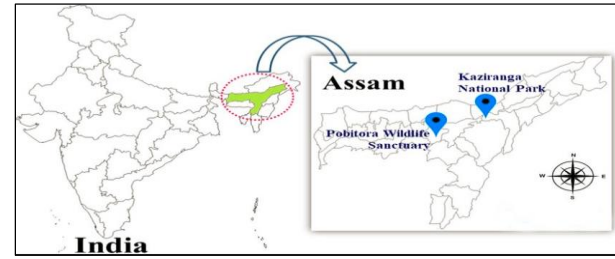


Kaziranga National Park

❖ Context

- Recently, The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change sought a “factual report” on the rhino population enumeration, conducted in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in March 2022.



❖ Key Highlights:

- Data sheets from the enumeration across the 84 compartments of the national park showed that the actual count of rhinos was 2,042.
- But this figure was “adjusted” after a sample survey in some randomly selected compartments to show 2,613 rhinos - an increase of 200 from the 2,413 rhinos estimated in 2018.

❖ Kaziranga National Park:

• Location :

- It is situated in the Golaghat, Karbi Anglong & Nagaon districts of the state of Assam, India.
- The entire area of Kaziranga - formed by alluvial deposits from the Brahmaputra & its tributaries - is centered on the river.
- The **Diphlu River passes through the Kaziranga National Park.**

- **International Status :** The sanctuary, which hosts two-thirds of the world's great one-horned rhinoceroses, **is a World Heritage Site.**

- **Legal Status :** It was declared as a **National Park in 1974** by Govt of India.

- Kaziranga is home to the **highest density of tigers** among protected areas in the world, and was **declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006** (now the highest tiger density is in **Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand**).

- **Flora :** Alluvial inundated grasslands, alluvial savanna woodlands, tropical moist mixed deciduous forests, and tropical semi-evergreen forests can be found here.

- **Kumbhi, Indian gooseberry, cotton tree, & elephant apple** are just a few of the park's well-known trees.

• Fauna : Indian Rhinoceros.

- It is famous for the charismatic **‘BIGFIVE’ Great Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros, Asiatic Wild Buffalo, Asiatic Elephant, Swamp Deer, and Royal Bengal Tiger** are among them.

❖ Indian Rhinoceros:

- **About :** The Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is the **biggest of the three rhinos of Asia**, and, along with the **African white rhino**, is the biggest of all rhino species.

- Its **single black horn** identifies it, along with its gray-brown hide and skin folds, giving it an **armor-plated look.**

- **Distribution :** The Indian rhinoceros is **found only in the Brahmaputra valley**, parts of North Bengal, and parts of southern Nepal.

- In India, rhinos are mainly found in Kaziranga NP, Pobitora WLS, Orang NP, Manas NP in Assam, Jaldapara NP and Gorumara NP in West Bengal Dudhwa TR in Uttar Pradesh.

- **Population :** According to the **WWF**, there are around 3,700 Indian rhinos in the wild today.

- Assam’s Kaziranga National Park (KNP) alone has 2,613 animals.

- There are more than **250 other rhinos in the Orang, Pobitora, and Manas parks.**

- **Conservation Status : IUCN Red List- Vulnerable.**

- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972- Schedule I**
- **CITES- Appendix I .**

Hate Speech

❖ Context

- Recently, The Supreme Court granted interim bail to a political party member who had been arrested for alleged **hate speech** by Assam Police earlier in the day.



❖ Key Highlights:

- He was booked under IPC sections including 153A, 505, and 295A.

- The invocation of these laws are often criticised for restricting free speech and misusing the legal processes for political purposes.

❖ Indian Laws With Respect to Hate Speech:

- There is **no specific legal definition** of ‘hate speech’.

- In the **267th Report of the Law Commission of India**, hate speech is stated as an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and the like.

- **Sections 153A and 153B of the IPC:** Punishes acts that cause enmity and hatred between two groups.

