

IPBES Report

❖ Context

- An assessment report by the **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)** on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species was released recently.

❖ Key Highlights

- The summary of the report was approved by representatives of the 139 member states of IPBES in Bonn, Germany.
- Humans directly depend on **10,000 species** for food and indirectly on **50,000 wild species** for various things, including food, energy, medicine, material and other purposes.
- Trade in wild plants, algae and fungi for food, medicine, hygiene, energy and ornamental use is increasing.
- The report warned of the risk of 1 MN species of extinction.
- **Over-exploitation** has been identified as the main threat to wild species in marine ecosystems and the second greatest threat to those in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.

- **Unsustainable harvest** contributes towards elevated extinction risk for 28-29% of near-threatened and threatened species from 10 taxonomic groups assessed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- **Unsustainable fishing** is the main cause for the increased extinction risk of sharks and rays over the past half century.
- ❖ **About IPBES**
 - It is an **independent intergovernmental body** established in Panama City, on 21 April 2012 by 94 Governments.
 - Its purpose is to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.
 - It is **not a United Nations body**.
 - However, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** provides secretariat services to IPBES.
 - **India is one of its founding members**.
 - IPBES currently has close to 140 member States.

Zonal Council

❖ Context

- A meeting of the northern zonal council in Jaipur was held between member states and UTs.

❖ About the councils

- There are 5 zonal councils in the country.

S.No.	Name	Member states/UTs	Headquarters
1	Northern Zonal	Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab and Rajasthan	New Delhi
2	Southern Zonal	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana	Chennai
3	Central Zonal	Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand	Prayagraj
4	Eastern Zonal	Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal	Kolkata
5	Western Zonal	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Goa, Gujarat, and Maharashtra	Mumbai

- The union territories of **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** and **Lakshadweep** are not members of any of the Zonal Councils. However, they are presently special invitees to the Southern Zonal Council.
- The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, **Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru** in 1956 during the course of debate on the report of the States Reorganisation Commission.
- They were set up in 1957 under **sections 15-22 of the State Reorganisation Act, 1956**.
- Each zonal council is an advisory body.
- The regional councils provide a forum for discussion in a structured manner on issues affecting one or more states, or issues between centre and states.

❖ Meetings

- As per Section 17(1) of States Reorganisation Act, each Zonal Council shall meet at such time as the Chairman of the Council may appoint on this behalf.

❖ Organisational structure

- **Chairman** : The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
- **Vice Chairman** : The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of **one year** at a time.
- **Members** : Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
- Union Ministers are also invited to participate in the meetings of Zonal Councils depending upon necessity.

❖ North-Eastern Council

- The Northeastern states are not covered by any of the Zonal Councils.
- Their special problems are addressed by another statutory body, the North Eastern Council at **Shillong**, created by the **North Eastern Council Act, 1971**.
- This council originally comprised Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.
- Later the state of Sikkim was also added vide North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002.

Face to Face Centres

Meghalaya Tribal Council to Revisit Instrument of Accession

❖ Context

- A tribal council in Meghalaya has called for a meeting of traditional heads to revisit the **Instrument of Accession** that made the **Khasi domain** a part of the Indian Union more than seven decades ago.

❖ Key Highlights

- Meghalaya is divided into **three regions dominated** by as many **matrilineal communities** – the **Khasis, Garos and Jaintias**.
- The **Khasi hills straddle 25 Himas or States** that formed the **Federation of Khasi States**.
- The chief executive member of the **Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC)** agreed that the **Instrument of Accession and Annexed Agreement signed** with the Dominion of India between **December 15, 1947, and March 19, 1948**, should be studied.



- The KHADC said the provisions can be added to the **Sixth Schedule**, which “can be amended by Parliament”

- The conditional treaty with these States was **signed by Governor-General of India, Chakravarty Rajagopalachari, on August 17, 1948.**

- **Nagaland was granted special status under Article 371A**, which was an idea of the **Federation of Khasi States**.

❖ Instrument of Accession of the Khasi State

- It was signed between the Khasi rulers and the Dominion of India.
- Agreement (which shall be regarded as part of Instrument of Accession), Khasi accepted that the Dominion Legislature may make laws for the said Khasi States in respect of any matter.
- **6th Schedule** of our constitution **makes separate provisions** for the administration of tribal areas in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**. These provisions have been made in exercise of the **enabling provisions given in Articles 244 (2) and 275 (1)** of the Constitution.
- The **Sixth Schedule provides for autonomy** in the administration of these areas through **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)**.
- The objectives are to **maintain a distinct identity and exclusiveness of tribals**.

Sri Ramanujacharya

❖ Context

- Recently, a **four-foot tall statue** of the Advaita philosophy's proponent **Sri Ramanujacharya** was virtually inaugurated by the Union Home Minister at **Srinagar's Shuryar temple**.

