UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelimbits 30-06-2025

Declining Habitat of Sea Turtles

Prelims : Current events of National and International Importance | Conservation

Why in News?

Over 50% of sea turtle habitats are expected to disappear by 2050 due to climate change.

- **Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** - It is a landmark international agreement adopted in December 2022 at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal.
- It aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, safeguarding nature for current and future generations.
- **30x30 target** – It mandates that 30% of marine areas are protected by 2030.
- **Recent Findings -** A new study on sea turtles raises questions about the effectiveness of marine protected areas in protecting marine biodiversity.
- Merely 23% of the world's sea turtle hotspots lie within the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- According to the Marine Protection Atlas, over 8% of the ocean is designated as MPAs, but only about 3% are effectively managed.
- The study reveals that climate change is pushing sea turtles away from their traditional habitats toward cooler waters.
- This shift is taking them outside protected areas and into busy shipping zones.
- Many of these new habitats, such as the ***North Sea, Mediterranean, East China Sea, and even waters near the Galapagos Islands***, are high-risk zones with heavy ship traffic.
- This is laying them open to the threat of vessel strikes, which is a leading cause of turtle deaths.
- In the future, the situation is likely to worsen as global shipping is also projected to grow by 1,200% by 2050.
- The analysis covered ***all 7 species of sea turtles found globally***, and also clearly supports what was emphasised at the Third UN Ocean

Conference (UNOC3) in June 2025.

7 recognized species of sea turtles are the Flatback, Green, Hawksbill, Leatherback, Loggerhead, Kemp's Ridley, and Olive Ridley turtles. These turtles inhabit all oceans except for the Arctic.

- **Third UN Ocean Conference** called for urgent action to protect marine biodiversity and the need for a new generation of MPAs.
- These initiatives demonstrate that adaptive, data-driven conservation is both feasible and effective, especially in mitigating risks like vessel strikes.
- To both protect turtles and meet the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's 30x30 goal, the study recommends the following
    1. Expanding MPA coverage in future turtle hotspots, especially within national Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).
    2. Designing dynamic, climate-informed MPAs that can adapt spatially and temporally based on emerging species distributions.
    3. Coupling MPAs with targeted shipping regulations, such as speed reductions in high-risk areas, to mitigate vessel strike risks.

Reference

Down to Earth | Declining of sea turtle habitats

Prolonged Droughts and Sexual Violence Against Women

Prelims: Current events of National and International Importance | Social development

Why in News?

A new study published in PLOS Global Public Health highlights that prolonged droughts in low- and middle-income countries are linked to increased risks of sexual violence against women.

Key Findings

- Prolonged droughts (lasting 8–43 months in a 4-year period) linked to increased risk of sexual violence against women and teenage girls.
- Even very dry periods, without being extreme, increase vulnerability to

sexual violence.
- The first population-level study showing direct correlation between environmental stress and sexual violence risk outside intimate relationships.

Impact on Rural Communities

- Rural women and girls in **low- and middle-income countries** most affected.
- Droughts reduce resources and livelihood options, forcing women to:
  - Walking long distances for water.
  - Migrate to unfamiliar regions.
  - Face pressure for **early marriage** to reduce household burdens.

Water Insecurity as a Form of Violence

- Women in Indonesia and Peru described the extreme burden of fetching water during droughts as a form of violence.
- Water insecurity linked to adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes.
- Previous studies showed extreme weather events like storms, landslides, and floods increase domestic and intimate partner violence.

Reference

The Hindu| Prolonged Droughts and Sexual Violence Against Women

Kuppadam Sarees

Prelim : Current events of National and International Importance

Why in News?

Recently the Government of Andhra Pradesh has designated Kuppadam Sarees as the ODOP (One District One Product) for Bapatla district under a revival initiative.

- **Kuppadam Sarees** – It is a traditional handloom saree from Andhra Pradesh, India.
- It is known for blending cotton or silk body with rich silk zari borders.
- **Origin** – It riginates from the town of Chirala, Bapatla district, near Suryalanka Beach.

- It is named after the Koopadam weaving technique, developed over 150 years ago.