- **Section 295A of the IPC:** Deals with punishing acts which deliberately or with malicious intention outrage the religious feelings of a class of persons.

- **Sections 505(1) and 505(2):** Make the publication and circulation of content which may cause ill-will or hatred between different groups an offence.

- **Section 8 of RPA Act 1951:** Prevents a person convicted of the illegal use of the freedom of speech from contesting an election.

- **Sections 123(3A) and 125 of the RPA:** Bars the promotion of animosity on the grounds of race, religion, community, caste, or language in reference to elections and include it under corrupt electoral practices.

Face to Face Centres



Norms For Jute Packaging Materials



❖ Context

- Government of India approved **Reservation norms for mandatory use of jute in packaging** of rice, wheat and sugar for the Jute Year 2022-23.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **The Mandatory norms provide** for 100% reservation for packaging of foodgrains and 20% reservation for packaging of sugar in jute bags.
- It will be a **big boost for West Bengal** here nearly 75 jute mills operate and provide livelihood to lakhs of workmen
- It will support 40 lakh farm families in the jute sector.
- The decision will **also help the jute sector in** Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

❖ About JPM Act 1987:

- The reservation norms under the JPM Act provide for direct employment to 3.70 lakh workers & protect the interest of approximately 40 lakh farm families in the jute sector.
- **JPM Act, 1987 protects** the interest of Jute farmers, workers and persons engaged in jute goods' production.
- **75% of the total production** of the Jute Industry is Jute Sacking Bags of which 85% is supplied to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and State Procurement Agencies (SPAs) and remaining is exported/sold directly.
- **Govt. purchases** Jute sacking bags worth approximately Rs. 9,000 Cr. every year for packing of foodgrains.
- **This ensures** a guaranteed market for the produce of Jute Farmers and Workers.
- **The reservation norms** would further the interest of domestic production of raw jute and jute packaging material in India.
- It will also **help protect the environment** because jute is a natural, bio- degradable, renewable & reusable fiber and hence fulfills all sustainability parameters.

❖ Jute Production In India:

- India is the largest producer of Jute followed by Bangladesh and China.
- It is also **known as the golden fiber** and is one of the most significant industries after cotton in India
- Bangladesh tops the list in terms of acreage and trade as it accounts for three-fourths of the global jute exports in comparison to India's 7%.
- The **major jute producing states** are West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura.
- However **99% of India's total production** is held by West Bengal, Bihar and Assam.
- It **grows in a warm and humid climate** with temperatures between 24° C to 37° C.
- It is **totally biodegradable and recyclable**. It not only consumes carbon dioxide and releases oxygen but also increases soil fertility if grown in crop rotations.

❖ Initiatives Taken For Jute Sector:

- The government brought the **Jute Packaging Materials Act, 1987** to protect the interests of about 4 lakh workers and 40 lakh farm families.
- In 2016, an **e-government initiative**, Jute SMART, was launched to bring transparency to the jute sector.
- **The Jute Geo-Textiles (JGT)** can be made through the special treatment and weaving processes.
- **JGT can be applied to many fields** including soil erosion control, civil engineering, protection of river banks and road pavement construction.

News in Between the Lines

International Monetary Fund (IMF)



❖ Context

- Recently, IMF's Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said that the **Indian economy will alone contribute 15 per cent of the global growth** this year, as the country continues to remain a relative "bright spot" in the world economy.

