

Prelim Bits 31-12-2017

Narcondam Hornbill

\n\n

\n

- The Narcondam hornbill (*Rhyticeros narcondami*) is a small, distinctive, dark hornbill, measuring 45 to 50 cm in length.

\n

- They are monogamous, non-migratory resident birds showing sexual dimorphic.

\n

- This species is endemic to the tiny (6.8 sq.kilometers) dormant volcanic island of Narcondam, forming part of the Andaman Islands, India.

\n

- It is resident in fairly open mixed forest, which covers most of the island, from sea-level to the peak

\n

- This hornbill is listed as “**Endangered**” in IUCN red list and CITES Appendix II.

\n

- It is protected under the Wildlife Protection Act and Narcondam Island is a wildlife sanctuary, near Myanmar’s Coco Island.

\n

- The Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) of these hornbill species in India is the Narcondam Island Wildlife Sanctuary.

\n

- Its population appears to be stable despite some degree of hunting and habitat degradation.

\n

\n\n



\n\n

Narcondam Hornbill

\n\n

Mission Seven Summits

\n\n

- \n
- It is a unique series of **mountaineering expedition** launched by Indian Air Force (IAF).
- \n
- The mission's aim is to fly the tricolour and the IAF flag on the highest peaks in every continent.
- \n
- A team of Mountaineers recently scaled Mt Vinson in Antarctica. With this, IAF becomes the first organisation in India to achieve this unique feat.
- \n

\n\n

World's First Photovoltaic Highway

\n\n

\n

- World's first solar highway in Jinan, the capital city of China's Shandong province was recently opened for testing.

\n

- The new solar road consists of an insulating layer on the bottom, photovoltaic panels in the middle, and transparent concrete on top.

\n

- It can generate 1 million kilowatt-hours of power in a year and saves the space for building solar farms and shorten the transmission distance.

\n

\n\n

Umananda Island

\n\n

\n

- It is the smallest inhabited river island in the world.

\n

- It is situated in the river of Brahmaputra in Assam.

\n

- According to the Hindu mythology, Lord Shiva lived in the island much to the ananda or joy of his consort Uma, another name for Parvati, hence the name 'Umananda'.

\n

- It is also known as Peacock island, because it resembled a peacock's feathers splayed in full view.

\n

- Golden Langur, one of the most endangered species of primates is found in this island.

\n

- Golden langurs are found only in parts of Western Assam and the neighbouring foothills of the Black mountains of Bhutan.

\n

\n\n

Agariyas

\n\n

\n

- Agariyas are nomadic tribes and traditionally salt farmers in Rann of Kutch, a seasonal salt marsh in Thar Desert, Rajasthan.

- \n
- The tribes derive their names from the word “Agar” meaning salt farms.
- \n
- During the monsoon months, the Rann of Kutch is submerged in sea water.
- \n
- As the sea water finally begins to recede in October, the Agariyas move in and begin the elaborate process of salt farming.
- \n
- This salt is different from the marine salt produced on the coast and is locally known as Badagara, literally meaning Bada (big) and Agara (pan).
- \n
- They suffer from skin lesions, severe eye problems, tuberculosis and abnormally thin legs, stiff with years of exposure to high concentration of salt.
- \n
- After the salt production season, they move to the peripheral villages.
- \n
- High Temperature, high wind velocity and high soil salinity makes Rann of Kutch an ideal place for salt production.
- \n
- It is home to rare breed of wild ass and flamingos.
- \n

\n\n

Dhanush Artillery Gun

\n\n

- \n
- Dhanush is an upgraded version of the Swedish bofors howitzers.
- \n
- It is a 155 mm gun with a maximum range of 40 km compared to 17 -km range of the original guns.
- \n
- It is expected to be inducted in the Indian Army by 2018.
- \n
- Army is keen on inducting Dhanush since it has not inducted any new artillery guns since the Bofors procured in 1980's from Sweden.
- \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu, PIB

\n



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering