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Current Affairs - 14 November 2024

WHAT IS THE WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA (WII)?



- It is an **autonomous institution** established in 1982 under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change**, Government of India, for nurturing the growth of wildlife science in the country.

Location:

- It is located in Dehradun, **Uttarakhand**.
- It shares the boundaries with the famous **Rajaji National Park**.
- It is an internationally acclaimed institution, which **offers training programs, academic courses, and advisory in wildlife research and management**.
- It is actively engaged in **research** across the breadth of the country **on biodiversity-related issues**.

Objectives:

- **Build up scientific knowledge of wildlife resources**.
- **Train personnel** at various levels for conservation and management of wildlife.
- **Carry out research** relevant to management including the development of techniques appropriate to Indian conditions.
- **Provide information and advice** on specific wildlife management problems.
- **Collaborate with international organizations** on wildlife research, management, and training.
- The institute carries out research work in the fields of study, which include Biodiversity, policy related to wildlife, Endangered Species, Wildlife management, forensic Wildlife research work, Eco-development, Spatial Modelling, and studies related to changing climatic conditions.
- The **board is chaired by the Union Minister** and has representatives from the centre and state governments as well as institutions and academia.



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WHAT IS WALKING PNEUMONIA?



- It is a type of **atypical pneumonia** most commonly caused by the bacteria *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, but other bacteria or viruses can also cause it.
 - It often presents symptoms similar to those of a **common cold or mild respiratory infection**, including cough, sore throat, low-grade fever, and fatigue.
 - While it may not cause severe illness, it can still be disruptive, with symptoms lingering for weeks if left untreated.
 - **Unlike typical pneumonia**, which can lead to severe lung inflammation and difficulty breathing, walking pneumonia is **often less intense, allowing people to carry on** with their **daily activities**, which is **how it earned its name** in the 1930s.
 - It is **also called 'silent' pneumonia** because sometimes people don't experience symptoms despite X-rays showing fluid-filled air sacs in the lungs.
 - **Transmission: It is contagious.** It's spread through airborne droplets from close contact, such as coughing, sneezing, or speaking.
 - **Treatment:** It is often manageable with rest, fluids, and, in some cases, antibiotics.
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SUKHNA LAKE



The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has finally issued a notification demarcating an area from 1 km to 2.035 km around the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary as an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) on the Haryana side.

- It is an **artificial lake** located in **Chandigarh, India**.
- It lies at the foothills (**Shivalik hills**) of the Himalayas.



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- It was created in 1958 by damming the Sukhna Choe, a seasonal stream coming down from the Shivalik Hills.
- It is declared a **National Wetland** by the Government of India.
- The catchment area of the lake has rugged terrain and steep slopes, and the soils are predominantly alluvial sandy embedded with layers of clay and are highly susceptible to soil erosion by water run-off action.
- The water flowing into the lake is heavily loaded with silt.

Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary:

- Adjacent to Sukhna Lake is the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary. Spread over an area of about 26 square kilometers, the sanctuary is home to various species of birds, mammals, and reptiles.
 - It is a sanctuary for many **exotic migratory birds** like the **Siberian duck**, **Storks**, and **Cranes**, during the **winter months**.
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EXERCISE SEA VIGIL

The Indian Navy is set to conduct the fourth edition of the ‘Pan-India’ Coastal Defence Exercise ‘Sea Vigil-24’ on 20 & 21 Nov 24.

- It is the **National Level Coastal Defence Exercise** conceptualized in 2018 to validate various measures that have been instituted towards enhancing maritime security since ‘26/11’.
- The concept of ‘Sea Vigil’ is to activate the Coastal Security apparatus across India and assess the overarching Coastal Defence mechanism.
- This fourth edition of Ex Sea Vigil involves 06 Ministries and 21 Organisations/agencies.
- The exercise will focus on **strengthening the security of coastal assets like ports, oil rigs, Single Point Moorings**, Cable Landing Points and critical coastal infrastructure including the coastal population.



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- This year participation by **other Services (Indian Army and Air Force)** and the planned deployment of a large number of ships and aircraft have enhanced the tempo of the exercise.
- This comprehensive exercise **will engage complete coastal security infrastructure** and all maritime stakeholders, including the fishing community and coastal populace, simultaneously.
- One of the **aims of the exercise is to raise awareness amongst coastal communities** about **maritime security**, and thus, the involvement of fishing communities, coastal populace, and students from NCC and Bharat Scouts and Guides will add to the fervour of the endeavour.
- Exercise Sea Vigil coordinated by the Indian Navy stands out as a national-level initiative that provides a holistic appraisal of India's maritime defence and security capabilities.
- It is serving as a **precursor to the Theatre Level Readiness Operational Exercise (TROPEX)**, conducted biennially by the Indian Navy.

AMORPHOPHALLUS TITANUM



People in Geelong city have beelined to witness an unusual event – the **blooming of the Amorphophallus Titanum (called Titan Arum in short).**

- **Amorphophallus Titanum** (called Titan Arum in short) blooms **once in a decade** and is one of the largest in the world — growing over 10 ft in height.
- It is also called **Corpse Flower**.
- It was first described by Italian botanist Odoardo Beccari in 1878.

Features

- It blooms approximately once every decade, with each flowering lasting merely 24 to 48 hours.



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- It **mimics the stench of rotting flesh** to attract its pollinators — carnivorous bees and flies that feed on corpses.
- The dark, red interior of the spathe that is exposed when it is fully open looks like the surface of a piece of uncooked meat, and the spadix in the centre even warms up to provide the perfect simulation of a warm, abandoned body.
- It looks peculiar, with a tall, crooked, **pale yellowish phallic structure** — the ‘spadix’ — rising from the centre of what looks like an upturned meat skirt — its dark red, thick, waxy ‘spathe’, which is the spiral, petal-like structure that holds within it the inflorescence.

