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RUBBER BOARD LAUNCHES PROJECTS ISNR AND INR KONNECT

In News

- The **Rubber Board of India** has introduced two significant initiatives, **iSNR (Indian Sustainable Natural Rubber)** and **INR Konnect**, as part of its efforts to enhance India's rubber industry globally and boost domestic production.

iSNR: Indian Sustainable Natural Rubber

- **Objective:** Align Indian rubber production with the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) standards and introduces traceability certification.
- **Benefit:** Facilitates easier access to European Union markets for stakeholders in the rubber supply chain.

INR Konnect: Web-Based Productivity Platform

- **Objective:** Connects owners of untapped rubber plantations with adopters to improve productivity.
- **Features:**
  - **Certified Network:** Rubber Board certifies growers, adopters, and tappers for credibility.
  - **Training:** Offers training in production management and sustainable practices.
  - **Database:** Maintains a comprehensive list of certified tappers.
- **Significance:** Addresses the challenge of underutilized plantations, which comprise 20-25% of India's rubber holdings, often neglected due to low rubber prices and absentee ownership.

India's Rubber Industry

- **Brief:** India is the third-largest producer of natural rubber globally, following Thailand (1st) and Indonesia (2nd). India is the fourth-largest consumer of natural rubber.
  - Kerala accounts for over 90% of India's natural rubber production. Other states include Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Tripura, Assam, and Meghalaya.
- **Key Challenges:** Climate Change impacting yields, competition from other rubber-producing countries, and labor shortages.
- **Government Initiatives: National Rubber Policy 2019** aims to enhance rubber production, improve productivity, and strengthen the domestic rubber industry.
  - **Sustainable & Inclusive Development of Natural Rubber Sector Scheme** focuses on promoting sustainable rubber cultivation practices and improving the livelihoods of rubber growers.

- **INROAD Project:** Focuses on maximizing the potential of untapped rubber plantations.

About Rubber Plantation
- **Scientific Name:** Hevea brasiliensis.
- **Origin:** Native to the Amazon River Basin.
- **Introduction:** Brought to tropical Asia and Africa by the British during colonial times.
- **Rubber Extraction:** Obtained as latex, a milky fluid that flows when the bark of the tree is tapped.
  - Latex is collected and processed to make natural rubber.
- **Climatic Conditions Required:**
  - Requires a tropical climate with annual rainfall of 200–300 cm, Temperature needed is 25°C to 34°C.
  - Grows best in deep, well-drained, lateritic soil. Requires good water retention capacity and organic matter.

About Rubber Board of India
- **Brief:** The Rubber Board of India is a statutory body under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
  - Established under the Rubber Act, 1947, the board focuses on the development, promotion, and research of the rubber industry in India.
- **Headquarters:** Kottayam, Kerala.
- **Mission and Objectives**
  - Development of the Rubber Sector.
  - Facilitate price stabilization and market access.
  - Promote domestic and export markets for natural rubber.
  - Undertake research on rubber cultivation, disease control, and high-yield varieties.
  - Provide training to rubber growers, tappers, and processors.

Source: TH

LOKPAL OF INDIA CELEBRATES 1ST FOUNDATION DAY

Context

- On January 16, 2025, the Lokpal of India celebrated its **Foundation Day**, marking 11 years since its inception on January 16, 2014, under the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.**

Historical Background

- The journey of Lokpal stems from:

  - **First Administrative Reforms Commission (1966):** Proposed a two-tier system with Lokpal at the Union level and Lokayuktas at the State level.

  - **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013:** Passed to establish statutory bodies to combat corruption in public offices.

  - **Inception:** Lokpal was officially constituted on January 16, 2014, with its first Chairperson, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghosh, appointed in 2019.

- India is also a signatory to the **United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2005)**, reflecting its commitment to combating corruption.

