

WHAT IS THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW)?

Recently OPCW blamed Syria gov't for 2018 chlorine gas attack in Douma

About Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW):

- It is the **implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).**
- **Mission:** To implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in order to achieve the OPCW's vision of a **world that is free of chemical weapons and of the threat of their use**, and in which cooperation in chemistry for peaceful purposes for all is fostered.
- Its **headquarters** are located in **The Hague, Netherlands.**
- The OPCW receives **states-parties' declarations detailing chemical weapons-related activities** or materials and relevant industrial activities.
- The OPCW is **authorized to perform inspections** to verify that signatory states are complying with the convention.
- It also **performs testing of sites and victims of suspected chemical weapons attacks.**
- **OPCW reports** on its inspections and other activities **to the UN through the office of the secretary-general.**
- The OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2013.**

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC):

- It is a **multilateral treaty that bans chemical weapons** and requires their destruction within a specified period of time.
- It **entered into force on April 29, 1997.**
- The CWC requires **states-parties to declare in writing to the OPCW their chemical weapons stockpiles**, chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs), relevant chemical industry facilities, and other weapons-related information.
- The CWC is **open to all nations and currently has 193 states-parties.**

PALLAS'S CATS

Recently researchers have discovered one of the planet's rarest Pallas cats for the first time in the Mount Everest Region.

About Pallas's cats:

- The Pallas's cat, also known as manul, is a small wild cat, perfectly adapted to the harsh conditions typical of its habitat.
 - Naturally secretive, it is rarely seen and little known.
 - **Habitat:** Wide but fragmented distribution throughout montane grasslands and steppes of Central Asia.
 - Its core populations are in **Mongolia and China.**
 - **Conservation status**
 - IUCN Red List: **Least concern**
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NATIONAL LOGISTICS PORTAL (MARINE)

Recently, the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways inaugurated The National Logistics Portal (marine) in New Delhi.

About National Logistics Portal Marine:

- The National Logistic Portal (marine) (NLP) is a **project of national importance**, as envisaged by the Ministry of Ports Shipping Waterways and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Aim:** To use IT to connect all logistics community stakeholders, to improve efficiency and transparency by reducing costs and time delays and achieving easier, faster, and more competitive service offerings.

Key features of the Portal

- NLP will serve as a **single point of contact for all logistics** trade processes across the country, including all modes of transportation via waterways, roads, and airways.
- The activities of NLP Marine are categorized into four distinct verticals
 - Carrier
 - Cargo

- Banking and Finance
 - Regulatory Bodies and Participating Government Agencies (PGAs).
 - The **Latch On feature** facilitates the trade in providing the required features that are not directly embedded into NLP Marine, by linking through systems developed by other agencies seamlessly without duplication of efforts.
 - It is envisaged that many standalone applications, developed by multiple vendors, users, and other stakeholders will integrate with NLP Marine through appropriate curation.
 - It also enables **digital transactions for payments** required for the clearance processes such as Port charges, CFS charges, shipping line charges, transportation charges.
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INDIA NOW HOME TO 70% OF WORLD'S TIGERS

Why in news?

- The Centre has told the Supreme Court that India had about 2,967 tigers (approx. 70% of global wild tiger population) in its wildlife as per the last count in 2018.
- It was revealed by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in an affidavit filed in the court.

Project Tiger

- The Govt. of India had launched Project Tiger on 1st April 1973 to promote conservation of the tiger.
- This project has been the largest species conservation initiative of its kind in the world.
- The Project is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- It provides funding support to tiger range States for in-situ conservation of tigers in designated tiger reserves.
- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is the immediate supervising agency

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- It has been constituted under the provisions of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The authority consists of:

- Minister in charge of MoEFCC (as Chairperson),
- Minister of State in MoEFCC (as Vice-Chairperson),
- three members of Parliament, Secretary, and other members.

Objectives of NTCA

- The objectives of NTCA are:
 - Providing statutory authority to Project Tiger so that compliance of its directives become legal.
 - Fostering accountability of Center-State in management of Tiger Reserves, by providing a basis for MoU with States within our federal structure.
 - Providing for an oversight by Parliament.
 - Addressing livelihood interests of local people in areas surrounding Tiger Reserves.

