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1. Bhupender Yadav Launched 'Save Wetlands Campaign' For Wetland Conservation (Feb. 7, 2023)

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **Bhupender Yadav** on 4 February launched the '**Save Wetlands Campaign**' in the presence of Chief Minister of Goa, Pramod Sawant.

An overview of the news

- The campaign is based on a "**whole of society**" approach to wetland conservation.
- It enables positive actions for wetland conservation at all levels of society and involves all levels of society.
- This campaign will provide an opportunity to sensitise people about the value of wetlands, increase the coverage of wetlands and citizen participation for wetland conservation in the years to come.
- During the occasion two publications were also released '**India's 75 Amrit Dharohar- India's Ramsar Sites Factbook**' and '**Managing Climate Risks in Wetlands - A Practitioner's Guide**.
- The factbook provides information on **75 Ramsar sites**, including their value, the threats they face and management arrangements in place.
- The Practitioner's Guide on Climate Risk Assessment provides step-wise guidance on the integration of adaptation and mitigation responses into **wetland management planning**.

Number of Wetlands Sites in India

- There are a total of **75 wetland sites** in India that are included in the **Ramsar sites**.
- About **49 wetland sites** in India have been included in Ramsar sites in the last **9 years**.
- India's **13 lakh hectares of land** comes under Ramsar sites. The largest wetland site in India is the **Sundarbans site**.
- The theme of this year's Wetland Day is '**It's time for wetlands restoration**'.

2. "Yaya Tso" declared as Ladakh's first Biodiversity Heritage Site (Feb. 7, 2023)

Recently **Yaya Tso** has been declared as the **first Biodiversity Heritage Site of Ladakh**.

An overview of the news:

- **Yaya Tso is a lake** situated at an **altitude of 4,820 metres in Ladakh** which is known as the paradise of birds.
- It is a nesting site for birds and animals such as bar-headed goose, black-necked stork and Brahminy duck. It is one of the highest breeding grounds of black-necked stork in India.
- Yaya Tso Lake has been declared as the first Biodiversity Heritage Site of Ladakh under Biodiversity Act by Chumathang Village Panchayat, Biodiversity Management Committee in association with Secure Himalaya Project.

Secure Himalaya Project:

- It is a scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.
- It was launched in the year 2017 in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).
- This is a 6 year project and will be functional till the year 2023.
- The main objective of this project is to conserve snow leopards in the area.
- Under this project, 4 Himalayan states of Jammu and Kashmir (now Union Territory), Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim come.

Biodiversity Heritage Site:

- Biodiversity Heritage Sites are areas that contain unique, vulnerable ecosystems in terrestrial, coastal and inland waters and wild species with rich biodiversity, as well as endemic, rare, threatened and keystone species.
- As per Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, State Governments are empowered to notify, in the Official Gazette, areas of biodiversity importance as Biodiversity Heritage Sites, in consultation with local bodies.

India's first BHS:

- **India's first Biodiversity Heritage Site was declared in 2007 at Nallur Tamarind Grove in Bengaluru, Karnataka.**
- Recently the Tamil Nadu government has declared Arittapatti in Melur block of Madurai district as Tamil Nadu's first and India's 35th Biodiversity Heritage Site.

Recently added 5 BHS:

- Debari or Chabimura in Tripura (September 2022)
- Betling Shib in and around Tripura (September 2022)
- Hejong Tortoise Lake in Assam (August 2022)
- Borjuli Wild Rice Site in Assam (August 2022)

• Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh (July 2022)

3. National School of Drama to organise the 22nd edition of the Bharat Rang Mahotsav (Feb. 7, 2023)

National School of Drama (NSD) will organise the **22nd edition of Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM)** from February 14 to 26, 2023.

An overview of the news

- This International Theater Festival will be held in **Delhi, Rajahmundry, Jaipur, Ranchi, Jammu, Guwahati, Srinagar, Bhopal, Nashik and Kevadia.**
- The closing ceremony will be held on February 26 at **Kevadia.**
- This will be the first BRM after a break of two years due to Covid.
- The 22nd Bharat Rang Mahotsav will see a scintillating display of plays and cultural performances, panel discussions on several topics of global and strategic importance of theatre in a global perspective.
- The plays will be performed in **16 different Indian languages.**

Bharat Rang Mahotsav

- Bharat Rang Mahotsav was established two decades ago by the National School of Drama to encourage the development of theater across the country.
- It hosts theater companies from around the world, and is the **largest theater festival in Asia.**
- It aims to strengthen international tie-ups and cultural exchange programs with other nations.
- It creates a platform to know more about theater traditions across the country.