Lokpal: Mandate & Performance

- **Legal Authority:** The Lokpal derives its authority from the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, which mandates it to:

  - Investigate corruption allegations against public officials, including:
    - Prime Minister (with safeguards related to national security, public order, etc.).
    - Union Ministers, Members of Parliament, and all public servants.
    - Entities receiving foreign contributions above ₹10 lakh.
    - Exercise supervisory powers over CBI, ensuring accountability during investigations.

- **Composition:**

  - **Chairperson:** A former Chief Justice of India, Supreme Court Judge, or an eminent person with integrity and expertise.

  - **Members:** Up to 8 members, with at least 50% being judicial members and 50% from underrepresented groups (SC/ST/OBC, minorities, and women).

- **Appointment and Tenure:**

  - Appointed by the President of India based on recommendations from a Selection Committee (**PM as chairman, Speaker of LS, Leader of Opposition of LS, CJI or eminent jurist**).

  - **Term:** 5 years or until the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.

- **Achievements:**

  - Establishment of a prosecution wing to streamline corruption cases.

  - Enhanced oversight of public servants and central government-funded entities.

  - Promoted transparency and accountability through technology-driven processes.

Key Challenges Ahead of Lokpal

- **Delays in Appointments and Staffing:** The first Lokpal, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghosh, was appointed in March 2019, six years after the Act was passed.

  - The current Lokpal, Justice (retd) A.M. Khanwilkar, was appointed in March 2024.

  - The Lokpal has faced issues related to staffing and the appointment of key positions such as the Director of Inquiry and Director of Prosecution.

- **Investigations and Prosecutions: Nearly 90% of complaints** in the last five years were **rejected due to incorrect formats or other procedural issues.**

- **Coordination with Agencies:** The Lokpal relies on various investigative agencies for conducting probes.

  - Ensuring seamless cooperation and avoiding bureaucratic bottlenecks remain critical hurdles.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Infrastructure:** Enhancing staffing, budgetary allocations, and technological support will enable faster and more thorough investigations.

- **Improved Coordination:** Strengthening collaboration with other anti-corruption agencies, such as the CBI, can expedite case resolution.

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Educating the public about the Lokpal's role, jurisdiction, and procedures can encourage more citizens to come forward with complaints.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Regular public disclosures about ongoing investigations, within legal limits, can bolster trust in the institution.

Key Legislations in India pertaining to Anti-Corruption

- **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (Amended in 2018):** Criminalizes bribery and corruption by public officials and corporations.

  - Introduced stricter penalties and time-bound trials.

- **Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2014:** Protects whistleblowers and ensures confidentiality.

  - Penalizes threats or victimization of whistleblowers.

- **Right to Information Act, 2005:** Empowers citizens to access government information.

  - Promotes transparency and accountability in public offices.\

- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA):** Prevents money laundering and confiscates proceeds of crime.
  - Strengthens global cooperation in anti-money laundering efforts.
- **Companies Act, 2013:** Regulates corporate fraud and governance.
  - Introduces penalties for fraud and unethical practices.
- **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988 (Amended in 2016):** Criminalizes benami transactions to conceal property ownership.
  - Allows confiscation of benami properties.
- **Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) Act, 2015:** Targets undisclosed foreign income and assets.
  - Imposes heavy penalties and prosecution for offenders.
- **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018:** Addresses economic offenders fleeing the country.
  - Allows confiscation of assets for offenses over ₹100 crore.

Source: TH

UNREST AGAINST MARTIAL LAW IN SOUTH KOREA

Context

- Recently, South Korea experienced significant political turmoil following President Yoon Suk-yeol's declaration of martial law.

About

- The President was **impeached on 15th December.**
  - The criticism against the President was on rise since he took office in 2022.
  - He was criticised for several of his domestic and foreign policies, including reports of interference in investigations into allegations of corruption against his wife.
- The declaration of Martial Law by the President was seen **as an attempt to subvert the democratic system.**

Political History of South Korea

- **Between 1910-1945,** S.Korea was subjected to **brutal colonial rule under the Japanese Empire.**
- **Towards the end of the Second World War,** the US proposed dividing the Korean peninsula

into two occupation zones divided at the **38th parallel:** the **Soviet Union controlling the North and the US controlling the South**.

