

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI) TAG

Seven products from Odisha, ranging from the Similipal Kai chutney made with red weaver ants to the embroidered Kapdaganda shawl, have bagged the coveted Geographical Indication (GI) tag.



About Geographical Indication (GI) Tag:

- It is a **sign used on products** that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- This is typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts and industrial products.
- The **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999** seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- This GI tag is **valid for 10 years** following which it can be renewed.

Key facts about newly GI Tagged products

- **Kapdaganda Shawl**
 - It is woven and embroidered by the women of the **Dongria Kondh tribe**, a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) in the **Niyamgiri hills** in Odisha's Rayagada and Kalahandi districts.
 - The shawl reflects the rich tribal heritage of the Dongria Kondhs.
 - The shawl is worn by both men and women and the Dongrias give it to their family members as a token of love and affection.
- **Lanjia Saurpa Painting**
 - It is one of the oldest tribal art forms, is also **known as Idital**.
 - The artworks are famous for their beauty, aesthetics, ritualistic association and iconography.

- It belongs to the **Lanjia Saura community**, a PVTG largely residing in the Rayagada district. These paintings are in the form of exterior murals painted on the mud walls of homes.
- **Koraput Kala Jeera Rice**
 - The **black-coloured rice** variety, also known as the ‘**Prince of Rice**’, is famous for its aroma, taste, texture and nutritional value.
 - As the rice grains resemble cumin seeds, it is also called Kala Jeera.
 - Its consumption helps in increasing haemoglobin levels and improves metabolism in the body.
- **Nayagarh Kanteimundi Brinjal**
 - It is known for its prickly thorns on the stems and the whole plant.
 - The green and round fruits **contain more seeds** as compared to other genotypes.
 - It is famous for its unique taste and **relatively short quick cooking time**.
 - The plants are resistant to major insects and can be grown with minimal pesticide.
- **Odisha Khajuri Guda (Jaggery)**
 - It is a natural sweetener **extracted from date palm trees** and has its origin in the Gajapati district.
 - Traditionally, the jaggery is prepared in a trapezoidal form called ‘Patali Gur’ and is organic by nature. It is dark brown and has a unique taste.
- **Dhenkanal Magji**
 - It is a type of sweet made from cheese from buffalo milk, with distinct characteristics in terms of appearance, taste, flavour, shape, and size.

WHAT IS IDEX (INNOVATIONS FOR DEFENCE EXCELLENCE)?



Innovations for Defence Excellence- Defence Innovation Organization (iDEX-DIO) is all set to participate in the tenth edition of the Vibrant

Gujarat Summit 2024 from 10 to 12 January 2024 at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

About iDEX:

- It is the flagship scheme of the **Ministry of Defence**, Govt of India launched in 2018.
- The **objective** of the scheme is to **cultivate an innovation ecosystem** in the Defence and Aerospace sector by collaborating with startups, innovators, MSMEs, incubators, and academia.
- iDEX offers grants and support for R&D with significant potential for future adoption in Indian defence and aerospace.
- It is currently engaged with around 400+ Startups and MSMEs.
- It is recognized as a game-changer in the defence ecosystem, iDEX has received the PM Award for Innovation in the defence sector.
- **Funding:** It will be **funded** and managed by a ‘**Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)**’ which has been formed as a ‘**not for profit**’ company as per the Companies Act 2013 for this purpose, by the two founder memberse. **Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) - HAL & BEL.**
- iDEX will function as the executive arm of DIO, carrying out all the required activities while DIO will provide high level policy guidance to iDEX.

WHAT IS LUNAR GATEWAY STATION?

The UAE recently announced its participation in developing a module on NASA’s Lunar Gateway Station alongside the USA, Japan, Canada, and the European Union.



