

Bhutan along with Tiger Conservation Coalition, hosted the 'Sustainable Finance for Tiger Landscapes' Conference

- It was attended by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam.
- **Aim of the conference**
 - ⊖ Develop new financial mechanisms for tiger conservation;
 - ⊖ Link tiger conservation to global biodiversity and climate agendas;
 - ⊖ Involve indigenous peoples and local communities.
- **Outcome**
 - ⊖ It acknowledged the tiger as the emblematic species of Asia, a revered cultural and spiritual symbol.
 - ⊖ Commit to **Catalysing US\$1 billion in additional funding** for tiger conservation by 2034
 - ⊖ The United Nations Development Programme presented with the **Tiger Landscapes Investment Fund**.
 - ⊖ The Asian Development Bank proposed "tiger bond".
 - ⊖ **Emphasis on securing the 63 vital tiger landscapes** for long-term tiger recovery
- Tiger conservation landscapes are **large blocks of habitat with low human footprint suitable for tigers**.
 - ⊖ Tiger landscape-specific investments are **required to sustain population trends and associated benefits**.
 - ◆ Since 2015, the global tiger population has increased from 3,200 in 2015 to approximately 4,500 in 2022.
- **Significance of conservation of tiger landscapes**
 - ⊖ They are models for **harmonious coexistence** between local communities and biodiversity.
 - ⊖ They **encourage carbon sequestration**, ensure the supply of ecosystem services, etc.
 - ⊖ Helps to **mitigate climate change**.

Global immunizations have saved at least 154 million lives over the past 50 years: WHO led study

- The study analyzed the **Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)**, launched by WHO in 1974 to ensure that all children, in all countries, benefited from life-saving vaccines.
- **Key findings**
 - ⊖ Vaccines saved **6 lives every minute of every year over the past 50 years**.
 - ⊖ **Measles vaccination had the most significant impact** on reducing infant mortality.
 - ⊖ **Vaccination against 14 diseases contributed to reducing infant mortality** by 40% globally
 - ⊖ For each life saved through immunization, an **average of 66 years of full health** were gained.
- **Factors responsible for increase in access to immunisation**
 - ⊖ **Collaboration among stakeholders** such as governments, health agencies, etc.
 - ⊖ **UNICEF and GAVI have expanded vaccine access**.
- **Challenges in Immunization**
 - ⊖ **Inequitable vaccine distribution** and **Financing of vaccination**.
 - ⊖ Underinformed and misinformed populations fear side effects.
- **Initiatives taken in India**
 - ⊖ **Mission Indradhanush (2014)** aims to cover all children who are partially vaccinated or unvaccinated against vaccine preventable diseases under Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).
 - ◆ UIP provide free vaccines against 12 life threatening diseases like Tetanus, Polio, etc.
 - ⊖ **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (2017)** progress reaching each child under two years of age and all those pregnant women left uncovered.
 - ⊖ **U-WIN digital platform** for routine Immunization in pilot mode.

Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)

- It is a **Vaccine Alliance**, launched in 2000.
- Alliance includes **WHO, UNICEF and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)** as core founding members.
- It was created to **expand the impact of EPI and help the poorest countries** in the World to increase coverage.
- **In 2014, India became the first implementing country donating to GAVI.**

FSSAI increased the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) of pesticides in herbs and spices

- The latest order from Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has increased the MRL of pesticides from 0.01 mg/kg to 0.1 mg/kg.
- **About MRL**
 - ⊕ The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defined MRL as the highest legally tolerable level of pesticide in food or animal feed.
 - ⊕ Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) sets MRLs for pesticides in food and feed crops for food safety and international trade.
 - ◆ It was established jointly by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1963.
- **Indian Scenario of MRL**
 - ⊕ MRLs in India are specified under the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulation, 2011 by the FSSAI.
 - ⊕ They are fixed based on the field trial data received through the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIBRC) under the Ministry of Agriculture.
- **Issues with increasing the MRL:** Can lead to ingestion of more pesticides into the human body, Can lead to ban on export of Indian food items due to the high pesticide residue, etc.
- **Way forward:** Bringing more transparency in field trial data, can register more pesticides under CIBRC, etc.

About FSSAI

- **Established:** Statutory Authority established under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- **Role:** Laying down science based standards for articles of food and regulating their manufacture, store, distribution and sale.