Tiger Census 2018 Report

- On International Tiger Day July 29 (2019), a census report of tigers in India was launched.
- It was observed for the first time in 2010 at the **Petersburg Tiger Summit in Russia**.
- The summit finalized Global Tiger Recovery Plan known as **TX2 (doubling the tiger population by 2022)**.
- As per the report, the total population of Tiger in India is 2967.
- In 2014, the count was 2,226 which reflected an increase of 741 individuals (aged more than one year), or 33%, in four years.
- India has achieved the target of doubling the tiger count four years ahead of the deadline of 2022.
- **The top Tiger States of India** (by Tiger population) - Madhya Pradesh (526); Karnataka (524); Uttrakhand (442).
- **Top states in terms of Percentage increase in Tiger population:** Madhya Pradesh (71%), Maharashtra (64%), Karnataka (29%).
- **Worst Performing States** - Chhattisgarh and Mizoram saw a decline in tiger population.

News Summary: India now home to 70% of world's tigers

- From the brink of extinction to now becoming home to 70% of the global population, the Centre told the SC that India has achieved grand success in saving tigers.
- As per the affidavit filed in the apex court, there is an annual growth of 6% in the big cat's population, which offset natural losses.

- India achieved the target of doubling the tiger population in 2018, four years ahead of schedule of the St Petersburg Declaration on tiger conservation.
 - The number of tiger reserves has gone up to 53 covering around 76,000 sq km
 - A new tiger reserve – Ranipur Tiger Reserve – has been declared in UP.
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WHAT IS THE INDUS WATER TREATY?

India recently issued a notice to Pakistan for modification of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

About Indus Water Treaty:

- It was **signed in September 1960 between India and Pakistan.**
 - The treaty was **brokered by the World Bank**, which too is a signatory to the treaty.
 - The treaty **fixed and delimited the rights and obligations of both countries concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system.**
 - It gives control over the waters of the three "eastern rivers" -- the Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej -- to **India**, while control over the waters of the three "western rivers" ' -- the Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum -- to **Pakistan.**
 - The treaty **allows India to use the western river waters for limited irrigation use** and unlimited non-consumptive use for such applications as power generation, navigation, floating of property, fish culture, etc.
 - It lays down **detailed regulations for India in building projects over the western rivers.**
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CHEETAH REINTRODUCTION PLAN: INDIA-SOUTH AFRICA SIGN PACT, 12 CHEETAHS TO BE BROUGHT TO KUNO

Why in News?

- An MoU on cooperation in reintroduction of cheetahs to **Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh** next month, has been signed between India and South Africa.

About the Species (*Acinonyx Jubatus Venaticus*):

- The Cheetah (a carnivore) is the **world's fastest land animal** historically ranging throughout most of Sub-Saharan Africa and extending eastward to **India**.
- It plays an important part in the ecosystem by maintaining prey species healthy (by killing the weak and old) and control the population of prey, thus, helping plants-life by preventing overgrazing.
- Today, Cheetahs are found in **only 9% of their historic range**, occurring in a variety of habitats such as **savannahs in the Serengeti**, arid mountain ranges in the Sahara and hilly desert terrain in **Iran**.
- Namibia has the largest population of Cheetahs in the world, earning it the title "**The Cheetah Capital of the World.**"
- Currently, Cheetahs (African) are listed as **Vulnerable** on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, as there are fewer than 7,100 adult and adolescent Cheetahs in the wild.
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (**CITES**) lists them as an Appendix 1 species.

What was the Historical Range of Cheetahs in India?

- **Historically**, Asiatic Cheetahs had a very wide distribution in India, occurring from as far north as **Punjab to Tirunelveli** district in southern Tamil Nadu, from **Gujarat and Rajasthan** in the west to **Bengal** in the east.
- Thus, the Cheetah's habitat was very diverse - scrub forests, dry grasslands, savannas and other arid and semi-arid open habitats.

What were the Causes of Extinction of Cheetahs in India?

- The big cat population got completely wiped out in the early **1950s**, mainly due to **over-hunting and habitat loss**.
- Records of Cheetahs being **hunted** (sport hunting, capturing during Mughal period) go back to the 1550s.
- However, the **final phase of its extinction** coincided with British colonial rule (the British declared a bounty for killing it in 1871).

What is the Cheetah Reintroduction Plan?

- Discussions to bring the Cheetah back to India were initiated in **2009** by the Wildlife Trust of India.
- Under the ‘**Action Plan for Reintroduction of Cheetah in India**’, 50 cheetahs will be brought from African countries to various national parks over 5 years.

Why are Cheetahs Coming from Southern Africa?

