

Daily Current Affairs

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16th Finance Commission

- The government appointed four **members of the Sixteenth Finance Commission**, with the approval of the President of India.
- Former Secretary **Ajay Narayan Jha**, former Special Secretary, Expenditure **Annie George Mathew**, Executive Director, Artha Global **Dr. Niranjan Rajadhyaksha** have been appointed as full time members. Group Chief Economic Advisor of State Bank of India, **Dr. Soumya Kanti Ghosh** has been appointed as part time member.

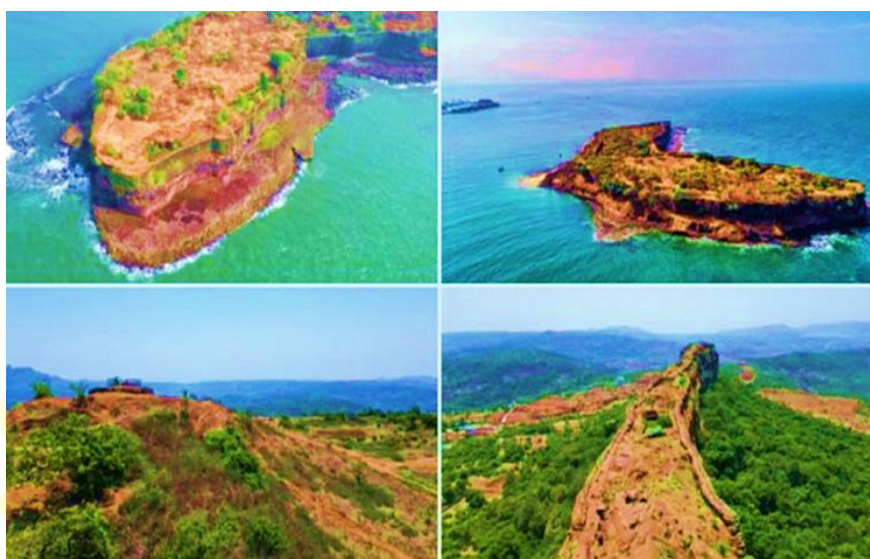


- The Sixteenth Finance Commission was constituted on 31st December with **Arvind Panagariya, former Vice-Chairman**, NITI Aayog as its Chairman.
- The Sixteenth Finance Commission has been requested to make its recommendations available by October 31, 2025, covering an award period of 5 years commencing 1st of April, 2026.



UNESCO World Heritage List

- The **Ministry of Culture announced** that India is nominating the '**Maratha Military Landscape**' for inclusion in the **UNESCO World Heritage List** for the 2024-25 cycle, with a total of 12 components included in this nomination. Suvarnadurg Fort is a part of the historic 'Maratha Military Landscape'.
- In its official statement, the Culture Ministry said that the 'Maratha Military Landscapes' represents **extraordinary fortification and military system** envisioned by the Maratha rulers, showcasing the vibrant history of India.



- It said that the **twelve components of this nomination are** -- Salher fort, Shivneri fort, Lohgad, Khanderi fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala fort, Vijay durg, and Sindhudurg **in Maharashtra**, and Gingee fort in **Tamil Nadu**.
- Officials from the ministry said that these twelve components are distributed across diverse geographical and physiographic regions and they showcase the strategic military powers of the Maratha rule in ancient India. The statement said that the 'Maratha Military Landscapes of India', which developed between 17th and 19th centuries, "represent an extraordinary fortification and military system envisioned by the Maratha rulers.
- There are **more than 390 forts in Maharashtra**, out of which only 12 forts are selected under the 'Maratha Military Landscapes of India', and eight of these forts are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- **The forts under ASI are** Shivneri fort, Lohgad, Raigad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala fort, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg and Gingee fort; whereas Salher fort, Rajgad, Khanderi

fort and Pratapgarh are protected by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, government of Maharashtra.