- **Post Independence:** The United States appointed and supported the former head of the Korean Provisional Government, Rhee Syngman, as leader.
  - **In 1948,** Rhee won the first presidential elections of the newly declared Republic of Korea, but engaged in **authoritarian control**.
- **End of Autocratic Rule:** For the next 12 years, Rhee would rule South Korea as an autocratic leader, till a **student uprising in 1960 forcing him to resign.**
- **Military Coup:** In 1961, Major-General Park Chung Hee organised and led a military coup.
  - He remained South Korea's president for 18 years, and introduced the **Yushin Constitution,** which created dictatorship. He was assassinated in 1979.
  - Chun Doo-Hwan, a brigadier general, came into power by a military coup, he forced South Korea's national cabinet to extend **martial law to the whole nation.**
- **Gwangju Uprising 1980:** A student-led protest against the military government, the military committed brutal violence against protestors.
  - Authoritarian rule under Chun continued in South Korea till 1987.
- **June Democratic Struggle of 1987,** led to the democratisation of South Korea.
  - In 1988, with the appointment of **Roh Tae-woo as President of South Korea,** the country began moving on the path of becoming a liberal democracy.
- The memories of the years of dictatorship, is why Yoon's political survivability became uncertain even though he lifted martial law a day after imposing it.

What is Martial Law?

- It refers to a **temporary imposition of direct military control** over civilian administration.
  - The military takes over functions such as **policing, judicial processes, and even governance.**
- **Grounds:** Emergencies, such as war, rebellion, or natural disasters.
  - It has been invoked to maintain order when governments are overwhelmed or incapacitated.
- **Critics:** It often undermines democracy, as it can lead to abuses of power, suppression of dissent, and prolonged authoritarianism.

- **Countries Having Provisions:** South Korea, the United States, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Thailand.

Does India have Martial Law?

- **The term "martial law"** is not explicitly defined in the Indian Constitution.

- **Article 34** mentions restriction on rights while martial law is in force in any area.
  - It does not provide explicit grounds or a process for declaring martial law itself.

- It is considered a last resort, and **India has never officially declared martial law since independence.**

- **Emergency Provisions:** India relies on constitutional emergency provisions under Article 352 (national emergency), 356 (state emergency), and 360 (financial emergency) to manage extraordinary situations.
  - These measures have drawn criticism for overreach in the past, such as during the Emergency of 1975-77.

- **SC Ruling:** The Supreme Court has ruled that even during emergencies, certain rights, such as habeas corpus, cannot be suspended outright, indicating that any future invocation of martial law would still be subject to **judicial scrutiny.**

Conclusion

- Martial law is a double-edged sword. While it may restore order in chaotic situations, it **risks violating fundamental rights** and eroding democratic norms.

- For citizens, understanding its implications is crucial, as history shows that it often walks a **fine line between necessity and authoritarianism.**

Source: IE

NATIONAL BROADBAND MISSION 2.0

Context

- The Department of Telecommunications launched the vision document for the **National Broadband Mission (NBM) 2.0**.
  - It aims to build upon the foundation laid by **NBM 1.0 (2019-2024).**

Broadband Connectivity in India

- In **2023**, India had **83.22 crore** broadband connections, with 79.98 crore being wireless and 3.23 crore being wireline.

- India witnessed a **200% increase** in internet subscriptions in **rural areas** and a **158% increase** in **urban areas** between **2015 and 2021.**

- The **NBM 1.0** accelerated growth in digital infrastructure, especially in rural areas, bridging the digital divide.

Broadband connection types

- **Wired broadband:** Broadband delivered through optical fiber cables.

- **Wireless broadband:** Broadband delivered through radio links.

- **Digital Subscriber Line (DSL):** Broadband delivered through copper lines.

NBM 2.0: Vision and Objectives

- The new phase of the National Broadband Mission builds on NBM 1.0 and sets ambitious goals for 2030 to ensure affordable and reliable broadband access across India.

