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1. Twelve cheetahs brought from South Africa to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh (Feb. 18, 2023)

Twelve cheetahs from **South Africa** were brought to **Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh** on 18 February. Of the 12 cheetahs, **seven are male and five are female.**

An overview of the news

- **The first group of Namibian cheetahs** reached Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh on **17 September 2022** under the cheetah reintroduction programme.

- **The second batch of Cheetahs** started their journey to Kuno on 17 February 2023 from **Tambo International Airport in Gauteng**.

- The aircraft landed at **Gwalior Air Force Base** in Madhya Pradesh on 18 February.

- The onward journey was undertaken in **Mi-17 helicopters** of the Indian Air Force.

- Union Environment Minister **Bhupendra Yadav** and Chief Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** released the cheetahs in their quarantine enclosures.

- The health of the cheetahs will be checked and then they will be kept in quarantine for a month.

Reintroduction Action Plan

- Reintroduction of a species means releasing it in an area where it is capable of surviving.

- Under the scheme, **50 cheetahs** will be released in various national parks of the country over a period of 5 years.

Extinction of cheetahs

- The last cheetah of the country was found dead in the year 1947 in Chhattisgarh and i**n the year 1952** it was declared **extinct** in the country.

- **Habitat loss, conflict with humans, poaching** and high susceptibility to diseases are the major causes of their extinction.

About 'Project Cheetah'

- This is a one of its kind project in which a species is being brought out of the country **(from South Africa / Namibia)** and restored to the country.

- The subspecies of the extinct cheetah in India was the **Asiatic cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus venaticus)** and the subspecies of the cheetah being brought back to the country is the **African cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus jubatus).**

- Research has shown that the genes of both these subspecies are similar.

2. Qatar lifts ban on frozen seafood from India (Feb. 18, 2023)

Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA) has said that **Qatar** partially lifted a ban imposed last year on the import of **frozen seafood** from India on 18 February.

An overview of the news

- The ban will continue on exports of **chilled seafood**, which accounts for about a third of the West Asian country's total seafood exports in 2021-22 with the worth of **Rs 143 crore**.

- Frozen seafood is stored at **minus 20 degrees**, while chilled seafood is stored at **3-4 degrees Celsius.**

- In the current financial year, India's seafood exports to the West Asian country stood at around **Rs 90 crore**, with prawns taking the number one spot.

- **China** has also lifted the suspension of shipments from 99 Indian seafood processing and export units.

- Now seafood exports are expected to cross **USD 8 billion** in the current fiscal.

Why was the ban imposed?

- This ban was imposed in **November 2022.**

- Vibrio cholerae, the bacteria that causes cholera infection, was reportedly detected in consignments exported from India to Qatar ahead of the FIFA World Cup. After this these food products were banned.

3. Railways launches Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train (Feb. 18, 2023)

Indian Railways on 17 February launched **Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train - Shri Ram-Janaki Yatra: Ayodhya to Janakpur** from Safdarjung Railway Station, Delhi.

An overview of the news

- This train will cover two most important pilgrimage sites **Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh and Janakpur in Nepal.**

- The train will pass through **Ayodhya, Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Janakpur, Varanasi and Prayagraj** during its seven-day journey.

- The train has **four first-AC coaches, two second-AC coaches**, two rail restaurants and a library.

- It can carry **156 tourists.**

Corporate Address: A102, A Block, Sector 58, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301

- The fare will start from **Rs 39,000 per person.**

- The tour package also includes night stay in an AC hotel and vegetarian food.

- This initiative will strengthen bilateral ties and also **promote cultural ties between India and Nepal.**

- The introduction of Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train is in line with the "**Dekho Apna Desh" initiative** of the Government of India to promote domestic tourism.

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5. Khalistan Tiger Force and Jammu and Kashmir Ghaznavi Force declared as terrorist organisations (Feb. 18, 2023)

The central government on 17 February declared **Khalistan Tiger Force, and Jammu and Kashmir Ghaznavi Force** as **terrorist organisations** under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).**

An overview of the news

- Apart from this, Punjab resident **Harvinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda**, the mastermind of the 2021 attack on the intelligence headquarters of Punjab Police, has been declared a **terrorist.**

- The government has so far designated **54 individuals** as terrorists and **44 organisations** as terrorist organisations.