4. First G20 Tourism Working Group meeting at Dhordo in Kutch region of Gujarat (Feb. 7, 2023)

As part of India's G20 Presidency, **Gujarat** is hosting the **first Tourism Working Group (TWG) meeting** at **Dhordo Tent City in the Rann of Kutch** from 7 February.

An overview of the news

- Union Tourism Minister **G Kishan Reddy**, Union Fisheries Minister **Purushottam Rupala** and Chief Minister **Bhupendra Patel** will officially inaugurate the meeting.

- The participants will be senior representatives from G20 member states, invited countries and international organisations.
- This will be the second G20 event in the state after the '**Business 20 Inception**' event held in **Gandhinagar** last month.

First Global Tourism Investors' Summit (GTIS)

- The Ministry of Tourism will organise the **first Global Tourism Investors Summit (GTIS)** in April/May 2023 in **New Delhi**.
- The aim of the conference is to attract global investment in the Indian tourism and hospitality sector along with investments in tourism infrastructure, technology, skill development, startups and more.

Five priority areas in the tourism sector

- **Green Tourism** -Greening of the tourism sector of India for a sustainable, responsible and resilient tourism sector.
- **Digitalization** -Harnessing the power of digitalization to promote competitiveness, inclusion and sustainability in India's tourism sector.
- **Skills Development** -Empowering youth with skills for jobs and entrepreneurship in the tourism sector.
- **Tourism MSMEs** -Nurturing tourism MSMEs. Startups and the private sector to unleash innovation and dynamism in the tourism sector.
- **Destination Management** -Rethinking the strategic management of destinations towards a holistic approach that delivers on the SDGs.

5. Ministry of Education launched "Yuva Sangam Portal" (Feb. 7, 2023)

"Yuva Sangam Portal" launched at Indira Gandhi Kala Kendra, Delhi **by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan**, chaired by Sports and Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur, Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijju, Tourism, Culture and North Eastern Affairs Minister G Kishan Reddy Went.

An overview of the news

- The Ministry of Education has launched a pilot project with the Yuva Sangam portal under Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat.
- **Under the project, 1000 youth in the age group of 18 to 30 years** (300 from North East, 700 from other states) will be sent to youth exchange programs in the North East and other states of the country.

- Through Yuva Sangam, the youth of the North East will get an opportunity to know the
- tradition, culture, tourist places, food, language and diversity of the eight states of the country and the youth of other states of the country.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat:

- Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat was **announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the year 2015** on the **occasion of Sardar Vallabh Patel's 140th birth anniversary** and was **launched by the Finance Minister in the budget for the financial year 2016-17**.
- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education.

6. Asia's largest helicopter manufacturing unit inaugurated (Feb. 7, 2023)

The helicopter manufacturing unit of **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Tumkuru, Karnataka** has been dedicated to the nation **by Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.

An overview of the news

- It is the **largest helicopter manufacturing facility in Asia**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the **foundation stone of this manufacturing unit in the year 2016** with an aim to promote the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
- **Initially, the Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) will be produced in this helicopter factory.**
- The factory would later be expanded to manufacture Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Indian Multirole Helicopter (IMRH) as well as repair LCH, LUH, civil ALH and IMRH.
- This helicopter manufacturing unit is spread over 615 acres, which is by far the largest helicopter manufacturing unit in India.
- This manufacturing unit will **manufacture 30 helicopters per year**, which will be **increased to 90 helicopters per year** in a phased manner.
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited plans to manufacture over 1,000 helicopters in the 3-15 tonne range with a total turnover of over Rs 4 lakh crore in 20 years.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)

- It was established as Hindustan Aircraft Limited in 1940 by Walchand Hirachand in Bangalore (now Bengaluru), Karnataka.
- The name was changed to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited on 1 October 1964 after it was merged with Aeronautics India Limited by the Government of India.
- Its core business is to design, develop, manufacture, repair and overhaul aircraft, helicopters, engines and related systems such as avionics, instruments and accessories.
- It comes under the Ministry of Defence.

Headquarters: Bengaluru

7. PMAY-U scheme extended up to next year (Feb. 6, 2023)

Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs **Hardeep Singh Puri** said the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) scheme** has been extended up to next year, to complete all the houses sanctioned during the last financial year.

