

TARGET4IAS: TOGETHER WE CAN



Weekly Current Affairs

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New Policy for Declassification of War History

In News

The Defence Minister has approved a policy on archiving, declassification, compilation, and publication of war and operations histories.

Key takeaways:

- According to the policy, records should ordinarily be declassified in 25 years.
- Records older than 25 years should be transferred to the National Archives of India once the war/operations histories have been compiled.
- Declassification of older wars like the Henderson Brooks report on the 1962 war with China and the Operation Bluestar of 1984 is not automatic. It is taken up on a case-by-case basis by a committee to be constituted under the policy.
- The History Division will coordinate with various departments for compiling, seeking approval, and publishing war/operations histories.
- The policy mandates the formation of the committee within two years of completion of war/operations.
- The war histories will be for internal use first. Later the committee may decide to publicly release whole or parts of it, considering the sensitivity of the subject.

Note:

War Histories give an accurate account of events, authentic material for academic research, and help counter rumours. Earlier, reports on wars and operations were never made public.

Committees on war history:

- **Kargil Review Committee:** the requirement of having war histories written with a clear-cut policy on declassification of war records.
- **N NVohra Committee:** war histories should be declassified ->to analyze lessons learned and prevent future mistakes.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

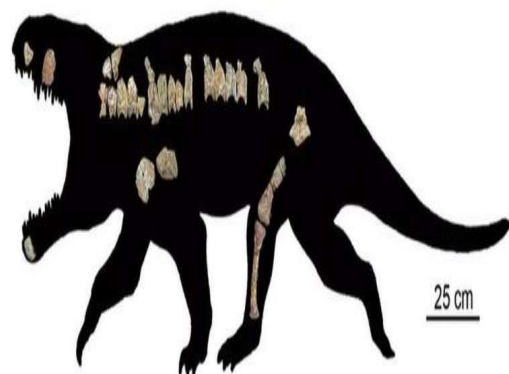
Bharitalasuchus tapani

In news

Researchers from the Indian Statistical Institute had carried out extensive studies on rocks of the Yerrapalli Formation in Telangana during the mid 20th Century. During that time, they uncovered several fossils. By studying some of these fossils, the team has now provided information on one of the reptiles (Bharitalasuchustapani).

About Bharitalasuchus tapani

- It is a carnivorous reptile that lived 240 million years ago.
- In the Telugu language, Bhari means huge, Tala means head, and Suchus is the name of the Egyptian crocodile-headed deity.



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- The reptile has been named after palaeontologist Tapan Roy Chowdhury. For his contribution to Indian vertebrate palaeontology, and especially his extensive work at Yerrapalli Formation.
- The reptile belonged to a family of extinct reptiles named Erythrosuchidae.
- They were robust animals with big heads and large teeth, and probably preyed on other smaller reptiles.
- They were approximately the size of an adult male lion and might have been the largest predators in their ecosystems.

About Yerrapalli Formation:

- Located primarily in the Pranhita–Godavari Basin in Telangana.
- It is a Triassic rock formation consisting primarily of red mudstones. The area preserves fossils of freshwater and terrestrial vertebrates, as well as trace fossils of invertebrates.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Operation Olivia

In news

Indian Coast Guards (ICG) are using an aircraft for 'Operation Olivia' to protect Olive Ridley turtles.

About Operation Olivia:

- **Launched by** the Indian Coast Guard in the early 1980s.
- **Aims** to protect Olive Ridley turtles when they arrive at the Odisha coast for breeding and nesting from November to December.

About Olive Ridley Turtles:

- The smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
- They are found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans.
- **Conservation status:**
 - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
 - CITES: Appendix I (It prohibits trade in turtle products by signatory countries)
 - Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
- Olive ridley turtles have a unique habit of mass nesting called **Arribada**. Under this, thousands of female turtles come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- The Odisha coast has three arribada beaches at Gahirmatha, the mouth of the Devi river, and in Rushikulya, where about 1 lakh nests are found annually.