PwC India released a report titled 'Navigating India's Transition to Sustainability'

- The report analyses how companies are adapting to the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) disclosures mandated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- The BRSR framework is a mandatory disclosure mechanism (from FY 2022–23) for the top 1000 listed companies or businesses to report their performance on environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspects.
 - ⊕ SEBI's guidance document provides details on three kinds of disclosures—general, management and process, and "principle wise" (principle-based).
- BRSR is aimed at improving compliance, consistency and communication around non-financial disclosures.
- SEBI also introduced BRSR Core in 2023 to enhance the reliability of ESG disclosures.
 - ⊕ BRSR Core represents a subset of the comprehensive BRSR and includes a specific set of key performance indicators (KPIs) / metrics across ESG attributes.
- **Significance:**
 - ⊕ **Transparency:** BRSR enables investors, stakeholders, and the public to assess a company's sustainability efforts related to ESG aspects.
 - ⊕ **Strong brand positioning:** Embracing sustainability as a key pillar of operating practices increases the brand value of a company
 - ⊕ **Increase value creation:** Companies integrating sustainability outperform peers, ensuring a competitive edge, and higher enterprise value compared to those resistant to change.

Key findings

- 51 out of 100 companies (Nifty 50 companies and Nifty 50 listed companies) analysed disclosed their Scope 3 data for FY23 despite it being a voluntary disclosure in the BRSR
 - ⊕ Scope 1 (direct emissions) and Scope 2 (indirect emissions from purchased electricity, heat, or steam)
 - ⊕ Scope 3 emissions (indirect GHG emissions that occur outside of the organization)
- 34% of the companies have reduced their Scope 1 emissions and 29% have reduced their Scope 2 emissions
- 49% of companies have increased their energy consumption from renewable sources

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Issued Master Direction for Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs)

- These have been issued in exercise of the powers conferred by the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002.
- **Aim of the direction:** To ensure prudent and efficient functioning of ARCs and to protect the interest of investors.
- ARCs are financial institutions that buy the Non Performing Assets (NPA) or bad assets from banks and financial institutions to clear their balance sheets.
 - ⊕ Union Budget 2021-22, announced the setting up of ARCs.
 - ⊕ They are registered by RBI under SARFAESI Act, 2002.
- **The RBI's direction to ARCs:**
 - ⊕ Have to maintain capital adequacy ratio of a minimum of 15% of its total risk-weighted assets.
 - ◆ Prohibited from raising money by way of deposit.
 - ⊕ No ARC shall invest in land or building, except for investment for its own use up to 10% of its owned funds.
- **Significance of ARCs:**
 - ⊕ Incentivize quicker action on resolving stressed assets thereby helping in better value realization.
 - ⊕ Help in bringing liquidity into the economy.
 - ⊕ Improves bank's valuation and enhances their ability to raise market capital.

TRAI released recommendations on 'Telecommunication Infrastructure Sharing, Spectrum Sharing, and Spectrum Leasing'

- At present **only spectrum trading and intra-band spectrum sharing** are permitted.
 - ⊕ Spectrum refers to the **radio frequencies allocated to the mobile industry and other sectors** for communication over the airwaves.
- **Telecommunications Act, 2023** provided that the Central Government may permit the **sharing, trading, leasing and surrender of assigned spectrum**.
- These recommendations are on the **Department of Telecommunications proposal** to allow sharing of all kinds of telecom infrastructure and network elements.
- **Issues Relating to Sharing and Leasing of Spectrum:** distinction between active and passive infrastructure sharing, ambiguities in provisions related to sharing of infrastructure, etc.
 - ⊕ **Active infrastructure refers to electronic infrastructure**, while passive refers to non-electronic infrastructure.
- **Recommendations made by TRAI**
 - ⊕ **Licensees should be allowed to share the passive infrastructure** such as building, tower etc.
 - ⊕ Infrastructure built using **Digital Bharat Nidhi should be mandated to allow roaming** to other service providers in remote areas for 3 years.
 - ⊕ **Spectrum leasing and inter-band spectrum sharing should also be permitted** for efficient utilization of scarce spectrum.
- **Significance of the recommendations**
 - ⊕ Will help **telecom companies in improving their cost efficiencies** and time to market.
 - ⊕ Will help in **extending services to underserved areas**.
 - ⊕ **Eases the connectivity issues** faced by the subscribers.

About Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

- **Genesis:** In 1997 by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.
- **Objective:** to provide a fair and transparent policy environment which promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition.

Also in News



Sympathetic Solar flares

- Four sympathetic solar flares erupted simultaneously was captured by NASA.
- **About Sympathetic Solar Flares:**
 - ⊕ They are caused by **multiple eruptions across the Sun's magnetic field, linked by massive magnetic field loops** that lie above the solar surface.
 - ⊕ **When one spot detonates, others follow suit.** This leads to coronal mass ejections (CMEs) and massive bursts of plasma.
 - ⊕ Such solar activity is likely an indication of the Sun reaching the peak of its 11-year solar cycle known as **solar maximum**.



