

INCREDIBLE INDIA CAMPAIGN

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India under its “Incredible India” brand line is participating in ITB, Berlin 2023, showcasing India’s rich & diversified tourism potential.



About Incredible India Campaign:

- The ITB is a prestigious platform and is among the top international travel shows, where travel professionals come together to connect and showcase destinations and tourism products.
- In view of promoting Incredible India holistically, the Ministry of Tourism has developed five thematic television commercials on different themes which are Adventure Tourism, Heritage Tourism, MICE Tourism, Art & Craft and Wellness Tourism.
- Encouraging inbound travel and particularly in the backdrop of India’s G20 Presidency as well as grand celebrations of India@75 ‘AzadikaAmritMahotsav’, the Ministry of Tourism has declared “**Incredible India! Visit India Year 2023**”.

Key facts about Incredible India Campaign

- Incredible India is the name of an international tourism campaign maintained by the Government of India since 2002, to promote tourism in India.
- **Incredible India 2.0 Campaign:** It aims to shift from generic promotions to promotional plans specific to the market and content creation with thematic creatives depending on different niche products such as spiritual, medical, and wellness tourism.
- The Incredible India 2.0 campaign focuses on promoting niche tourism products, including yoga, wellness, luxury, and cuisine wildlife.
- Incredible India 2.0 represents the post-pandemic plan for Indians in the sector.
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Tourism.**

Scheme under Incredible India 2.0 Campaign:

- The Holistic Island Development plan focuses on the Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) and Lakshadweep Islands.

MEDIUM RANGE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE (MRSAM)

Recently, the Indian Navy has carried out a successful test-firing of a Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) and a ship-launched version of BrahMos missile.



About Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile:

- This weapon system also called the ‘Abhra’ Weapon System is a state-of-the-art medium-range air defence weapon system.
- It is a joint venture of **DRDO and Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI)** and is produced at Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- It is designed to destroy hostile aircraft, helicopters cruise missiles and drones **at a 70km range**.

What is a BrahMos missile?

- It is a **joint venture of India and Russia** which makes supersonic cruise missiles
- It has a **speed of 2.8 Mach** or about three times the speed of sound.
- The missiles can be launched from a range of platforms such as submarines, ships, aircraft, or land.
- BrahMos Aerospace is also developing the BrahMos NG, a compact version of the missile.

YAOSHANG FESTIVAL

Recently, the five-day-long Yaoshang festival, Manipur’s version of Holi, has begun



About Yaoshang Festival

- The festival is celebrated every year on the full moon of Lamta month (February-March) of the Meitei lunar calendar.
- The festival is celebrated by the **Meitei people** who are predominantly Hindu.
- It is celebrated at the same time as Holi and is known as ‘Manipur’s version of Holi’.

- The five-day-long celebration begins with the burning of 'yaoshang' (a small thatch hut/straw hut) which is constructed with bamboo and straws on the first day
- The highlight of the festival is the **ThabalChongba**, a traditional **Manipuri folk dance** where boys and girls hold hands and sing and dance in a circle.
- The festival marks the rejuvenation of the spirit of life and commemorates the birthday of **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**.
- Children visit neighbours to ask for a monetary donation which is called

Who are the Meitei people?

- Meiteis are the dominant population of **Manipur** in northeastern India.
- A majority follow Hinduism while more than 8% are Muslims, locally known as
- The **Marup system** (literally, "friendship association"), a type of cooperative saving and credit institution, is an intriguing aspect of Meitei village's socio-economic organisation.
- They speak a **Tibeto-Burman language**, they differ culturally from the surrounding hill tribes by following Hindu customs.

[INSURANCE REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF INDIA \(IRDAI\)](#)

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) recently asked the general insurers to talk to transport authorities of 28 states and eight union territories to provide mandatory covers for the uninsured vehicles.



Why in News?

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) has recently come up with a 'zero-tolerance' policy to achieve 100% motor insurance.

About IRDAI:

- It is an **autonomous** and **statutory body** established under the **IRDA Act 1999**.
- It is the apex body that **supervises and regulates the insurance sector** in India.