Habitat: It blossoms on limestone hills in the rainforests of western Sumatra, Indonesia, where it is called bunga bangkai (bunga means flower and bangkai means corpse).

Conservation status

- **IUCN:** Endangered

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INDICATORS



- The report reveals significant growth in patent, trademark, and industrial design applications across top economies.

Highlights of the report

- India has secured a spot in the global top 10 for all three major Intellectual Property (IP) rights—patents, trademarks, and industrial designs.
- India recorded the fastest growth in patent (+15.7%) applications in 2023 among the top 20 origins, marking the fifth consecutive year of double-digit growth.
- India ranks sixth globally for patents with 64,480 applications, with resident filings accounting for over half of all submissions (55.2%)—a first for the country.



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- The report indicates a **steady rise** (36.4%) in **India's industrial design applications**, which aligns with increasing emphasis on product design, manufacturing and creative industries within India.
- The top three sectors—**Textiles and Accessories, Tools and Machines, and Health and Cosmetics**—made up almost half of all design filings.
- Between 2018 and 2023, **patent and industrial design applications more than doubled**.
- India's **patent-to-GDP ratio also saw significant growth**, rising from 144 to 381 in the past decade, indicating that IP activity is scaling alongside economic expansion.
- India ranked **fourth globally in trademark filings**, with a 6.1% increase in 2023. Nearly 90% of these filings were by residents, with key sectors including Health (21.9%), Agriculture (15.3%), and Clothing (12.8%) leading the way.
- India's **trademark office holds the second-largest number** of active registrations worldwide, with over 3.2 million trademarks in force, reflecting the country's strong position in global brand protection.
- Key findings show a record of 3.55 million patent applications filed worldwide in 2023, up 2.7% from 2022 with notable contributions from leading economies in Asia. This increase was largely driven by residents in China, the United States, Japan, South Korea, and India.

BOOKER PRIZE



British writer Samantha Harvey won the **Booker Prize 2024** for fiction with **Orbital**, a short, wonder-filled novel set aboard the **International Space Station**.

- It is the world's leading literary award for a **single work of fiction**.
- Founded in the UK in 1969, the Booker Prize initially rewarded Commonwealth writers and now it is open to anyone regardless of origin.
- It **aims to promote the finest in fiction** by rewarding the best novel of the year written in

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Eligibility:

- The Booker Prize awards any **novel originally written in English** and **published in the UK and Ireland** in the year of the prize, regardless of the nationality of their author.
- The novel must be an original work in English (not a translation).
- It must be published by a registered UK or Irish imprint; self-published novels are not eligible.
- The winner **receives £50,000**, and each shortlisted author will be given £2,500.

The Booker Prize Foundation: It is a registered charity established in 2002. Since its inauguration in 2005, it has been responsible for the award of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction and the Man Booker International Prize.

RBI RETAINS SBI, HDFC, ICICI AS D-SIBS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has maintained the State Bank of India, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), meaning they are classified as "Too Big To Fail."

This status indicates that their stability is essential for providing uninterrupted banking services to the economy. The banks remain in the same risk category as in the 2023 D-SIB list.

Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)

- D-SIBs are highly integrated into cross-jurisdictional activities and possess complex financial structures, making them essential to the economy.
- Their failure could cause widespread disruption and economic panic. Consequently, the government is likely to bail them out during financial crises.
 - SIBs are perceived as "Too Big To Fail" (TBTF), creating expectations of government support during crises.

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- This perception enables SIBs to enjoy advantages in funding markets but also encourages risk-taking and reduces market discipline.
- D-SIBs are also subject to specific regulations addressing systemic risks and moral hazard concerns.

Need for the creation of D-SIBs

- To address the systemic risks and moral hazard issues associated with SIBs, the RBI requires these banks to follow additional regulatory measures.
- These measures are aimed at controlling potential competitive distortions and future financial distress.

Regulations these banks need to follow

- Depending on the bucket in which a D-SIB is placed, an additional common equity requirement [**Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1)**] is applicable to it.
 - Tier 1 capital (measured by the capital adequacy ratio (CAR)) is the core measure of a bank's financial strength from a regulator's point of view.
- It means that these banks have to earmark additional capital and provisions to safeguard their operations.
- Foreign banks in India that are classified as Global Systemically Important Banks (G-SIBs).
 - G-SIBs must maintain an additional CET1 capital surcharge in India, proportionate to their Risk Weighted Assets (RWAs) in India, as specified by their home regulator.
 - Notable G-SIBs for 2023 include JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, HSBC, Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, Barclays, and BNP Paribas.

Which banks have been classified as D-SIBs by the RBI?



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- RBI has reaffirmed SBI, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank as D-SIBs, retaining their positions from the 2023 list.
 - SBI and ICICI Bank were first designated as D-SIBs in 2015 and 2016, with HDFC Bank joining them in 2017.
 - SBI has been placed in bucket 4, HDFC Bank in bucket 3 and ICICI Bank in bucket 1.
 - **Capital requirements for these D-SIBs**
 - The RBI requires additional CET1 capital for D-SIBs based on their assigned buckets, ranging from 0.20% to 0.80% of risk-weighted assets (RWAs).
 - Currently, SBI's additional CET1 requirement is 0.80%, HDFC Bank's is 0.40%, and ICICI Bank's is 0.20%.
 - G-SIBs with branches in India must maintain an additional CET1 surcharge proportionate to their Indian RWAs, based on the CET1 buffer set by their home regulator.
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