

ROLE OF A LOK SABHA'S LEADER OF OPPOSITION

The LoP is the parliamentary chairperson of the largest political party/ coalition in the Lok Sabha that is not in government.

The Position of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha:

- **Statutory recognition:**
 - It was officially described in the **Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act 1977**.
 - The Act describes the Leader of Opposition as:
 - A member of the Council of States or the House of the People (as the case may be),
 - Who is the Leader in that House of the party (having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Chairman/ the Speaker) in opposition to the Government.
- **Numerical strength:** According to a conventional understanding, in order to get the post of Leader of Opposition a party must have at least **10% of MPs** in the House.
- **Salary and sumptuary allowances:** S/he shall be entitled to receive a salary and allowances as are specified in the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act 1954.

Powers of the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the House:

- **Order of precedence:** The LoP in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha come at No. 7, along with
 - Union Cabinet Ministers,
 - The National Security Advisor,
 - The Principal Secretary to the PM,
 - The Vice-Chairperson of the NITI Aayog,
 - Former PMs, and Chief Ministers.
- **Sitting position in the House:**

- The LoP sits in the front row to the left of the Chair, and enjoys **certain privileges on ceremonial occasions** like escorting the Speaker-elect to the rostrum (Chair of the Speaker).
- The LoP is also entitled to a seat in the front row during the Address by the President to both Houses of Parliament.
- **The main duty of the LoP:**
 - It is to **serve as the voice of the opposition** in the House and is considered as a **shadow Prime Minister with a shadow Cabinet**.
 - This means, s/he is **ready to take over the administration** if the Government resigns or is defeated on the floor of the House.
- **Practical role and responsibility:**
 - Most importantly, the LoP is the **opposition's representative in the high-powered committees** headed by the PM for appointment to key posts such as
 - The Director of CBI,
 - The Central Vigilance Commissioner and Chief Information Commissioner,
 - The Chairperson and Members of the National Human Rights Commission, and
 - The Lokpal.
 - S/he will also be a **member of crucial committees**, including Public Accounts, Public Undertakings, Estimates and several Joint Parliamentary Committees.

BANNERGHATTA BIOLOGICAL PARK (BBP)



South India's first and the country's largest leopard safari was recently inaugurated at the Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP).

It has been an integral part of Bannerghatta National Park and emerged as an independent establishment in 2002.

- In order to meet the growing demand for eco-recreation, eco-tourism, and conservation, an area of 545.00ha of forest from the National Park was set aside to constitute a biological park originally and later extended to 731.88ha.
- It is located about 22 kms south of **Bengaluru city, Karnataka**.
- It has **different units such as Zoo, Safari, Butterfly Park, and Rescue Centre** (Conservation of Captive animals).
- It is the **first biological park in India** to have a **fenced, forested elephant sanctuary**.

Key Facts about Bannerghatta National Park:

- **Location:** It is located **near Bangalore, Karnataka**, in the hills of the **Anekal range**.
- It was declared a National Park in 1974.
- In 2006, **India's first butterfly enclosure** was inaugurated at the park.
- **River:** The **Suvarnamukhi stream**, the main source of water for the animals in the park, runs through the centre of the park.
- **Vegetation:** There are three types of vegetation that can be found: **Dry Deciduous Scrub Forests, Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests** and **Southern Tropical Moist Mixed Forests**.
- **Flora:** Include **Narcissus latifolia, Schleichera oleosa, Sandalwood, Neem, Tamarind, Bamboo, Eucalyptus, etc.**
- **Fauna:** Prime habitat for several species, including the endangered **Asian Elephant, Indian gaur, Tiger, Sambar deer, Spotted deer, Leopard, Wild dog, Wild pig, Sloth bear, Common mongoose, Pangolin, Slender loris, Black-naped hare, etc.**

WHAT IS TAPAS UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE (UAV)?



The Indian Air Force (IAF) recently proposed to the central government the purchase of 10 TAPAS drones.

- The Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance Beyond Horizon-201, or Tapas BH-201, is a **medium-altitude, long-endurance (MALE) drone**.
- It was **previously referred to as Rustom-II**.
- It was developed indigenously by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) of **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- Designed to fulfil the **Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Tracking & Reconnaissance (ISTAR)** requirements of the tri-services, the Tapas UAV can effectively operate both day and night.

Features:

- It has an operating altitude of 30000 feet and an **endurance of 24 hours**.
- It also projects a **range of 250 km**, which can carry a variety of payloads up to a maximum of 350 kg with a wing span of 20.6 metres.
- Maximum speed: 225 kmph.
- It can be controlled remotely and also has the **ability to execute pre-programmed flight plans autonomously** with precision and flexibility.
- It is equipped with **enhanced aerodynamic configuration**, digital flight control, navigation system, communication intelligence, medium and long-range electro-optic payloads and synthetic aperture radar that will enable it to see through the clouds.

WHAT ARE STAR CLUSTERS?

Astronomers recently discovered five young star clusters, and possibly the oldest star clusters ever, born from the time when the Universe was an infant.



- A Star cluster is either of two general types of **stellar assemblages held together by the mutual gravitational attraction** of its members, which are physically related through common origin.

