

INDIAN VIRTUAL HERBARIUM

With details of about one lakh plant specimens, the Indian Virtual Herbarium, the biggest virtual database of flora in the country, is generating a lot of interest and turning out to be an eye-catching endeavour.



About:

- In the Mann Ki Baat episode on July 31, PM Modi spoke about the novel initiative, and said that the herbarium was an interesting collection of plants and preserved parts of plants.
- Developed by scientists of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), the herbarium was inaugurated by Union Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change Bhumendra Yadav in Kolkata on July 1. Since then, the portal ivh.bsi.gov.in has had nearly two lakh hits from 55 countries.
- Each record in the digital herbarium includes an image of the preserved plant specimen, scientific name, collection locality, and collection date, collector name, and barcode number.
- The digital herbarium includes features to extract the data State-wise, and users can search plants of their own States, which will help them identify regional plants and in building regional checklists.

GAZA STRIP

Israel and Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip were exchanging fire in the worst bout of cross-border violence since an 11-day war between Israel and Hamas last year.



About:

- The Gaza Strip or simply Gaza, is a Palestinian enclave on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders Egypt on the

southwest for 11 kilometers (6.8 mi) and Israel on the east and north along a 51 km (32 mi) border.

- The Gaza Strip and the West Bank are claimed by the de jure sovereign State of Palestine.
- The territories of Gaza and the West Bank are separated from each other by Israeli territory.
- Both fell under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, but the Strip has, since the Battle of Gaza in June 2007, been governed by Hamas, a militant, Palestinian, fundamentalist Islamic organization, which came to power in the last-held elections in 2006.
- It has been placed under an Israeli and US-led international economic and political boycott from that time onwards.

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR IS NEW VICE-PRESIDENT

In News:

- NDA nominee Jagdeep Dhankhar was elected as the 14th Vice-President of India.
- He defeated joint opposition candidate Margaret Alva after securing 528 votes (72. 8%) against his rival's tally of 182.

Jagdeep Dhankhar India's new Vice President	
	
<p>► Born in Kithana village in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district, Jagdeep Dhankhar studied at the government school there and later Sainik School, Chittorgarh on full merit scholarship</p>	
<p>► Physics graduate and LLB, practised for over 40 years as lawyer in Rajasthan HC and SC. Former member of ICC International Court of Arbitration</p>	<p>► Joined BJP in 2008 from Congress. Was Lok Sabha MP from Jhunjhunu (1989-91) and MLA from Kishangarh in the Rajasthan assembly (1993-98)</p>
<p>► Junior minister for parliamentary affairs (April 1990-Nov 1990). Governor of West Bengal since 2019.</p>	<p>► Dhankhar is the first-ever OBC (Jat) to become Vice President</p>

Vice-President (VP) of India

- The office of the Vice-president is a unique feature of India, which follows a parliamentary system, and has no exact parallel in other democratic countries, including the Commonwealth.
- The second-highest constitutional authority after the President, the Vice-President draws his or her powers from Article 63 of the Constitution.
- Article 63 states that there shall be a Vice-President of India.

Role & responsibilities

- Article 64 confers upon the post the power to be ex-officio Chairman of the Council of States (the Rajya Sabha).
- Under Article 64 (2), the Vice-President (VP) also discharges Presidential functions when the President is unable to do so owing to absence, illness or any other cause.
- As per Article 65, the VP can act as the President, in the event of the occurrence of any vacancy in the office of the President by reason of his death, resignation, removal or otherwise “until the date on which a new President enters upon his office.

The Election Procedure

- **Eligibility**
 - Any citizen of India who is at least 35 years of age and a registered voter in a state or Union Territory can be a candidate for the post.
 - At least 20 MPs need to propose the nomination and 20 other MPs need to second it.
 - As per Article 66 (2), the Vice-President cannot be a member of either House of Parliament or of the Legislature of any state.
- **Electoral college**
 - Article 66 lays down the process of the election of the Vice-President.
 - It says the Vice-President shall be elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament.
 - There are 524 MPs in the Lok Sabha and 237 members in the Rajya Sabha, including Ilaiyaraja, P T Usha, Vijayendra Prasad and Veerandra Hegde, the four MPs nominated recently.

- The election will in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.
- In it, the elector has to mark preferences against the names of the candidates.
- The voting is through a secret ballot.

Tenure

- Article 67 says that the VP will hold office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office.
- However, according to the same provision, the VP can continue to hold power notwithstanding the expiration of his term until his successor enters upon his office.

Removal from the office

- The VP may leave mid-term by submitting a resignation letter to the President.
- He can also be removed from office by a resolution in the Rajya Sabha, passed by a majority of its members at that time and agreed by the House of the People (Lok Sabha).