About Lunar Gateway Station:

- It is a primary **component of NASA's Artemis program.**
- Artemis intends to establish a long-term base on the Moon (Artemis base), and the **Lunar Gateway will serve as a multi-purpose outpost that orbits the Moon.**
- The Gateway is a **multinational project** involving four of the International Space Station partner agencies: **NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA), Japan’s Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).**
- Basically, the Gateway Station is similar to the International Space Station currently in low Earth orbit, but the Gateway will orbit the Moon.

- Incidentally, the Gateway will be the **first space station** ever to exist **outside of low Earth orbit, or LEO.**
- From the Gateway, NASA and international partners can **provide essential support for long-term human presence on the lunar surface**, as well as **launch additional missions** for deep space exploration.
- Its flight path is a **highly elliptical orbit, bringing it both relatively close to the Moon's surface and also far away, making it easier to pick up astronauts and supplies from Earth**, around a five-day trip.
- It will also offer a place to **relay communications** and **act as a base for scientific research.**
- The Gateway will **weigh around 40 tonnes** and consist of a **service module, a communications module, a connecting module, an airlock for spacewalks, a place for the astronauts to live, and an operations station** to command the Gateway's robotic arm or rovers on the Moon.
- **Astronauts will be able to occupy it for up to 90 days** at a time, occasionally travelling to the lunar surface to conduct science and test new technologies.

CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA

Why in the News?

- One in five girls and one in six boys are still getting married below the legal age of marriage in India.
- This has been highlighted by a new study published in the Lancet Global Health on December 15th, 2023.

Child Marriages in India:

- In India, child marriage reduced from 47.4% in 2005-06 to 26.8% in 2015-16.
- In the last five years, it declined by 3.5% points to reach 23.3% in 2020-21, according to the latest National Family Health Survey-5 data.

- There is a growing trend for decline in the overall prevalence of child marriage, but 23.3% is still a disturbingly high percentage in a country with a population of 141.2 crore.
- Eight States have a higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average:
 - **West Bengal, Bihar and Tripura** top the list with more than 40% of women aged 20-24 years married below 18, according to NFHS data.
- Some States have shown a reduction in child marriages, like **Madhya Pradesh** (23.1% in 2020-21 from 32.4% in 2015-16), **Rajasthan** (25.4% from 35.4%) and **Haryana**.

Legal Intervention in India:

- There are several laws including the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** and the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012**, which aim at protecting children from violation of human and other rights.
- The **Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021** seeks to increase the marriage age of women from existing 18 years to 21 years.

Why Minimum Age of Marriage for Females should be Increased?

- **Lack of access to education and employment:**
- **Impact of early marriage on health of women and children:**

Schemes/ Policies for Preventing Girl Child Marriage:

- **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY):**
- **Balika Samriddhi Yojana:**
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:**
 - Among all the other girl's child welfare schemes, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is the most popular.
 - This scheme is to promote girl children's safety before and after they are born.

58TH ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF DIRECTOR GENERALS, INSPECTOR GENERALS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the All-India Conference of Directors General and Inspectors General of Police 2023 in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- The three-day conference was inaugurated by Home Minister Amit Shah on January 5.

58th Conference of Directors General of Police / Inspectors General of Police

- **About**
 - The three-day Conference, from January 5 to 7, 2023, was held in hybrid format in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
 - About 100 invitees including DGP of States/UTs and Heads of Central Armed Police Forces and Central Police Organizations attended the Conference physically.
 - The remaining invitees participated virtually from across the country.
- **Hosted by**
 - Intelligence Bureau at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jhalana.
- **Outcomes**
 - Best practices from States and Union Territories was presented at the Conference so that they can learn from each other.
 - The Conference deliberated on critical components of national security, including:
 - newly enacted major criminal laws,
 - counter terrorism strategies,
 - left wing extremism,
 - emerging cyber threats,
 - worldwide counter radicalisation initiatives etc.
 - Off late, the Conference has started discussions on futuristic themes in policing and security.
 - This is to ensure not only safety in the present times, but also to develop capability to meet emerging issues and challenges.