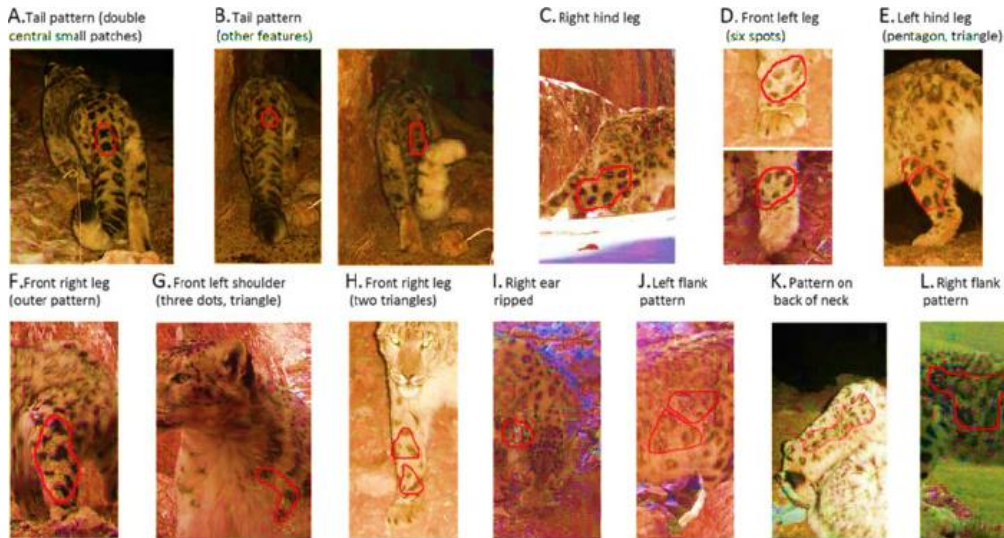
Snow Leopard Census

- **Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change**, Bhupender Yadav, released the report during the National Board for Wildlife meeting held in New Delhi on Tuesday.
- The **Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI)** programme is the first-ever scientific exercise.



- **Covering approximately 107,594 Km² of crucial snow leopard habitat** across the trans-Himalayan region, including UTs of Ladakh and J&K, states such as Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh, the exercise was conducted from 2019 to 2023.
- India has an estimated **718 snow leopards** in the wild, according to a first-of-its kind, four-year long estimation exercise, the results of which were made public on Tuesday.
- The **maximum number of cats were estimated** to be in Ladakh (477), followed by Uttarakhand (124), Himachal Pradesh (51), Arunachal Pradesh (36), Sikkim (21), and Jammu and Kashmir (9).
- The current estimate puts the number of Indian snow leopards **from 10-15% of the global population**.
- The exercise involved setting up **cameras, or 'camera traps,' in 1,971** locations and surveying 13,450 km worth of trails which teams surveyed for recording signs of snow leopards such as scat, hair and other body markers.
- Much like the approach used in surveys to estimate tiger numbers, States conducted the surveys and the **Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India**, an autonomous body of the Union Environment Ministry, used software and

statistical methods to estimate the number of individual cats that are present but not caught on camera and combined them with those caught on camera.



- The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI) began in 2019 and involves the **World Wide Fund for Nature-India** and the **Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru**, along with the **WII**.
- The snow leopard is **classified as 'vulnerable'** by the **International Union for the Conservation of Nature** and faces threats such from free ranging dogs, human wildlife conflicts, and poaching.
- Scientific surveys to estimate their numbers began in the 1980s though the area over which the animal ranged was undefined due to a "lack of extensive nationwide assessments," the Environment Ministry noted.



- The report also mentioned the need for establishing a **dedicated snow leopard cell at Wildlife Institute of India** under the Ministry, with a primary focus on long-term population monitoring, supported by well-structured study designs and consistent field surveys.
- For the same, **states and UTs can consider adopting a periodic population estimation approach** (every 4th year) in the snow leopard range. These regular assessments will offer valuable insights for identifying challenges, addressing threats, and formulating effective conservation strategies.

Khelo India Winter Games 2024 Mascot

- The **mascot of the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 is a snow leopard**. It has been named **'Sheen-e She' or Shan in Ladakh region**.
- The logo of the Games, prominent with the Indian tricolor, reflects the uniqueness of the picturesque land and the many sports that's on the cards.
- The Games logo is **complete with a Dharmachakra** (turning wheel of Dharma) on a hilltop in Chanspa in Leh, the venue of the Games.



- The Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Information & Broadcasting, GoI, Shri **Anurag Singh Thakur will inaugurate** the opening ceremony of the games at the NDS stadium, Leh on **February 2**. Two disciplines – **ice hockey and speed skating** – will be contest in three venues at Leh. Brigadier Mishra welcomed the MYAS decision to let Ladakh host a portion of the Games for the first time.
- “Ladakh is the place to play winter games. We are making an honest start and we can only get better as hosts,” he said.
- The **snow leopard is native to the high-altitude areas of J&K and Ladakh** over 3200 meters. It is also found in other Himalayan states of India and high-altitude areas in neighbouring countries including Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, China, and Central Asia.



