

Daily Current Affairs

20 January 2025

Penguin Awareness Day

- Penguin Awareness Day is observed annually on **January 20th**, a day dedicated to celebrating these unique birds, educating the public about the threats they face (like climate change, pollution, and overfishing), and promoting conservation efforts for their survival as many species are vulnerable or endangered.
- It serves as a reminder of their crucial role in marine ecosystems and the urgent need to protect their habitats, often coinciding with **World Penguin Day** on **April 25th**.



China's Population Declines for Fourth Year

- China's population declined by 3 million in 2025. Births fell to a record low despite new child-rearing incentives.
- China's total population stood at about 1.404 billion in 2025, nearly 3 million lower than the previous year.

- The number of babies born dropped sharply to 7.92 million, a fall of 1.62 million or 17 percent compared to 2024.
- This also marked the lowest birth rate ever recorded, at 5.63 births per 1,000 people.
- The brief rise in births seen in 2024 failed to continue, reinforcing a long-term downward trend that has persisted for several years.
- China's fertility rate has fallen far below the replacement level.
- While the last official figure in 2020 stood at 1.3, experts now estimate it to be close to 1, much lower than the 2.1 needed to maintain population size.



India Introduces First Tailings Policy

- The Centre has notified India's first Tailings Policy to guide the recovery of critical and strategic minerals from mining waste. The move follows a Union Budget announcement on recovering minerals from tailings and secondary sources.
- Tailings are the leftover waste materials produced after valuable minerals are extracted from crushed ore.
- They usually form a slurry of fine rock particles, water and processing chemicals, stored in tailing ponds or dumps.
- Earlier seen only as waste, tailings are now recognized as valuable secondary resources.

- Many tailings contain critical and companion minerals that were not economically viable to extract earlier.
- With rising global demand for clean energy minerals, these tailings can now help unlock new domestic mineral resources without opening fresh mines.



Responsible Nations Index Launched

- The Responsible Nations Index was officially launched by Ram Nath Kovind in New Delhi. It introduces a new global framework to assess countries based on responsibility rather than power or wealth.
- The Responsible Nations Index is a global evaluative framework designed to measure how responsibly countries behave towards their citizens, the environment and the global intellectual community.
- Unlike traditional indices that focus mainly on GDP, military power or influence, RNI emphasizes ethical governance, human-centric policies and sustainable development.
- The index aims to encourage nations to adopt moral responsibility in policymaking, ensuring that progress benefits society as a whole.
- By redefining benchmarks of national success, RNI seeks to promote a more balanced and humane model of global development.
- The RNI has been developed by the World Intellectual Foundation in academic collaboration with Jawaharlal Nehru University.
- This partnership combines policy research with academic expertise to ensure credibility and depth in evaluation.

- The involvement of academic institutions strengthens the analytical foundation of the index and supports evidence-based assessment of nations.



India and UAE Set \$200 Billion Trade Target

- India and the UAE agreed to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032. Several agreements were signed during talks between Narendra Modi and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in New Delhi.
- The decision to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032 highlights the growing economic interdependence between India and the UAE.
- The UAE is one of India's largest trading partners and a key gateway to West Asia and Africa.
- This ambitious target builds on the momentum created by recent trade facilitation measures and investment flows.
- Both countries aim to diversify trade beyond traditional sectors by strengthening cooperation in manufacturing, energy, logistics, technology and services, ensuring long-term and resilient economic growth.
- India and the UAE signed a letter of intent to conclude a framework agreement on a strategic defense partnership.
- This reflects rising trust and shared security interests. Another letter of intent focuses on joint initiatives in space infrastructure development and its commercialization.



Tropical Storm Nokaen Raises Lahar

- Tropical storm Nokaen is moving near Luzon in the Philippines. Authorities have warned that heavy rainfall could trigger lahars around Mayon Volcano.
- Tropical storm Nokaen, locally named Ada, is the first tropical cyclone of 2026 to affect the Philippines.
- According to the PAGASA, the storm has sustained winds of about 65 kmph, with gusts reaching 80 kmph.
- It is moving slowly northward over the Philippine Sea and is expected to affect the eastern coast of southern Luzon, bringing widespread rainfall over the weekend.
- Mayon Volcano, located in Albay province, is one of the most active volcanoes in the Philippines.
- It has been restive since January 1, with recent eruptions depositing loose volcanic materials on its slopes.
- Heavy rainfall from tropical storm Nokaen can mobilise these materials, forming lahars, which are fast-moving volcanic mudflows that travel along river channels and drainage systems, posing serious risks to nearby communities.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Penguin Awareness Day is observed every year on which date?

- A. January 15
- B. January 20
- C. April 25
- D. December 5

Answer: B. January 20

2. The primary objective of Penguin Awareness Day is to:

- A. Promote tourism in polar regions
- B. Celebrate marine biodiversity
- C. Spread awareness about threats to penguins and conservation
- D. Study penguin migration patterns

Answer: C. Spread awareness about threats to penguins and conservation

3. China's population declined by approximately how many people in 2025?

- A. 1 million
- B. 2 million
- C. 3 million
- D. 5 million

Answer: C. 3 million

4. What was China's approximate total population in 2025?

- A. 1.35 billion
- B. 1.38 billion
- C. 1.40 billion
- D. 1.45 billion

Answer: C. 1.40 billion

5. India's first Tailings Policy is mainly aimed at:

- A. Expanding coal mining
- B. Managing nuclear waste
- C. Recovering critical minerals from mining waste
- D. Reducing mining employment

Answer: C. Recovering critical minerals from mining waste

6. Tailings are best described as:

- A. Freshly mined mineral ores
- B. Waste material left after mineral extraction
- C. Underground water reserves
- D. Forest by-products

Answer: B. Waste material left after mineral extraction

7. The Responsible Nations Index focuses on evaluating countries based on:

- A. Military power and GDP
- B. Population size
- C. Ethical governance and sustainability
- D. Technological advancement only

Answer: C. Ethical governance and sustainability

8. The Responsible Nations Index has been developed by the World Intellectual Foundation in collaboration with:

- A. IIT Delhi
- B. United Nations University
- C. Jawaharlal Nehru University
- D. World Bank

Answer: C. Jawaharlal Nehru University

9. India and the UAE aim to increase bilateral trade to how much by 2032?

- A. \$100 billion
- B. \$150 billion
- C. \$180 billion
- D. \$200 billion

Answer: D. \$200 billion

10. Lahars associated with Tropical Storm Nokae pose a risk mainly around which volcano?

- A. Mount Pinatubo
- B. Mount Taal
- C. Mayon Volcano
- D. Mount Apo

Answer: C. Mayon Volcano



SSBCrack
EXAMS