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1. Supreme Court seeks government's response on 'Project Great Indian Bustard' conservation programme (Dec. 2, 2022)

'ProjectGreat Indian Bustard'

The Supreme Court on November 28 sought the government's response on developing a conservation program called '**Project [Great Indian Bustard](#)**' to address the crisis faced by the critically endangered bird species.

Important facts

- A public interest litigation was filed in the country's top court, in which an appeal was made to give directions to **save the Godavan i.e. Great Indian Bustard bird.**
- In fact, many Great Indian Bustards or Godavan have died due to **criss-crossing of power transmission lines** in Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- While hearing the petitions filed in this context, the court sought answers from the government and advised to start Project Great Indian Bustard.
- The Supreme Court has advised to start '**Project Great Indian Bustard**' on the lines of '**Project Tiger**' for the rescue of an endangered bird Great Indian Bustard.

About Great Indian Bustard

- It is considered India's most **critically endangered bird** species and especially found in **Rajasthan and Gujarat.**
- It is one of the heaviest flying birds **endemic to the Indian subcontinent.**
- It is the state bird of Rajasthan.
- These birds are on the verge of extinction, with barely 50 to 249 surviving, according to a 2021 report by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).**
- It is a large bird with brown-and-white feathers with black crown and wing markings. It is one of the heaviest birds in the world.
- Its habitat is Arid **grasslands.**
- IUCN Status - **Critically Endangered.**
- Listed in Wildlife Protection Act's **Schedule 1.**
- The cause of the decline in numbers is Hunting, Intensification of agriculture, Power lines.

2. India assumes the Presidency of the UNSC for December month 2022 (Dec. 1, 2022)

India assumes the Presidency of the UNSC for December month 2022

According to the External Affairs Ministry, India has assumed the **Presidency** of the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) for the month of **December 2022**. India will be the President of the UNSC for one month as the 2 year term of India as a non-permanent member of the UNSC ends on 31 December 2022.

India became the non -permanent member of the UNSC on 1 January 2021. During **its 2 year terms** India has become the President of the UNSC for the second time . Earlier it became President in August 2021.

According to the External Affairs Ministry during India's Presidency two key events are scheduled in the UNSC.

There will be a debate on “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: New Orientation for Reformed Multilateralism’ and others will be on “Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts: Global Approach to Counter Terrorism - Challenges and Way Forward”.

Both the sessions will be chaired by the **External Affairs minister S. Jaishankar**.

India has been elected **8 times** as a non-permanent member of the UNSC. India has been elected **in 1950, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1984, 1991, 2011 and 2021**.

The UNSC consists of **15 members**. China, US, Russia, France and the United Kingdom are permanent members. Rest 10 non-permanent members are elected for a period of 2 years.

At present the UN has **193 member countries**.

3. India to assume chairmanship of Wassenaar arrangement on 1 Jan 2023 (Dec. 1, 2022)

India to assume chairmanship of Wassenaar arrangement on 1 Jan 2023

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has announced that India will assume Chairmanship of **Wassenaar Arrangement** (WA) on 01 January 2023 for a period **of one year**.

At the 26th annual Plenary of the WA held in **Vienna, Austria** on 30 November-01 December 2022, Ambassador Eoin O'Leary of Ireland handed over the Chairmanship to Ambassador Jagdeep Majumdar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to UN and International Organizations in Vienna.

India joined the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) on 08 December 2017 as its **42nd Participating State**.

Wassenaar Arrangement

The Wassenaar Arrangement was established in July 1996 at **Wassenaar, Netherlands**. It is a voluntary export control regime of **42 member countries**. The member countries exchange information on transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies.

The main aim of the Wassenaar agreement is to discourage its member countries from exporting conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies to countries which are a threat to global peace.

The WA Plenary is the decision-making and governing body of the Arrangement. It is composed of representatives of all Participating States who normally meet once a year at **Vienna, Austria.**

External Affairs' Minister : S.Jaishankar

4. Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin dies aged 96 (Dec. 1, 2022)

Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin dies aged 96

Former **Chinese President Jiang Zemin** died on 30 November, 2022 at the age of 96 in **Shanghai**, of leukaemia and multiple organ failure.

Important facts

- He was the **first Chinese President to visit India in 1996** when India and China moved towards normalising the bilateral ties.
- Jiang was China's president from **1993-2003.**
- Under his leadership, **Hong Kong** was peacefully handed over to China in 1997 and China joined the **World Trade Organization**, which laid the groundwork for China to become the **world's second largest economy** with high-speed development.
- Jiang Zemin took command of China after the **1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre.**
- He consolidated the powers of the Communist Party of China, weeded out internal dissent, and in 1999 cracked down on the religious sect Falun Gong, which was seen as a threat to the party.
- He is also credited with the country's further integration with the global order and higher status as a world power.