- The **Khelo India Winter Games 2024 is the fourth edition** of the annual event in the Khelo India calendar.
- Leh will be the venue for the first part of the Games from February 2-6. The Games are scheduled to move to Gulmarg between February 21-25. While Ladakh will be conducting games -- **ice Hockey and speed skating** -- Jammu and Kashmir will conduct **ski mountaineering, Alpine skiing, snowboarding, Nordic ski and gandola**.
- **The Khelo India Winter Games are part of the Khelo India Mission**, a brainchild of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. It is the PM's endeavor to give importance to all types of Olympic sports and produce a feeder channel of talented sportspersons who can shine for India at the highest levels of sporting excellence.

ISSF World Cup

- **Divyansh Singh Panwar** continues to carve his name in the annals of **shooting history, securing his fourth World Cup gold in the 10m air rifle event.**
- This latest triumph adds to his impressive collection, which includes victories in **Munich, Beijing, and Delhi since 2019.**



- The former world number one and Olympian, Divyansh Singh Panwar, showcased his exceptional skill and composure by topping the qualification round with a stellar score of 632.4.
- In the final showdown, he maintained his poise to edge out Danilo Sollazzo of Italy by a mere 1.9 points, securing the coveted gold medal. Despite setbacks at Tokyo, Panwar's resilience shone through. Taking a hiatus, he emerged stronger, ready to tackle new challenges at the ISSF World Cup.

Ramsar Sites

- **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Labour and Employment Shri Bhupender Yadav** said on the eve of **World Wetlands Day 2024**, India has increased its tally of Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance) to **80 from existing 75** by designating **five more wetlands** as Ramsar sites.
- Three of these sites, **Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, Aghanashini Estuary and Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve** are located in Karnataka whereas two, **Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and Longwood Shola Reserve Forest** are in Tamilnadu.



- With the addition of these five wetlands to List of Wetlands of International Importance, the total area covered under **Ramsar sites is now 1.33 million ha** which is an **increase of 5,523.87 ha** from existing area (of 1.327 million ha).
- **Tamil Nadu continues to have maximum number of Ramsar Sites** (16 sites) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 sites).
- The theme of WWD-2024 is '**Wetlands and Human Wellbeing**' which underscores the critical role wetlands play in enhancing our lives. It highlights how wetlands contribute to flood protection, clean water, biodiversity and recreational opportunities, all of which are essential for human health and prosperity.



Bhupender Yadav ✓
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Dr Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands, today handed over the Ramsar Site certificates for:

- ◆ Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu
- ◆ Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve, Karnataka
- ◆ Longwood Shola Reserve Forest, Tamil Nadu
- ◆ Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, Karnataka
- ◆ Aghanashini Estuary, Karnataka

Industrially Produced Trans Fats

- **WHO Has Reached A Significant Milestone By Issuing Its Inaugural Certificates** Recognizing Progress In **Eliminating Trans Fatty Acids (TFA)**, Whether Industrially Produced Or Naturally Occurring.
- **Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia, And Thailand** Have Earned Praise For Their Pioneering Efforts In Implementing Effective Policies And Robust Monitoring Systems To Eliminate TFA.



- Despite Facing Challenges, Who's Global Initiative To Eliminate TFA Has Made Notable Strides. Although The **Ambitious Goal Set In 2018 To Completely Remove TFA From The Global Food Supply By The End Of 2023 Was Not Fully Achieved**, Considerable Progress Has Been Evident Worldwide During The Initiative's First Five Years.
- **Trans Fatty Acids (TFA) Present Significant Health Hazards**, Increasing The Risk Of Heart Attacks And Heart Disease-related Deaths.



- Without Any Known Health Benefits, TFA Are Commonly Found In Processed Foods Like Fried Items, Cakes, And Ready-to-eat Meals, Existing In Both Industrial And Natural Forms.
- Currently, 53 Countries Have Implemented Leading Policies To Combat TFA In Food, Greatly Enhancing Food Safety For 3.7 Billion Individuals Globally. These Proactive Measures Signify A **Substantial Improvement Compared To Five Years Ago** And Are Estimated To Save About 183,000 Lives Each Year.

Transparency International's 2023 Index

- Bangladesh has slipped by two positions in the **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2023** of Berlin-based Transparency International (TI) to become the **10th most corrupt country in the world**. In the last decade, this is the worst performance of Bangladesh.



