

Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)

❖ Context

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare chairs National Symposium on India's Roadmap to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF).

Key Highlights of National Symposium:

- The Minister mentioned **LF is not a Neglected Disease**, but a Priority Disease for Elimination'.
- India is committed to eliminating Lymphatic Filariasis by 2027 which is **three years ahead of the global target** through mission mode.
- **Union Minister said** that learning from the wide experience of the country in elimination of other diseases, we have come up with a **renewed five-pronged strategy for elimination of LF**.
- **The five pillars are as follows:**
 - **Multi-drug administration (MDA)** Campaign twice a year synchronized with National Deworming Day (10th Feb and 10th August).
 - **Early diagnosis and treatment**-engagement of medical colleges for strengthening Morbidity management and disability (MMDP) services.
 - **Integrated Vector Control** with multi sectoral coordinated efforts.
 - **For inter sectoral convergence** with allied departments and ministries.
 - **Leveraging existin.g digital** platforms for LF and exploring alternate diagnostics.
- **Four States** UP, Odisha, Telangana, and Bihar account for **-60% Lymphedema cases**.
- **Four States** Odisha, Jharkhand, UP and Bihar, account for **-80% Hydrocele cases**.

About Lymphatic Filariasis:

- Lymphatic Filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a **neglected tropical disease**.
- Lymphatic Filariasis is caused by infection with **parasites classified as nematodes (roundworms)** of the family Filarioididea.
- Infection is **usually acquired in childhood** causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system.
- **Lymphoedema, elephantiasis and scrotal swelling occur later in life** and can lead to permanent disability.
- **World Health Assembly resolution WHA50.29** encourages Member States to eliminate lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem.
- In response, WHO launched its **Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GPELF) in 2000**.
- WHO's strategy is based on **2 key components:**
 - **Stopping the spread** of infection through large-scale annual treatment of all eligible people in an area or region where infection is present.
 - **Alleviating the suffering** caused by lymphatic filariasis through provision of the recommended essential package of care.
- **Seventeen countries and territory** are now acknowledged as **achieving elimination of lymphatic filariasis** as a public health problem.
- 51 million people were infected as of 2018, a **74% decline since the start of WHO's Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis in 2000**.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY)

❖ Context

- The Central Government's integrated food security scheme has been named as the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY)**, under which free foodgrains are being given to more than **80 crore poor people from January 1**.

Key Highlights:

- PMGKAY was launched in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic in April 2020 which ended in December 2022.
- The government decided to **subsume PMGKAY into two existing food subsidy schemes** and consequently, the **new integrated food security scheme came into force**.
- The new scheme has been named as Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY).
- **New Scheme Features**
 - Free foodgrains will be provided under the PMGKAY for the year 2023 to the poor beneficiaries as per the entitlement under the the National Food Security Act (NFSA).
 - Till December 2022, the NFSA beneficiaries were getting their foodgrains entitlement at a highly subsidised rate of ₹1, ₹2 and ₹3 per kg for coarse cereals, wheat and rice, respectively.
 - Now, **they will get it for free this year**.
 - **Ration card holders can now avail 5 kg of wheat or rice** per month for free rather than at a subsidised rate.
 - Antyodaya Anna Yojana cardholders will receive 35 kg of free foodgrains.

- **Previous Scheme (PMGKAY)**
 - Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY) was a **scheme as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat** to supply free food grains to migrants and the poor.
 - The scheme aimed at providing each person who is covered under the National Food Security Act 2013 with an additional 5 kg grains (wheat or rice) for free, in addition to the 5 kg of subsidized foodgrain already **provided** through the Public Distribution System (PDS).
 - **Nodal Ministry-** Ministry of Finance.

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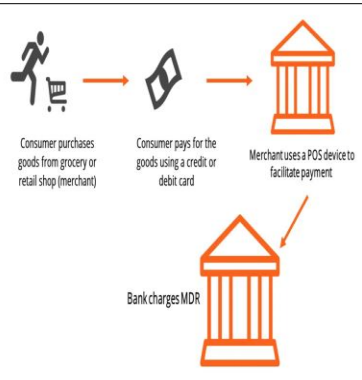
National Food Security Act 2013:

- It aims to ensure people food and nutritional security by assuring access to a sufficient quantity of high-quality food at reasonable prices.
- NFSA 2013 includes almost two-thirds of the Indian population in its entirety.
- Provisions**
 - 75% of the Rural and 50% of the Urban population is entitled to receive highly subsidised foodgrains under two categories of beneficiaries-
 - Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** households and **Priority Household (PHH)**.

- The Act entitles 35 kg of foodgrain per AAY Household per month, whereas 5 Kg of foodgrain per PHH person per month.
- Eligible households receive foodgrains at subsidised price— rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg and coarse grain at Rs 1/kg — under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- Coverage-** 81.35 crore beneficiaries is still based on Census 2011.
- Grievances Redressal-** every state of India is required to create a mechanism for the redressal of any grievances.
- Special focus on women and children.

