UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 24-06-2024

Dodol

The Goa government has formally applied for a Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Dodol.

- **About-** It is a pudding-like, classic Goan sweet that is often called a cousin of Bebinca, the ***Queen of Goan desserts.***
- **History-** The scholars believe a traditional version of the sweet is served at royal banquets in the ***Medang Kingdom of Indonesia*** between the 8th and 11th centuries.
- In Goa, it is believed that the sweet was introduced during Portuguese rule in the coastal state during the *17th century.*
- The dish is dark brownish in colour often served during Christmas celebrations.
- **Ingredients-** Rice flour, coconut milk, and black palm jaggery.
- **Distribution**- Dodol and its variations are also popular in southern India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and parts of Southeast Asia.



Geographical Indication (GI) Tag
• GI tag is a form of certification that recognizes unique products based on their origin. • It is defined under Article-23 and 24 of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO). • GI tagged products can be ***natural or man-made.*** • The raw materials for such products do not necessarily have to come from that region, unless it is an agricultural tag. • The essential difference between GI and other intellectual properties (IP) is that, GI is a collective Intellectual Property Right. • India is a ***member of WTO*** and enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 that came into force from 2003.

Reference

The Indian Express | Dodol

World Investment Report, 2024

- The Report focuses on trends in foreign direct investment (FDI) worldwide, at the regional and country levels and emerging measures to improve its contribution to development.
- **Released by –** United Nations Trade & Development (UNCTAD).

Key findings of the report

- Global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) fell by 2% in 2023.
- FDI flows to developing countries dropped 7%.
- Overall, FDI to developing countries fell by 7% in 2023 to $867 billion, but the decrease varied significantly across regions.
    - FDI inflows to Africa declined by 3%.
    - Flows to developing countries in Asia fell by 8%, with China, the world's 2nd-largest FDI recipient experiencing a rare decline.
    - FDI flows to Latin America and the Caribbean decreased by 1% to $193 billion.
- FDI flows to structurally weak and vulnerable economies increased.
- International project finance deals, critical for infrastructure investment led to a 26% fall due to tight financing conditions.
- Investment in sectors linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fell by more than 10%.
- Reforming older IIAs remains slow, with about half of global FDI still governed by non-reformed treaties, increasing the risk of investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) cases.
- Only 16% of global FDI stock is covered by new-generation IIAs.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
• It is an intergovernmental organization and United Nations' leading institution dealing with trade and development. • **Aim -** To promote integration of developing countries into the global economy and their inclusive and sustainable development through trade and investments. • **Headquarters -** Geneva, Switzerland. • **Established by -** It is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 30, 1964. • UNCTAD membership consists of **195** states.

Reference

UNCTAD | World Investment Report, 2024

Lunar Gateway Programme

India and the US have finalized the Strategic Framework for exploring the opportunities to participate in the Lunar Gateway Programme.

- The Lunar Gateway Programme is an international collaborative project aimed at establishing a space station in orbit around the Moon.
- The Lunar Gateway Programme is part of ***NASA's Artemis program,*** designed to support long-term human exploration of the Moon and beyond.

  Artemis programme is to return humans to the moon by 2025, with the ultimate goal of expanding space exploration to Mars and beyond.

- **Launch -** No earlier than 2025.
- **Polar orbit** - Near-rectilinear halo orbit.
- **Objectives-** To facilitate regular missions to the lunar surface and serve as a base for astronauts.
- **Agencies -** The Lunar Gateway is a collaborative effort spearheaded by NASA, includes several international partners:
  - European Space Agency (ESA)
  - Canadian Space Agency (CSA)
  - Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
  - Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC), UAE
- The Gateway Station is similar to the International Space Station currently in low Earth orbit, but the Gateway will orbit the Moon.
- Incidentally, the Gateway will be the ***1st space station ever to exist outside of low Earth orbit*** or LEO.