An overview of the news

- Around **123 lakh houses** were sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) during the last financial year, of which **68 lakh houses** were completed till last month.
- The central government has sanctioned **Rs 2 lakh crore** under the scheme, out of which Rs **1.36 lakh crore** has been released so far.
- The survey conducted by the States and Union Territories shows that there is a **demand of 112 lakh houses** under PMAY-U in the country.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)

- It was launched on **25 June 2015** by the Government of India and it is being implemented by the **Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.
- The scheme aims to provide pucca houses to all the eligible beneficiaries **by 2022**.
- Around 1.12 crore houses are to be constructed under the scheme.

8. Rice bran promoted as staple food amid food crisis in China (Feb. 6, 2023)

China has started promoting **rice bran** as a staple food amid the food crisis in the country, as the food crisis remains a significant issue in China from 2020.

An overview of the news

- China's **National Rural Industry Development Plan (2020-2025)** was formulated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in 2020 to encourage the full utilization of by-products such as rice bran and wheat bran.

Rice Bran

- Rice bran is the brown outer layer of the rice kernel, which is mainly composed of the **pericarp, aleuron, seed coat, and germ**.
- It contains **50% carbohydrate** (starch), 20% fat, 15% protein and 15% dietary fiber (DF), which is mainly insoluble fiber.
- It contains **14-18% oil**.

- Rice bran oil is a good source of unsaturated **fats, vitamin E**, and other important nutrients.
- It is mostly used as **animal feed**.

Why is China focusing on Rice Bran?

- **Global warming** is a major factor contributing to the growing food problem in China, as well as the loss of agriculturally productive land.
- **One-fifth of the world's population** lives in China. Only **11 percent** of the country's land is considered ideal for agriculture.
- The conflict between **Russia and Ukraine** has also had a negative impact on China's food supply system.
- The **Covid-induced disruption** has created an already dire situation on the food front.

9. NTPC hosts international seminar on 'Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage' (Feb. 6, 2023)

NTPC hosts an international seminar on '**Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS)**' at First Energy Transitions Working Group meeting in **Bengaluru** under the aegis of G20 India Presidency on 5 February.

An overview of the news

- In India's presidency of G20 the first **Energy Transitions Working Group (ETWG)** meeting was held from 5th February to 7 February 2023.
- CCUS aims to achieve **net zero carbon emissions by 2070**.
- Energy PSUs including NTPC and ONGC are looking to tap the potential of this sector in India.

Outcomes of the seminar

- The "**Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS) - Technology Gaps and International Collaboration**", commissioned under the G20 India Presidency, was unveiled.
- **A 3D model of NTPC's flagship project** on Methanol Synthesis from Flue Gas CO₂ was displayed at the event.
- More than **200 dignitaries**, speakers, panellists and delegates from various countries attended the event.

What is Carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS)?

- It is a technology that can capture and effectively utilize high concentrations of **carbon dioxide** emitted by industrial activities.
- This allows the **captured carbon dioxide (CO₂)** to be used in other industrial processes or in the manufacture of consumer products, instead of being stored.

10. Pakistan's former President Pervez Musharraf passes away (Feb. 5, 2023)

Pakistan's former President Pervez Musharraf passes away

Pervez Musharraf, former President of Pakistan, passed away after a prolonged illness on 5 February at a hospital in **Dubai**. He was 79.

An overview of the news

- Musharraf was undergoing treatment for a rare disease called **amyloidosis**, which is caused by a build-up of abnormal proteins called **amyloid** in organs and tissues.
- Musharraf was a **four-star general** who ruled Pakistan for nearly a decade after seizing power in a **1999 coup**.
- Musharraf had been in **self-exile** in **Dubai** since **March 2016** facing trial for treason for suspending the constitution in **2007**.
- He was declared a proclaimed offender in the former Prime Minister **Benazir Bhutto** assassination case and the **Lal Masjid Maulvi murder case**.
- Musharraf rose to power following a military takeover of the government in 1999 and became the **tenth President of Pakistan** in June 2001.
- He resigned in **August 2008**, facing possible impeachment.
- Musharraf was born in **New Delhi in 1943**, at the age of four his family moved to Pakistan. His father was employed in the Ministry of External Affairs, while his mother was a teacher.
- He joined the Pakistan Army in 1961, participated in the **Indo-Pakistani Wars of 1965 and 1971**, and was promoted to the rank of Four Star General.
- Musharraf is considered the chief architect of the **Kargil War**, which took place in 1999, soon after India and Pakistan signed the **Lahore Declaration**.
- Musharraf as president came to **Agra in 2001** for a peace summit with Prime Minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, but talks broke down and a treaty was never signed.
- He was allowed to visit Dubai in **2016**.