

DIRECTORATE OF REVENUE INTELLIGENCE (DRI)



The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officers developed an intelligence and intercepted seven consignments which had arrived from Hong Kong at the Foreign Post Office in New Delhi recently.

About Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI):

- It is the **premier intelligence and enforcement agency** of the Government of India on **anti-smuggling matters**.
- It works **under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Ministry of Finance**, Government of India.
- It came into existence on December 4, 1957.

Functions:

- **Collection of intelligence about smuggling** of contraband goods, narcotics, under-invoicing, etc. **through sources in India and abroad**, including secret sources.
- **Keeping watch over important seizures and investigation cases**. Associating with or **taking over the investigations** which warrant specialised handling by the Directorate.
- **Guiding important investigation/prosecution cases**. Keeping liaison with foreign countries, Indian Missions, and Enforcement agencies abroad on anti-smuggling matters.
- To **keep in liaison with C.B.I. and through them to refer cases registered under the Customs Act to the Income Tax Department for action** under the Income Tax Act.
- To **keep statistics of seizures, and prices/rates etc.** for watching trends of smuggling and supply required material to the Ministry of Finance and other Ministries.
- To **study and suggest remedies for loopholes in law and procedures** to combat smuggling.
- The DRI, with its **Headquarters in New Delhi**, has 12 zonal units, 35 regional units, and 15 sub-regional units.

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION (UGC)

The University Grants Commission (UGC):

- **Genesis:**
 - **The Sargeant Report** was the first attempt to formulate a national system of education in India in **1944**.
 - It recommended the formation of a **University Grants Committee**, which was established in 1945 and was tasked with dealing with all of the then-existing Universities in 1947.
 - Soon after independence, the **University Education Commission** was established (in 1948) under the **chairmanship of Dr. S Radhakrishnan** to report on Indian university education and suggest improvements and extensions.
 - It proposed **reorganizing** the University Grants Committee along the lines of the **University Grants Commission of the United Kingdom**.
 - As a result, the UGC was **formally inaugurated in 1953** by Maulana Abul Kalam, the then Minister of Education.
 - However, the UGC was established [by the Ministry of Education's Department of Higher Education] as a **statutory body in November 1956** by the UGC Act 1956.
 - A proposal to replace UGC with another new regulatory body called the **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** is under consideration by the Government of India.

Mandate:

- The UGC has the **unique distinction of being the only grant-giving agency** in the country which has been vested with two responsibilities of:
 - Providing funds
 - Coordination, determination and maintenance of standards in institutions of higher education.

BLACK TIGERS OR MELANISTIC TIGERS: ODISHA TO ESTABLISH A FIRST OF ITS KIND SAFARI IN THE WORLD

Why in News?

- The Odisha government announced plans to start a melanistic tiger safari near Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) and is likely to be ready for visitors by October this year.
- The safari will be the first of its kind anywhere in the world, and it will give a chance to the tourists to see “**the rare and majestic**” melanistic tiger species “**found only in Odisha**”.

Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR):



- Similipal is a tiger reserve in the **Mayurbhanj district** (adjoining Jharkhand and West Bengal) in the Indian state of **Odisha** covering 2,750 km² (1,060 sq mi).
- It is part of the **Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve**, which includes three protected areas - Similipal Tiger Reserve, Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Similipal National Park derives its name from the **abundance of red silk cotton trees** growing in the area.
- The park is home to **Bengal tiger, Asian elephant, gaur and chausingha**, and this protected area is part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves since **2009**.
- The STR is Asia’s **second largest biosphere** (after the Gulf of Kachchh, Gujarat), and the country’s **only wild habitat for melanistic royal Bengal tigers**.

What are Black Tigers or Melanistic Tigers?

- **Melanism is a genetic condition** in which an increased production of melanin, a substance in the skin that produces hair, eye and skin pigmentation, **results in black (or nearly black) skin, feathers or hair in an animal**.
- Many royal Bengal tigers of Similipal belong to a unique lineage with **higher-than-normal levels of melanin**, which gives them **black and yellow interspersed stripes** on their coats.

