



drishti

Important Facts For Prelims (12th March 2019)

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Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary

- After declaring Gir Forests (Junagadh, Gujarat) as wildlife sanctuary in 1965, more lion habitats in adjoining regions were also declared sanctuaries and ultimately **Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary was created in 2007.**
- According to the last census of Asiatic lions, which was conducted in 2015, there were 523 lions in and around Gir wildlife Sanctuary in Saurashtra region of Gujarat.
Out of the total 523 lions, 33 lions were reported from Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Asiatic Lions are cousins of African Lions who are believed to be separated 1,00,000 years ago. They are slightly smaller and have a distinctive fold of skin along their bellies. **Gir sanctuary is the only wild population of Asiatic lions in the world.**
They are listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and Appendix I of CITES and also have been categorized as 'Endangered' on IUCN Red List.
- India has launched "The Asiatic Lion Conservation Project" to strengthen the ongoing measures for conservation and recovery of Asiatic Lion with the help of state-of-the-art techniques/ instruments, regular scientific research studies, disease management, Modern surveillance/ patrolling techniques.

ITU's First ever Innovation Centre in India

- The **United Nations' telecom body 'International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** has planned to set up its **first ever Innovation Centre in India** to incorporate technologies from South Asian countries and emerging economies in standards for technologies.
- The Innovation Centre is expected to give the opportunity to Indian technology firms to make their case for being part of global standards, which has been largely influenced by companies from developed countries and have huge influence on telecom businesses globally.
- The center will also **collaborate with firms for joint research in the field of**

standardization for 5G, artificial intelligence, and upcoming new technologies.

- Besides the Innovation Centre, **ITU's first regional office for South Asia** will also get established in India.

International Telecommunication Union

- It is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – ICTs. It is the oldest among all the 15 specialized agencies of UN.
- Founded in 1865 to facilitate international connectivity in communications networks, it allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strive to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide.
- Based in Geneva, Switzerland, it is also a member of the United Nations Development Group and has 12 regional and area offices in the world.
- ITU has remained an intergovernmental public-private partnership organization since its inception. Its membership includes 193 Member States and around 800 public and private sector companies and academic institutions as well as international and regional telecommunication entities.
- Recently, India got elected as a member of ITU Council for another 4-year term - from 2019 to 2022. India has remained a regular member since 1952.

Wood Snake

- A species of wood snake that **wasn't seen for 140 years (last seen in 1878)** has resurfaced in a survey conducted by scientists in the Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary. **Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary** in Meghamalai Wildlife Division spreads over 636 square kilometers in Theni district of Tamil Nadu bordering the Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala and thus **an important buffer zone for tiger population in addition to an important elephant corridor.**
- The species is **endemic to the Meghamalai forests (Tamil Nadu)** and the **Periyar Tiger Reserve landscape (Kerala).**
- The local population of wood snakes was last spotted and recorded by British military officer and naturalist Colonel Richard Henry Beddome in 1878, who went on to describe it as a new species, *Xylophis indicus*.

"Sirsi Supari" Gets GI Tag

- Arecanut (also known as supari or betel nut) is the latest entrant in the list of agricultural produce with a **geographical indication (GI) tag.**
- **'Sirsi Supari' grown in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka has received the Geographic Indication (GI) tag.**
- The arecanut has unique **features like a round and flattened coin shape,**

particular texture, taste and has a hard seed. These features are not seen in arecanut grown in any other regions.

- It is cultivated in Yellapura, Siddapura and Sirsi taluks in Karnataka
- Totgars' Cooperative Sale Society Ltd., Sirsi, is the registered proprietor of the GI.

Phased Manufacturing Programmes for Electric Vehicles

- The government has notified phased **increase in basic customs duty** on parts of electric passenger vehicles to be assembled in India and imported lithium-ion cells to promote domestic manufacturing of EVs.
- The notification is part of the road map under the **phased manufacturing programme (PMP)**.
 - The phased manufacturing programme is part of a road map wherein through **graded duty structure** indigenous manufacturing of **electric vehicles, its assemblies and parts or inputs of the sub-assemblies shall be promoted over a period of time.**
 - The intention is to substantially increase value addition and capacity building within the country.
- The government is also promoting the mass adoption of EVs through **schemes like FAME II.**
- Recently, the Union Cabinet has also approved the '**National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage**' to drive clean, connected, shared and sustainable mobility initiatives in the country.

PINAKA

- **Defense Research and Defence Organisation (DRDO)** successfully test fired indigenously developed Guided PINAKA rockets from Pokhran ranges in Rajasthan.
- The weapon system is equipped with **state-of-the-art guidance kit** comprising of an advanced navigation and control system.
- It will significantly boost the capability of the artillery to make precision hits.

Central Electricity Regulatory Commission

- The **Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)** has come up with revised regulations to encourage neighboring countries to buy more power from India's spot markets.
- **Bangladesh is the largest buyer of Indian power.**
- India signed a memorandum of understanding for establishing grid interconnection between the members of the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**.

About CERC

- CERC is a **statutory body** functioning under **section - 76 of the Electricity Act 2003.**
- Functions:
 - to regulate the **tariff of generating companies.**
 - to determine **tariff and regulate the inter-State** transmission of electricity.
 - to issue licenses to persons to function as transmission licensee and electricity trader with respect to their inter-State operations.