

Prelim Bits 02-05-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Bihan Mela

A seed festival aims to help tribal Kondh farmers in Odisha return to their agricultural traditions

Features

- Bihan Mela, literally the seed festival, participated by farmers from as many as 40 villages in members of the Kondh tribe in Odisha's Nayagarh district.
- Preparations begin as soon as farmers have harvested kharif crops, which includes both hybrid and indigenous varieties of paddy, millets, maize and sorghum.
- Women, who are at the helm of this festival, carefully collect seeds of the indigenous varieties and store them in earthen pots.
- Then, on a designated day in December, they decorate the pots with red and white motifs, place them in a bamboo basket and carry it on head to the village where the fair is being organised.
- The fair mimics a traditional market where farmers used to exchange seeds.
- Even in dongars or hilltops, where families used to practice mixed cropping until recently, have shifted to monoculture cash crops like cashew.
- This has not only affected their food and nutritional security, but also degraded the soil and made the farmers more vulnerable to crop loss.
- "The seed festival was thus introduced to help farmers return to their traditional ways of farming like mixed-cropping.

Reference

1. [Down To Earth | Bihan Mela](#)

Laundromat countries

India leads five countries named as the "Laundromat" countries that buy Russian oil and sell processed products to European countries, sidestepping European sanctions against Russia.

Issues

- The five countries are responsible for 70 per cent of Russia's crude oil exports.
- They are India, China, United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Turkey
- Price cap coalition countries have increased imports of refined oil products from countries that have become the largest importers of Russian crude.
- The Price Cap Coalition comprising Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- India emerged as the leading exporter of refined oil products at 3.7 million tonnes to

Price Cap Coalition countries in 2022.

- Among laundromat countries, India, which in April remained the highest global consumer of seaborne Russian crude.
- The EU was the largest importer of oil products from these laundromat countries worth €17.7 billion, despite partially banning crude oil imports from Russia last year.

Reference

1. [The Hindu | Laundromat Countries](#)

ASEAN India maritime exercise (AIME-2023)

Indian Naval Ships Satpura and Delhi arrived at Singapore to participate in the Inaugural ASEAN India Maritime Exercise (AIME-2023)

Salient features

- The AIME-2023, scheduled to be held in two phases.
- The Harbor Phase of the exercise is scheduled to be held at Changi Naval Base and the Sea Phase will be conducted in the South China Sea.
- The exercise will provide an opportunity for Indian Navy and ASEAN navies to work closely and conduct seamless operations in the maritime domain.
- The ships, during their port call at Singapore, will also participate in the International Maritime Defence Exhibition (IMDEX-23) and International Maritime Security Conference being hosted by Singapore.
- INS Delhi, India's first indigenously-built guided missile destroyer.
- INS Satpura, an indigenously-built guided missile stealth frigate are a part of Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam.

Reference

1. [The New Indian Express | AIME-2023](#)

Sonorous submarine

Researchers have recorded the bustling sounds of marine organisms in coral reefs off the coast of south Goa to understand their behavior.

- The researchers from the Indian Council of Scientific and Industrial Research's National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) used hydrophones to eavesdrop on underwater organisms in a reef in the Arabian Sea.
- Hydrophones are a low-cost means of monitoring species.
- If the coral reef system is healthy, fish will be there and the presence of soniferous (sound-producing) fish will generate sound.
- The technology can help researchers to study the abundance, diversity and behaviour of organisms.
- It can also reveal how they respond to climate change and anthropogenic disturbances.
- Soniferous fish represent a group of vocal vertebrates that produce sounds during various social interactions.

- Hydrophones also pick up the sounds of wind (50-20,000 Hz) and oceanic traffic (10-10,000 Hz).
- The technology compares the recorded sounds with archival information to distinguish calls coming from fish species or families.
- Fish communication is more active in the pre-monsoon than in the post-monsoon season.
- Hydrophones help in examining how marine life responds to climate change and anthropogenic activities.

Reference

1. [Down To Earth | Sonorous Submarine](#)

YUVA tourism club

Tourism Ministry to undertake special initiative of 100 Episodes of Mann ki Baat-100 days of Action through the Yuva Tourism Clubs

About the club

- The vision of YUVA Tourism Clubs is to nurture and develop young ambassadors of Indian tourism, appreciate our rich cultural heritage and develop an interest and passion for tourism.
- These young ambassadors would be catalysts for promoting tourism in India.
- Participation in Tourism Clubs is also expected to facilitate development of soft skills like teamwork, management, leadership.
- It also encourages adoption of responsible tourism practices and concern for sustainable tourism.
- The establishment of Yuva Tourism Clubs was initiated in schools, colleges and Indian Hotel Management institutions in connection with the Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav celebrations.

Reference

1. [PIB | Yuva Tourism Club](#)