

Prelim Bits 06-02-2017

Pangolin

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- Pangolins are nocturnal mammals, often called “scaly anteaters,” are covered in tough, overlapping scales.

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- These burrowing mammals eat ants and termites using an extraordinarily long tongue, and are able to quickly roll themselves up into a tight ball when threatened.

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- There are eight different pangolin species can be found across Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

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- They are the most trafficked mammal in the world.

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- They are hunted for the bush meat and their scales made of keratin used in traditional medicines.

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- Recently, UN's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, known as CITES, placed the eight species of pangolin on the convention's "Appendix I".

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- Thus adding pangolins under "Appendix I" will prohibits any cross-border movement in the animals or their body parts for commercial purposes.

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CITES

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- CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals.
- It is also known as the Washington Convention.
- Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species in the wild.
- It accords varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 species of animals and plants.
- Participation is voluntary, and countries that have agreed to be bound by the Convention are known as Parties.
- Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties, it does not take the place of national laws. Rather it provides a framework respected by each Party, which must adopt their own domestic legislation to implement CITES at the national level.
- Recently, Pangolin and **Barbary macaques**, the only wild primate north of the Sahara, were given "Appendix I" protection.

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New rail line in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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- A 240 - KM broad-gauge railway line connecting Port Blair with Diglipur in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

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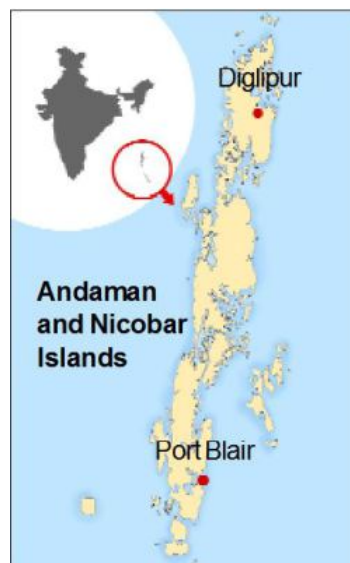
- It is the first in the country that will bring the archipelago on the rail map.

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- The project will connect the Union Territory's capital city in the south with the largest town on the north Andaman island.

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- It is will be of strategic importance to the defense forces because Diglipur is just 300 km by sea from the southern coast of Myanmar

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- Among the major tourist attractions in Diglipur are the Ross and Smith islands.

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The Blue Carbon Initiative

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- The Blue Carbon Initiative is a global program working to mitigate climate change through the restoration and sustainable use of coastal and marine

ecosystems.

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- The Initiative is coordinated by Conservation International (CI), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO).

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- Blue carbon is the carbon stored in coastal and marine ecosystems.

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- The Blue Carbon Initiative currently focuses on carbon in coastal ecosystems - mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses, which are found on every continent except Antarctica.

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