Provision for if the post falls vacant

- There is no direct provision in the Constitution on who performs the duties of the Vice-President if the office falls vacant before the expiry of his/her term or when the Vice-President is discharging the duties of the President.
- However, the Constitution does have a provision on what happens if the chairperson of the Council of States falls vacant.
- The Deputy Chairman or any other member of the Rajya Sabha authorised by the President can perform the chairperson's duties.

NATIONAL HANDLOOM DAY

8th National handloom day is being observed on August 7, 2022.



About:

- The day has special significance in the history of the freedom struggle in the country. On the same day in 1905 Swadeshi Aandolan was started.
- Announcing the date to celebrate National handloom day in 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that all families in the country must keep at least one product of khadi and one of handloom.

SRI LANKA RELENTS, ASKS CHINA TO DEFER SHIP VISIT

In News:

- The Sri Lanka Foreign Ministry has asked China to defer the arrival of the Yuan Wang 5, a military vessel, at its southern port of Hambantota.
 - This was not the first time a Chinese vessel was headed for the Sri Lankan port.
 - In 2014, Chinese submarine Changzheng 2 was twice allowed to dock at the Colombo port despite protests by India.

Hambantota port



- The second-largest Lankan port, Hambantota sits on the route connecting Southeast Asia with Africa and West Asia.
- The development of this port has been largely funded by China, and in 2017, Colombo handed over its majority stake to a Chinese firm after failing to repay the debt.
- For China, it is an important stop in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- However, security experts point out that this port fits right into China's 'string of pearls' strategy to surround India in the Indian Ocean.
- Chinese control of this port could harm India's interests in the Indian Ocean by becoming a hub for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy.

Background:

- The Chinese ship - Yuan Wang 5 - is en route from the Chinese port of Jiangyin and due in the Chinese-run Sri Lankan port of Hambantota on August 11.
- Clearances for the ship to berth at Hambantota port were given by Lanka on July 12, a day before Gotabaya Rajapaksa was expected to resign from President Post.
 - Gotabaya Rajapaksa was driven out of office by a people's movement.
- India was shocked to learn that the government in Colombo had given clearances for the Chinese military vessel to berth at Hambantota.
- New Delhi conveyed more than once that it had serious concerns about the planned arrival of the ship.

News Summary

- Sri Lanka has asked China to indefinitely delay a visit by a ship, following objections from India.
- In an official communication, the Lankan foreign ministry asked the Chinese embassy in Colombo to defer the arrival of the Ship until further consultations.
- Although, the matter has been closed for now, India is worried over the language used in the communication which suggests that the issue is still open for discussion.

About the Ship

- As per China, the 'Yuan Wang 5' is a Chinese research and survey vessel.
 - Last monitoring mission of Yuan Wang 5 was the launch of China's 'Long March 5B' rocket.
 - It was also recently involved in maritime monitoring of the launch of China's Tiangong space station's first lab module.
- Yuan Wang-class ships are used to track satellite, rocket and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches.
- The ships supplement Beijing's land-based tracking stations and are operated by the PLA's Strategic Support Force (SSF).
 - SSF is a theater command-level organization established to centralize the PLA's strategic space, cyber, electronic, information, communications, and psychological warfare missions.

Why was this ship headed to Sri Lanka?

- As per China, the ship was supposed to enter Hambantota port for replenishment.
- This ship has been tasked to conduct satellite control and research tracking of China's satellites in the North Western part of the Indian Ocean region.
- China also claimed that the visit to Hambantota Port will be an excellent opportunity for Sri Lanka and the regional developing nations to learn and develop their own space programmes.

Why India was worried?

- The 'Yuan Wang 5' is a powerful tracking vessel whose significant aerial reach is reportedly around 750 km.
- This means that several ports in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh could be on China's radar.
- Reports have claimed that several vital installations in South India could be under threat of being snooped upon.
- India was worried that the surveillance vessel could be involved in mapping the ocean floor for potential anti-submarine operations against the Indian Navy.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL (CAT)

Union Minister of State for Personnel and Public Grievances, Dr. Jitendra Singh has said, in the last three years the Central Administrative Tribunal, CAT, achieved a disposal rate of around 91 percent. Justice Ranjit Vasantrya More is the newly appointed CAT Chairman.



About:

- The Central Administrative Tribunal had been established under Article 323 - A of the Constitution for adjudication of disputes and complaints with respect to recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or other authorities under the control of the Government.
- There are 17 Benches and 21 Circuit Benches in the CAT all over India.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- In addition to the Ministries and Departments of Central Government, the Government of India has notified 214 organizations under section 14 (2) of the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985 to bring them within the jurisdiction of the Central Administrative Tribunal, from time to time.
 - In addition the Central Administrative Tribunal, Principal Bench is dealing with the matters of Govt. of National Capital Territory of Delhi.
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