MALDIVES GOVT SUSPENDS THREE MINISTERS

Why in news?

- The Maldives government suspended three deputy ministers after they took to social media to make derogatory remarks against PM Modi.

Background:

- **Social media war**
 - It all started with a series of posts on X from Indian Prime Minister, promoting tourism in Lakshadweep islands.
 - Soon after PM Modi's post, some prominent Maldivian social media users responded to it with offensive, racist, xenophobic and derogatory comments.
 - These comments were targeted at Indians at large, as well as the Indian PM.
 - Among them were the three Maldivian Ministers

Lakshadweep

- **About**
 - India's smallest Union Territory Lakshadweep is an archipelago consisting of 36 islands with an area of 32 sq km.
 - It is a uni-district UT and is comprised of **12 atolls, three reefs**, five submerged banks and ten inhabited islands.
 - The capital is Kavaratti and it is also the principal town of the UT.

Demography

- According to the 2011 Census, Lakshadweep has a population of 64429 persons.
- More than 93% of the population who are indigenous, are Muslims and majority of them belong to the Shafi School of the Sunni Sect.
- **Malayalam** is spoken in all the islands **except Minicoy** where people speak Mahl which is written in Divehi script and is spoken in Maldives also.

- The entire indigenous population has been classified as Scheduled Tribes.
 - There are no Scheduled Castes in this Union Territory.

Significance of Lakshadweep for India

- Strategic Location
- Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
- Maritime Security
- Economic significance
- Biodiversity and Marine Life

Dependency of Maldives on tourism

- The Maldives is heavily dependent on tourism and the industry accounts for over 28 percent of its GDP.
- According to official figures by the Maldives' government, Indian tourists have consistently remained among the top ten nationalities who travel to the island every year.
- **In 2023 alone, among the tourists who travelled to the Maldives, Indians formed the largest group of tourists with over 200,000 travellers.**
 - This was followed by tourists from Russia and China.

HOG DEER

In a significant discovery, the hog deer has been spotted for the first time at the Rajaji Tiger Reserve.



It is a **solitary creature** but sometimes spotted feeding in small groups in open fields when food there is plentiful.

- For the most part it is sedentary and does not migrate.
- Males tend to be territorial and mark their territory with **glandular secretions**.
- This species exhibits sexual dimorphism. The females are slightly smaller than males and lack antlers.
- **Distribution**

- It has a native geographic range **throughout India**, including the Himalayan foothills and Southeast Asia.
- Humans have introduced free-ranging populations of this deer in Sri Lanka, Australia and the United States, including Texas, Florida, and Hawaii.
- **Habitat:**
 - It appears to **prefer dense forests**; however, they are often observed in clearings, grasslands and occasionally wet grasslands.
 - This variation is usually associated with time of year and food distribution.
- **Conservation status**
 - **IUCN: Endangered**
 - **Wildlife Protection Act 1972: Scheduled I**

Key facts about the Rajaji Tiger Reserve

- It is spread over three districts of **Uttarakhand**: Haridwar, Dehradun and Pauri Garhwal.
 - It is situated along the hills and foothills of the **Shivalik ranges**.
 - In the year 1983, Rajaji Wildlife Sanctuary was merged with Motichur and Chilla wildlife sanctuaries and made into Rajaji National Park.
 - It was named after the famous freedom fighter **Rajgopalachari** popularly known as "Rajaji"
 - It's location in a **transition zone** between **temperate western Himalaya and central Himalaya** enhances the species diversity.
 - **Vegetation:** The area is covered with diverse forest types ranging from semi-evergreen to deciduous and from mixed broad-leaved to Terai grassland and has been classified as Indus-Ganges Monsoon Forest type.
 - **Flora:** Rohini, Palash, Shisham, Sal, Sandan, Khair, Arjun, Baans, Semul, Chamaror etc.
 - **Fauna:** Tiger and Asian Elephants. Leopard, Jungle cat and Himalayan Black Bear etc.
-