News in Between the Lines

Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)



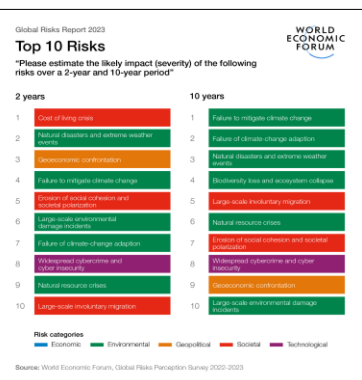
❖ Context

- Recently, The Union Cabinet approved an outlay of ₹2,600 crore to promote payments using RuPay cards and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- The fund will be paid to banks in view of the lack of a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) for UPI and RuPay transactions.

❖ Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)

- MDR is a fee charged to merchants for processing of payments made through UPI, digital wallets, debit, and credit card.
- The merchant discount rate is also referred to as the transaction discount rate (TDR).
- MDR is given as a percentage of each sales transaction processed.
- Though payments through UPI and RuPay debit cards do not attract any MDR, it is capped at 0.9 per cent for all other debit cards.
- The amount that the merchant pays for every transaction gets distributed among three stakeholders-
 - The bank that enables the transaction.
 - Vendor that installs the point of sale (PoS) machine.
 - The card network provider such as Visa, MasterCard, RuPay.

Global Risk Report 2023



❖ Context

- Recently, The World Economic Forum's annual Global Risks Report 2023 was released.

❖ Key Highlights:

- It highlights the **cost of living crisis** as the biggest short-term risk facing the world right now, with climate change as the biggest long-term threat.
- It said that **Russia's war in Ukraine and the Covid-19 pandemic** had propelled the energy crisis, food scarcity and inflation as the most pressing global issues.
- It observed that technologies such as **AI, Quantum and Biotechnology** are going to **exacerbate the inequalities and digital divide** (if no action is taken to mitigate it).
- Major risks to India**
 - Digital inequality, geopolitical confrontation for resources, the rising cost of living, debt crisis, natural disasters and extreme weather events.
- The report says the world must collaborate more effectively on climate mitigation and adaptation over the next decade to avoid "ecological breakdown" & continued global warming.

Four Dinosaur Species Found

❖ Context

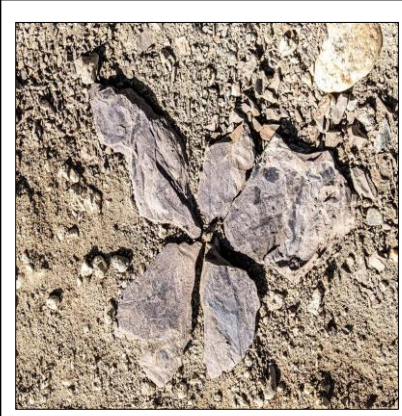
- Recently, Scientists have found the **remains of four species of dinosaurs**, including a **megaraptor** which belongs to the theropod family, in an inhospitable valley in Chilean Patagonia that has emerged over the past decade as an **important fossil deposit**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The fossils were found in **Cerro Guido, in southern Chile's Las Chinas valley** near the border with Argentina, and taken to a laboratory in 2021.

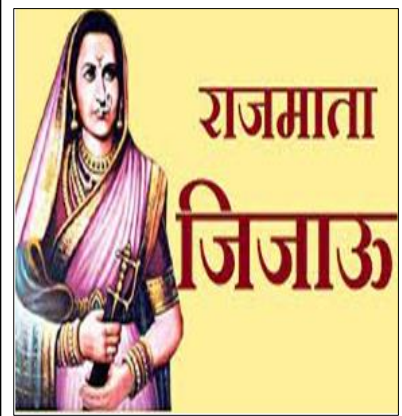
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- The researchers said they belong to dinosaurs that have not previously been identified in the area.
- These carnivorous dinosaurs had raptor claws, small teeth for tearing, and large upper limbs which, put them at the **top of the food chain in the region**.
- They **inhabited between 66 and 75 million years ago**, at the end of the **Cretaceous period**.
- They also found remains of **two bird species**-
 - An **Enantiornithe**, the most diverse and abundant group of birds of the Mesozoic.
 - **Ornithurinae**, a group directly related to present-day birds.

Rajmata Jijau



❖ Context

- The Prime Minister, has paid tributes to **Rajmata Jijau** on her Jayanti and said that her name will always be a part of our history for **mentoring a great person like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**.

❖ About Rajmata Jijau:

- Jijabai was born on **12 January 1598** in a village named Sindkher.
- **Jijabai was the only daughter of Lakhuji Jadhav**, and as per the customs that prevailed in those days Jijabai was married at an early age (at the age of 8 years) to Shahaji Bhosle.
- Lakhuji Jadhav belonged to **Deulgaon, near Sindkhed**, in the present-day Buldhana district of Maharashtra.
- He was equally brave and ambitious and proud of his lineage.
- Jijabai is also known as Rajmata Jijabai, **mother of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, founder of the **Maratha kingdom**.
- She was **the guide who shaped his mind** from his early years.
- Such a mother and brave woman were Jijabai who was **not only his friend, guide** but also a great source of inspiration.
- She **never lost courage and** patience in case of difficulties and adversities. She imparted moral values and ideals to her son.