- **Objective:** To protect the interests of policyholders, to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the insurance industry in India.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Finance
- **Head Office:** Hyderabad.
- **Composition:** IRDAI is a 10-member body- a Chairman, five full-time members, and four part-time members appointed by the Government of India.

Functions:

- To have a fair regulation of the insurance industry while ensuring financial soundness of the applicable laws and regulations.
- **Frame regulations** periodically so that there is no ambiguity in the insurance industry.
- **Registering and regulating insurance companies;**
- Protecting policyholders' interests;
- **Licensing and establishing norms** for insurance intermediaries;
- Promoting professional organizations in insurance;
- Regulating and overseeing premium rates and terms of non-life insurance covers;
- **Specifying financial reporting norms** of insurance companies;
- **Regulating investment of policyholders' funds** by insurance companies;
- Ensuring the maintenance of solvency margin by insurance companies;
- Ensuring insurance coverage in rural areas and of vulnerable sections of society.

WHAT IS A HAILSTORM?

The sudden change in the weather conditions in Madhya Pradesh hit the state's farmers as their crops were damaged due to the heavy rain and hailstorm.



About Hailstorm:

- Hail is a type of solid rain made up of balls or lumps of ice.
- Storms that produce hail which reaches the ground are known as

hailstorms.

• Conditions for Hailstorms to occur:

- Highly developed **Cumulonimbus clouds need to be present.** These are the massive anvil or mushroom-shaped clouds that are seen during thunderstorms which can reach heights up to 65,000 feet.
- There must be **strong currents of air ascending through these clouds.** These currents are commonly known as **updrafts.**
- The clouds will need to contain **high concentrations of supercooled liquid water.**

How are Hails formed?

- It begins as a **water droplet** that is **swept up by an updraft** inside of a thundercloud.
- Other **supercooled water droplets** which are already present inside the cloud will **adhere to the water droplet's surface, forming layers of ice around**
- As the **water droplet reaches higher elevations** within the cloud, **it comes into contact with more and more supercooled particles.**
- The **hail embryo will grow larger** and larger as it reaches higher altitudes in the updraft.
- Finally, **it will reach a size and weight where gravity will begin to act on it and pull it down.**

U.N. TAKES STEP TOWARDS NEW WAY OF TRACKING GREENHOUSE GASES

Why in News?

- The U.N.'s World Meteorological Organisation has come up with a new Global Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Infrastructure.

About World Meteorological Organisation (WMO):

- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an intergovernmental organization.
- It originated from the **International Meteorological Organization (IMO)**, the roots of which were planted at the 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.

- Established by the ratification of the **WMO Convention in March 1950**, WMO became the **specialised agency of the United Nations** for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences a year later.
- **Secretariat** – Geneva, Switzerland

What does WMO do?

- WMO **coordinates the activities of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in 193 States and Territories** so that basic weather, climate and water services are made available to anyone who needs them, when they need them.
- These weather, climate and water services contribute towards socio-economic development, environmental management and policy formulation.
- WMO guarantees the publication of observations and statistics and furthers the application of meteorology and hydrology (including the **monitoring and predictions of climate change and ozone**) to all aspects of human activities.
- WMO also encourages research and training in meteorology and hydrology and their related applications and **contributes towards reducing the impact of weather- and climate-related hazards**.

Members & Governance Structure:

- WMO Members include a total of 187 Member States (**including India**) and 6 Member Territories.
- The WMO is governed by the **World Meteorological Congress**, which is composed of all WMO Members.
- The World Meteorological Congress **meets every four years to review, and give policy guidance to, WMO Programmes**.

News Summary:

- The United Nations announced that it had taken a significant step towards trying to fill a key gap in the fight against climate change: standardised, real-time tracking of greenhouse gases.

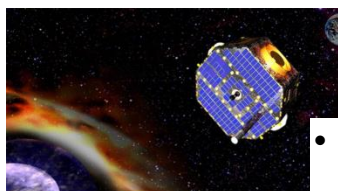
- The U.N.'s World Meteorological Organisation has come up with a new **Global Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Infrastructure**.