Source->The Hindu

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

In news

The Prime Minister of India has delivered a keynote address at the United Nations (UN) High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought.

key takeaways

- India is working towards restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- This would contribute to India's commitment to achieving an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

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- over the last 10 years, India has added around 3 million hectares of forest cover. This has enhanced the combined forest cover to almost one-fourth of the country's total area.
- India has also taken up some novel approaches in many parts of India. Example: Banni region in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat suffers from highly degraded land and receives very little rain. In this region, land restoration was done by developing grasslands. It helped the region in achieving land degradation neutrality.

About UNCCD

- **Legally binding international agreement** linking environment and development to sustainable land management. It was established in 1994.
- It seeks to work towards maintaining and restoring land and soil productivity and mitigating the effects of drought.
- India had for the first time hosted the 14th session of the Conference of Parties(COP-14) UNCCD at Greater Noida in 2019. The theme of the Conference was 'Restore land, Sustain future'.
- During the conference, the **Delhi Declaration** was issued. The declaration called for better access over land and emphasised gender-sensitive transformative projects.

Source: [PIB](#)

Jardalu mangoes

In News

The first commercial consignment of Geographical Indications(GI) certified Jardalu mangoes from Bhagalpur, Bihar was exported to the United Kingdom.

About Jardalu Mangoes:

- It is grown in the Bhagalpur district of Bihar. It received the GI certification in 2018.
- The mango is famous for its exclusive aroma, sweetness and other nutritional properties.
- It is rich in fibre and enzymes that are highly beneficial to the abdominal muscles and digestive system.
- It is also considered a safe fruit for even those who have been diagnosed with diabetes or have a poor digestive system.

GI certified mangoes in News:

Khirsapati & Lakshmanbhog (West Bengal), Jardalu (Bihar), Banganapalli and Suvarnarekha mango varieties (Andhra Pradesh).

Source: [PIB](#)

World Giving Index 2021:

- It is an annual report published by the Charities Aid Foundation. The report is the world's largest survey of charitable endeavors from around the world. The first edition was released in September 2010.
- The report looks at three aspects of giving behavior:
 - Helped a stranger

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- Donated money to a charity
- Volunteered time to an organization

Latest findings:

- The most generous country in the world is Indonesia.
- Australia and New Zealand the only high income countries to remain in this year's Top 10.
- India is 14th most charitable country.

Pyrostrialajii

In news

A team of researchers from India and the Philippines has discovered a new species named Pyrostrialajii in the Andaman Islands.

About Pyrostrialajii

- A 15 metre tall tree that **belongs to genus of the coffee family** has recently been discovered in Andaman Islands
- it is also the first record of the genus Pyrostria in India. Trees belonging to these species are usually found in Madagascar
- The tree is distinguished by a long stem with a whitish coating on the trunk and oblong-obovate leaves with a cuneate base and was first reported from Wandoor forest in South Andaman
- Other places where tree could be located are: Jarawa reserve forest, chidiatapu forest
- **IUCN status:** Critically endangered

Source->The Hindu



Pyrostria laljii

Rare Earth Metals (REM)

In news

Recent measures of America and other countries to reduce import dependency on China for rare earth minerals

Key takeaways:

- In 2019, US imported 80% of its rare earth minerals from China and EU gets 98% of its supply from China
- India has the world's fifth-largest reserves of rare earth elements but it imports most of its rare earth needs in finished form from its geopolitical rival, China
- Such high dependence on China might result in creating geopolitical issues-> to tackle this US senate passed a law recently aimed at improving American competitiveness that includes provisions to improve critical minerals supply chain.
- US also aims to boost production and processing of rare earths and lithium, another key mineral component while "working with allies to increase sustainable global supply and reduce reliance on competitors"

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About rare earth minerals

- Set of seventeen metallic elements. neodymium, praseodymium and dysprosium are examples of Rare earth metals.
- These are crucial to the manufacture of magnets used in industries such as wind turbines and electric cars.
- These are already being used in consumer goods such as smartphones, computer screens and telescopic lenses.

