

Prelim Bits 27-09-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Manis Mysteria

Scientists discovered a new pangolin species named Manis Mysteria.

Manis Mysteria

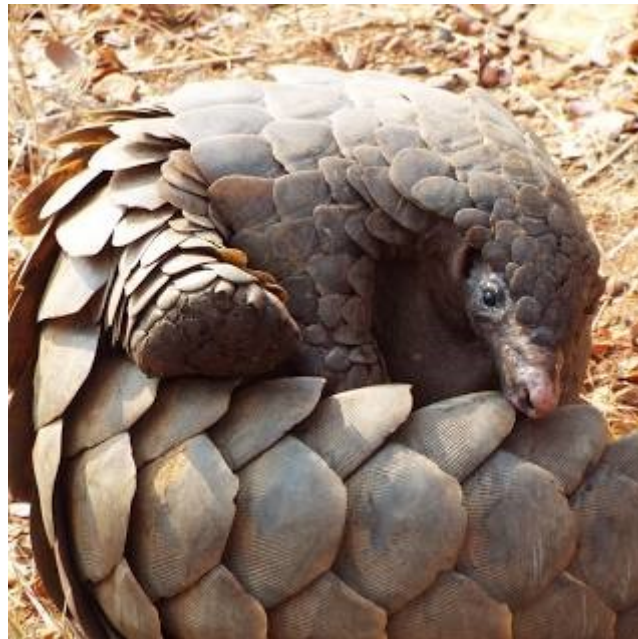
- **Findings** - Previously it was believed that there are eight species of pangolin (4 Asian and 4 African varieties).
- It is now updated to nine with the newly discovered pangolin named Manis Mysteria.
- **Manis Mysteria** - This species bears similarities to the Asian branch of the pangolin family, known as Manis.
- The researchers gave it the name Manis Mysteria, in reference to its enigmatic nature.
- **Origin** - Most of the Asian pangolins are thought to have originated in South-East Asia.
- **Threats** - The scales of this mammal, which is a victim of global trafficking, are coveted in particular for use in traditional medicine.
- The small animal is also highly prized for its meat.

More than one million pangolins are thought to have been poached in the wild between 2004 and 2014, but all international trade in the animal was banned in 2016.

Pangolins

- They are also called as scaly anteater.
- There are about 8 species of armored placental mammals of the family **Manidae**.
- The name pangolin, means rolling over, and often refers to the animal's habit of curling into a ball when threatened.
- Pangolins are nocturnal and have the ability to swim.
- Pangolins feed mainly on termites but also eat ants and other insects.
- **Threats** - All pangolin species have been hunted for their meat, and the organs, skin, scales, and other parts of the body are valued for their use in traditional medicine.
- As a result, all eight species have fallen to the point that they became **threatened with extinction** during the early 21st century.
- **IUCN status** - All eight pangolin species are protected under national and international laws.
 - **Critically Endangered** - Philippine Pangolin, Sunda Pangolin, Chinese Pangolin.
 - **Vulnerable** - Temminck's Pangolin.
 - **Endangered** - Indian Pangolin, White-bellied Pangolin.
- **Indian Pangolin** - Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and as

Endangered on IUCN Red List.



References

1. [The Hindu | Scientists uncover a new pangolin species](#)
2. [NY Times | Mystery Species Was Discovered](#)
3. [Brussels Times | Scientists discover a new species of pangolin](#)

Scheme for promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma MedTech Sector (PRIP)

Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Minister of Health & Family Welfare launched Scheme for promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma MedTech Sector (PRIP).

- **Aim** - To promote industry-academia linkage for R&D in priority areas and to inculcate the culture of quality research and nurture our pool of scientists.
- **Objective** - To transform Indian pharmaceuticals sector from cost based to innovation-based growth by strengthening the research infrastructure in the country.
- **Components**
 - **Component A** - Strengthening the research infrastructure by establishment of seven Centre of Excellences at National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER).
 - **Component B** - Promoting research in Pharma's 6 priority areas wherein financial assistance will be provided for both in- house and academic research.
- **Benefits**
 1. Development of Research Infrastructure.
 2. Promote collaboration between Private and Govt. institutes.
 3. Focus on strengthening India's position in the world market.
 4. Launching commercially viable products.
 5. Development of affordable primary healthcare.

National Policy on Research and Development and Innovation in Pharma-MedTech Sector in India

- **Aim** - To create an ecosystem of skills and capacities including the academia and the private sectors and give impetus to new talent among the youth through start-ups.

Indian pharmaceutical industry is the 3rd largest pharmaceutical industry in the world by volume with current market size of around USD 50 Billions.