❖ Key Highlights

- This statue was named as the **Statue of Peace**.
- The **Gujarat government**, too, will install a Ramanujacharya statue next year.
- Earlier, Prime Minister of India unveiled the saint's **216-foot statue in Hyderabad in February, 2022.**

❖ Sri Ramanujacharya



• About:

- Sri Ramanujacharya was **born in 1017 in SriPerumbudur, Tamil Nadu.**
- He is also known as **Ramanuja.**
- He was also referred to as **Ilaya Perumal**, which means the radiant one.

• Contribution to Society:

- He is considered to be a **great thinker, philosopher and social reformer.**
- Ramanuja is known to have **revolted against the discrimination of untouchability** and played a role in bringing a big change in society.

- The saint is known for **judging people not by their caste** at birth, but by their character.

❖ Contribution to Spiritualism

- He is a **follower of Vaishnavism** and taught people the **principles of salvation.**
- He was one of the **most important exponents** of the **Sri Vaishnavism** tradition within Hinduism.
- He **wrote many books**, including **Sri Bhashya, Vedartha Sangraha and Bhagavad Gita Bhasya**, based on his belief that is different from the teachings of Adi Shankaracharya.
- **Bhakti movement** was greatly influenced by Sri Ramanujacharya's philosophical **teachings of devotionism.**
- He is **believed to be the first Hindu acharya** to initiate women into 'sanyasa' (renunciation of the world).
- He is also known for blending Vedanta methodology with 'bhakti'.
- After Ramanuja's demise, the **female community of 'sanyasinis' faded away.**



Cloudbursts

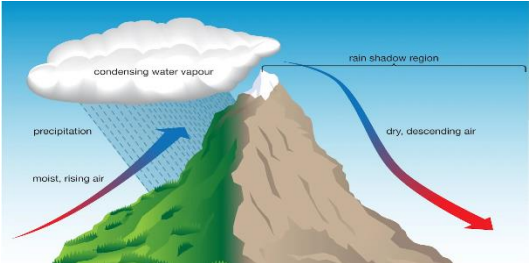
❖ Context

- Recently, Sudden, “highly-localized rains” (cloudburst) in Amarnath, Jammu and Kashmir caused flooding and led to the deaths of at least 16 people.

❖ About Cloudburst

- A cloudburst refers to an extreme amount of rain that happens in a short period, sometimes accompanied by hail and thunder, and this has a precise definition.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) defines it as unexpected precipitation exceeding 100mm (or 10 cm) per hour over a geographical region of approximately 20 to 30 square km.
- Significant amounts of rainfall such as this can result in floods.
- Basically, all instances of cloudbursts involve heavy rain in a short period, but all instances of heavy rain in a short period are not cloudbursts if they do not fit this criterion.

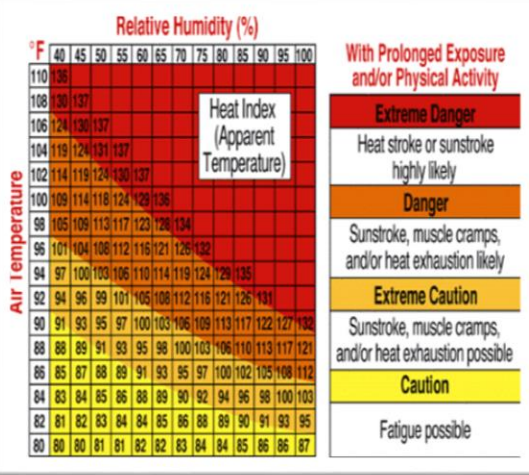
- It is difficult to predict when exactly a cloudburst will occur.
- ❖ **Mechanism**
- They are more likely to occur in mountainous zones mainly because of terrain and elevation.



- In hilly areas, sometimes saturated clouds ready to condense into rain cannot produce rain, due to the upward movement of the very warm current of air.
- Instead of falling downwards, raindrops are carried upwards by the air current.
- New drops are formed & existing raindrops increase in size.
- After a point, the raindrops become too heavy for the cloud to hold on to, and they drop down together in a quick flash.

News in Between the Lines

Heat Index



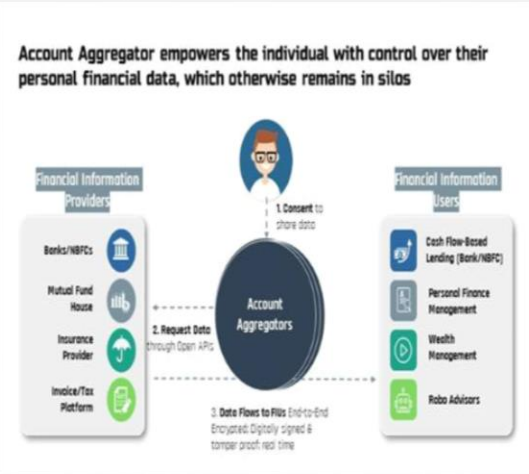
❖ Context

- Humidity levels in Delhi have been significantly higher recently, when compared to the previous one.