- **Reasons behind re-introducing cheetah from southern Africa:**
 - The locally extinct Cheetah-subspecies of India is found in Iran and is categorised as **critically endangered**.
 - Since it is not possible to source the critically endangered Asiatic Cheetah from Iran, **India decided to source Cheetahs from Southern Africa**.
 - Southern African Cheetahs have the **highest observed genetic variety** among extant Cheetah lineages, which is critical for a founding population stock.
 - Furthermore, Southern African Cheetahs have been **determined to be the ancestors of all other**

ADANI GROUP STOCKS HAMMERED; INVESTORS LOSE RS 4.2L CRORE IN 2 DAYS

Why in News?

- Recently, a US-based investment research firm, **Hindenburg Research**, published a research report on the Adani Group.
- The report claims that the Adani Group is holding a **short position** on the Adani stocks, signalling that the shares of Adani Group are overpriced and will dip in value soon.

About Adani Group:

- It is one of the largest group of companies in India which specialises in infrastructure projects in coal, ports, cement, green energy and even edible oil.
- It has made the news in India lately because of its rapid expansion in the cement industry (buying majority stake in Ambuja Cement and ACC Ltd.) as well as news media (buying around 30% shares of NDTV).

- Its owner, **Mr Gautam Adani** has been one of the top 4 richest persons in the world for some time now.

About Hindenburg Research:

- Hindenburg Research is a US-based research team that offers services in forensic financial research, with a focus on equity, credit and derivatives analysis.
- Their fundamental research often includes studying and reporting on companies with accounting irregularities, unethical practices in business/related-party transactions, bad management etc.
- Its primary method for investment is said to be **short-selling**.
- Short selling basically **involves borrowing an asset now in order to sell it, only to buy it back at a lower price and then return the borrowed asset.**
- The view taken basically is bearish one.

WHAT IS GJ 1002 B AND C?

An international group of researchers has recently discovered the presence of two planets with masses comparable to that of the Earth in orbit around the star GJ 1002.

About GJ 1002 b and c:

- The two new planets are named, **GJ 1002 b and GJ 1002 c**.
- These planets **lie in so-called habitable zones**, within which water could be found in liquid form, and which is located in the immediate vicinity of the star due to its low luminosity.
- **Planet b has a mass slightly higher than Earth's**, is the closer of the two and its **year lasts only 10 days**.
- **Planet c is about a third more massive than Earth** and takes about **20 days to orbit the star**.
- The two planets were discovered using the **radial velocity (RV) method**.

What is the Radial Velocity method?

- This method is based on the detection of variations in the velocity of the central star, due to the changing direction of the gravitational pull from an unseen exoplanet as it orbits the star.

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLAR AND OCEANIC RESEARCH (NCPOR)

A recent study by the NCPOR revealed that the Antarctic sea ice (South Pole) reached its lowest level ever recorded in the summer of 2022.

About National Centre for Polar and Oceanic Research (NCPOR):

- It is an **autonomous research institute** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** established in **1998**.
- NCPOR is **tasked with planning and executing polar expeditions and scientific research in Antarctica, Arctic, Himalayas and Southern Ocean**.
- NCPOR is **the nodal agency** for planning, promoting, coordinating, and executing the entire gamut of **polar and southern ocean scientific research in the country** and the associated logistics activities.
- It also **undertakes research on some of the country's strategically vital projects** like mapping of **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), continental shelf margins and the Deep Ocean Mission**.
- The Center **maintains a Research Advisory Committee (RAC)** to help guide and concentrate the research activities.
- It is **located in Vasco da Gama, Goa**, and was formerly known as the **National Center for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR)**.

NATIONAL TECHNICAL TEXTILES MISSION

Recently, **The Union Minister of Textiles cleared 15 R&D projects across key strategic areas such as Speciality fibre, Protective textiles, High-Performance Textiles , Medical Textiles etc under the National Technical Textiles Mission.**

What are Technical Textiles?

- **Technical Textiles are textile products which are manufactured primarily for their functionality and use rather than aesthetic appeal.**
- **Technical textiles are classified into 12 major groups based on their application areas namely; Agrotech, Geotech, Buildtech, Mobiltech, Hometech, Clothtech, Indutech, Meditech, Sportstech, Protech, Packtech, Oekotech.**



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



Key features of the National Technical Textiles Mission India

- The Ministry of Textiles has launched NTTM to increase the penetration level of technical textiles in India while leveraging the extraordinary growth rate of the sector.
 - The mission aims to position India as a global leader in Technical Textiles.
 - The mission will comprise the following four components:
 - Research, Innovation and Development
 - Promotion and Market Development
 - Export Promotion
 - Education, Training, Skill Development
 - **Implementation:** It has been approved with an implementation period of **four years** starting from **FY 2020-21 till FY 2023-24**. The total outlay of the mission is INR 1480 Cr.
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