Source->[The Hindu](#)

SIPRI Report

In news

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released the SIPRI Yearbook 2021. The report assesses the current state of armaments, disarmament and international security.

Key takeaways:

- Nine Nuclear-Armed States- the US, Russia, UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea together possessed an estimated 13,080 nuclear weapons at the start of 2021.
- Russia and the U.S. together possessed over 90% of global nuclear weapons.
- China is in the middle of significant modernisation and expansion of its nuclear weapon inventory. India and Pakistan also appear to be expanding their nuclear arsenals.
- The five largest arms importers were: Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China. They together accounted for 36% of total arms imports.
- **Concerns:** The overall number of nuclear warheads in global military stockpiles appears to be increasing. This is a worrying sign as the declining trend that started since the end of the Cold War has stalled.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

NATO Summit 2021

In news

The NATO Summit was held recently in Brussels. During the summit, countries agreed to step up their collective defence against threats from all directions.

Key takeaways

- It will respond to Russia's increasing nuclear arsenal.
- Further, It called on Iran to stop all ballistic missile activities.
- All members will strengthen their collective defense against all threats from all directions.
- It asked Russia to drop the designation of "unfriendly countries" for US and the Czech Republic.

About NATO

- It is an intergovernmental military alliance. Formed in 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty.
- It consists of 30 countries from North America and Europe. The most recent member state is North Macedonia, included in NATO in 2020.

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- **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium.
- Its purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.
- Article 5 of the Washington Treaty states that if one member of the alliance is attacked in Europe or North America, it is to be considered an attack on all members.
- It also has what it calls the Membership Action Plan (MAP). It helps the aspiring members in preparation for membership and meet key requirements by providing practical advice and targeted assistance. Bosnia and Herzegovina are currently participating in this plan.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

New Shephard rocket system

In news

Amazon founder and billionaire Jeff Bezos's space company named Blue Origin has concluded the online auction for the first seat on the New Shephard rocket system. It is a rocket system meant to take tourists to space.

About New Shephard Rocket System

- It is a **reusable rocket system** that has been designed to take astronauts and research payloads past the Karman line – the internationally recognized boundary of space.
- **Built by:** The rocket system has been built by Blue Origin.
- The rocket system has been named after astronaut Alan Shepard – the first American to go to space.
- It offers flights to space over 100 km above the Earth and accommodation for payloads.
- It will provide easier and more cost-effective access to space. This is meant for purposes such as academic research, corporate technology development and entrepreneurial ventures among others.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

JivanVayu

In news

Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar has developed a device named 'JivanVayu'.

Key takeaways

- It is India's first CPAP device that functions even without electricity.
- It is adapted to both kinds of oxygen generation units like O2 cylinders and oxygen pipelines in hospitals and can deliver high flow oxygen up to 60 Litres Per Minute (LPM).
- The device has an inbuilt viral filter which ensures that the air does not bring in any pathogens from the environment.

What is Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)

- CPAP is a treatment method for patients having breathing problems during sleep called sleep apnea. The machine uses mild air pressure to keep the airways open for easy breathing.

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- This machine is also used to treat infants whose lungs have not fully developed. The machine blows air into the baby's nose to help inflate his or her lungs.
- Moreover, the machine is also required during the initial stages of Covid-19 disease. This is to mitigate lung damage and help patients recover from the inflammatory effects.

Source: [PIB](#)

Innovations for Defence Excellence

In news

Recently, the Defence Minister has approved the budgetary support of Rs. 498.8 crore to **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** challenge under the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) for the next five years.

About iDEX

- It was launched by the PM in April 2018 .
- **Aim:** to achieve self – reliance and foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace.
- It engages Industries including MSMEs, start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes and academia.
- **Funded and managed by:** DIO. It also functions as the executive arm of DIO.

Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)

- DIO is a 'not for profit' company registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013.
- **Founding members:** Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) & Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) – Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).
- It will provide the engaging industries with funding and other support to carry out Research & Development.