Key Features

- **Design** – Technique designed to imitate **temple architecture** in saree borders.
- Unlike regular stitching, uses interlocking of silk borders with the body fabric.
- Three-shuttle weaving technique, body and borders woven separately and interlocked manually.
- It is known for vibrant colours, nature-inspired motifs, temple murals, and rich pallus.
- Lightweight and affordable compared to pure silk sarees.

Cultural Significance

- It is popular for ceremonies, festivals, and gifting during weddings.
- It symbolizes elegance, tradition, and familial pride.
- It is worn during important occasions like Sankranti, Ugadi, baby showers, and temple visits.

Weaving Process

- It primarily uses **pit looms** in Chirala.
- **Handloom fabrics** from Chirala known for softness, durability, and suitability for all climates.
- Weaving skills passed down through **generations**, involving both men and women.
- **Decline** – It faced decline in early 2000s due to power loom competition and synthetic imitations.
- **Modern innovations –** New-age designs with digital motifs, pastel shades, and minimalistic borders.
- It is done to retain the traditional **Koopadam craftsmanship** while appealing to urban and global markets.
- **GI Tag efforts –** Efforts underway to secure a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag** for Kuppadam sarees.
- **Economic and social impact** – Revival has helped hundreds of weaving families resume work in Chirala and nearby villages.
- It supports employment, preserves traditional craftsmanship, and promotes rural livelihoods.

Reference

The Hindu| Kuppadam sarees

UN80 Initiative

Prelims: Current events of National and International Importance | International organizations

Why in News?

Recently the United Nations launched the UN80 Initiative ahead of its 80th anniversary in 2025.

- **UN80 Initiative** – It is s major reform and revitalization initiative launched by the United Nations in March 2025.
- Aim – It aims to make the UN more efficient, impactful, and fit-for-purpose ahead of its 80th anniversary in 2025.

Vision

- To respond to global challenges: conflict, inequality, displacement, climate change, and technological shifts.
- To restore trust in multilateralism and global institutions.
- To strengthen the relevance, credibility, and effectiveness of the UN.
- **Leadership –** It is led by Guy Ryder, UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy and overseen by a system-wide UN80 Task Force, organized into 7 thematic clusters.
- **Internal efficiency** – It will reduce bureaucracy, streamline operations and cut duplicate processes and improve global coordination.
- **Cost optimization** – It will relocate functions to lower-cost locations.
- **Mandate implementation review –** Review of nearly 4,000 active mandates and past 40,000 resolutions.
- It uses AI tools and data analysis to identify redundancies, overlaps, and outdated functions.
- **Structural and programmatic reform –** Examine the architecture of the UN system.
- It also aims to consider program realignment and better integration across agencies.
- **Financial context** – Initiative comes amid tight UN budgets and delayed member contributions.

- Although cost-efficiency is a focus, the reform is not a downsizing exercise.
- It is intended to improve financial sustainability alongside mission impact.
- **System-wide coordination** – It involves the entire UN system, not just the Secretariat in New York.
- Clusters include areas like peace and security, humanitarian action, development, human rights, and training.

Reference

UN News| UN80 Initiative

Central Potato and Sweet Potato Research Centre (CSARC)

Prelims: Current events of National and International Importance

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of the *International Potato Centre's South Asia Regional Centre* at Agra, as a regional hub of the *International Potato Center*.

- **Central Potato and Sweet Potato Research Centre (CSARC)** – It will be established at Singna, Agra district, Uttar Pradesh, India.
- **Parent organization –** CSARC is a regional arm of the **International Potato Center (CIP)**, headquartered in **Lima, Peru**.

  *CIP was founded in **1971** is a global research-for-development organization focused on potato, sweet potato, and other Andean roots and tubers.*

- It will serve farmers in India, especially in major potato-producing states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and other states.
- It will also cater to other South Asian countries.

Objectives

- To improve food and nutrition security.
- To enhance farmers' income and create employment opportunities.
  - To promote development of high-yielding, nutrient-rich, climate-resilient potato and sweet potato varieties.

    - To promote post-harvest management, processing, value addition, and market access.
- **Project cost & funding –** Total Project Cost is Rs **171 crore** with Rs **111 crore** contributed by the Government of India and Rs **60 crore** contributed by the International Potato Center (CIP).

