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## Current Affairs - 18 November 2025

### NATIONAL GOPAL RATNA AWARDS (NGRA)



• NGRA are the country's highest honours in the livestock and dairy sector.

- It was constituted by the Department of Animal Husbandry, and Dairying under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- It was launched under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission in 2021.
- **Objective:** It aims to encourage excellence among milk-producing farmers, dairy cooperatives, Milk Producer Companies (MPCs), Dairy Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and Artificial Insemination Technicians (AITs).

The NGRA will be conferred in the following categories:

- Best Dairy farmer rearing indigenous cattle/buffalo breeds (list of registered breeds Annexed).
- Best Dairy Cooperative Society (DCS)/ Milk Producer Company (MPC)/Dairy Farmer Producer Organization (FPO).
- Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT).
- There is also a provision of **Special award for the North Eastern Region (NER) and Himalayan States** so as to encourage and boost the dairy development activities in these States/UTs.
- The Award consists of a cash prize of **5 lakh for 1st rank, Rs. 3 lakh for 2nd rank, Rs. 2 lakh for 3rd rank** and **Rs. 2 lakh for Special Award for North Eastern Region**, along with a Certificate of merit and a memento in the first two categories i.e Best Dairy Farmer and Best DCS/FPO/MPCs.
- In the Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT) category, NGA will consist of a Certificate of merit and a memento.



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### KEY FACTS ABOUT VITAMIN K



- It is a **fat-soluble vitamin** that comes in **two forms**.
  - The main type is called **phylloquinone (Vitamin K1)**, found in **green leafy vegetables** like collard greens, kale, and spinach.
  - The other type, **menaquinones (Vitamin K2)**, are found in some **animal foods and fermented foods**.
  - **Menaquinones can also be produced by bacteria in the human body.**
- **Vitamin K helps to make various proteins that are needed for blood clotting and the building of bones.**

**Prothrombin** is a **vitamin K-dependent protein** directly involved with **blood clotting**.

**Osteocalcin** is another **protein that requires vitamin K to produce healthy bone tissue**.

- **Vitamin K is found throughout the body**, including the **liver, brain, heart, pancreas, and bone**.
- It is **broken down very quickly** and **excreted in urine** or stool.
- Because of this, it **rarely reaches toxic levels** in the body even with high intakes, as may sometimes occur with other fat-soluble vitamins.

### Why Do Modern Diets Often Cause Vitamin K Deficiency?

- Many people fall short of Vitamin K not because food is scarce but because **daily diets lack greens and fermented foods**.
- **Over-frying or overcooking vegetables also destroys** much of the vitamin.
- **Long-term antibiotic use, liver disease, or fat-absorption disorders** can further lower Vitamin K levels since it is fat-soluble and requires dietary fat for absorption.
- **Vitamin K deficiency can contribute to significant bleeding, poor bone development, osteoporosis, and increased cardiovascular disease.**

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### SUPREME COURT RESTRICTS TIGER SAFARIS TO NON-FOREST LAND

#### Key Directives of the Supreme Court

- **Tiger Safaris Only in Non-Forest Areas**
  - The Court categorically prohibited tiger safaris inside **core or critical tiger habitats**, directing that they may only be established on **non-forest or degraded forest land** within buffer zones.
  - Further, such safaris must operate **in association with a fully functional rescue and rehabilitation centre** for tigers, catering to **conflict animals, injured, or abandoned wildlife**.
- **Complete Ban on Night Tourism and Mobile Use**
  - Recognising the disturbance caused by human activity and noise pollution, the Court imposed a **complete ban on night tourism** within tiger reserves.
  - In areas where roads pass through core tiger habitats, the Court ordered **strict night-time regulation**, prohibiting vehicular movement **from dusk to dawn**, except for **emergency or ambulance services**.
  - Additionally, it directed that the **use of mobile phones** within tourism zones of core habitats be strictly prohibited to minimise noise and human interference.
- **Eco-Sensitive Zone Norms for Tiger Reserves**
  - The Court directed that **Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)** around tiger reserves must conform to the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**
  - Under this, the **minimum ESZ area** shall be equivalent to the **buffer or fringe area** of the tiger reserve. States were instructed to **notify ESZ boundaries within one year**, ensuring uniform protection standards nationwide.
- **Regulation of Tourism Infrastructure in Buffer Zones**
  - The judgment mandates that all **tourism infrastructure development** in buffer areas comply with **ESZ notifications under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.