- **Key Objectives:**
  - **Expand Optical Fiber Connectivity:** Extend Optical Fiber Cable (OFC) to 2.70 lakh villages by 2030, from around 50,000 villages currently.
    - Maintain 95% uptime for OFC networks.
  - **Anchor Institution Connectivity:** Provide broadband to 90% of anchor institutions such as schools, PHCs, Anganwadi Centers, and Panchayat offices.
  - **Enhanced Broadband Speeds:** Increase the national average fixed broadband download speed to a minimum of 100 Mbps by 2030.
  - **5G Rollout and 6G Preparedness:** Facilitate the nationwide rollout of 5G networks while laying the groundwork for future 6G technologies.
  - **Leverage Power Sector Infrastructure:** Utilize Optical Ground Wire (OPGW) from the power sector to boost connectivity, particularly for critical situations like disasters, wars, and emergencies.

NBM 2.0 Impact

- **Digital Inclusion:** Bridge the digital divide, especially in rural and underserved areas, ensuring equitable access to digital resources.

- **Education and Healthcare:** Broadband in schools and healthcare centers will promote e-learning, telemedicine, and other digital services.

- **Economic Growth:** Infrastructure development will generate employment and stimulate economic activity in both rural and urban regions.

- **Disaster Management:** Leveraging OPGW infrastructure will enhance communication resilience during natural disasters and emergencies.

- **Technological Advancement:** Adoption of 5G and 6G networks will position India as a leader in global digital innovation.

Way Ahead

- **Affordable Internet Services:** Ensure broadband remains affordable to increase adoption across all socio-economic groups.

- **Strengthen Collaboration:** Partner with private sector players to fast-track digital infrastructure development.

- **Invest in Digital Literacy:** Launch initiatives to improve digital literacy, enabling citizens to leverage connectivity effectively.

- **Policy Support:** Implement supportive policies to streamline processes, such as Right of Way (RoW) approvals, to minimize delays.

Source: TH

NEW WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDER WDC-PMKSY 2.0

Context

- The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has approved 56 new Watershed Development Projects across 10 high-performing states, with a budget of Rs. 700 crore.

Watershed Development Component of PMKSY (WDC-PMKSY)

- **The Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)** was launched in 2009-10.

- IWMP was later merged with **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)** in **2015-16** as WDC-PMKSY.

- The Government continued WDC-PMKSY as '**WDC-PMKSY 2.0**' from **2021-26** with a physical target of **49.50 lakh hectares** and a financial outlay of **Rs. 8,134 crore.**

    - WDC-PMKSY 2.0 will be **implemented in** Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim.

What is Watershed?

- A watershed is an area of land that channels **rainfall, snowmelt, and runoff** into a common body of water.

- **Watershed development** refers to the **management and conservation** of water resources within a defined watershed, to improve water availability, enhance soil fertility, and promote sustainable land use.

Significance of Watershed Development

- **Improved Water Availability:** By focusing on enhancing groundwater recharge through rainwater harvesting, as well as increasing the capacity for surface water storage in ponds, check dams, and other structures, the project helps improve water availability.

    - **The World Bank** watershed management projects in **Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Karnataka** have been successful in arid zones, rain-fed lowlands, and higher elevation sites.

- **Sustainable Agriculture:** Watershed development helps in curbing soil erosion and improving soil fertility, which are vital for maintaining healthy agricultural ecosystems.

- **Economic Upliftment:** It creates opportunities for livelihood generation through activities like afforestation, fisheries, water harvesting, and agro-based industries.

- **Resilience to Climate Variability:** Climate change has made rainfall patterns increasingly erratic, leading to unpredictable droughts and floods. Watershed development plays a critical role in building resilience to such climate-induced challenges.

Way Ahead

- **Better Integration of Technology:** The use of modern technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Remote Sensing (RS), and drones for mapping watersheds enhance the efficiency and impact of watershed management.

- **Collaboration Between Stakeholders:** Effective coordination among central and state governments, local bodies, NGOs, and farmers is crucial for the successful implementation of watershed development projects.

