

Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS)

A case was recently registered against a chopper company by the forest department in Uttarakhand for purportedly landing a helicopter in a restricted zone of Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary.



About Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS):

- **Location:** The KWS, famously known as the **Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary**, is located in the **Rudraprayag and Chamoli districts** of the state of **Uttarakhand**.
- It was **named after** the famous **Hindu temple of Kedarnath**, which **lies outside the northern border** of the sanctuary.
- Its alternate name comes from its **primary purpose of protecting** the endangered **Himalayan musk deer**.
- It is the **largest protected area in the western Himalayas**.
- The sanctuary was established in 1972, covering a total area of 975.20 km².
- It **lies in the upper catchment of the Alaknanda and Mandakini Rivers**.
- The **altitude ranges from 1,160 to 7,068 m**.
- It is **bordered by Kedarnath (6940 m), Mandani (6193 m), and Chaukhamba (7068 m) peaks** in the north.
- The area falls under the **West Himalayan Zone in the Palearctic realm**.
- **Vegetation:**
 - It is covered with **temperate forests**.
 - The higher and **upper regions possess the sub-alpine and alpine coniferous forests**.
 - At **high altitude, lush green meadows** envelope the entire region.
- **Flora:** **Oak, rhododendrons, Chir Pine** and **Alpine meadows** along with several **Himalayan flowering plants**.
- **Fauna:** Some of the mammals are **Musk deer, Himalayan Thar, Himalayan Black bear, Snow Leopard**, etc, and some birds like **Monal, Koklass, and Himalayan Griffon**, etc.

WHAT ARE AURORAS

NASA recently shared an incredible picture of an aurora captured from the International Space Station.



About Auroras:

- An aurora is a **natural phenomenon** that is characterised by a **display of a natural-coloured** (green, red, yellow, or white) **light in the sky**.

What causes it?

- It is a light show which is caused when **electrically-charged particles from the sun interact with the Earth's magnetosphere and atmosphere**.
- Solar particles **interact with** different types of **gas molecules in the atmosphere**, mostly nitrogen and oxygen, **resulting in unique, colored displays of light**.
- **Oxygen gives off green and red light**, while nitrogen glows blue and reddish-purple.
- It is sometimes referred to as **'polar light'**. It is **predominantly seen in regions of high altitudes** like the Arctic and Antarctic.
- **In the Northern Hemisphere**, the phenomenon is called the **northern lights** (aurora borealis), while in the **Southern Hemisphere**; it's called the **southern lights** (aurora australis).
- Auroras can appear in various forms, like **streamers, patches, arcs, scattered light**, diffused light, etc.
- **Do other planets have Auroras?**
- **Earth isn't the only planet** that experiences auroras.
- **Any planet with an atmosphere and a magnetic field** is likely to have auroras.
- Auroras have been **observed on Saturn and Jupiter**.

CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (CBI)



The Central Government recently told the Supreme Court that the CBI is an “independent body” and the Centre has “no superintendence or control over it.

About Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):

- It is the **premier investigative agency** in India, with a **dual responsibility** to **investigate grievous cases** and **provide leadership** and **direction in fighting corruption** to the **police force across the country**.
- The **establishment of the CBI** was **recommended** by the **Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–1964)**.
- It is **not a statutory body**, as it was **set up by a resolution (1963)** of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It **derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**.
- It is also the **nodal police agency** in India that **coordinates investigations on behalf of Interpol member countries**.
- **Motto: Industry, Impartiality, and Integrity**
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions**
- Though, for **issues under the Prevention of Corruption Act**, its **superintendence lies with the Central Vigilance Commission**.

Following are the **types of cases that CBI deals with:**

- **Anti-Corruption Crimes:** CBI manages the investigation of cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act **against public officials and central government employees, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), Corporations, or bodies owned or controlled by the central government** of India.
- **Economic Crimes:** It probes the **cases of huge financial scams and serious economic frauds**, comprising crimes relating to **fake Indian currency notes, bank fraud and cybercrime, import-export and foreign exchange violations, cultural property, mega smuggling racket of narcotics, antiques, and smuggling of other contraband items**.
- **Suo Moto Cases:**
- CBI accelerates the investigation of offences **only in the Union Territories** by taking them up on a **priority basis**.