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- While **eco-friendly resorts** may be allowed in buffer areas, the Court emphasised that **no such establishment shall be permitted in tiger corridors**. It further recommended promoting **community-managed homestays** and **village-based ecotourism**, thereby ensuring that conservation efforts benefit local populations.
- **Ban on Commercial and Industrial Activities**
  - The Court imposed a comprehensive ban on ecologically harmful activities in **buffer and fringe areas**, including:
    - Commercial mining and polluting industries,
    - Sawmills and hydroelectric projects,
    - Firewood extraction and tree felling without authorisation,
    - Waste discharge into natural ecosystems,
    - Use of low-flying aircraft or tourism flights, and
    - Introduction of exotic species.
  - These restrictions align with **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and India's commitments under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.

### Directions to States and Tiger Conservation Authorities

- The Court instructed all **State Governments** to:
  - **Prepare or revise the Tiger Conservation Plans** within three months.
  - **Notify core and buffer areas** within six months.
  - Establish effective monitoring systems to ensure compliance with the ruling.
- It also directed the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** to serve as the nodal agency for enforcing these directions and conducting **annual ecological audits** of tiger reserves.

### Significance of the Judgment

- This verdict reinforces the principle of "**ecocentric jurisprudence**", which prioritises the intrinsic value of nature over anthropocentric interests.
  - By imposing strict limits on tourism and infrastructure expansion, the Court has sought to **reverse the trend of ecological degradation** within protected areas.
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### CHINA'S AIR POLLUTION PLAYBOOK: KEY LESSONS FOR INDIA

- India's current pollution levels mirror China's late-2000s phase, when rapid industrialisation and urbanisation sharply increased particulate pollution and its health impacts.
- After China opened its economy in 1978, carbon emissions soared, leading to smog-filled skies, contaminated rivers, and rising public discontent.
- The situation gained **global attention during the 2008 Beijing Olympics**, pushing the government to act.
- **China's main pollutant was PM2.5**, emitted from heavy industries, coal-based heating, power plants, vehicles, and crop burning. These particles penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream, causing severe health risks.
- Recognising the urgency, China launched aggressive measures from 2013 onward, resulting in air quality improvements across nearly 80% of the country.

### **China's Policy Push: Strong Top-Down Governance**

- By the late 2000s, air pollution became a major government priority. China's 11th Five-Year Plan integrated environmental goals into the **cadre evaluation system**, where bureaucrats' promotions depended on meeting pollution-control targets.
- This created strong top-down pressure for compliance across provinces and cities.
- **Industrial Shutdowns and Cleaner Technologies**
  - China invested heavily in pollution-control technologies and shut down thousands of outdated, highly polluting industrial units—including smelters, chemical factories, power plants, and paper mills.
  - Simultaneously, the government pushed aggressively for **Electric Vehicles (EVs)**, recognising their lower lifecycle emissions compared to traditional combustion engines.
- **Mass Electrification of Transport**
  - Cities like **Shenzhen** led the world by fully electrifying their massive bus fleets.



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- By 2017, all 16,000+ buses in the city were electric, a move replicated by other cities such as Shanghai.
- These transitions greatly cut urban tailpipe emissions.
- **Key Measures That Improved Air Quality (2013–2017)**
  - Studies from Tsinghua University show that China's biggest gains came from:
    - Restrictions on coal boilers,
    - Cleaner residential heating,
    - Shutting local polluting industries, and
    - Vehicle emission controls.
- **Caveats and Ongoing Challenges**
  - China's model has pitfalls. Strict targets sometimes lead to **fudged data** or illegal reopening of factories.
  - Recent commitments to increase **coal capacity** have raised concerns about reversing progress.
  - Additionally, China's air-quality standards remain **less stringent** than Western norms, leaving room for improvement.
- **Key Determinants of Success: Political Will and Accountability**
  - A 2023 comparative study highlighted two crucial factors:
    - **Strong political will and financial capacity** to prioritise clean air.
    - **Clear accountability systems** linking national standards to facility-level pollution control.