    - **Public-private partnerships,** where corporations, research institutions, and local governments collaborate, could further enhance the scope and impact of watershed development initiatives.

Source: PIB

DISCOVERY OF SEMI-DIRAC FERMION

Context

- Physicists have theorized the existence of a unique particle called the semi-Dirac fermion.

About

- The **semi-Dirac fermion** is a **quasiparticle** that behaves differently depending on its direction of travel—**massless in one direction** but **possessing mass when moving the other way.**
    - It was discovered in **zirconium silicon sulfide**, a crystalline material.
- This phenomenon occurs when the particle derives its energy from its motion, making it almost pure energy traveling at the speed of light.

What is a Quasiparticle?

- A quasiparticle is a concept used to describe how a group of particles interact in a system.
- Quasiparticles are **not actual particles**, but rather a **way to model the collective behavior of particles** as if they were a single particle.
- One type of quasiparticle is called a semi-Dirac fermion.

Types of Particles

- **Elementary Particles:** These are the smallest, most basic particles. For example, quarks, leptons, and gauge bosons.
- **Composite Particles:** Made up of elementary particles. The most famous examples are protons and neutrons (made of quarks).

Fundamentals of Particles

- Particles are broadly classified as;
    - **Fermions:** These particles make up matter and have half-integer spins (e.g., electrons, protons, and neutrons).
    - **Bosons:** These particles mediate fundamental forces between matter, such as photons for electromagnetic force and gluons for the strong force. Bosons have integer spins.

Source: TH

THIRD LAUNCHPAD AT SATISH DHAWAN SPACE CENTER

In News

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the establishment of the **Third Launch Pad (TLP)** at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

About launchpad

- It refers to a platform or area used to launch rockets or other vehicles into space.
- Currently, India relies on two launch pads: **First Launch Pad (FLP) and Second Launch Pad (SLP).**
    - FLP has been operational for 30 years, supporting PSLV and SSLV.
    - SLP, operational for 20 years, primarily supports GSLV and LVM3, and is preparing for the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission.

Third Launch Pad (TLP)

- TLP will be designed to support **Next Generation Launch Vehicles (NGLV)**, **LVM3** vehicles with Semi-cryogenic stages, and scaled-up NGLV configurations.
- It will involve significant industry participation and utilize ISRO's experience from earlier launch pad establishments. The facilities at the existing launch complex will be shared to maximize efficiency.
- **Target :** The project is targeted to be completed within 48 months (4 years).
- **Expenditure**: The total fund requirement is Rs. 3984.86 Crore for the establishment of the TLP and associated facilities.

Benefits

- The project will benefit the Indian Space ecosystem by enabling higher launch frequencies and supporting human spaceflight and space exploration missions.
- It will act as a standby launch pad for the Second Launch Pad (SLP) at Sriharikota.
- It will enhance launch capacity for future human spaceflight missions.

Satish Dhawan Space Center:

- SDSC SHAR is located in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, on a spindle-shaped island between the **Pulicat Lake and the Bay of Bengal.**
- It is the Spaceport of India, a leading centre of ISRO, and provides world-class launch infrastructure for satellite and launch vehicle missions for national and international customers.
    - **Renaming:** The centre, originally known as SHAR (Sriharikota Range), was renamed in 2002 to honor Prof. Satish Dhawan, former ISRO Chairman.

- **Operational Launch:** SDSC SHAR became operational on October 9, 1971, with the launch of 'Rohini-125', a small sounding rocket.

- **Selection of Sriharikota as the Launch Site:** The search for a launch site began in the 1960s under Vikram Sarabhai, the founder of India's space program.

- **Reasons for Choosing Sriharikota: East Coast Location** facilitates rocket launches eastward, taking advantage of Earth's rotation to increase payload capacity.
    - **Proximity to the Equator** enhances launch efficiency for satellites, especially geostationary ones.
    - **Safety:** Largely uninhabited, the area is close to the sea, allowing rockets to be launched over the ocean, minimizing risk from rocket debris.