Importance for India

- It supports India's status as the second-largest producer and consumer of potatoes globally.
- It is expected to strengthen the potato and sweet potato sectors through scientific research and innovation.
- It complements existing Indian research institutions like:
    - **ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute (CPRI)**, Shimla (Potato research).
    - **ICAR-Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI)**, Thiruvananthapuram (Sweet potato and tuber crops research).

Significance

- Boost to climate-resilient agriculture.
- Enhances India's role in international agricultural research.
- Builds on India's successful model of hosting international agricultural research centres, like:
    - IRRI-South Asia Regional Centre, Varanasi (for rice research).

Reference

The Indian Express |Centre approves International Potato Centre

One Liners 30-06-2025

History, Art and Culture

Jagannath Rath Yatra 2025

The recently started Jagannath Rath Yatra, also known as the Chariot Festival, is a significant Hindu festival celebrated in Odisha.

• It marks the joyful journey of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra from Puri's Jagannath Temple to Gundicha Temple.

• **Nine-Day Celebration** - Featuring various rituals, including the Rath Yatra's start (Day 1), arrival at Gundicha Temple (Day 2), Hera Panchami (Day 4), and the Return Yatra (Day 7).

• **Significance -** The Rath Yatra symbolizes immense devotion, allowing even those unable to enter the temple to worship the deities. It commemorates Lord Krishna's journey to his maternal home, fostering joy and unity.

• **Key Rituals -**Important rituals include Rath Snana (bathing the deities), Rath Pratistha (blessing the chariots), the Main Rath Yatra (chariot pulling), Bahuda Yatra (return journey), and Niladri Bijaya (festival's end).

Bonalu Festival 2025

The Bonalu festival has gloriously begun at Hyderabad's Golconda Fort, initiating a month of Telangana's folk traditions.

• **Devotees flocked** - To the Sri Jagadamba Mahankali temple, performing rituals and offering the first Bonam amidst vibrant cultural displays.

• **Bonalu -** Is a traditional Hindu festival in Telangana, where devotees offer Bonam (rice, jaggery, curd, neem) to Goddess Mahankali for protection, symbolizing gratitude for overcoming past hardships.

• **2025 Celebration Highlights -** The inauguration at Golconda Fort featured the first Bonam procession from Langar Houz, alongside fire-breathing artists and Potharajus, with thousands of women participating.

• **Government's Role -** Minister Konda Surekha offered Pattu Vastralu, and Rs.20 crore was allocated to 2,783 Mahankali temples for celebrations. Dignitaries including the Assembly Speaker were present.

• **Upcoming Phases** - Future phases include Secunderabad Bonalu on July 13–14 at Ujjaini Mahankali Temple, and Lal Darwaza & Old City Bonalu on July 20–21, with extensive security arrangements.

International Relations and Issues

NATO Summit 2025

The Recent 2025 NATO summit, led by President Donald Trump, brought a significant shift in defence policy.

• **New 5% Defence Target** - NATO allies committed to 5% GDP for defence: 3.5% for core spending and 1.5% for infrastructure/innovation. Members must submit annual plans, with progress reviewed after the 2029 US presidential election.

• **Challenges for Members** - Many nations struggle with the new target, historically spending around 2%. In 2024, only Poland, Estonia, and Latvia exceeded 3%. Spain, at 1.24%, faced potential US trade sanctions.

• **Article 5 -** States “an attack on one is an attack on all," remains central to NATO's collective security, encouraging membership, especially amid current geopolitical tensions like the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

• **Shift from Ukraine Focus -** Under Trump, the summit's focus shifted from Ukraine. His administration ruled out Ukraine's NATO membership and halted military aid, contrasting sharply with past commitments and raising concerns about alliance unity.

• **Nuanced Russia Relations** - The 2025 declaration acknowledged a "long-term threat posed by Russia" but avoided explicit condemnation, reflecting Trump's cordial relationship with President Putin and a thaw in US-Russia relations.

Environment

Salkhan Fossils Park

Salkhan Fossils Park in Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh, is now on UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.

• **Highlighting -** Its 1.4-billion-year-old fossils, boosting eco-tourism and scientific research in the region.

• **Inclusion on** - The UNESCO Tentative List is the first step towards a full World Heritage Site designation.