- They are particularly useful to astronomers as they provide a way to study and model **stellar evolution and ages**.
- The two basic categories of stellar clusters are **open clusters**, also known as galactic clusters and **globular clusters**.
- **Open (Galactic) Clusters:**
 - Open clusters are so named due to the fact that the individual component stars are **easily resolved through a telescope**.
 - They are sometimes called **galactic clusters** due to their location on the dusty spiral arms on the plane of spiral galaxies.
 - Stars in an open cluster have a **common origin**: they formed from the same initial giant molecular cloud.
 - Open clusters contain from a **dozen to many hundreds of stars**, usually in an unsymmetrical arrangement.
- **Globular Clusters:**
 - Globular clusters contain several **thousand to one million stars** in a spherical, gravitationally-bound system.
 - Located mostly in the halo surrounding the galactic plane, they comprise the oldest stars in the galaxy.
 - There is **little free dust or gas** found in globular clusters, so no new star formation is taking place in them.
 - Stellar densities within the inner regions of a globular cluster are **very high compared with regions such as those around the Sun**.
- In addition, groups called associations, made up of a few dozen to hundreds of stars of similar type and common origin whose density in space is less than that of the surrounding field, are also recognized.

EXERCISE HOPEX

Recently, the Indian Air Force and Egyptian Air Force participated in the Exercise HOPEX 2024.



- It is the **fourth joint exercise** of IAF (Indian Air Force) and EAF (Egyptian Air Force) which was held in Egypt from 21 to 26 June.

- The aim of this exercise is to **promote bilateral and regional cooperation**, which is a symbol of the long-standing relations between the two countries.
- The Indian Air Force's (IAF) Rafale fighter jets are currently in Egypt for Ex- HOPEX. The **C-17 Globemaster and IL-78 tankers** are also participating in the weeklong exercise.

India and Egypt relationship

- Diplomatic relations between India and Egypt began on 18 August 1947 at the ambassadorial level.
- Both countries have cooperated closely on multilateral forums as **founding members** of the **Non-Aligned Movement**.
- In the year 2022, India and Egypt celebrated the **75th anniversary of diplomatic relations**, which reflects the depth of the relationship.

BIOMASS BRIQUETTES

In recent times biomass briquettes are being used as a fuel alternative for the power and electricity generation sector.



- These are made up of compact blocks of **organic materials**, such as agricultural residues, forestry wastes, or industrial by-products.
- **Applications:** These are used for **heating, cooking fuel and electricity generation** usually in developing countries that do not have access to more traditional fuel sources.
- **Advantages**
 - **Environment Friendly:** Bio-briquettes can be created from easily available biomass waste often found in rural settings.

- **Affordable:** These can be made by hand from any freely available organic matter, including invasive species and agro-waste.
 - Biomass briquettes are **carbon-neutral**, meaning they release no additional carbon dioxide into the atmosphere when burned.
 - By reducing reliance on fossil fuels, the adoption of biomass briquettes helps **mitigate greenhouse gas emissions**, thus contributing to climate change mitigation efforts.
 - By diverting residues towards productive use, biomass briquettes play a crucial role in **waste management and carbon sequestration**, further enhancing their environmental credentials.
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ESAKHSYA APP



Days ahead of the implementation of the three criminal laws, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is testing eSakshya (e-evidence) app.

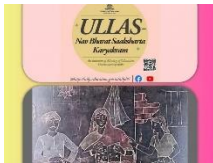
- It is a **mobile-based application** to help police record the scene of crime, search and seizure in a criminal case and upload the file on **the cloud-based platform**.
- **Working**
 - The police official will have to **upload a selfie after** the procedure is complete.
 - Each recording could be a maximum **four minutes** long and several such files could be uploaded for each First Information Report (FIR).
- This mobile application **developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC)** will be available to all police stations which register and download the App.

Key facts about the National Informatics Centre

- It is the premier information technology organization of the Government of India. Established in 1976, it operates under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.

- The NIC's primary focus is to **provide e-Government solutions** and support to various government departments.
 - NIC, through its ICT Network, “NICNET”, has institutional linkages with all the Ministries /Departments of the Central Government, 36 State Governments/ Union Territories across India.
 - The following major activities are being undertaken:
 - Setting up of ICT Infrastructure
 - Implementation of National and State Level e-Governance Projects/Products
 - Consultancy to the Government departments
 - Research & Development
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ULLAS-NAV BHARAT SAAKSHARTA KARYAKRAM



Recently, Ladakh has become the first administrative unit to achieve full functional literacy under the ULLAS-Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Program).

- The Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS) is a **centrally sponsored scheme implemented from 2022-2027**.
- The scheme aligns with the recommendations of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
- **Aim:** It aims to empower those **adults aged 15 years** and above from all backgrounds who could not get due schooling and mainstream them with society to be able to contribute more to the growth story of the country.
- The scheme **consists of five components**
 - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy,
 - Critical Life Skills,
 - Basic Education,
 - Vocational Skills, and
 - Continuing Education.

- The **ULLAS app** can be used for registration of learners and volunteers either through self-registration or by surveyors.
 - It will serve as a digital gateway for learners to engage in diverse learning resources through the **DIKSHA portal of NCERT**.

What is the DIKSHA portal?

- It is a national platform for school education, an **initiative of the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT)**, Ministry of Education.
 - It provides **e-content for schools** via an online portal and a mobile application.
 - It was developed based on the core principles of **open architecture, open access, open licensing**, choice and autonomy.
 - It is built on open-source technology that is made in India and for India, incorporating internet-scale technologies and allowing for a variety of use cases and solutions for teaching and learning.
 - **Features**
 - The core building blocks of DIKSHA comprise majority of National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR) building blocks, having enabled some successful use-cases of NDEAR such as energised textbooks, online courses, content authoring, content sourcing, interactive quizzes, question banks, chatbot, analytics and dashboard.
 - To aid teaching and learning for **Children With Special Needs(CWSN)**, a large **number of audiobooks**, ISL (Indian Sign Language) Videos, and a Dictionary have been made available on DIKSHA for CWSN.
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