- **These tigers are not entirely black**, and are therefore more accurately described as being **pseudo-melanistic**.
- As per the 2022 cycle of the All-India Tiger Estimation, 16 individuals were recorded at STR, **out of which 10 were melanistic**.
- The state government's ongoing tiger survey (which will be released soon), however, suggests that the number of royal Bengal tigers in STR is more than what has been mentioned in the NTCA report.

What Makes Tigers (Pseudo) Melanistic?

- According to research of the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NBCS, Bengaluru), **a single mutation in the gene Transmembrane Aminopeptidase Q (Taqppe)** causes black tigers' stripes to enlarge or spread into the yellow background.
- Genetic analyses of other tiger populations in India and computer simulations suggest that the **Similipal black tigers may have arisen from a very small founding population of tigers**, and are inbred.
 - The STR cats live isolated from other tigers, because of which they breed among themselves.

DOGRI FOLK DANCE



Recently, the Union Government of India conferred Padma Shri award to Jammu's Dogri folk dancer Romalo Ram.

About Dogri folk dance:

- It is a dance performed in **Duggar region of Jammu**.
- It is generally **performed by a group of artists** whose main leader sings the song as well as dances while others are in the sitting position providing beats of **Drums and Chimta**.
- It is performed in **functions and social gatherings**.

- There are other varieties of this dance with the **men and women or only women** performing dance in groups to the music of some famous folk song in colourful traditional dresses.
 - Dogra folk-dances have an important role as a part of worship, ceremonies and a pastime but the main force behind the folk-dances is the celebratory mood.
 - **Other dance forms of Jammu region:** Dheku, Phummani, jagran, Ckauki, Chhajja, Kuddha, Hirana etc. are the main dances. Bhagtan, Raas, Chandrauli etc. are main folk-drama styles.
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WHAT IS ALPENGLOW?



Astronaut Lora O'Hara, currently stationed aboard the International Space Station, recently shared images showcasing the Alpenglow phenomenon near the Hindu Kush mountain range.

About Alpenglow:

- It is a **natural phenomenon** when **mountain slopes are illuminated by the sun as it rises or sets.**
 - The **slopes turn a rosy, reddish, or orange hue** depending on the angle of the sun and atmospheric conditions.
 - It **occurs during the twilight hours before or after sunset.** It can also occur in the first minutes after the sun rises or sets.
 - Alpenglow **typically occurs in** the range of colours between **red, pink, and orange.**
 - This is because these are the **longest warm rays of electromagnetic waves** (light) — they reach various surfaces, while **cold rays are shorter and disappear faster** in the atmosphere.
 - Its **vibrancy and colour depend on** the **location of the sun**, the **angle of the light**, and other **atmospheric conditions** like clouds, humidity, and particulates.
 - It can change quickly depending on how fast the sun sets on any given day.
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KEY FACTS ABOUT SUPREME COURT OF INDIA (SC)



The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Supreme Court.

About Supreme Court of India (SC):

- The Supreme Court of India is the **apex judicial body** under the Constitution of India.
- **Article 124** of the Constitution states that “There shall be a Supreme Court of India.”
- The Supreme Court **came into existence on January 26, 1950**, with the coming into force of the Constitution.
- **On January, 28, 1950**, two days after India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic, **the Supreme Court was inaugurated**.
- The Supreme Court **initially functioned from the old Parliament House** till it moved to **the present building located on Tilak Marg, New Delhi, in 1958**.
- The **first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad**, inaugurated the **present building** of the Supreme Court of India on August 4, 1958.

Number of Judges:

- The **original Constitution** of 1950 envisaged a Supreme Court with a **Chief Justice and 7 puisne Judges**, leaving it to Parliament to increase this number.
- Considering the increase in workload, **Parliament increased the number** of Judges from 8 in 1950 to 11 in 1956, 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986, 31 in 2009, and **34 in 2019 (current strength)**.
- Today, the **judges sit in benches of two and three and come together in larger benches of 5 and more (Constitution Bench) to decide any conflicting decisions** between benches of the Supreme Court **or any substantial questions concerning the interpretation of the Constitution**.
- The **proceedings** of the Supreme Court are **conducted in English**.

