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Current Affairs - 25 September 2024

WHAT IS PACT FOR THE FUTURE?

Recently, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a “Pact for the Future” a



comprehensive agreement designed to reshape global governance for the twenty-first century at the Summit of the future.

- It is a landmark declaration reaffirming the commitment of **UN Member States** to sustainable development, **peace, and stronger global governance**.
- The **Pact’s five broad focus** areas include
 - **Sustainable development:** It includes a pledge to move faster towards achieving the UN’s **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **Paris Agreement** commitments on climate change.
 - **International peace and security:** Redouble efforts to build and sustain peaceful, inclusive and just societies and address the root causes of conflicts and protect all civilians in armed conflict
 - **Science and technology and digital revolution:** Science, technology and innovation have the potential to accelerate the realization of the aspirations of the United Nations across all three pillars of its work.
 - **Youth and future generations:** Listen to young people and include them in decision-making, at the national and global levels
 - **Transforming global governance:** Build stronger partnerships with civil society, the private sector, local and regional authorities.

NAGAR VAN YOJANA (NVY)

Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India achieved a 100-Day Target of 100 Nagar Vans under Nagar Van Yojana (NVY) with the objective to Enhance Urban Greenery.



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- It was launched in 2020 in an effort to **enhance the urban greenery** for improving the quality of life and increasing social cohesion in cities.



- The scheme provides **financial assistance of Rs. 4 lakh per hectare** for the creation and maintenance of these urban forests, encouraging the involvement of citizens, students, and other stakeholders in the creation and management of these green spaces.
- Nagar Van areas range from a **minimum of 10 ha to 50 ha**.
- The scheme **covers all cities with Municipal Corporations, Municipalities and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)**.
- Emphasis is on biodiversity, planting fruit-bearing, medicinal, and native species to attract wildlife and promote ecological balance. Community participation is central, with opportunities for public engagement through tree planting, educational programs, and sustainable management.
- Each Nagar Van must have at least two-thirds of its area under tree cover and will feature components like **Biodiversity Parks, Smriti Vans, Butterfly Conservatories**, and Herbal Gardens and now Matri Van created under Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam.
- Presently, the Nagar Van Yojana aims to develop 1000 Nagar Vans by the year 2027 with the financial support of National Fund of National Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (National CAMPA).

INDIA TO LAUNCH ITS FIRST MISSION TO VENUS IN 2028

Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM)

- India's first planned mission to Venus, "**Shukrayaan-1**," will study the planet's atmosphere, surface, and geological features using advanced scientific instruments.
- The mission will place an orbiter around Venus to gather data on its climate, atmospheric composition, and potential volcanic or seismic activity.

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- Instruments like synthetic aperture radar, infrared and ultraviolet cameras, and sensors will examine Venus's ionosphere and the thick clouds of carbon dioxide and sulfuric acid.
- The mission aims to explore signs of active volcanoes and provide insights into the planet's unique environment.
- **Objectives**
 - Investigate surface processes and subsurface stratigraphy
 - Study the structure, composition, and dynamics of Venus's atmosphere
 - Explore solar wind interactions with the Venusian ionosphere

Why is India Exploring Venus?

- **Unique opportunity to understand Earth's evolution**
 - Venus is often called Earth's twin due to its similar mass, density, and size, making it an important subject for studying Earth's evolution.
 - Scientists believe Venus once had water but is now dry and dusty.
- **Clues about climate change, atmospheric dynamics**
 - The surface temperature of is around 462°C, hotter than Mercury, due to a runaway greenhouse effect.
 - Water on Venus likely evaporated, creating more heat and worsening the effect.
 - Venus, once believed to have oceans, has now become a sweltering greenhouse world with surface temperatures reaching 470°C.
 - By comparing Venus's climate with Earth's, scientists hope to uncover clues about climate change, atmospheric dynamics, and planetary evolution.
 - Studying Venus can provide insights into Earth's potential future and the factors that make a planet habitable.
- **Technology development capabilities and scientific prowess**

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- Venus is notoriously difficult to study due to its extreme temperatures and dense atmosphere.
 - On Earth, the atmospheric pressure is 1 bar, but on Venus, it's a staggering 100 bar.
 - Its atmosphere is 96.5% carbon dioxide, with sulfuric acid clouds, and it rotates very slowly, with one Venusian day lasting 243 Earth days.
 - Its surface temperature is around 462°C, hotter than Mercury.
 - No lander has survived the extreme heat for more than a few hours.
 - Successful exploration would place India among an elite group of countries with advanced planetary science programs.
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WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF 'CONSTRUCTIVE POSSESSION'?

Invoking the doctrine of “constructive possession”, Supreme Court recently ruled that



watching child pornography over the Internet without downloading would also amount to “possession”, in terms of Section 15 of the POCSO Act, provided the person had a degree of control over such material.

- It is a **legal doctrine** that **attributes possession of an item** or substance to an individual, **even if they do not have physical control** or immediate possession of it.
- In criminal law, constructive possession **arises when a person has the intention and ability to exercise control over the item** or substance, either individually or jointly with others.
- Unlike actual possession, which involves physical custody or control, constructive possession is based on the concept that an **individual** can still be **held responsible for items they have the power to control**, even if those items are not physically on their person.