- This was revealed by the executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), at a press conference in Dhaka. Bangladesh received a score of **24 out of 100** in the Corruption Perception Index 2023, said the Executive Director.
- TIB officials said that according to the CPI, Bangladesh's score fell from 25 in 2022 to 24 in 2023, which means the public sector is perceived to be more corrupt than it was a year ago.
- The findings placed **Denmark on top of the list** as the least corrupt country with a score of 90 out of 100. Finland is in second place with 87 and New Zealand is third with a score of 85.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. As Per Latest Census How Many Snow Leopards Are In India

- A. 1000
- B. 927
- C. 818
- D. 718

ANSWER: D

2. Divyansh Singh Panwar Seen In News Is Related To

- A. Hockey
- B. Shooting
- C. Cricket
- D. Javelin Throw

ANSWER: B

3. Mascot For Khelo India Winter Games 2024

- A. Snow Leopard
- B. Polar Bear
- C. Musk Ox
- D. Walrus

ANSWER: A

4. As Per Transparency International's 2023 Index Which Is Least Corrupted Country

- A. Denmark
- B. Finland
- C. Hungary
- D. Turkey

ANSWER: A

5. 'Maru Mahotsav', Also Known As Desert Festival, Is Celebrated In

- A. Jaipur
- B. Jaisalmer
- C. Kutch
- D. Bikaner

ANSWER: B

6. Singchung Bugun Village Community Reserve Is Located In Which State

- A. Arunachal Pradesh
- B. Assam
- C. Manipur
- D. Mizoram

ANSWER: A

7. INSAT-3DS Recently Launched By ISRO, Is What Kind Of Satellite

- A. Geostationary Satellite
- B. Meteorological Satellite
- C. Communication Satellite
- D. Earth Observation Satellite

ANSWER: B

8. Dogri Folk Dance Is A Famous Folk Dance Form Of Which State

- A. Assam
- B. Jammu
- C. Arunachal Pradesh
- D. Lakshadweep

ANSWER: B

9. Directorate Of Revenue Intelligence Is Associated With Which Ministry

- A. Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- B. Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- C. Ministry of Finance
- D. Ministry of Defence

ANSWER: C

10. Ratle Hydro Electric Project Is Built On Which River

- A. Chenab River
- B. Tawi River
- C. Sutlej River
- D. Kaveri River

ANSWER: A

11. Which Three Countries Announced Their Withdrawal From The Economic Community Of West African States

- A. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger
- B. Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone
- C. Ghana, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau
- D. Benin, Cape Verde and Cote d' Ivoire

ANSWER: A

12. Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary Is Located In Which State

- A. Madhya Pradesh
- B. Karnataka
- C. Tamil Nadu
- D. Kerala

ANSWER: B

13. 'INS Sumitra', Recently Seen In The News, Is What Kind Of Vessel

- A. Patrol vessel
- B. Frigate
- C. Destroyer
- D. Aircraft Carrier

ANSWER: A

14. NATO Signed A Contract To Buy 1,000 Units Of Which Missile Defense Systems

- A. THAAD
- B. S-400
- C. Patriot
- D. Arrow

ANSWER: C

15. Gharana Wetland Conservation Reserve Due To Arrival Of Thousands Of Migratory Birds, Is Located In Which State

- A. Himachal Pradesh
- B. Jammu & Kashmir
- C. Uttarakhand
- D. Rajasthan

ANSWER: B

16. Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee Operates Under Which Ministry

- A. Ministry of Science and Technology
- B. Ministry of Earth Sciences
- C. Ministry of Defence
- D. Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change

ANSWER: D

17. Which Country Agreed To Host A 'Global Peace Summit' On Ukraine

- A. Switzerland
- B. Maldives
- C. Mauritius
- D. Singapore

ANSWER: A

18. PM Modi Inaugurated 'NACIN', A National Level Institute, In Which State

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Andhra Pradesh
- C. Kerala
- D. Karnataka

ANSWER: B

19. According To A Recent Forbes Report, Which Is The World's Strongest Currency

- A. Chinese Yuan
- B. Kuwaiti Dinar
- C. Israeli Shekel
- D. Russian Ruble

ANSWER: B

20. PK Rosy, Honoured In Google Doodle, Was 1st Actress In Which Language

- A. Tamil
- B. Malayalam
- C. Kannada
- D. Telugu

ANSWER: B