Payment aggregator (PA)

- **PayU has received an in-principle approval** from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a PA.
- **About PA**
 - ⊕ It is a **financial technology company that simplifies the process of accepting electronic payments** for businesses.
 - ⊕ It acts as an **intermediary between the business and the financial institutions**.
 - ⊕ It is incorporated as a company under the **Companies Act, 1956 / 2013**.
 - ⊕ Non-bank PAs require authorisation from RBI under the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**.



Article 244(A)

- The people of the **Diphu Constituency (Assam)** have been demanding the implementation of **Article 244(A)** of the Constitution.
- **About Article 244(A)**
 - ⊕ Inserted by the **22nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1969**.
 - ⊕ It enables the **formation of an autonomous State** comprising certain tribal areas in Assam.
 - ⊕ The formed **autonomous state shall have its own local Legislature or Council of Ministers or both** for local administration.
 - ⊕ **Provides for more powers** to tribal areas **than the Sixth Schedule** by providing control over the law and order in the region.



Crystal Maze 2

- The Indian Air Force has successfully tested a new version of a medium-range ballistic missile Missile know as **Crystal Maze 2**
- **About Crystal Maze 2 (aka ROCKS):**
 - ⊕ **Origin:** medium-range ballistic missile developed by Israel.
 - ⊕ **Range:** **strike range of over 250 km**
 - ⊕ **Type:** Air-to-surface missile
 - ⊕ **Aim:** designed to strike high-value stationary and relocatable targets in GPS-denied environments
 - ⊕ Missile can target long-range radar and air defense systems.



Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS)

- The Supreme Court has stayed construction of four proposed dams inside KWS in Haryana's Yamunanagar district.
- **About Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary**
 - ⊕ It is at the junction of the states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.
 - ⊕ It's the **largest wildlife sanctuary in Haryana** situated at **lower Shivalik** in the Himalayan foothills.
 - ⊕ The **Yamuna River** runs to the **east of KWS**.
 - ⊕ It's an **important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs)**.
 - ⊕ It's a **Broadleaf Deciduous Forest**, comprising sal, khair, shisam, tun, sain and amla.
 - ⊕ **Fauna:** Leopard, Sloth Bear (Melursus ursinus), Hyena, etc.



Voyager 1

- **NASA's Voyager 1 Resumes Sending Engineering Updates to Earth**
 - ⊕ Earlier it stopped sending data back to Earth from Nov, 2023.
- **About Voyager 1**
 - ⊕ **Launched in 1977 to fly by Jupiter and Saturn.**
 - ⊕ **The probe is now in interstellar space, the region outside the heliopause.**
 - ⊕ It was also **the first spacecraft to cross the heliosphere.**
 - ◆ The boundary where the influences outside our solar system are stronger than those from our Sun.
 - ⊕ **Discovered a thin ring around Jupiter** and Jovian moons: Thebe and Metis.



The Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC)

- The GNAFC launched the **Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC)** which is produced **annually** by the **Food Security Information Network (FSIN)**.
- **About GNAFC:**
 - ⊕ It was launched in **2016**.
 - ⊕ By the European Union, the **UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and the **World Food Programme (WFP)**.
 - ⊕ It seeks to **better link, integrate and guide existing initiatives, partnerships, programmes and policy processes** to address the root causes of food crises.
 - ⊕ It brings together **governments, international organisations, and NGOs** to improve humanitarian responses and reduce the number of people facing acute food insecurity.



Nomination in Election

- Recently a candidate was **elected unopposed to the lok sabha** as the nomination papers of the opposite candidate was rejected by the returning officer.
- **Nominations in election**
 - ⊕ **Section 33 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RoPA)** contains the **requirements for a valid nomination.**
 - ⊕ For filing of nomination in a constituency
 - ◆ **Candidate from recognised political party** should have **one proposer**
 - ◆ **Candidates from independent and unrecognised parties** should be subscribed by **ten proposers.**
 - ◆ The proposers should be electors from that respective constituency.
- **Section 36 of the RoPA**, provides that the Returning Officer can reject a nomination based on signature of the candidate or proposer found not genuine.

Place in News



Kenya (Capital: Nairobi)

- Heavy rains in the capital city have resulted in devastating floods.
- **Political boundaries**
 - ⊕ Lies on the East Africa coast, **bordered by the Indian Ocean.**
 - ⊕ Somalia to the east, **Ethiopia and South Sudan** to the north, and Uganda and Tanzania, west and south respectively.
- **Geographical features**
 - ⊕ **Major mountain: Mt Kenya (second highest in Africa),** Aberdare Range, Mau Escarpment
 - ⊕ **Major rivers:** Athi, Tana
 - ⊕ **Lake Victoria** on the western border.
 - ⊕ Bisected **horizontally by the Equator.**
 - ⊕ **Great Rift Valley** passes through it.