- The central government can ask the CBI to probe a crime in a state, but only with due permission from the respective State
- The Supreme Court and High Court can also direct the CBI to investigate crimes anywhere in the country without the state's approval.
- **Special Crimes:**
- CBI manages the investigation of serious and pre-planned crimes under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and other laws on the requests of the state governments or the direction of the Supreme Court and High Courts.
- For instance, cases like bomb blasts, terrorism, abduction for ransom, and crimes committed by the mafia or the underworld at a particular place in the country.

WHAT IS INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE, 2016

The Supreme Court recently upheld key provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC), which had been challenged on various grounds, including the alleged absence of due process and a violation of natural justice principles.



About Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016:

- It is the bankruptcy law of India which seeks to consolidate the existing framework by creating a single law for insolvency and bankruptcy.
- It provides for a time-bound process to resolve insolvency.
- **Applicability:** The provisions of the Code are applicable to companies, limited liability entities, firms, and individuals (i.e. all entities other than financial service providers).
- **Timeframe for completion of the exercise:**
- Companies have to complete the entire insolvency exercise within 180 days under the IBC. The deadline may be extended if the creditors do not raise objections to the extension.
- For smaller companies, including startups with an annual turnover of Rs 1 crore, the whole exercise of insolvency must be completed in 90 days, and the deadline can be extended by 45 days.
- If debt resolution doesn't happen, the company goes for liquidation.

- **Who regulates the IBC proceedings?**
- **The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has been appointed as a regulator and it can oversee these proceedings.**
- **IBBI has 10 members appointed by the Central Government.**
- **IBBI regulates insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies, and information utilities set up under the Code.**
- **Who facilitates the insolvency resolution? A licensed professional administer the resolution process, manage the assets of the debtor, and provide information for creditors to assist them in decision-making.**

Who adjudicates over the proceedings?

- **The proceedings of the resolution process will be adjudicated by the National Companies Law Tribunal (NCLT) for companies and the Debt Recovery Tribunal for individuals.**
- **The courts approve initiating the resolution process, appointing the insolvency professional, and giving nod to the final decision of creditors.**
- **What is the procedure to resolve insolvency under the Code?**
- **When a default occurs, the resolution process may be initiated by the debtor or creditor.**
- **The insolvency professional administers the process.**
- **The professional provides financial information of the debtor from the information utilities to the creditor and manages the debtor's assets.**
- **This process lasts for 180 days, and any legal action against the debtor is prohibited during this period.**

UNESCO DECLARES GWALIOR THE 'CITY OF MUSIC'

Why in the News?

- **The city of Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh has been added to UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN) for its strong commitment to harnessing culture and creativity.**
- **Kozhikode from Kerala was also among the 55 new cities to join the network.**

Gwalior's Musical Past:

- All the music gharanas of the country have their origins in the Gwalior gharana.
- Gharana in Hindustani music is a community of performers who share a distinctive musical style that traces to a particular instructor or region.
- Before Hindustani classical music was divided into various gharanas, Gwalior emerged as the first proper gharana of music.
- Hence, the Gwalior gharana is considered the most ancient and 'Gangotri' (meaning origin) of **Khyal raga**.
- Khayal singing, as we know it today, emerged from dhrupad under the aegis of Gwalior gharana while incorporating the elements of qawwali.

Famous Musicians Associated with Gwalior Gharana:

- Gwalior gharana music has thrived under the patronage of the erstwhile royal families of Gwalior such as Raja Mansingh and Scindias.
- **Raja Dungarendra Singh Tomar:**
 - Raja Man Singh's great grandfather **Dungarendra Singh Tomar**, a musician himself, attempted a revival of Indian classical music through academic interest and patronage.
 - He is known to have gifted two music treatises in Sanskrit – **Sangeet Shiromani** and **Sangeet Choodamani** – to his friend and Sultan of Kashmir Zain-ul-Abdin.
 - The treatises comprised detailed discussions on music and musical instruments.
- **Raja Man Singh:**
 - Dungarendra also composed Vishnupadas (songs in praise of Vishnu) with a unique style of singing that he passed down to Man Singh, who ascended the throne in **1486**.
 - It's also believed that Man Singh invented dhrupad, in a classical genre sense.
 - Raja Man Singh's Horis and Dhamars also became quite popular. The king would take advice from Sufi saints, who were often musicians too.
 - In an attempt to popularize Indian music, **he replaced Sanskrit songs with those in simple Hindi**.
 - He also wrote **Manakutuhala** (Quest for Learning), considered the first treatise of music in Hindi, helping a wider audience to understand high art performed in kings' courts.