ELDERLINE:

- It was launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- It aims to help elderly persons by extending emotional care, health and legal assistance through dedicated call centres.
- The helpline has already been made operational in 5 major states (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka). In Telangana, this facility has been working for more than a year.
- The helpline has been operationalised with the assistance of Tata Trusts and the NSE foundation.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day:

- It is observed each year on June 15th.
- It was officially recognized by the United Nations in 2011 following a request by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA).
- Theme: "Access to Justice".

Source: [PIB](#)

Shenzhou-12 or Divine Vessel

In news

China has launched the Long March 2F rocket transporting the Shenzhou-12 or Divine Vessel.

About Shenzhou-12

- Shenzhou-12 is a manned mission.
- It is the third of the 11 missions that needed to complete China's first Permanent space station, named Tiangong Space Station. Among these missions, four will be manned missions.
- Shenzhou-12 is made up of three sections—an orbiter module, a return module and a propelling module.
- It will carry three astronauts to the orbiting Tianhe core module. The astronauts will test the module's technologies, including its life-support system.
- China is the third country after the former Soviet Union and the United States to carry out a manned mission on its own.

About Tiangong Space Station:

- Tiangong is a planned Chinese Permanent space station to be placed in Low Earth orbit.
- The Space Station roughly will be one-fifth the mass of the International Space Station.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)

In news

The Union Government has approved a plan for Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) Corporatisation.

Key takeaways:

- OFB will cease to exist.
- Seven companies will be created, each having a specific manufacturing role.
- The existing 41 factories under the OFB will be subsumed under the seven new government-owned PSUs.
- There would be no change in the service conditions of the OFB employees
- The restructuring of OFBs is aimed at Making it a productive and profitable asset; deepens specialisation in the product range; enhance competitiveness and improve quality and cost-efficiency

About Ordnance Factory Board

- It is an umbrella body of 41 Ordnance Factories.
- In 1775, British authorities accepted the establishment of the Board of Ordnance in Fort William, Kolkata->marked the official beginning of the Army Ordnance in India.
- It is currently a subordinate office of the Ministry of Defence.
- It provides a major chunk of the weapon, ammunition, and supplies for Indian armed forces, paramilitary forces, and police forces.
- **Headquarters:** Kolkata, West Bengal

Source->The Hindu, LiveMint

Great Power summit

In news

U.S President and Russian President have concluded their Great Power summit meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.

Key takeaways:

- The US and Russia will return their Ambassadors to their posts in a bid to lower tensions.
- They have agreed to begin negotiations on nuclear talks. It is to potentially replace the New START treaty after it expires in 2026.
- Discussed a potential prisoner swap. But no agreement was reached.
- The US has called out Russia on Human Rights issues. The US raised the issue of jailed opposition leaders in Russia and about his condition.

About New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty):

- It is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the US and the Russian Federation. It was signed in 2010.
- The treaty had replaced the 1991 START I treaty which expired in 2009.
- It limits the US and Russia to possess a maximum of 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers, well below Cold War caps.
- The duration of the treaty is ten years and can be extended for a period of no more than five years at a time.
- The treaty was to expire in 2021. But it has been extended for five more years, i.e till February 2026.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

New Norms on Hallmarking of Gold

Recently, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution made it mandatory for the hallmarking of gold jewellery, which will be implemented in a phased manner.

Key takeaways:

- Hallmarking is a “guarantee of purity or fineness” of precious metal articles, which started in 2000.
- Earlier, it was optional for the jewellers
- In the first phase, jewellers having annual turnover above Rs. 40 lakh will come under its purview.
- The Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) operates the gold and silver hallmarking scheme in India, Till now, only 40% of gold jewellery has been hallmarked.