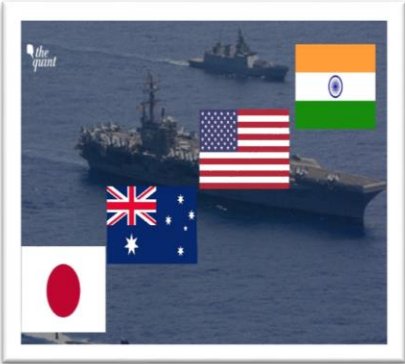
❖ International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- **About:**
 - The IMF is an **international financial institution**, It was **set up along with the World Bank** at the **Bretton Woods Conference in 1944**.
 - **Headquarter** - Washington, D.C.
 - It consists of **190 countries**.
 - It works to foster **global monetary cooperation**, secure financial stability and facilitate **international trade**.
- **Areas Of Involvement :**
 - Exchange rate, currency, liquid asset, Special Drawing Right
 - Plays a **central role in the management of balance of payments difficulties** and international financial crises.
- **Publications :** Global Financial Stability Report ,World Economic Outlook, Regional Economic Outlook , Managing Director's Global Policy Agenda.

Face to Face Centres



Malabar Exercise



❖ Context

- Australia will host the Malabar multilateral naval exercise, consisting of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., for the first time this year.

❖ About Malabar Exercise:

- Japan hosted the last edition of Malabar which was held in November 2022 which also marked 30 years of the exercise.
- Malabar is a **multilateral war-gaming naval exercise** that was started in **1992**.
- It began as a bilateral exercise between the navies of India and the United States.
- Two more editions of the exercise were carried out in 1995 and 1996, after which there was a break until 2002 in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests.
- **From 2002 onward, the exercise has been conducted every year.**
- Japan and Australia first participated in 2007, and since 2014, India, the US and Japan have participated in the exercise every year.
- Australia was included as a permanent member of Ex Malabar in 2020 amid the standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh.

Emergency Over Dengue Outbreak



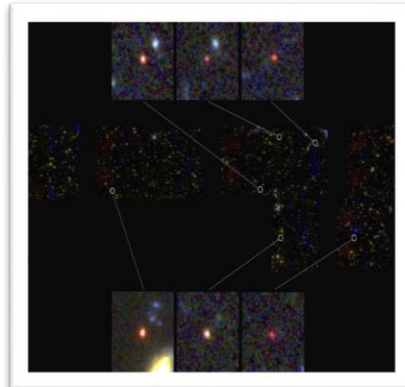
❖ Context

- Peru has declared a "**health emergency**" in 13 departments in the country's north, centre and southeast due to an outbreak of dengue.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Earlier its neighbour** Bolivia also declared a health alert with a cumulative number of more than 6,800 cases and 26 deaths.
- According to the **World Health Organization**, dengue fever is one of the top ten global health threats and is also the most rapidly spreading threat.
- There has been a **30-fold increase in global incidence** over the past 50 years.
- Dengue fever is caused by a virus transmitted primarily by **Aedes Aegypti mosquitoes**.
- These mosquitoes **bite during the day**, usually just after sunrise and around sunset.
- Common symptoms of dengue include fever, rash, nausea and aches and pains, lasting up to a week. Some people with dengue develop **complications that can result in internal bleeding, shock and even death.**
- Around 2.5% of people affected by severe dengue die from the disease. **There is no cure for infection.**

James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)