India - China relation in his tenure

- His visit to India in 1996 was seen as a major step towards the normalisation of **India-China bilateral relations.**
- During his visit, the two countries signed a comprehensive agreement to restore **peace and tranquillity** along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** and reached a consensus on building a **constructive and cooperative partnership.**
- Both sides signed several agreements for confidence building in the military sector along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC).**
- Both sides also discussed reducing border troops.

- This was followed by Prime Minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee's** visit to **China in 2003**, when both sides decided to appoint their respective Special Representatives (SRs) to explore a solution to the boundary issue under the framework of the Boundary Agreement.
- Jiang was then the chairman of the Central Military Commission and Hu Jintao took over as the Chinese President in 2002, a year earlier.

5. Indian Coast Guard Advanced Light Helicopter Mk-III squadron, commissioned in Chennai (Dec. 1, 2022)

Indian Coast Guard Advanced Light Helicopter Mk-III squadron, commissioned in Chennai

With a view to further strengthen Coast Guard Area East, **840 Sqn (CG)**, an Indian Coast Guard Advanced Light Helicopter (**ALH) Mk-III squadron** was commissioned by **DG VS Pathania** on 30 November at ICG Air Station, **Chennai**.

Important facts

- The commissioning of **840 Sqn (CG)** marks a significant progress towards self-reliance in helicopter manufacturing, in line with the government's vision of '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**'.
- It will provide a fillip to the capabilities of the Indian Coast Guard in the security sensitive waters of **Tamil Nadu and Andhra region**.
- A total of **16 ALH Mk-III aircraft** have been inducted into the Indian Coast Guard in a phased manner and four of these aircraft are positioned in Chennai.
- Since induction, the squadron has flown over 430 hours and conducted numerous operational missions.

About ALH Mk-III helicopters

- The ALH Mk-III helicopters, indigenously manufactured by **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**.
- It features state-of-the-art equipment including advanced RADAR as well as Electro optical sensors, Shakti engines, full glass cockpit, high-intensity search light, advanced communication systems, automatic identification system as well as search-and-rescue homer.
- The facility will enable the squadron to conduct maritime reconnaissance, and conduct search and rescue operations over extended ranges, operating **day and night** from ships.
- The aircraft has the ability to switch from an offensive platform with a heavy machine gun for transfer of critically **ill patients** to a benign platform carrying ICUs.

6. ICG conducts 24th National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan and Preparedness Meeting (Dec. 1, 2022)

24th National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan and Preparedness Meeting

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on 30 November conducted the **24th National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOS-DCP) and Preparedness Meeting** in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.

Important facts

- Director General, ICG **V S Pathania**, who is the Chairman of NOS-DCP, chaired the meeting.
- During the meeting, national capabilities were reviewed with the objective of ensuring collective preparedness to respond to any oil and chemical spill contingency in Indian waters.
- The meeting was attended by around 100 delegates including representatives from various ministries, central and state government departments and agencies, state pollution control boards, ports and companies dealing with oil spills.
- Currently, as the **third largest importer of crude**, India receives a large volume of oil through ships.
- Similarly, **India stands sixth in the world as a major chemical importer** country.

Risks of oil and chemicals spill

- Spills of both oil and chemicals pose inherent risks to coastal populations, marine ecosystems, industry and the ancillary tourism industry as well as various establishments in India's maritime zones and associated coastlines.
- Hence, preventive measures are required to be taken by the Central Coordinating Agency, Ports, Ship Owners, Oil Handling Facilities, Coastal States and other relevant stakeholders to prevent any possible marine spillage.

About Indian Coast Guard (ICG)

- It is an Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency under the **Ministry of Defence**.
- It was established in **August 1978** by the **Coast Guard Act, 1978** as an independent Armed force of India.
- It is the **fourth largest Coast Guard** in the world.
- It has played a vital role in securing Indian coasts and enforcing regulations in India's maritime zones.
- It is headquartered in **New Delhi**.

7. BIS signs MoU with top six engineering institutes of India (Nov. 30, 2022)

BIS signs MoU with top six engineering institutes of India

The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** has signed **MoUs with six engineering institutes** to implement Indian Standards as part of their curriculum.

Important facts

- This initiative is towards institutionalising engagement of BIS with the eminent institutes for securing active participation of academia.
- BIS has signed an Agreement with the following engineering Institutes-
 1. Indian Institute of Technology BHU,
 2. Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur,
 3. Indian Institute of Technology Indore,
 4. Indian Institute of Technology Patna,
 5. Indian Institute of Technology Madras
 6. National Institute of Technology Trichy
- The MoU is for establishment of '**BIS Standardization Chair Professor**' at these institutes.
- It will promote excellence and leadership in teaching, research and development in the field of science and various disciplines in the respective institutions.
- Under the agreement, technology innovation and standards development will be linked together to promote the development of technology oriented products and services.