❖ Key Highlights

- According to the **National Weather Service of the USA**, it is “what the temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature”.
- The impact of high heat index ranges from fatigue to heat stroke.
- According to research by IMD and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, the heat index is **increasing during the monsoon season at the rate of 0.32 degrees Celsius per decade**.
- Easterly winds bringing moisture from the Bay of Bengal have contributed to the high humidity in the capital.
- Nobody is using heat index in India. **IMD is developing a heat index suitable for Indian climatic conditions**.
- However, as part of the heat action plan, ‘feels like’ temperature is also being calculated based on the temperature forecast.

Account Aggregators



❖ Context

- The Finance Minister recently instructed all the Public Sector Banks (PSBs) to onboard the account aggregator system by the end of July, 2022.

❖ About Account Aggregators

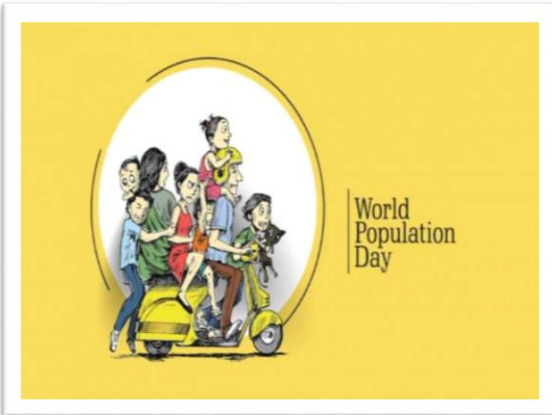
- It is a type of **RBI-regulated entity** (with an NBFC-AA licence).
- They will be data intermediaries.
- Account Aggregators (AA) will collect and share the user’s financial information from a range of entities that hold consumer data called **Financial Information Providers (FIPs)** to a range of entities that are requesting consumer data called **Financial Information Users (FIUs)** after obtaining the **consent of the consumer**.
- It will help an individual securely and digitally access and share information from one financial institution they have an account with to any other regulated financial institution in the AA network.
- There will be many Account Aggregators an individual can choose between.

Face to Face Centres



- AA replaces the long terms and conditions form of 'blank cheque' acceptance with a granular, step by step permission & control for each use of individual data.
- RBI had released rules for registration and operation of account aggregators under section 45-IA of the RBI Act, 1934.

World Population Day



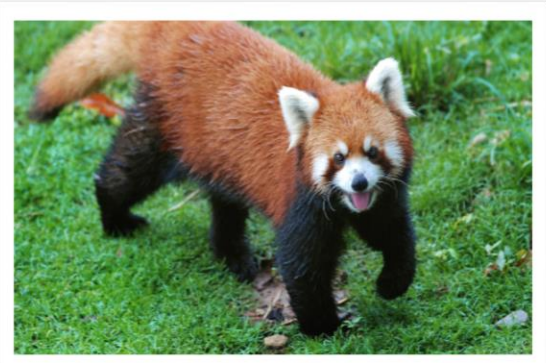
❖ Context

- World Population Day is **observed on the 11th of July every year.**

❖ About World Population Day

- **About:**
 - World Population Day was **established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989.**
 - The Day was **first marked on 11th July 1990** in more than 90 countries.
 - This day seeks to focus **attention on the urgency and importance of population issues.**
- **Objective:**
 - To increase the awareness of the people towards the worldwide population issues.
 - To observe their relations to the environment and development.
- **The theme for World Population Day 2022:**
 - 'A world of 8 billion: Towards a resilient future for all - Harnessing opportunities and ensuring rights and choices for all.'
- **Key Facts about World Population:**
 - In **1000 AD**, the world population **was only 400 million.**
 - It first reached 1 billion in 1804 and 3 billion by 1960.
 - It only took 40 years - by 2000 - for the population to double to 6 billion.
 - **In 2011, the world reached a population of 7 billion.** This year, the number will hit 8 billion.
 - The world's population is growing by **1.10 percent per year**, or about an additional 83 million people annually.

Red Panda



❖ Context

- Recently, a **zoo in the picturesque Darjeeling Hills** has started an ambitious programme to augment the wild red panda population.

❖ Key Highlights

- In the first rewilding programme of **red pandas** in India, the Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park will release 20 of these furry endangered mammals in about five years to the forests.
- The **number of red pandas has been declining in the wild** even in the **Singalila and Neora Valley National Parks**, the two protected areas where the mammal is found in the wild in West Bengal.

❖ Red Panda

- The **red panda (Ailurus fulgens)** is a mammal **native to the eastern Himalayas and southwestern China.**
- Its wild population is estimated at fewer than 10,000 mature individuals.
- Despite its name, it is **not closely related to the giant panda.**
- Red pandas are **shy, solitary and arboreal animals** and considered an **indicator species for ecological change.**
- **Distribution:** An **estimated 14,500 animals** are left in the wild across **Nepal, Bhutan, India, China and Myanmar.**
 - About 5,000-6,000 red pandas are estimated to be **present in four Indian states – Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Sikkim and West Bengal.**
- **Threats:** Habitat loss and fragmentation, poaching, and inbreeding depression.
 - The animal has been **hunted for meat and fur**, besides illegal capture for the pet trade.
- **Conservation Status: IUCN Red List- Endangered (EN).**

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