Reference

The Indian Express | Lunar Gateway Programme

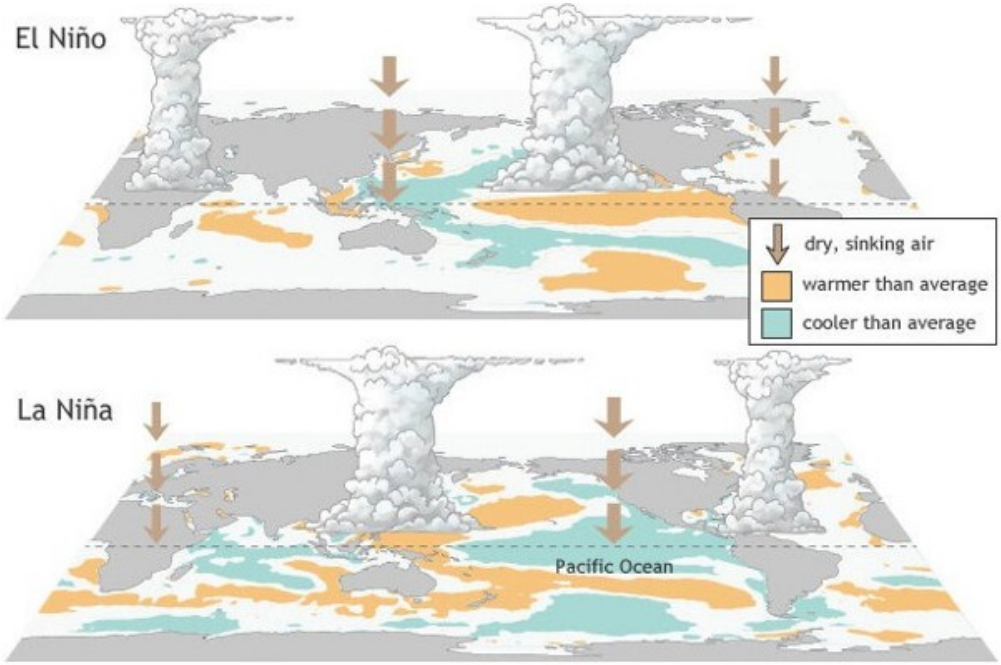
Bayesian Convolutional Neural Network (BCNN)

Recently, Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has created a Bayesian Convolutional Neural Network (BCNN).

- **About-** The BCNN is new product integrates cutting-edge technology to enhance forecasts associated with ENSO phases.
- It is to forecast ***El Nino and La Nina conditions*** up to 15 months ahead.
- The model is particularly adept at predicting El Nino or La Nina events due to its ability to account for the slow oceanic variations and their atmospheric coupling.
- It computes the ***Nino 3.4 Index*** by averaging sea surface temperature anomalies across the central equatorial Pacific, enhancing ENSO phase prediction accuracy.

ENSO, El Nino and La Nina

- **ENSO-** ENSO, short for El Niño-Southern Oscillation, affects global weather by changing sea temperatures in the *tropical Pacific Ocean and altering atmospheric circulation.*
- It can alter the global atmospheric circulation, which, in turn, influences weather across the world.
- ENSO occurs in irregular cycles of *2-7 years and has three different phases — warm (El Niño), cool (La Niña), and neutral.*
- **El Nino-**Warmer than average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific.
- **La Nina-** Cooler than average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific.
- **Neutral-**Conditions when sea surface temperatures are close to average.



Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)
• It is an autonomous organization established in 1999. • **Location –** Hyderabad. • **Nodal agency-** Ministry of Earth Sciences. • It is a unit of the Earth System Science Organization, New Delhi. • **Objective-** Its primary mandate is to provide ocean information and advisory services to various stakeholders including government agencies, research institutions, industry, and the public. • It is being the central repository for marine data in the country, receives large oceanographic data in real time, from a variety of in-situ and remote sensing observing systems.

Reference

The Indian Express | BCNN

Pushpak

Recently, the 3rd and final test success of the Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) Landing Experiment (LEX) or Pushpak is conducted.

- **About-** Pushpak designed to carry payloads into ***low earth orbits*** and return to earth for reuse.
- **Agency-** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- It is to undertake more difficult manoeuvres with dispersions, correct both cross-range and downrange.
- It demonstrated the ***autonomous landing capability*** of reusable launch vehicle (RLV) from off-nominal initial conditions at release from helicopter.
- Pushpak landed at a velocity exceeding ***320 kmph***, due to its low lift-to-drag ratio aerodynamic configuration.
- Pushpak autonomously maintained a stable and precise ground roll along the runway using its rudder and nose wheel steering system during the ground roll phase.

References

1. The Hindu | Reusable Launch Vehicle
2. ISRO| RLV-TD

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