Future Vision

- The expanded vision of the Indian Space Programme includes the **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2035 and an Indian Crewed Lunar Landing by 2040.**
    - New, heavier launch vehicles with advanced propulsion systems are required, which cannot be supported by the existing launch pads.
- Establishing the Third Launch Pad is essential to meet future space transportation needs for the next 25-30 years.

Do you know?

- Satish Dhawan was born in Srinagar and he was a renowned Indian rocket scientist, known as the 'Father of Experimental Fluid Dynamics' in India.

- He succeeded Vikram Sarabhai as ISRO Chairman in 1972.

- Under his leadership, ISRO achieved significant milestones, including operational systems like INSAT (telecommunications), IRS (remote sensing), and PSLV, positioning India as a space-faring nation.

Source :IE

═══ NEWS IN SHORT ═══

KOKBOROK

Context

- **Kokborok day** is celebrated by the Indigenous Tripuri people of the state of Tripura on **19th January each year.**

About

- **Significance:** It commemorates the rich cultural heritage, history, and linguistic contributions of the Kokborok language, which is the mother tongue of the Tripuri people.

- It was first recognised as an **official state language of Tripura in 1979.**
    - Other official languages of Tripura are Bengali and English.

- Tripura has rolled out a **language mapping drive to boost Kokborok in schools.**

Source: TH

KUKA MOVEMENT

In Context

- The **Kuka Movement**, also known as the **Namdhari Movement**, emerged in the 19th century as a Sikh religious and socio-political reform movement.

About

- **Origin**: Namdhari sect was founded by **Satguru Ram Singh** on **April 12, 1857**, at **Bhaini Sahib**. He was the secular chief of Namdhari Sect.
    - Followers were called **"Kukas"** due to their **high-pitched recitation of Gurbani**, referred to as "**Kook**" in Punjabi.
- **Leadership**: Led by **Satguru Ram Singh**, supported by **Kuka Hira Singh** and **Lehna Singh**.
- **Core Objectives**: Advocated for **spiritual reform** and **social justice**.
    - Opposed British rule and promoted **self-reliance** through the boycott of British goods and institutions.
    - Protested **cow slaughter**, reflecting their religious and cultural values.

Kuka Movement's Escalation

- **Clash with Authorities**: On **January 15, 1872**, the Kukas attacked the **Malaudh Fort** in Ludhiana district, confronting British officials. Later, Britisher executed Kukas.

- **Exile of Leaders**: **Satguru Ram Singh** and other Kuka leaders were exiled to **Rangoon (present-day Myanmar)**, where they remained until their deaths.

Post-Movement Contributions

1. **Publications**: The Kukas launched **'Satyug'** in **1920** and the daily **'Kuka'** in **1922** to spread their ideology.

2. **Support for Non-Cooperation Movement**: The Kukas aligned with **Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement**, contributing to the broader freedom struggle.

Significance

- **Early Resistance**: The Kuka Movement was among the **first organized revolts** against British rule in Punjab.
- **Combination of social and freedom goals**: Inspired **self-reliance**, **civil disobedience**, and **social reform**.

Source: TH

GULF OF ADEN AND RED SEA

Context

- Rising threats in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and East African waters have led the Indian Navy to enhance its presence and ensure secure sea routes.

Gulf of Aden

- It is a deepwater gulf located between **Yemen** on the **Arabian Peninsula** and Somalia in the Horn of Africa.
- It connects the **Arabian Sea** to the **Red Sea** through the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait**.

Red Sea

- It is a narrow, elongated sea separating the **Arabian Peninsula** from **Africa.**
- It extends from the **Suez Canal** in the north to the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait** in the south.
- **Bordering countries:** Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen.

Strategic Importance

- **Global Trade Route:** Together, they form a critical maritime route connecting the Indian Ocean to the **Mediterranean Sea via the Suez Canal**.
- **Energy Supply Chain:** Major pathway for oil and **liquefied natural gas (LNG)** shipments, with nearly **10%** of global oil trade passing through the Bab el-Mandeb.
- **Chokepoint Vulnerability:** Bab el-Mandeb is a strategic chokepoint, and any disruption could impact global trade and energy security.

