

Prelim Bits 06-10-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

The State of the World's Amphibians, 2023

A new study, based on the 2nd global amphibian assessment (**GAA2**), revealed that climate change posed the greatest threat to amphibians.

- The “*State of the World’s Amphibians: The Second Global Amphibian Assessment*” is a comprehensive synthesis of the current global status of our planet’s amphibians.
- The Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA) is a recurring initiative that comprehensively assesses all known amphibian species for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN Red List).
- **Initiation of GAA2** - In 2015 by Amphibian Red List Authority.

Amphibian Red List Authority (ARLA)

- **Establishment** - 2009
- **Branch** - Under Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) of the IUCN’s Species Survival Commission.
- **Aim** - To assess the conservation status of amphibian species in the world.
- **Managed by** - Re:wild, a wildlife conservation group.

IUCN Species Survival Commission in July 2023 signed an MoU with the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) to set up the South Asia’s first-ever Center for Species Survival (CSS) in India.

Highlights of the report

- **Extinction** - More than 300 amphibians came closer to extinction, between 2004 and 2022.
 - 2 out of every 5 amphibians are threatened with extinction.
 - 3 out every 5 Salamanders are threatened making them as the most threatened group of amphibians.
- **Threats** - 41% of amphibians are globally threatened with extinction making them the most threatened vertebrate group.
- **Reasons** -
 - Habitat Loss
 - Climate Change
 - Disease
 - Fire
 - Invasive species
 - Over-exploitation
- Neotropics is the most threatened realm.

The Neotropical realm is one of the 8 biogeographic realms which physically includes the tropical terrestrial ecoregions of the Americas and the entire South American temperate zone.

- **Climate Captives** - Amphibians are unable to move very far to escape the climate change-induced extreme weather events.
- **Signs of Recovery** - It is observed in some areas where critical habitat has been protected.

Biogeographic Realms



References

1. [The Hindu | Global Amphibian Assessment Report](#)
2. [IUCN | GAA2](#)

Udangudi Panangkarupatti

Udangudi 'Panangkarupatti' (palm jaggery/ gur) has been given a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

- Karupukatti is a hard and golden brown coarse sugar which is added to food items as sweetener.

A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

- This jaggery is prepared from the sap (Pathaneer) which is extracted from the Palmyra tree.

Palmyrah (Borassus flabellifer) is the state tree of Tamil Nadu.

- It is prepared in traditional way till date without any additional modern strategies.
- No chemical additives like Triple super phosphate and phosphoric acid are used unlike other areas.
- It is also exported to foreign countries, including Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore.

Geographical uniqueness

- The jaggery is unique due to presence of red sand dune soil of this region.

- *Lower groundwater and atmospheric moisture* owing to dry conditions, enriches high sucrose content which in turn adds taste.
- The region's *dry climate* is also suitable for long duration storage.

References

[The Hindu| GI tag for Udangudi Panangkaruppati](#)

BlueWalker 3

Observations of the BlueWalker 3 prototype satellite show it is one of the brightest objects in the night sky, outshining all but the brightest stars.

- It is a *prototype satellite* of a satellite constellation belonging to *AST SpaceMobile*.
- Its antenna array is 64 square meters and is the *largest commercial antenna system* deployed in low Earth orbit.
- It is a predecessor to planned commercial satellites called *BlueBirds*.
- **Launch** - 2022
- **Objective** - To deliver mobile or broadband services anywhere in the world.
- It successfully relayed its first 5G connection to a smartphone in a cellular coverage gap on Earth.

Satellite Constellation Project	Owner
BlueBird satellites	AST SpaceMobile.
Starlink network	SpaceX
Project Kuiper	Amazon
OneWeb	ISRO & Uk's OneWeb Group

Issues with the Brightness of BlueWalker 3

- The large antenna helps bounce cell signals back and forth across the globe. It also reflects a lot of light back to Earth, making it appear so bright in the sky.
- **Data collection** - The streaks of satellites could mask objects in the vicinity of Earth.
- **Astronomical observations** - The light interferes with astronomical observations thus hampering the progress in understanding of the cosmos.
- **Hampers radio astronomy** - This happens as it uses *wavelengths close to those of radio telescopes*.
- **Biodiversity** - Light pollution also affects people's circadian rhythms and migratory patterns for other animals.

The North Star has a magnitude of plus-2 whereas BlueWalker 3 registered as bright as plus-0.4 with respect to the glow.

References

Nobel Prize in Literature, 2023

The Nobel Prize in Literature 2023 is awarded to the Norwegian author Jon Fosse for his innovative plays and prose which give voice to the unsayable.

- Fosse was born in 1959 in Norway and writes in Norwegian Nynorsk.

Bokmal and Nynorsk are the two different standards of writing in Norwegian language.

- His writings spans a variety of genres consisting of plays, novels, poetry collections, essays, children's books and translations.
- His style of writing novels famously known as '*Fosse minimalism*'.
- His work has been translated into more than 40 languages.

Notable works of Jon Fosse

- I Am the Wind
- Melancholy
- Boathouse
- The Dead Dogs
- A New Name: Septology VI-VII (finalist of the International Booker Prize, 2022)

*Last year, the Literature Nobel was awarded to French author **Annie Ernaux** for the courage and clinical acuity with which she uncovers the roots, estrangements and collective restraints of personal memory.*

References

1. [The Hindu| Nobel Prize in Literature 2023](#)
2. [The Indian Express | Nobel laureate Jon Fosse](#)

Sammakka Sarakka Jathara

*The Union cabinet has recently approved for the establishment of **Sarakka Central Tribal University** in Mulugu district of Telangana.*

- **Sammakka Sarakka Jathara** - It is a biennial festival conducted in Mulugu district of Telangana.
- The Jathara (pilgrimage) begins at Medaram where the rituals are conducted by the Koya priests.
- It was declared as a state festival in 1996 and is one of the most famous tribal festivals

in the world with *close to 1.5 crore attendees*.

Sammakka Sarakka Jathara is considered among the largest gatherings of tribal people in the world and is called as the Kumbh Mela of the tribals.

Historical Background

- The event commemorates the 13th-century battle of mother-daughter duo (Sammakka-Sarakka) against the local rulers.
- It is against the imposition of taxes on the Koya people.
- In the battle, Sarakka died, while Sammakka disappeared and believed to have metamorphosed into a vermillion casket.

The Ministry of Tourism, as a part of the Tribal Circuit under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, sanctioned Rs. 75.88 crore for the integrated development of a tribal circuit of Mulugu-Laknavaram-Medavaram-Tadvai-Damaravi-Mallur-Bogatha Waterfalls where the temple of Sammakka-Sarakka is located.

Central Tribal University

- Establishing tribal university in both Andhra and Telangana was accorded in *Andhra Pradesh Re-organisation Act of 2014*.
- Foundation stone for Central Tribal University near Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh was laid recently.
- It promote avenues of *higher education for the benefit of the tribal* population in the State.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ramappa Temple is located near Mulugu in Telangana.

References

1. [The Hindu | Samakka Saralamma Jatra](#)
2. [The Indian Express | Sarakka Central Tribal University](#)