- This made dhrupad more accessible, which now comprised Vishnupadas sung in ragas.
- The king also built huge music halls in his palace and held regular music sessions. His music was also popular among Sufis as well as Muslim Sultans.
- **Tansen:**
 - Mian Tansen born as **Ramatanu** to a poet and musician was one of Gwalior's early proteges.
 - At the beginning of the 16th century, he trained under **Swami Haridas**, who practiced dhrupad but the poetry was dedicated to Krishna instead of Vishnu.
 - Tansen understood and honed the Gwalior gharana style under the famed Sufi saint Mohammad Ghous and was the court musician for King Ram Chandra Singh of Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, for many years.
 - The story of his musical brilliance and knowledge travelled and Akbar invited Tansen to be a part of his court musicians in the Mughal court.
 - A Vaishnava musician, he first refused, but after Ram Chandra insisted, he go, he joined the court at the age of 60.
 - **Abul Fazl's Ain-i-Akbari mentions 36 imperial musicians**, out of which 15 were from Gwalior.
- **Baiju Bawra:**
 - Baiju Bawra was born in Uttar Pradesh.
 - He had shifted to Gwalior to work as mentor of music for students in Gwalior and was patronised by Raja Mansingh.
- **Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan:**
 - Born in 1888, he was a court musician in Gwalior but in the early 20th century, when music conferences became popular, he was one of the most popular artistes to perform at these baithaks and was known for very fine musicianship.
 - He trained many significant musicians, including his son and foremost disciple **Ustad Amjad Ali Khan** and **Pt Bhimsen Joshi** for a few months, among others.

Other Famous Personalities:

- Haddu Khan's son Bade Inayat Hussain Khan (1852-1922),

- Vasudeva Buwa Joshi,
 - Balakrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjkar (1849–1926) who taught Vishnu Digambar Paluskar who later founded the **Gandharva Mahavidyalaya** which continues till today,
 - Famed educator BR Deodhar and Pakistani singer Farida Khanum among others.
-

CASH-FOR-QUERY CASE: ETHICS PANEL RECOMMENDS EXPULSION OF TMC MEMBER FROM LOK SABHA

Why in News?

- The Lok Sabha Ethics Committee’s report recommending the expulsion of Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP (Mahua Moitra) will now go to the Lok Sabha Speaker.
- A complaint by a BJP MP that the TMC MP sought favours from a businessman to ask questions against industrialist Gautam Adani sparked a chain of events leading to the report, which was adopted by six votes to four recently.

About the Ethics Committee:

- **Objective:** It oversees the moral and ethical conduct of members and examines cases of misconduct referred to it.
- **Appointment of members in Lok Sabha:** The members of the Ethics Committee are appointed by the **Speaker** for a period of one year.
- The Committee is currently headed by the BJP MP Vinod Kumar Sonkar.

Procedure for complaints

- **Any person** can complain against a Member through another Lok Sabha MP, along with evidence of the alleged misconduct, and an affidavit stating that the complaint is not “false, frivolous, or vexatious”.
- **If the Member himself complains, the affidavit is not needed.**
- **The Speaker** can refer to the Committee any complaint against an MP.
- **The Committee does not entertain complaints** based only on media reports or on matters that are sub-judice.

- **The Committee makes a prima facie inquiry** before deciding to examine a complaint. **It makes its recommendations** after evaluating the complaint.
- **The Committee presents its report to the Speaker**, who asks the House if the report should be taken up for consideration. There is also a provision for a half-hour discussion on the report.

Ethics Committee vs Privileges Committee:

- The work of the Ethics Committee and the Privileges Committee often **overlap**.
 - The Rules (for example, **the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha**) applicable to the Committee of Privileges also apply to the ethics panel.
 - An allegation of corruption against an MP can be sent to either body, but **usually more serious accusations go to the Privileges Committee**.
 - **The mandate of the Privileges Committee** is to safeguard the “freedom, authority, and dignity of Parliament”.
 - These privileges are enjoyed by individual Members as well as the House as a whole.
 - **An MP** can be examined for breach of privilege; **a non-MP** too can be accused of breach of privilege for actions that attack the authority and dignity of the House.
 - **The Ethics Committee can take up only cases of misconduct that involve MPs.**
-