First Ever District In India



❖ Context

- **Vidisha becomes the first ever district** in India for on ground deployment of innovative 5G use cases offered by startups.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **It is a joint initiative** by Vidisha District Administration and Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- **DoT facilitates** collaborations under 5G use case promotional pilots of startups & SMEs to accelerate Digital Transformation across socio-economic vertical.

❖ What is 5G?

- **5G is the 5th generation mobile network**. It is a new global wireless standard after 1G, 2G, 3G, and 4G networks.
- **5G enables a new kind of network** that is designed to connect virtually everyone and everything together including machines, objects, and devices.
- 5G wireless technology is meant to **deliver higher multi-Gbps peak data speeds, ultra-low latency, more reliability, massive network capacity**, increased availability, and a more uniform user experience to more users.
- Higher performance **and improved efficiency will empower** new user experiences and connects **new industries**.

Kuno Palpur National Park

❖ Context

- Recently, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh said that more cheetahs would be arriving at the Kuno Palpur National Park.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The five female and three male cheetahs were reintroduced in september 2022 as part of the 'Action Plan for Reintroduction of Cheetah in India' prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India.

❖ Kuno Palpur National Park

- Kuno National Park is national park and Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, India.

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- One of the main tributaries of the Chambal River, the Kuno River, cuts across the whole length of the National Park division.
- It was established in 1981 as a wildlife sanctuary with an initial area of 344.686 km² (133.084 sq mi) in the Sheopur and Morena districts.
- In 2018, it was given the status of a national park.
- It is part of the Khathiar-Gir dry deciduous forests ecoregion.
- The Kuno has the potential to carry populations of all four of India's big cats.
 - The tiger, the leopard, the Asiatic lion, and also the cheetah all four of which have coexisted within the same habitats.
- Fauna
 - It is home to Indian wolves, jackals, Chital, Sambar, Nilgai, Wild pig, leopards, langur monkeys, blue-bull, chinkara, and spotted deer.
- Flora
 - The vegetation of the protected area includes Anogeissus pendula forest and scrub, Boswellia and Butea forest, dry savanna forest and grassland and tropical riverine forest.



National Startup Awards

❖ Context

- The results of National Startup Awards 2022 will be announced by, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution & Textiles Industry on 16th January 2023 in New Delhi.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Award recognizes **startups and enablers** for their outstanding performance.
- A **special award category introduced this year** to recognize startups in Hilly and North-East region of India.
- The winning startups will also be given a **cash prize of INR 5 lakh each**.
- **Rs 15 lakh cash price** to one exceptional Incubator and one Accelerator.
- Union Minister will **also launch the MAARG platform** (Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience, and Growth), **which will facilitate mentorship** between startups and entrepreneurs across sectors, stages, and functions.
- The matchmaking phase of the portal, **which will be launched on the occasion**, will allow startups to connect with mentors and discuss their mentorship needs.



India's First Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming

❖ Context

- Digital India Startup Hub through the Software Technology Parks of India shall set up **India's first Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming at Shillong**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **The Centre of Excellence in Shillong** is expected to catalyse startups and entrepreneurs from the entire North East Region to build the Next Gen Online Gaming ecosystem.
- MeitY has recently circulated **Draft amendments to the IT Rules 2021** in relation to the Online Gaming for public consultation.
- The Minister also informed that the **Government is Re-launching Skill India through PMKVY 4.0**, which shall train around 50,000 youth in Meghalaya in future ready skills with Industry backed Job Opportunities.
- **The Minister announced another initiative of MeitY** to set up a state-of-the-art facility under the National Institute of Electronics and IT (NIELIT) to provide **training on cutting edge Digital Skills at Shillong**.



Study: Logged Tropical Forests Can Emit Carbon into the Atmosphere

❖ Context

- Recently, a new study has found that **tropical forests**, which have been logged (cut down) or degraded, **remain a source of carbon emission for at least a decade**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The findings are **contrary to a previous assumption** – that recovering tropical forests absorb more carbon than they emit into the atmosphere because they witness rapid re-growth of trees.

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14 January 2023



- The study compared data collected from both intact and logged forests and concluded that the latter release a substantial amount of carbon from its damaged soil and decaying deadwood.
- **Carbon Sequestration**
 - Carbon sequestration is a crucial part of the global carbon cycle, as it is the **process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide**.
 - One of the ways this happens is when **forests and other land vegetation absorb carbon dioxide during photosynthesis**.
 - Tropical forests remove up to **30 per cent of human carbon dioxide emissions** from the atmosphere and make for an important carbon sink.
 - Therefore, they have a significant role in keeping global temperatures low.

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