Source: TH

BHARATHAPUZHA RIVER

Context

- In a tragic incident, members of a family drowned in the **Bharathapuzha river** at Cheruthuruthy.

About

- The Bharathapuzha River, also known as the **Nila River or Ponnani River,** is the **second longest river** in Kerala after Periyar.
- **Length:** 209 km (Approx).
- **Origin:** Anamalai Hills, Tamil Nadu.
- **Tributaries:** Gayathripuzha, Kannadipuzha, Kalpathipuzha, Thuthapuzha.
- **Drainage Area:** Covers parts of **Kerala and Tamil Nadu.**
- **Significance:** Houses several ancient temples along its banks, including the Thiruvilwamala Temple.
  - Known for the **Kerala Kalamandalam,** a center for traditional arts located on its banks.

Source: DH

ZOMBIE DEER DISEASE (CWD)

In News

- A recent study has concluded that humans are not at significant risk of contracting the deadly **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), often referred to as Zombie Deer Disease.**

Zombie Deer Disease (CWD)

- It is also known as **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).**
- It is a deadly, neurological illness that affects deer, elk, moose, reindeer, and muntjac.
  - It may also affect some other members of the Cervidae family.
- **Human Infection Risk:** CWD is caused by prions, infectious proteins, and there are concerns about the disease potentially jumping to humans, particularly through the consumption of infected meat.
  - However, no confirmed human cases have been reported.
- **Transmission :** CWD prions spread through body fluids such as saliva, blood, urine, and feces, either by direct contact or environmental contamination.
  - Once present, prions remain infectious for years in soil, water, and plants.

- **Impact :** Infected animals may appear healthy for months or years, during which they can spread the disease. As the disease progresses, animals become debilitated and die.
  - The speed of progression varies by species and the animal's genetics.

Source: ET

NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS

In News

- The President of India recently presented the **National Sports Awards 2024**, honoring exceptional contributions to sports and adventure in India.

Award Categories

- **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award**:
  - **India's highest sporting honor**, established in **1991-92**.
  - Recognizes outstanding performance over a period of **four years**.
  - **Named After**: Major Dhyan Chand (1905–79), an iconic hockey legend who led India to **three consecutive Olympic gold medals** (1928, 1932, and 1936).
  - **2024 Awardees**:
    - **Gukesh D** (Chess)
    - **Harmanpreet Singh** (Hockey)
    - **Praveen Kumar** (Para-Athletics)
    - **Manu Bhaker** (Shooting)
- **Arjuna Award**:
  - Established in **1961** for **consistent performance** over the past **four years**.
  - **Named After**: Arjuna, the legendary warrior from the Indian epic *Mahabharata*.

- **First Recipient**: **P.K. Banerjee** (Football).
- **Dronacharya Award**:
  - Instituted in **1985**, this is **India's highest honor for coaches**.
  - Awarded for **producing medal winners** at prestigious international events.
  - **Named After**: Dronacharya, the guru of Arjuna in *Mahabharata*.
  - **First Female Recipient**: **Renu Kohli** (Athletics).
- **Major Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement**:
  - Instituted in **2002** for **lifetime contributions to sports**.
  - **First Recipients**:
    - **Shahuraj Birajdar** (Boxing)
    - **Ashok Diwan** (Hockey).
- **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy**:
  - The **oldest National Sports Award**, instituted in **1956–57**.
  - Named in honor of **Shri Abul Kalam Azad**, India's first Education Minister and a freedom fighter.
  - **First Recipient**: **Bombay University**.
- **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar**:
  - Instituted in **2009**, awarded to **organizations**, **corporates**, and **individuals** for significant contributions to **sports promotion and development** over the past **three years**.
- **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award**:
  - Introduced in **2004** to honor achievements in **adventure sports**.
  - Recognizes contributions across **land, water, air, and lifetime adventure categories**.

Source: PIB

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