- The policy aims to address the education and training including high end research & international co-operation and all matters relating to NIPERs.
- The policy aims to expand the industry's presence in the innovation space.
- High level Inter- departmental Committee has been constituted to draft and finalize Policy on R&D and Innovation in 2020.
- **3 main areas of focus to achieve the objectives:**
 1. To create a regulatory environment that facilitates innovation and research in product development, expanding the traditional regulatory objectives of safety and quality.
 2. To incentivize private and public investment in Innovation through a mix of fiscal and non-fiscal measures.
 3. To build an enabling ecosystem designed to support innovation and cross-sectoral research as a strong institutional foundation for sustainable growth in the sector.
- It is also proposed to set up an Indian Council of Pharmaceuticals and Med-tech Research and Development.
- **Advantages**
 - Higher contribution in the GDP of the 5 Trillion economy;
 - Increased exports and forex inflow;
 - Increase in global market share;
 - Increased drug security and availability;
 - Improvement of overall healthcare index and reduced disease burden;
 - Creation of high-end jobs in R&D and
 - Innovation and opportunity to attract back Indian talent with expertise in R&D and Innovation.

References

1. [PIB | Scheme for PRIP](#)
2. [The Hindu | Health Minister unveils Policy & Scheme for PRIP](#)

India-UN Capacity Building Initiative

India and UN Join Forces to Empower Global South with Capacity Building Initiative.

- **Event** - The announcement of this initiative took place during a special event titled India-UN for the *Global South-Delivering for Development*.
- **Aim** - To share India's development experiences, best practices and expertise with

partner countries in the 'Global South' through capacity building and training programs.

- This initiative builds upon India's extensive cooperation in development and capacity building with partner countries.
- **Partnership** - It builds upon existing extensive collaborations that India already has bilaterally with the partner countries.
- **Fund** - It complements the India-UN partnership through the ***India-UN Development Partnership Fund***.
- This initiative will witness a collaboration between the UN India team and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, leveraging India's Technical and Economic Cooperation platform.
- This initiative will operationalize the development-focused objectives of India's G20 Presidency, including the G20 Action Plan for Accelerating Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Global South comprises countries in the regions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia (excluding Israel, Japan, and South Korea), and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

References

1. [Financial Express | India, UN Join Forces to Empower Global South](#)
2. [India Today | India, UN launch capacity building initiative](#)
3. [The Times of India | India, UN launch capacity building initiative](#)

Global Security Initiative (GSI)

Nepal rejected calls from China to join Global Security Initiative (GSI).

- It is a China-led framework to restore stability and security in Asia,
 - The initiative aims to counter-narrative to U.S. leadership.
 - **Aim** - To eliminate the root causes of international conflicts, improve global security governance, encourage joint international efforts and promote durable peace and development in the world.
 - **Major Pillars of GSI** - Mutual respect, Openness and inclusion, Multilateralism, Mutual benefit, Holistic approach.
 - **Principles**
1. Stay committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.
 2. Stay committed to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries.
 3. Stay committed to abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.
 4. Stay committed to taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously.
 5. Stay committed to peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation.
 6. Stay committed to maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains.

The Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) are 3 key new initiatives of China's foreign policy.

China - Nepal Ties

- The flagship cross-border railway from ***Lhasa to Kathmandu*** which was once dismissed is now agreed between the two countries to strengthen connectivity.
- Both countries agreed to jointly build the ***Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network***.
- They welcomed the opening of the Lizi-Nechung port and the reopening of the Zhangmu-Khasa port to passenger services.

Reference

[The Hindu | Global Security Initiative](#)

Change in Angel Tax Rules

The government has eased some of the provisions of the angel tax introduced in this year's Budget by non-resident investors.

Angel tax

- Angel taxes are taxes funds raised by startups if they exceed the fair market value of the company.
- It is a 30% tax that is levied on the funding received by startups from an external investor.

An angel investor is usually a high-net-worth individual who funds start-ups at the early stages, often with their own money.

- Section 56(2) VII B of the Income Tax Act colloquially known as the angel tax was first introduced in 2012.
- **Aim** - To discourage laundering of unaccounted money via unlisted firms disguised as capital investments.
- The tax covers investment in any private business entity and startups.
- **Exemptions** - The only classes of investors whose investments are exempted from angel tax are
 1. SEBI-registered CAT I and II AIFs (alternate investment fund)
 2. IFSCA-registered CAT I and II AIFs (under the IFSCA FME Regulations, 2022)

Changes

- The changes to the Angel tax were notified by the Central Board of Direct Taxes, Ministry of Finance.
- **Amendment** - Rule 11UA under the Income Tax Act.
- The rules outlines the valuation methods for non-resident and resident investors under

the new angel tax mechanism in the Finance Act 2023.

- Earlier, it was imposed only on investments made by a resident investor.
- The notification has introduced an additional sub-clause addressing ***Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS)***.

CCPS is a type of Preferred Share/Stock that gives holders the Option to Convert their Preference Shares into a Fixed Number of Equity Shares of the issuing company after a specified date/ event.

- It has introduced 5 different valuation methods for shares and offered a 10% tolerance for deviations from the accepted share valuations.
- **5 different methods** - Comparable company multiple method, probability weighted expected return method, option pricing method, milestone analysis method and replacement cost methods.

References

1. [The Hindu | Centre seeks to soften angel tax](#)
2. [The Hindu Business line | FinMin notifies valuation methods](#)
3. [Business Today | Finance Ministry notifies final angel tax rules](#)