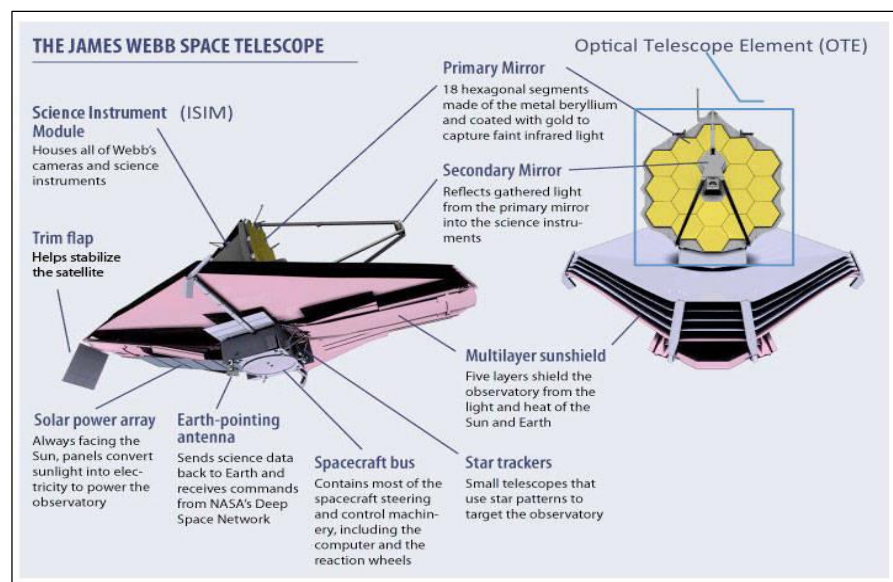


❖ Context

- Recently, James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) discovered six extraordinarily massive first-generation galaxies, formed roughly 500-700 million years after the Big Bang.

❖ James Webb Space Telescope

- The telescope has been developed under an international partnership between **NASA**, the European Space Agency (**ESA**) and the Canadian Space Agency (**CSA**).
- It was launched aboard a rocket on December 25, 2021.
- It headed to an outpost 1.5 million kilometers (9,30,000 miles) from Earth.
- It is currently at a point in space known as the Sun-Earth **L2 Lagrange point**.
 - L2 is approximately 1.5 million km beyond Earth's orbit around the Sun.
- It is a successor of the **Hubble Telescope**.
- The telescope will study the **atmospheres of a wide diversity of exoplanets**
- It will also **search for atmospheres similar to Earth's**, and for the signatures of key substances such as **methane, water, oxygen, carbon dioxide**, and **complex organic molecules**, in hopes of finding the building blocks of life.



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Medicinal Plant Having Cardio Protective Potential Found



❖ Context

➤ Medicinal plant commonly called **Borthekera** in Assamese found to have cardio protective potential.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Scientists of Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST)**, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), explored this medicinal plant's potential.
- **Garcinia Pedunculata, traditionally forbidden for raw consumption**, has been found to protect from heart disease.
- The sun-dried slices of the ripe fruit are **used for culinary and medicinal purposes** and are known to have therapeutic properties like anti-inflammatory etc.
- Multiple studies have been reported that **G. pedunculata is a rich source of antioxidants**. However, the cardio protective potential was yet to be explored earlier.

ICAR Develops Climate-Smart Wheat Variety



❖ Context

➤ ICAR develops a new wheat variety which can overcome challenges arising out due to changes in weather patterns and rising heat levels.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Amid the **rapidly rising mercury levels** across the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had cautioned that the recent temperature spike witnessed by Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan **might put the wheat crops in peril**.
- This was followed with the Union Agriculture Ministry **setting up a committee to monitor the developing situation** and its impacts on the current wheat crop.
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research **has developed a new wheat variety**
- **It can overcome the challenges** arising out due to changes in weather patterns and rising heat levels.
- This new wheat **variety called HD-3385** is amenable to early sowing, escaping the impact of heat spikes and can be harvested before March end.

Environmental Costs Of War



❖ Context

➤ The conflict in Ukraine has racked up environmental costs that will far outlive the actual fighting.

❖ Key Highlights:



- **According to UN Environment Programme data**, the conflict has seen damage across many regions of the country, with incidents at nuclear power, energy infrastructure, including oil storage tankers etc.
- **The result** has been multiple air pollution incidents and potentially serious contamination of ground and surface waters.
- **More than 2 million hectares** of forest have been destroyed, wrecking ecosystems and putting at risk rare endemic species such as pearl cornflowers.
- **It is being estimated** that the emissions from Russia's invasion to be roughly around 33 million tonnes of CO2 from the conflict and 23 million tonnes CO2 from fires caused by the conflict.

- **It is predicted** that reconstruction of infrastructure and buildings destroyed or damaged during the war could emit 49 million tonnes of CO2.
- The potential carbon costs for reconstruction, is roughly equivalent to the **carbon footprint of Greece or Belarus in 2020**.

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