About Global Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Infrastructure:

- Currently, most GHG monitoring undertaken globally relies heavily on research capabilities and research funding.
- The intermittent nature of most research funding and the competitive processes used for its allocation makes sustained global monitoring difficult to achieve.
- The proposed Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Infrastructure will establish an internationally coordinated approach to observing network design, and to acquisition, international exchange and use of the resulting observations.
- It will engage and closely collaborate with both the broader scientific community, and other UN agencies and international coordination entities involved in GHG monitoring activities.
- The WMO's new platform will **integrate space-based and surface-based observing systems, and seek to clarify uncertainties about where GHG emissions end up**.
- It should result in much faster and sharper data on how the planet's atmosphere is changing.

INTERSTELLAR BOUNDARY EXPLORER

Recently, NASA engineers successfully reset the Interstellar Boundary Explorer (IBEX) spacecraft after it went into contingency mode for 3 weeks.



About Interstellar Boundary Explorer:

- NASA's Interstellar Boundary Explorer (IBEX) was launched in October 2008 to **study the outer edge of the heliosphere**.
- The spacecraft is designed to map the boundary where winds from the Sun interact with winds from other stars.
- The solar system's boundary is studied by observing **energetic neutral atoms or ENAs**.
- ENAs are high-energy particles produced at the very edge of our solar system.

Major discoveries of IBEX

- This spacecraft fully **mapped the heliosphere** within a year after its launch.
- Its most famous discovery is uncovering a dense region of particles, the **‘IBEX ribbon**

What is Heliosphere?

- Heliosphere is the region where the **constant flow of particles from our Sun**, called the solar wind, **collides with material from the rest of the galaxy**.

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARDS’ PROTECTION

Why in news?

- The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has proposed that only power lines below 33 KV need to go underground and the rest be fitted with bird-diverters.
- Conservationists have objected to the proposal by saying that the move could lead to the “extinction” of the Great Indian Bustards.

Great Indian Bustards (GIBs)

- GIBs are the largest among the four-bustard species found in India.
- The other three being MacQueen’s bustard, lesser florican and Bengal florican.
- Being terrestrial birds, they spend most of their time on the ground with occasional flights to go from one part of their habitat to the other.
- They feed on insects, lizards, grass seeds etc. GIBs are considered the flagship bird species of grassland and hence barometers of the health of grassland ecosystems.

Habitat and Status

- This bird, **found mainly in Rajasthan and Gujarat**, has been categorized as **critically endangered** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- As per the 2021 report of the IUCN, they are on the verge of extinction with hardly 50 to 249 of them alive.
- GIBs’ historic range included much of the Indian sub-continent but it has now shrunken to just 10% of it.
- Among the heaviest birds with flight, GIBs prefer grasslands as their habitats.

Threats

- Scientists of Wildlife Institute of India (WII) have been pointing out overhead power transmission lines as the biggest threat to the GIBs.
- WII research has concluded that in Rajasthan, 18 GIBs die every year after colliding with overhead powerlines.
- These birds, due to their poor frontal vision, cannot detect powerlines in time and their weight make in-flight quick manoeuvres difficult.
- Kutch and Thar desert are the places which have witnessed creation of huge renewable energy infrastructure over the past two decades.
- This led to installation of windmills and construction of power lines even in core GIB areas.

Conservation measures

- In 2015, the Central government launched the **GIB species recovery programme**.
- Under the programme, the WII and Rajasthan Forest department have jointly set up **conservation breeding centres** where GIB eggs harvested from the wild are incubated artificially and hatchlings raised in controlled environment.
- The plan is to create a population which can act as insurance against the threat of extinction and release the third generation of these captive-bred birds into the wild.

Supreme Court's intervention

- The SC in April 2021 ordered that all overhead power transmission lines in core and potential GIB habitats in Rajasthan and Gujarat be made underground.
- The SC also formed a three-member committee, including Devesh Gadhvi, the member of the bustard specialist group of IUCN, to help power companies comply with the order.
- Again, in November 2022, the court sought reports from chief secretaries of the two states in six weeks on installation of bird diverters in priority areas.
- It also asked them to assess the length of transmission lines that need to go underground.