Benefits:

- Protect the public against cheating



HALLMARK ECONOMY

- 42 million jewellery pieces hallmarked in 2019-20
- Combined hallmarking capacity of all centres is 1.4 million pieces per year
- Only 30% of jewellery getting hallmarked in the country
- Jewellery up to 2 gram, and kundan, polki, jadau and unfinished jewellery are exempt
- Unregistered jewellers will not be allowed to sell hallmark jewellery
- Mandatory hallmarking in 256 districts with 940 operative centers
- Over 40,000 jewellers have to get BIS registration

What is expected

- Notification allowing hallmarking of 20, 23 & 24 carat jewellery
- Notification on abolition of registration fees for jewellers

Source: BIS, Industry

- Transparency
- Quality assurance

Deep ocean Mission

In news

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the Deep Ocean Mission.

About Deep Ocean Mission:

- **Aim** to explore the deep ocean for resources. Also, for sustainable use of ocean resources, it aims to develop deep-sea technologies.
- Ministry of Earth Sciences(MoES) will be the nodal Ministry.
- The mission will be implemented over a period of 5 years in a phased manner. Its 1st phase will be of 3 years.
- There are six components to the programme:->
 - A manned submersible and An integrated mining system
 - Ocean Climate Change Advisory Services
 - Searching for deep sea flora and fauna
 - Explore and identify potential sources of hydrothermal minerals
 - Studying and preparing detailed engineering design for offshore Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) powered desalination plants.
 - Grooming experts in the field of biology and engineering.



Deep dive: One component of the mission is tapping deep-sea flora and fauna, including microbes. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Note:

- UN has declared the decade 2021-2030 as the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
- The Government of India's Vision of New India by 2030 announced in 2019 highlighted the Blue Economy as one of the ten core dimensions of growth.

Source: **The Hindu**, [PIB](#)

Inland Vessels Bill, 2021

- It will replace the Inland Vessels Act, 1917.
- It will regulate safety, security and registration of inland vessels.
- Key feature of the Bill is a unified law for the entire country, instead of separate rules framed by the States.
- The Bill provides for a central data base for recording the details of vessel, vessel registration, crew on an electronic portal.
- It requires all mechanically propelled vessels to be mandatorily registered.

Inland Waterways:

- India has about 14,500 km of navigable waterways which comprise of rivers, canals, backwaters, creeks, etc.
- As per the National Waterways Act 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways (NWs).
- NW-1: Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System (Prayagraj-Haldia) with length 1620 km is the longest National Waterway in India.

Source->The Hindu

Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) 1967

In news

The Delhi High Court recently granted bail to 3 students, accused of conducting riots and anti CAA protests in North East Delhi.

About UAPA

- Anti-terror law aimed at effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations.
- Objective is to empower the state for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India.
- The Act assigns absolute power to the central government. It can declare an activity as unlawful, by way of an Official Gazette.
- The act has the death penalty and life imprisonment as the highest punishments.
- Under the act, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged.
- The investigating agency can file a charge sheet within a maximum of 180 days after the arrests. This duration can be extended further after information to the court.
- **2004 amendment:**added “terrorist act” to the list of offences, to ban organisations for terrorist activities.
- **2019 amendment:**empowers the Central Government to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds.
 - It empowers the Director-General, National Investigation Agency (NIA) to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is under investigation by the agency.

Source->The Hindu

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Important Terms

Build Back Better World” (B3W) project: Aimed at competing with China’s trillion dollar Belt and Road infrastructure (BRI) initiative.

Carbis Bay Declaration: Series of commitments to curb future pandemics after COVID19 wrecked economies and killed millions around the world.

Bio-prospecting: systematic and organized search for useful products derived from bio-resources. It includes plants, microorganisms, animals that can be developed further for commercialization and overall benefits of the society.

Microgravity is the condition in which people or objects appear to be weightless. The effects of microgravity can be seen when astronauts and objects float in space.

Karman Line:

- Internationally recognized boundary of space. Named after Theodore von Kármán, a Hungarian American engineer and physicist.
- The Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) defines the Karman line as the altitude of 100 kilometres (62 miles) above Earth’s mean sea level. However, not all organizations recognize this definition. The US Air Force and NASA define the boundary as 50 miles (80 km) above sea level. But there is no international law that defines the edge of space or the limit of national airspace.
- **FAI** is an international standard-setting and record-keeping body for aeronautics and astronautics.