Khalistan Tiger Force

- It came into existence in **2011** as an offshoot of terrorist organization **Babbar Khalsa International.**

- It is a banned organisation under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

- It is a militant organization whose aim is to **revive militancy in Punjab.**

- This organisation is promoting various acts of terrorism including **targeted killings in Punjab.**

- Its agenda is the formation of a **separate state of Khalistan.**

Jammu and Kashmir Ghaznavi Force (JKGF)

- It has been formed with cadres of terrorist organisations like **Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.**

- It has been found involved in infiltration attempts, smuggling of narcotics and arms and carrying out terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

- It draws its cadres from **Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami** and various banned terrorist organisations.

Harvinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda

- He hails from **Lahore** and is associated with the banned **Babbar Khalsa International (BKI**), a terrorist-designated group.

- He is accused of masterminding the **attack on the intelligence headquarters of the Punjab Police in 2021.**

- He has direct links with Pakistan-based terrorist groups and is also involved in large-scale smuggling of drugs, arms, ammunition and militant hardware.

- He has been involved in various crimes like **murder, attempt to murder, contract killing, dacoity and extortion** in Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

- He is the **54th person** to be declared a terrorist by the government.

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7. Jaishankar unveils bust of Sardar Vallabhai Patel in Fiji's capital Suva (Feb. 18, 2023)

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** unveiled the **bust of Sardar Vallabhai Patel** at **India House in Fiji's capital Suva** on 17 February.

An overview of the news

- Jaishankar was in Fiji from February 15 to 17, where he participated in the **12th World Hindi Conference.**

- He held bilateral meetings with Fiji's leadership during his first visit to Suva on 16 February.

- Jaishankar met the President of Fiji, **Ratu William Katonivere,** at State House and along with the President of Fiji launched a Government of India funded project for **solarization of the Pacific Heads of State Residence at State House in Suva**.

- The project is a Solar Head of State initiative launched by the **Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF)** in Fiji and funded by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

- The leaders of the two countries took stock of bilateral relations and discussed ways to further strengthen the development partnership between India and Fiji in various sectors including capacity building, health, education, agriculture and information technology.

- The External Affairs Minister inaugurated the renovated **Girmit Gallery at the Fiji Museum.**

- The gallery depicts the journey of **Girmits (Indian indentured labourers**) in Fiji.

- India and Fiji signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on **visa exemption for holders of diplomatic and official passports**.

8. AICTE and BPRD Jointly Launch KAVACH-2023 (Feb. 17, 2023)

A national level **hackathon KAVACH-2023** was launched on 16 February to identify innovative ideas and technological solutions to address India's 21st century **cyber security and cybercrime challenges.**

An overview of the news

- KAVACH-2023 is a one-of-a-kind national hackathon jointly developed by **AICTE, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) and Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre.**

- It identifies innovative ideas and technological solutions to address **21st century cyber security and cybercrime challenges** faced by law enforcement agencies and common citizens.

- KAVACH-2023 will be organised in two phases.

- In the first phase, topics related to Fake News/Social Media, Dark Web, Women Safety, Phishing Detection, Video Analytics/CCTV, Obscene Content Detection, Spam Alerts, and Malware Analysis/Digital Forensics will be covered.

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10. World Hindi Conference concludes in Fiji (Feb. 17, 2023)

The **12th World Hindi Conference** concluded on 17 February in **Nadi, Fiji.** It was held from 15 to 17th February.

An overview of the news

- Fiji's Deputy Prime Minister **Biman Prasad,** External Affairs Minister **Dr S Jaishankar**, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan and Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra addressed the closing ceremony.

- The three-day conference was organised by the **Indian Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Government of Fiji.**

- The main theme of the conference was "**Hindi - Traditional Knowledge of Artificial Intelligence".**

- In addition to the theme-based plenary sessions, **10 parallel sessions** were held.

- Representatives of **50 countries** participated in the World Hindi Conference.

- The conference was inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar along with Fijian Prime Minister **Sitwini Rabuka.**

- This program will be used to promote Hindi as a global language.

World Hindi Conference

- The first World Hindi Conference was held in Nagpur in **1975** to popularise Hindi as a global language. At that time Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India.

- **11th World Hindi Conference** was held at **Port Louis, Mauritius** between 18-20 August' 2018.

Hindi Diwas

- Every year **14 September** is observed as **Hindi Diwas** in India.

- On this day in 1949 the Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi as the official language of the country.

Republic of Fiji

- It is an archipelago consisting of around 300 islands in the **South Pacific Ocean.**

- Capital: **Suva**

- Currency: **Fijian Dollar**

- Prime Minister: **Sitiveni Rabuka**