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Mount Ili Lewotolok

- Mount Ili Lewotolok is located on Lembata Island in eastern Indonesia.
- This volcano has been erupting on and off since October 2017.
- Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Center raised volcano's alert level to the second-highest level after sensors picked up increasing activity.
- This mountain is one of the three currently erupting in Indonesia along with Merapi on Java island and Sinabung on Sumatra island.
- There are more than 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire".

Annapurna idol

- Prime Minister told that an 18th-century idol of goddess Annapurna, carved in the Benares style, is being brought back from Canada.
- This idol was stolen from a temple of Varanasi and smuggled out of the country somewhere around 1913.
- It is part of the University Of Regina, Canada's collection at the MacKenzie Art Gallery.
- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is the official custodian of all such repatriated artefacts.
- So, ASI was tasked with ascertaining the security arrangements at the idol's original location before handing it back to trustees at the temple.
- Recently, Union Culture Minister handed over 13th-century bronze idols of Lord Rama, Lakshmana and goddess Sita, which were repatriated from the UK, to the Tamil Nadu government.

Hualong One

- China has powered up its first domestically developed nuclear reactor - Hualong One, deployed at a plant in east China's Fujian province.
- Work on the Hualong One reactor started in 2015.
- It will be put into commercial use by the year end after undergoing tests.
- Reducing its dependence on Western allies in critical high-tech sectors is a key goal in Beijing's "Made in China 2025" plan.
- Nuclear plants supplied less than 5% of China's annual electricity needs in 2019, but this share is expected to grow as Beijing attempts to become

carbon neutral by 2060.

- China has 47 nuclear plants with a generation capacity of 48.75 million kilowatts - the world's third highest after the United States and France.
- Beijing has invested billions of dollars to develop its nuclear energy sector in recent years as it struggles to wean its economy from coal.

Indian Peacock Softshell Turtle

- Indian peacock softshell turtle (*Nilssononia hurum*) was rescued from a fish market in Assam.
- It is listed on the IUCN Red list as **Vulnerable** species.
- It is a **Schedule I** species under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, and is accorded the highest protection.
- Hunting for human consumption is the greatest threat to turtle survival.
- Other factors include pollution, river traffic, sand mining, damming of rivers, and conversion of water bodies into agriculture land, etc.

Turtles in India

- There are five species of seas turtles in Indian waters - Leatherback, Loggerhead, Hawksbill, Green and Olive Ridley.
- IUCN Status of these turtles are
 - i. Hawksbill - Critically endangered
 - ii. Green turtle - Endangered
 - iii. Leatherback - Vulnerable
 - iv. Loggerhead - Critically endangered
 - v. Olive Ridley - Vulnerable
- Mostly these turtles are found in the eastern coast of the Country.

La Niña Influence

- The ongoing winter season from December 2020 to February 2021 will be colder than usual in several parts of India.
- The minimum temperatures in north, northwest, central and some areas in eastern India may be lower than the average.
- The maximum temperatures in some of the same regions of north, northwest, eastern and some parts of central India may be higher than the average.
- There would be wider gap between day and night temperatures.
- One reason for this could be the prevailing La Niña conditions in the

Equatorial Pacific Ocean.

La Niña

- La Niña is the cooling phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation cycle in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, as opposed to the warming El Niño phase.
- It usually brings in colder than normal winters in India.
- It influences the Indian subcontinent by piping in cold air from Siberia and South China, which interacts with the tropical heating to produce a north-south low-pressure system.
- The cold air associated with this north-south trough tends to extend much farther south into India, but won't affect the North East that much.
- This is remarkably different than the more northwest-southeast blast of cold air associated with an El Niño.
- Generally, the La Niña cold air occupies a larger part of India than the El Niño cold air.

Eviction of J&K Nomads

- Nomads of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) are being allegedly forcibly evicted by the government.
- These nomads are mostly from the Gujjar and Bakkarwal communities living in temporary sheds in forests and mountains.
- The evictions are seen in the light of the 2019 J&K High Court order to retrieve encroached forest land and the annulment of the Roshni Act.
- Roshni Act, introduced in 2001, had allowed ownership of government land occupied by some people against a fixed amount.
- It envisaged conferment of proprietary rights of 2.56 lakh acres of land to occupants to earn money for investment into hydroelectric projects.
- But, the HC found that the scheme led to a land scam.

Source: The Indian Express, Down To Earth, Economic Times