• **Location & Significance –** Loc+ated in Salkhan village, Sonbhadra, it's one of the oldest global fossil sites, containing ancient stromatolites and algae.

• **Path to UNESCO Status -** Being on the tentative list begins the nomination. A detailed dossier will be submitted to UNESCO, followed by an on-site evaluation typically lasting a year.

• **Scientific Confirmation -** A June 26, 2024, MoU between the UP Eco-Tourism Development Board and the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences confirmed the presence of early life forms.

• **Tourism Push -** UP government is boosting eco-tourism, including new Vistadome tourist trains to sites like Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.

International Day of the Tropics: 2025 Observance

Observed annually on June 29th, the International Day of the Tropics marks its 9th observance in 2025.

• **Proclaimed** - By the UN, it recognizes the immense diversity and crucial global role of tropical regions.

• **Historical Roots -** The observance stems from the "State of the Tropics Report," released on June 29, 2014, a collaboration of twelve research institutions.

• **Geographical Definition -** The Tropics lie between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, characterized by year-round warmth and varied rainfall.

• **Biodiversity & Culture Hub -** Covering 40% of Earth's surface, the Tropics house 80% of global biodiversity and significant cultural richness, despite facing deforestation, habitat loss, and inequality.

• **Population Dynamics -** Countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania within the Tropics are experiencing rapid population growth and urbanization.

• **Purpose & Action -** The day raises awareness about tropical strengths and vulnerabilities, encouraging international cooperation and sustainable development to address challenges like rising temperatures and resource exploitation.

Security

Operation Bihali

Operation Bihali was a targeted counter-terror operation in Udhampur's Basantgarh area of Jammu & Kashmir.

• **Primary aim -** Was to intercept and neutralize four Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militants, identified through a year-long surveillance effort.

• **Joint Operation Conducted** - By the Indian Army's Para Commandos & the J & K Police.

• **The Outcome -** One JeM terrorist was neutralized, and three others were cornered, effectively disrupting their activities.

• **Significance -** This operation significantly enhances local security, disrupts terror infiltration routes, and highlights India's proactive, intelligence-led counter-terror capabilities in the region.

Indian Coast Guard Inducts 'Adamya'

The 'Adamya' is the Indian Coast Guard's (ICG) first Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) from an eight-vessel series built recently by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL).

• **Purpose** - Designed for rapid deployment, it enhances the ICG's quick-reaction capability for search & rescue, coastal surveillance, and maritime law enforcement.

• **Key Features** - It boasts Controllable Pitch Propellers (CPPs) and indigenous gearboxes, alongside a 30mm naval gun and two 12.7mm remote-control guns.

• **Advanced Systems** - Equipped with an Integrated Bridge System (IBS) and Automated Power Management System (APMS), Adamya offers superior maneuverability and operational efficiency.

• **Significance** - This induction boosts coastal defense and reinforces the 'Make in India' initiative, acting as a crucial force multiplier for the ICG.

Science

Leptospirosis Outbreak

Ernakulam District has seen a recent surge in Leptospirosis cases, with five fatalities and over 65 suspected/confirmed cases in the last three weeks.

• **Outbreak coincides** - With the monsoon season, prompting health authorities to issue precautions against the zoonotic disease.

• **Leptospirosis -** Caused by Leptospira bacteria, this infection spreads through contact with contaminated water, soil, or animal urine. It's most common in tropical, high-rainfall regions, with symptoms varying from mild to severe.

• **Symptoms** - Leptospirosis typically has two phases: an initial flu-like leptospiremic phase (fever, headache) and an immune phase that can lead to severe complications like jaundice and internal bleeding (Weil's syndrome).

• **Transmission Routes -** Primarily transmitted via animal urine (rodents, cattle, dogs), humans get infected through skin abrasions or mucous membranes when exposed to contaminated water or soil. Outbreaks often follow heavy rainfall or floods.

• **Risk Factors -** Those in tropical climates, agricultural workers, and outdoor enthusiasts are at higher risk. Flood-prone areas are especially vulnerable due to widespread bacterial contamination.

• **Precautionary Measures -** Health authorities advise avoiding muddy water with open wounds, and agricultural workers should wear protective gear. Prompt medical attention is crucial for anyone with symptoms after potential exposure.