### What India Can Learn?

- Experts note India can adapt key Chinese strategies:
    - Stricter industrial and vehicular emission norms
    - Wider adoption of clean fuels
    - Stronger public transport systems
    - Robust environmental monitoring and scientific research
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### ADAM CHINI RICE



Recently, agricultural scientists at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), have achieved significant breakthroughs in improving the Adam Chini Rice variety's resilience and productivity by using mutagenesis.

- It is an **aromatic black rice variety** known for its pleasant aroma and superior cooking qualities.
- It is mainly grown in the **Eastern Uttar Pradesh region** including Chandauli, Varanasi and Vindhya region.
- **Characteristics of Adam Chini Rice**
  - It is known for its **sugar-crystal-like grains, draught tolerance, and disease resistance**
  - It reaches **height up to 165 cm** and its grains are short-bold, scented with intermediate alkali digestion value
  - It has **long maturity period** (155 days) and **low yields** (20-23 quintals per hectare)
  - It is renowned for its excellence in flavor and aroma.
  - It has **intermediate amylose content which helps rice to remain fluffy** and remains soft on cooling.
- It has received **Geographical Indication(GI)** in 2023.

### Improved Features of Adam Chini Rice:

- Reduced height (105 cm for mutant-14),
- Early maturity (120 days for mutant-19),
- Higher yields (30-35 quintals per hectare for mutants 14, 15, 19, and 20).
- Now it is more **suitable for mass production** while retaining its coveted fragrance.



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### EXERCISE AJEYA WARRIOR



- It is a bilateral **military exercise** conducted between **India-UK**.

- It is **held biennially since 2011** which has evolved into a flagship engagement between the Indian Army and the British Army.

### Key Features of Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR 25

- The Indian Army is being represented by troops of the **Sikh Regiment**.
- **Objective:** To **facilitate the exchange of best combat skills** and experiences between the two armies and to enhance their ability to operate together in complex situations.
- It is conducted under a **United Nations mandate**, the exercise focuses on **counter-terrorism operations in semi-urban environment**.
- It include joint mission planning at Brigade level, integrated tactical drills, simulation-based scenarios and company-level field training exercises replicating **real-life counter-terror contingencies**.
- The exercise also aims to share **best practices, enhance tactical proficiency** and develop coordinated responses for managing complex operations in challenging environments.
- **Significance:** The 2025 edition further reinforces shared values of professionalism, cooperation and commitment to **regional stability and global peace**.

### SC FLAGS RISING ‘DIGITAL ARREST’ SCAMS, SEEKS ACTION ON UN CYBERCRIME TREATY

- A digital arrest scam is a sophisticated cyber fraud in which criminals impersonate law enforcement agencies to intimidate victims into believing they are under “virtual arrest”.
- Scammers typically pose as officers from the police, CBI, ED, or even courts, using forged documents, spoofed phone numbers, or video calls to create a sense of urgency and fear.

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- Victims are falsely accused of crimes such as money laundering, violating cyber laws, or involvement in illegal parcels.
- They are then coerced into staying on video call “under surveillance” and pressured to transfer money to supposedly secure or investigative accounts.
- Elderly individuals and professionals are frequent targets.

### SC on Digital Arrest Scams

- Emphasising global cooperation in fighting cybercrime, the Supreme Court asked the Centre to consider **ratifying the UN Convention against Cybercrime**.
  - SC Judge noted that without worldwide coordination, India cannot effectively trace money trails in cyber frauds.
  - The Solicitor General informed the Court that **India has not yet ratified the treaty**.
  - **Bench Passes Extraordinary Order in Digital Arrest Case**
    - In a rare move, the Court directed that the accused in a ‘digital arrest’ fraud—where a 72-year-old lawyer lost ₹3.29 crore—must not be granted bail until the investigation is completed.
    - The order came after concerns that the accused might be released as the 90-day chargesheet deadline nears.
    - Justice Kant remarked that the situation may require unusual orders.
  - **Court Takes Suo Motu Cognisance of Growing Digital Arrest Scams**
    - Acting on a complaint from an elderly couple in Ambala who were defrauded of ₹1.05 crore, the SC had earlier sought responses from the MHA and CBI.
    - The scammers allegedly used forged orders of the SC, Bombay HC, and ED to intimidate victims.
  - **Proposal to Transfer All Digital Arrest Cases to CBI**
    - Concerned by the **sharp rise in cyber fraud**, the Supreme Court proposed moving all digital arrest cases nationwide to the **CBI**, asking states to submit case details.
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