

## **Prelim Bits 25-04-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs**

### **Earth Day, 2023**

*Every year, April 22 is celebrated as Earth Day, an annual event where people take time out to demonstrate their support for protecting the planet.*

- The theme for this year Earth Day is, “Invest in our planet”.
- The first Earth day was celebrated more than 50 years ago on April 22, 1970.
- The event was a wild success with more than 20 million Americans participating in it.
- The date of April 22 is selected because, it is the day of perfect intersection of fair springtime weather and suitability for a college student’s semester schedule.
- This year’s theme encourages all to invest in a better future for our planet by tackling environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and waste reduction.

### **References**

1. [PIB | Earth Day 2023](#)
2. [The Indian Express | Earth Day 2023](#)

### **Operation Kaveri**

*India has started ‘Operation Kaveri’ to evacuate its nationals from conflict-torn Sudan.*

- Operation Kaveri aims to bring back Indian citizens stranded in Sudan.
- Around 3,000 Indians are stuck in various parts of Sudan, including capital Khartoum and in distant provinces like Darfur.
- With the runways at the international airport in Khartoum being damaged, the sea route was the only option for evacuation in large numbers.
- India had earlier stationed two C-130J heavy-lift aircraft in Jeddah and sent INS Sumedha in Port Said for the operation.
- France also evacuated some Indian citizens while repatriating its own nationals from Sudan aboard military aircraft.

### **Reference**

1. [The Hindu | Operation Kaveri](#)

### **Wagner group**

*Since the beginning of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, news reports have indicated the presence of a mercenary group in the country.*

- Although known popularly as the Wagner Group, there is no corporation registered under that name, no recruitment centre, and no records about where its funding

comes from.

- The Wagner Group is a network of contractors that supply soldiers for hire.
- The group is said to have been founded by Dmitry Utkin, a former Special Forces officer, member of Russia's military intelligence service and a veteran of both Chechen wars.
- The Wagner Group first surfaced in 2014, during Russia's annexation of Crimea.
- There have been reports of its presence in the Middle East and Africa as well.
- The Wagner Group is helpful to Russia's war effort, as it can send these forces to Ukraine while simultaneously denying any relationship with them.
- Fighters from the Wagner Group have also been accused by Ukrainian officials of committing war crimes since the takeover of the Donbas region in 2014.
- Wagner Group forces have also been deployed in Syria, Libya, Central African Republic, Mali, Sudan and Mozambique.
- Human Rights Watch reported that Russian and Wagner Group forces appear to have summarily executed, tortured, and beaten civilians since 2019 in Central African Republic.

## Reference

1. [The Indian Express | Wagner Group](#)

## Biodiversity heritage sites in West Bengal

*Bengal has notified four more biodiversity heritage sites (BHS), taking the tally in the state to eight.*

- Bengal now has the highest number of biodiversity heritage parks in the country.
- The government has notified four latest biodiversity heritage parks:

1. Char Balidanga (Nadia),
2. Namthing Pokhari (Darjeeling),
3. Amkhoi Wood Fossil Park (Birbhum) and
4. State Horticulture Research and Development Station (Nadia)

## Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)

- BHS are defined areas with unique and ecologically fragile ecosystems with rich biodiversity.
- Under Section-37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, the State Government, along with local bodies, may notify areas of biodiversity importance as BHS.
- The State Government, in consultation with the Central Government, may frame rules for the conservation of BHS.

*In 2007, the Nallur Tamarind Grove in Karnataka, was designated as India's first BHS.*

## Reference

1. [The Times of India | Bio Diversity Heritage Sites](#)

## Sex Perfumes

*Researchers are engineering tobacco plants to produce moth pheromones that could potentially be used to create traps that can lure the insects as a replacement for harmful pesticides.*

- Scientists have engineered tobacco plants to produce insect sex perfumes, which can be used as an alternative to pesticides in farms.
- These plants could potentially be used to produce a more sustainable and less harmful alternative to pesticides.
- **Pheromones** - They are chemicals that are produced and released by animals. When they are released by an individual of a species, they affect the behavior of other individuals.
- Animals secrete these pheromones to trigger different kinds of behavior.
- The pheromones that trigger sexual arousal can be thought of as a kind of 'sex perfume,' attracting other individuals of the same species.
- The researchers engineered plants to produce chemicals that mimic these pheromones.
- **Insect pheromones** - They are considered as alternatives to pesticides as they are highly species-specific and do not affect pollinators or other beneficial species.
- Plants can be converted into green factories that can produce these pheromones that can potentially be used instead of environmentally-intensive and harmful pesticides.

## Reference

1. [The Indian Express | Sex Perfumes](#)