Powers and Functions:

- The Supreme Court has **original, appellate, and advisory jurisdiction.**
- It serves both as the **final court of appeals** and the **final interpreter of the Constitution.**
- Its **exclusive original jurisdiction** extends to **any dispute between the Government of India and one or more States** or between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more States on the other, or **between two or more States**, if and insofar as **the dispute involves any question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends.**

IN TODAY'S TECH-SAVVY TIMES, THE IMPORTANCE OF COMBINING SHAASTRA (KNOWLEDGE) WITH SHASTRA (WEAPONS)

Context

- **India is in the process of formulating its inaugural National Security Strategy, with a focus on accelerating domestic defence production.**
- **However, amidst the evolving dynamics of global conflicts, the intersection of knowledge (Shaastra) and weapons (Shastra) becomes increasingly evident.**
- **The blurring lines between civilian and military technologies, as seen in the cases of drones, satellite internet, artificial intelligence (AI), etc., necessitate a strategic approach that adapts to these technological advancements.**

An Overview of Geopolitical Shifts and Technological Fences

- **Reassessing Economic Integration**
 - **Previously, the United States played a pivotal role in accelerating China's global economic integration.**
 - **However, the recognition of the strategic implications of advanced technologies has led to a revaluation of this approach.**
- **Friend Shoring Under Scrutiny**

- The concept of friend shoring, wherein economic partnerships between countries with conflicting interests are maintained, is facing heightened scrutiny.
- Recent suggestions from the White House Economic Council Director that a Japanese company with Chinese operations acquiring a U.S. steel company may impact national security.
- **China's Response and Tech Restrictions**
 - China, in response to perceived threats to its technological sovereignty, has implemented measures to restrict the use of certain foreign technologies.
 - Notably, Tesla cars and Apple phones have been banned from Chinese army bases due to concerns over sophisticated surveillance features such as cameras, microphones, and cloud backups.
- **Xi Jinping's Dual Circulation Strategy**
 - The Chinese leadership, under Xi Jinping, has adopted a dual circulation strategy, emphasising the use of Chinese technologies whenever possible and relying on foreign technologies only when necessary.
- **Challenges in Indo-Pak Relations and China's Changing Approach**
 - India faces persistent geopolitical challenges, notably from Pakistan, which refuses to abandon its decades-old conflict stance.
 - China's policy shift towards prioritising domestic technologies reflects a changing global landscape.

Conclusion

- **India's National Security Strategy must adapt to the changing landscape of geopolitics and technology.**
- **Integrating the goals of elevating universities to global prominence becomes imperative,** given the intertwined nature of knowledge, weapons, and national security.
- **By strategically addressing the challenges and leveraging collaborative efforts between academia and government, India can position itself as a formidable player in the evolving global security paradigm.**

DALMA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

The canopy walk facility at a height of 25 feet at the Dalma Sanctuary will be set up soon.



About Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary:

- **Location:**
 - It is located 10 kilometres from the city of Jamshedpur in the state of **Jharkhand**.
 - It is situated around the **Dalma Hills** on the **Chota Nagpur Plateau**.
- The Sanctuary gets its **name from the "Dalma mai" a local goddess** who is revered and worshipped by the local people and the people of adjoining villages of Dalma.
- Inaugurated in 1975, it contains a **significant population of Indian Elephants**.
- The sanctuary covers almost 193 sq. km. of forest area.
- The entire forest of Dalma Sanctuary falls in the **catchment of the Subarnarekha River and Dimna Lake** of Jamshedpur.

Vegetation: The forests of Dalma come under the category "**Dry peninsular Sal**" and "**Northern dry mixed deciduous Forest**".

Flora: **Medicinal plants like Ananatmula, Satawari, Sarpagandha, etc.** are abundant in the sanctuary. Various types of trees, climbers, herbs, shrubs, and orchids are found here.

Fauna:

- Besides elephants, the sanctuary has a considerable population of other wildlife like **barking deer, wild boar, giant squirrel, porcupine, pangolin, sloth bear, etc.**
- Commonly seen birds in the sanctuary are **falcons, golden orioles, Indian tree pie, paradise fly catchers, grey hornbills, Indian peafowl, etc.**