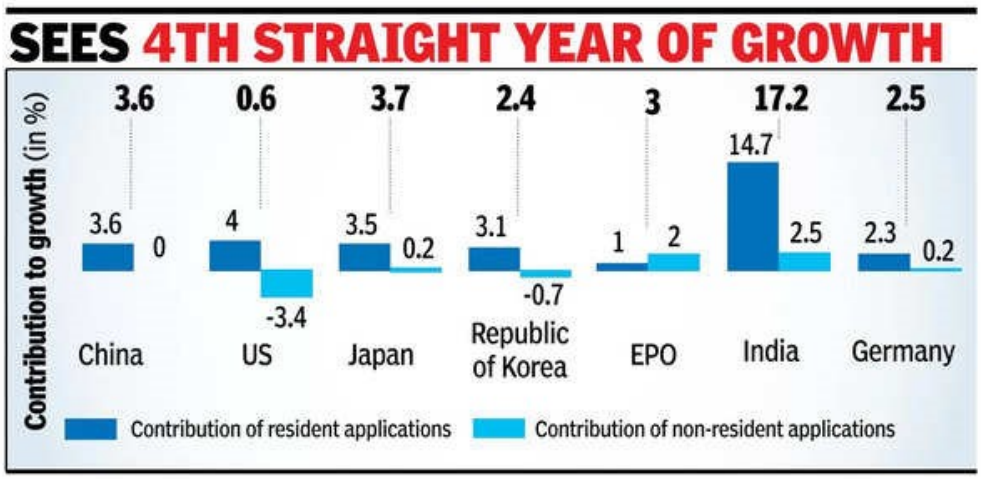
Report findings

- **India's position -** India has secured a spot for the first time in the ***global top 10*** for all 3 major intellectual property (IP) rights.



- **3 major IP -** Patents, Trademarks, and Industrial designs.
- **Patents** – India ranks ***6th globally*** for patents.
- The patent office also granted 149.4% more patents in 2023 compared to the previous year. It underlining the country's fast-evolving IP ecosystem.
- India recorded the fastest growth in patent (+15.7%) applications in 2023 among the top 20 origins, marking the 5th consecutive year of double-digit growth.
- **Industrial designs (ID) –** India indicates a steady rise (36.4%) in ID which aligns with increasing emphasis on product design, manufacturing, and creative industries.
    - **Top 3 sectors**—Textiles and Accessories, Tools and Machines, and Health and Cosmetics made up almost half of all design in India.
- **Trademarks -** India ranked ***4th globally*** in trademarks.
    - **Key Sectors -** Health (21.9%), Agriculture (15.3%), and Clothing (12.8%) leading the way.
- India's trademark office holds the *second-largest number of active registrations worldwide.*
- It reflecting the country's strong position in global brand protection.
- **Global Findings -** Asia continues to be the top spot for patents, accounting for 68.7%, 66.7% and 69% of global patent, trademark and industrial design filing activity in 2023.
- **Patents -** Global patenting activity reached new heights in 2023 as applications surpassed 3.5 million for the first time.

- It marks the 4th consecutive year of growth despite a challenging macroeconomic environment.
- China (1.64 million), the US (518,364), Japan (414,413), the Republic of Korea (287,954) and Germany (133,053) led global patent filings.
- **Industrial filing -** Global industrial design filing activity also grew in 2023, rising by 2.8% to 1.52 million designs, with 7 of the top 20 countries seeing double digit growth.
- China were the most active in the world in terms of design count in 2023.
- They were followed by applicants from the US (69,076), Germany (64,986), Italy (60,486) and the Republic of Korea (60,120).
- In contrast, Germany (–7.6%) and the Republic of Korea (–3.4%) saw declines.
- **Trademark filing** - Activity totalled 15.23 million classes, reflecting a 2% decline on 2022, though the decrease was much less severe than in the previous year.
- Among the top 5 origins, Italy (+15.7%) had the fastest growth in filings in 2023, followed by China (+5%) and the US (+2.6%).
- **Asia's position -** Offices located in Asia received around 2.44 million applications in 2023, constituting 68.7% of the world total.
- Notably, over the course of a decade, Asia's share of total applications filed globally has increased by 10.3% point from 58.4% in 2013 to 68.7% in 2023.
- Meanwhile, Northern America's share has decreased from 23.6% in 2013 to 17.8% in 2023, while Europe's has fallen by 3.2% points down to 10.3% during the same period.



References

[The PIB| World Intellectual Property Indicators (WIPI), 2024]

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