About Bureau of Indian Standards

- Bureau of Indian Standards is the national standards body of India under the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India.
- Headquarters- **Manak Bhawan, Old Delhi**
- Director General- **Pramod Kumar Tiwari**
- Established- **23 December 1986**

8. India witnesses significant decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) (Nov. 30, 2022)

India witnesses significant decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)

As per a report released by the **Registrar General of India** on 30 November India has witnessed a significant decline in the **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** from 130 in 2014-16 to 97 in 2018-20 on per lakh live births.

Important facts

- As per the report MMR has improved further by a spectacular six points and now **stands at 97 per lakh live births.**
- The MMR is defined as the number of maternal deaths during a given time period per one lakh live births.
- India has thus met the National Health Policy target of an MMR of less than 100 per lakh live births and is on course to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goal of an MMR of less than 70 per lakh live births by 2030.**

Three highest MMR State

- Assam has the highest maternal mortality rate (MMR) at 195, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 173 and Uttar Pradesh at 167 (per lakh live births).

States with lowest MMR

- Kerala has the lowest MMR of 19 per lakh live births, followed by Maharashtra 33 and Telangana 43.

States which have achieved Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target

- Kerala (MMR 19), followed by Maharashtra (33), Telangana (43), Andhra Pradesh (45), Tamil Nadu (54), Jharkhand (56), Gujarat (57) and Karnataka (69).

9. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval highlights role of Ulema in countering radicalization (Nov. 30, 2022)

Ajit Doval highlights role of Ulema in countering radicalization

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval participated in a conference on '**Role of Ulema in promoting a culture of interfaith peace and social harmony in India and Indonesia**', in **New Delhi** on 29 November.

Important facts

- He said that cross-border terrorism and **ISIS-inspired terrorism** continues to pose a threat.

- He said, India and Indonesia are victims of terrorism and separatism.
- He said scholars of Islam and Islamic law have a “**vital role**” to play in countering **radicalisation and extremism** by propagating progressive ideas and thought.
- Role of Ulema in promoting a culture of interreligious peace and social harmony in India and Indonesia - will help bring scholars together to promote tolerance, harmony and peaceful co-operation and strengthen the fight against violent extremism, terrorism and radicalism.
- The ulemas have a “leading role in educating the people on the original tolerant and moderate principles of Islam”.
- Both countries need to build a consensus on de-radicalisation, and institutions need to come together to identify and address potential negative impacts.
- The Indonesian delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister **Mohd Mahfud MD** is on a three-day visit to India.

About Indonesia

- Indonesia is located between the **Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean**.
- It is the **world's largest island country** with more than 17,000 islands, it is the **fourth most populous country in the world**.
- **Indonesia ranks first**, Pakistan second and India third in terms of Muslim population in the world.
- The world's most populous island is **Java**, it is in Indonesia.
- Indonesia was one of the founding members of the **Non-Aligned Movement** along with India.
- Currency - **Indonesian rupiah**
- President - **Joko Widodo**

10. 4 US soldiers promoted high up on Nanda Devi during India-US military exercise (Nov. 30, 2022)

India-US military exercise

For the first time, **four US Army officers** from the **11th Airborne Division** have been promoted to India's second highest Himalayan peak **Nanda Devi** during the 18th edition of Indo-US joint military exercise '[Yudh Abhyas](#)' in Uttarakhand.

Important facts

- Capt. Cerruti, Lt. Russell, Lt. Brown and Lt. Hack became the first four US Army Officers to be promoted in the Himalayas during Yudh Abhyas Exercise.

- US soldiers from the 2nd Brigade of the **11th Airborne Division and Indian Army**
- **soldiers** from the Assam Regiment are participating in a two-week joint military exercise.
- Yudh Abhyas is conducted annually between India and the US with the aim of exchanging best practices, tactics, techniques and procedures between the armies of the two nations.
- The aim of the exercise is to enhance **interoperability** and share expertise in **peacekeeping** and disaster relief operations between the two armies.
- The joint exercise will also focus on **humanitarian** assistance and **disaster relief (HADR) operations**.

Nanda Devi Peak

- Nanda Devi is the **second-highest mountain in India**, after **Kangchenjunga**, and located entirely within India (Kangchenjunga is on the border of India and Nepal). It is in the state of Uttarakhand (Chamoli district).
- It is the **23rd-highest peak in the world**.
- The Nanda Devi Peak is a part of the **Garhwal Himalayas**.