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- The **key element is the intent and capability to exercise dominion** or control over the object or substance.
 - Constructive possession allows a person who does not actually have personal possession of something, yet still controls it, to be charged with a crime for possessing it.
 - Constructive possession **often arises in cases involving illegal drugs, firearms, or stolen property**, where the defendant may not have direct physical possession but has control or access to the item.
 - For a successful prosecution of constructive possession, **certain criteria must be met**. These include:
 - **Knowledge of the Item's Presence:** The individual must be aware that the item exists. Mere proximity to an item without knowledge does not constitute constructive possession.
 - **Ability to Exercise Control:** The person must have the capability to maintain dominion over the item. This means having the power and intention to control its use.
 - **Intent to Possess:** There must be an intent to possess the item. This can often be inferred from circumstances, such as the location of the item and the individual's actions or statements.
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WHAT ARE SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTIONS (SAIS)?

The President of India recently expressed her confidence in the ability of the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in ensuring the efficiency and integrity of public funds.



About Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs):

- They are **public oversight institutions** responsible for the **audit of government revenue and expenditure**.
 - They are a critical link in a country's accountability chain.
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- By **scrutinizing public financial management** and reporting, they provide assurance that resources are used as prescribed.
- Most SAIs **derives their mandate from the constitution and/or legislation**.
- SAIs **undertakes financial audits** of organizations' accounting procedures and financial statements, and compliance audits reviewing the legality of transactions made by the audited body.
- They **also conduct performance audits** to scrutinize the efficiency, effectiveness, or economy of government's undertakings.
- **The independence of the SAI from the executive bodies** it audits is fundamental to its role in holding governments to account and building trust between the organs of the state and society.
- The **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)** and the **Indian Audit and Accounts Department (IAAD)** functioning under him **constitute the SAI of India**.
- Nearly every SAI from a **United Nations-member country** is a member of the **International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI)**.

Key Facts about International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI):

- It is a **voluntary, non-political organization** that works to **promote auditing standards, good governance of SAIs, and SAI independence**, among other work.
- The INTOSAI was founded in 1953 and has grown from the original 34 countries to a **membership of over 192 SAIs**.
- It operates as an umbrella organization for the external government audit community.
- INTOSAI has numerous committees and working groups which examine issues of particular relevance to SAIs, such as **developing professional standards for public sector auditing**, knowledge sharing, and capacity building.
- It has **special consultative status with** the Economic and Social Council (**ECOSOC**) of the **United Nations**.
- **Structure:**



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- The **International Congresses of Supreme Audit Institutions (INCOSAI)** is the **supreme organ** of INTOSAI and is composed of all the members. On a triennial basis, it holds regular meetings, which is chaired by the hosting SAI.
- The **INTOSAI Governing Board** meets annually to **provide strategic leadership**, stewardship, and continuity of INTOSAI activities between INCOSAI.
- The **CAG of India** is a **member of the Governing Board** of the INTOSAI.

WHAT IS THE COMMISSION FOR AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT (CAQM)?



The Supreme Court recently sought a report from the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on incidents of stubble-burning and action taken against these occurrences.

- The CAQM is a **statutory body** established under the **Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region (NCR) and Adjoining Areas, Act 2021**.
- **Mandate:** Better coordination, **research, identification, and resolution of problems surrounding the air quality index** and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- It undertakes action for the **prevention and control of Air pollution in Delhi-NCR & Adjoining Areas** which impacts the air quality of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.
- The Commission is required to **coordinate its actions on monitoring of air quality with the government of Delhi and the adjoining states**, which includes Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

Powers:

- **Restricting activities** influencing air quality.



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- **Investigating and conducting research** related to environmental pollution impacting air quality, preparing codes and guidelines to prevent and control air pollution,
- **Issuing directions** on matters including **inspections, or regulations**, which will be binding on the concerned person or authority.
- **All the directions** and orders by the Commission **are of binding nature**, and any person, officer, or authority shall be bound to comply with the same.
- The commission is **directly accountable to the parliament**.
- **Composition:**
 - **Chairperson:** To be chaired by a **government official of the rank of Secretary** or Chief Secretary. He will hold the post for three years or until s/he attains the age of 70 years.
 - It will also have five **ex officio members** who are **either Chief Secretaries** or Secretaries in charge of the department dealing with environment protection in the **States of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh**.
 - Three full time technical members.
 - Three **members from non-government organisations**.
 - Technical members from **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)**, Indian Space Research Organisation, and NITI Aayog

WHAT ARE GHOST SHARKS?



Researchers recently identified a new ghost shark species named **Australasian Narrow-nosed Spookfish** in the Chatham Rise region near New Zealand.

- Ghost sharks, also known as **chimaeras and spookfish**, are a group of **cartilaginous fish** closely **related to sharks** and rays.
- They genetically diverged from their shark relatives nearly 400 million years ago.



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Features:

- They have **long, tapering bodies** and incredibly **large heads**.
 - The ghost shark's maximum observed length is about 49 inches, but scientists believe they can grow to be more than six feet in some cases.
 - Their skin ranges in color from black to pale blue to brownish grey.
 - They have **haunting black eyes** and **smooth, light brown, scale-free skin**.
 - Their **eyes** are backed with a **reflective tissue layer** that makes them **seem to glow in the dark**, contributing to an eerie—even **ghostlike—appearance**.
 - They **live at depths** ranging from 200 meters to **2,600 meters** and generally stay **close to the seafloor**.
 - Their diet primarily consists of shellfish, mollusks, and worms that live on or under the seafloor.
 - They are sometimes referred to as the **ocean's butterflies** for the way they **glide through the water with their large pectoral fins**.
 - Ghost sharks are thought to be **solitary animals**, as they are generally observed alone.
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