

### ARAVALLI RANGE

A seven-member team called the "Aravalli Rejuvenation Board" was recently formed to curb illegal mining in the protected Aravallis region.



- It is one of the **oldest fold mountains of the world.**
- It runs approximately **670 km (430 mi)** in a south-west direction, starting near **Delhi**, passing through southern **Haryana and Rajasthan**, and ending in **Gujarat.**

- The highest peak is **Guru Shikhar** at 1,722 metres (5,650 ft). Guru is a peak in the **Arbuda Mountains of Rajasthan.**

**Rivers:** Three major rivers and their tributaries flow from the Aravalli, namely **Banas and Sahibi** rivers which are tributaries of **Yamuna**, as well as **Luni River** which flows into the **Rann of Kutch.**

#### **Formation:**

- It is **part of the Aravalli-Delhi orogenic belt**, which is a large and complex geological structure **formed due to the collision of tectonic plates during the Proterozoic era.**
- It is **part of the Indian Shield** that was **formed from a series of cratonic collisions.**
- **In ancient times, Aravalli were extremely high but since have worn down almost completely** by millions of years of weathering.
- The range is **rich in mineral resources** like copper, zinc, lead, and marble.
- It is **divided into two sections: the Sambhar-Sirohi ranges, taller and including Guru Shikhar; and the Sambhar-Khetri ranges, consisting of three ridges that are discontinuous.**

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### WHAT IS A STAPLED VISA?

- India withdrew its 8-athlete wushu contingent from the Summer World University Games, after China issued stapled visas to 3 athletes from the team who belong to Arunachal Pradesh.

## What is a Stapled Visa?

- A stapled visa is simply **an unstamped piece of paper** that is attached by a pin or staples to a page of the passport and can be torn off or detached at will.
- **This is different from a regular visa** that is affixed to the passport by the issuing authority and stamped.
- China has made it a practice to issue stapled visas to Indian nationals from **Arunachal Pradesh** and **J&K**.
- It says the visas are valid documents, but the **Government of India has consistently refused to accept this position.**
- India's long-standing and consistent position is that there should be **no discrimination or differential treatment** based on domicile or ethnicity in the visa regime.

## Why does China issue Stapled Visas?

- Passports, visas, and other kinds of immigration controls **reiterate the idea of a nation-state and its sovereignty** which is inalienable and inviolable.
- A passport and visa entitle their holders to travel freely and under legal protection across international borders.
- **China disputes** India's unequivocal and internationally accepted sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh.
- Hence, they started the practice of issuing 'stapled' visas (since 2005-06) to all Indian citizens from Arunachal Pradesh.
- The stapled visas for J&K residents appear to have started around 2008-09.



## What does China Claim?

**It challenges the legal status of the McMahon Line**, the boundary between Tibet and British India that was agreed at the Convention Between Great Britain, China, and Tibet at the **Shimla Convention**

of 1914.

- It is this disagreement that lies at the heart of Chinese claims over the position of the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**, and its repeated transgressions into Indian territory, undermining the sovereignty of India over parts of Indian territory.
- China claims **some 90,000 sq. km of Arunachal Pradesh** as its territory.
- It calls the area “**Zangnan**” in the Chinese language and makes repeated references to “**South Tibet**”.
- Chinese maps show Arunachal Pradesh as part of China.

### Way Forward:

- **Diplomatic engagement:** To prevent misconceptions or a rise in strain in relations, it is essential to keep lines of communication open.
- **India should underline its strength and power:** Asserting its position at the negotiating table and emphasising that India is ready to protect its interests.
- **Development of border infrastructure:** Construction of border infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, can enable both nations access isolated areas and lessen the likelihood of confusion or conflicts.

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### [U.N. WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME \(WFP\)](#)

Deputy executive director of the World Food Program recently said that United Nations has been forced to cut food, cash payments and assistance to millions of people in many countries because of "a crippling funding crisis".



### About U.N. World Food Programme (WFP):

- It is a branch of the United Nations that deals with hunger eradication and promotes food security in the world.
- WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency and was established in 1961.

- The organization's work is guided by Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030.
- It operates in more than 120 countries, provides food assistance during emergencies and works with communities to enhance nutrition and generate resilience.
- **Funding:** WFP is funded by voluntary donations from governments, corporates and private donors.
- It is a member of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

## Headquarters: Rome, Italy

- It has been functioning in India since 1963.
- It was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020.
- Report released by the WFP is **Global Report on Food Crisis** which describes the scale of acute hunger in the world.

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## WHAT IS PERMAFROST?

Scientists recently revived a worm that was frozen 46,000 years ago below the surface in the Siberian permafrost.



### About Permafrost:

- Permafrost is any ground that remains completely frozen—32°F (0°C) or colder—for at least two years straight.
- **Global Distribution:**
  - These permanently frozen grounds are most common in regions with high mountains and in Earth's higher latitudes—near the North and South Poles.
  - Permafrost covers large regions of the Earth. Almost a quarter of the land area in the Northern Hemisphere has permafrost underneath.

### Composition:

- Permafrost is made of a combination of soil, rocks and sand that are held together by ice. The soil and ice in permafrost stay frozen all year long.
- Near the surface, permafrost soils also contain large quantities of organic carbon—a material leftover from dead plants that couldn't decompose, or rot away, due to the cold.
- Lower permafrost layers contain soils made mostly of minerals.
- A layer of soil on top of permafrost does not stay frozen all year. This layer, called the active layer, thaws during the warm summer months and freezes again in the fall.

## PRADHAN MANTRI SCHOOLS FOR RISING INDIA (PM-SHRI) SCHEME?

Prime Minister will inaugurate Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam 2023 and also release the first instalment of funds under the PM SHRI Scheme at the event.



About Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Scheme:

- It is a Centrally Sponsored scheme announced in 2022.
- Objective: Development of more than 14500 schools across the country by strengthening selected existing schools being managed by Central Government/ State/ UT Government/ local bodies.
- The duration of the scheme is from 2022-23 to 2026-27, after which it shall be the responsibility of the States/UTs to continue to maintain the benchmarks achieved by these schools.

### Features:

- The selected schools will act as exemplar schools showcasing all components of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) and offering mentorship to other schools in their vicinity.
- The PM SHRI Schools will be developed as Green Schools, incorporating environment-friendly aspects.



- The **pedagogy** adopted in these schools will be more **experiential, holistic, integrated, play/toy-based** (particularly in the foundational years), **inquiry-driven**, discovery-oriented, learner-centric, discussion-based, flexible and enjoyable.
- The **focus will be on the learning outcomes of every child in every grade.**
- **Assessment at all levels will be based on conceptual understanding and application of knowledge** to real-life situations and will be **competency-based.**
- **Linkage with Sector Skill Councils and local industry** for enhancing employability and providing better employment opportunities will be explored.
- A **School Quality Assessment Framework (SQAF)** is being developed, specifying the key performance indicators to measure outcomes. Quality evaluation of these schools at regular intervals will be undertaken to ensure the desired standards.

## INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY 2023

**International Tiger Day is observed globally on July 29 every year.**



### **About International Tiger Day:**

- It is observed on **July 29** each year.
- It serves as a **platform to raise awareness about the endangered tiger species.**
- It is celebrated worldwide to **promote comprehensive efforts in safeguarding tigers** and their natural habitats, fostering harmonious coexistence between humans and tigers.
- **History of International Tiger Day:**
  - **Global Tiger Day**, commonly referred to as International Tiger Day, was **first established in 2010 during the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit by nations that are home to tigers.**
  - **13 tiger range countries came together to create Tx2 – the global goal to double the number of wild tigers** by the year 2022.
  - The 29th of July was chosen as International Tiger Day because it represents the halfway point between the first and last days of the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit and the ongoing international campaign to rescue tigers.

## Key Facts about Bengal Tiger:

- Bengal tiger (subspecies **Panthera tigris tigris**) inhabits the forests, and wetlands of **India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.**
- **Features:**
  - It is **distinguished from other tiger subspecies by its orange coat accented by prominent brownish-to-black stripes**; a rare white-coated variant of the subspecies also exists.
  - The largest **male Bengal tigers** can grow up to about **3.2 metres long** (including a **1-metre-long tail**) and weigh nearly **295 kg.**
  - **Females are smaller**, the largest ones measuring about **2.7 metres** long and weighing as much as **181 kg.**
  - They are **solitary hunters**, **preying primarily on ungulates** (including deer and antelope), gaurs, and wild boars (*Sus scrofa*).
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List: Endangered**
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act (WPA), 1972: Schedule-1**

## DIGITAL PAYMENT INDEX

As per Reserve Bank of India's Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) , Digital payments across the country registered a growth of 13.24% in a year through March 2023.



### About Digital Payment Index:

- It has been **constructed by the RBI** to measure the extent of digitisation of payments across the country.
- It is based on multiple parameters and reflects the expansion of **various digital payment modes accurately.**
- It is a first-of-its kind index to measure the spread of digital payments across the country.
- It **contains five broad parameters** that measure the deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.

- **Payment Enablers** with a weight of 25% (Internet, mobile, Aadhaar, bank accounts, participants, merchants)
- **Payment Infrastructure – Demand-side factors** weight 10% (Debit and credit cards, PPIs, Customers registered in mobile and internet banking, FASTags),
- **Payment Infrastructure – Supply-side factors** weight 15% (Bank branches, BCs, ATMs, PoS Terminals, QR Codes, Intermediaries),
- **Payment Performance** – weight 45% (Digital payment volumes, value, unique users, paper clearing, currency in circulation, cash withdrawals) and
- **Consumer Centricity weight** – 5% (awareness and education, declines, complaints, frauds, system downtime).
- The **base period** of the index is **March 2018**.
- The index has been published **on a semi-annual basis** from March 2021 onwards with a lag of 4 months.

## WORLD CITIES CULTURE FORUM

Recently, Bengaluru has become the first Indian city to become part of the World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF).



### About World Cities Culture Forum:

- It was founded in **2012** by **Justine Simons OBE**, London's Deputy Mayor for Culture & the Creative Industries.
- It is a global network of cities that **share research and intelligence, and explore the role of culture** in future prosperity.
- The network currently **has 40 cities spanning six continents**.
- Bengaluru being the latest addition is set to join the league of cities like New York, London, Paris, Tokyo and Dubai among others.
- World cities **culture summit hosted on a rotating basis** by city partners, an unprecedented gathering of city leaders sharing ideas and knowledge about culture's role in public policy in a world city context.



## Key facts about Bengaluru

- Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) is a **megacity**, the capital of the Southern state of Karnataka and the fastest growing city in India.
  - Its population has grown from one million in 1950 to over 16 million in 2023.
  - It is commonly referred to as the ‘**Silicon Valley of India**’ because of its role as the nation’s leading information technology exporter,
  - It is home to more than **30 government and private museums** that showcase the city’s rich history, art and culture.
  - Most recently, South India’s **first major private art museum**, the Museum of Art and Photography (MAP), opened in February 2023.
  - Bengaluru’s distinction lies in being a rare city where both North Indian (Hindustani) and South Indian (Carnatic) **classical music thrive**.
  - As the “**Garden City of India**”, Bengaluru has many green spaces including two nationally recognised botanical gardens, **Lal Bagh and Cubbon Park** that act as green lungs for the city.
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