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Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

India's External Affairs Minister attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit 2024.

- **Background** It is world's largest regional organisation for **international security** and defence.
- It is a *permanent intergovernmental* international organization formed in 2001.
- **Origin-** It is basically an extension of the **Shanghai Five Group** (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan), created in 1996.
- **Headquarters** Beijing (China)
- Founding nations- Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- The SCO now has **10** members, including **India**, Iran, and Pakistan, Belarus in addition to the founding members.
- **Observer states** Afghanistan, and Mongolia (2 members).
- **Dialogue Partners** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Turkey and more (14 members).
- **Significance-** The SCO consists of 40% of the world's population and 30% of global gross domestic product (GDP).
- The SCO has been an *observer in the UN General Assembly* since 2005.
- Goals of the SCO
 - To strengthen mutual trust, friendship, and good-neighbourliness between the Member States.
 - To encourage the effective cooperation between the Member States in such spheres as politics, trade, economy, science and technology, culture, education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, etc.
 - \circ To jointly ensure and maintain peace, security and stability in the region and
 - To promote a new democratic, fair and rational international political and economic international order.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, 2024

- Venue- Astana, Kazakhstan.
- **Theme-** Strengthening Multilateral Dialogue—Striving Towards a Sustainable Peace and Prosperity.
- **Objective-** Addressing key <u>regional issues</u> and providing a platform to <u>advocate for</u> <u>dialogue and diplomacy once again.</u>
- **New SCO member-** *Belarus* recently upgraded to member state from Observer status in (SCO), becoming its 10th member state.

Belarus, officially the Republic of Belarus, is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe.

References

- 1. Indian Express | Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit
- 2. SCO | General information

Indian Gaur & Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR)

The Indian gaur, previously locally extinct, has been spotted in the Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR) after decades.

Indian Gaur

- The Gaur also called *Indian Bison*, is the largest extant bovine, native to South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- Scientific Name- Bos gaurus
- Diet- Herbivore, primarily grazing on grasses, leaves, and fruits.
- **Distribution** It is prevalent in Western Ghats and also found in north east India and Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh.
- **Habitat-** They are largely confined to <u>evergreen forests or semi-evergreen</u> and moist deciduous forests, but also occur in deciduous forest areas at the periphery of their range.
- **Population diversity-** Mainland South and Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Nepal.
- **Threat** Gaur is highly threatened by poaching for trade to supply international markets.
- Conservation Status
 - IUCN Red List- Vulnerable
 - **CITES-** Appendix I.
 - Wild Life Protection Act, 1972- Schedule I



Nagarajunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR)

- Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve is the *largest tiger reserve* in India.
- Location- Nallamala hill ranges of Andhra Pradesh.
- Geographical sperad- The reserve spreads over <u>5 districts</u>, Nandyal District,
 Prakasam District, Palnadu District, Nalgonda District and Mahabub Nagar district.
- Tiger Reserve Status- It attained the status of a Tiger Reserve in 1983.
- **Area-** The total area of the reserve including core and buffer is 3727.82 Square Kilo meters and it is India's largest Tiger Reserve.
- Two wildlife Sanctuaries, namely Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary (GBM) constitute the Tiger Reserve.
- **Vegetation-** Features *tropical, dry, moist, deciduous vegetation* with diverse flora and fauna.
- River- The Krishna River flows through the reserve for about 270 kilometers.

The Krishna River in the Deccan plateau is the third-longest river in India, after the Ganges and Godavari.



References

- 1. Times of India | Indian Gaur
- 2. Tigerreservesinindia | Indian Bison
- 3. Nstr | About us

International Cooperative Day

The Union Minister of Cooperation recently addressed the conference on the occasion of the 102^{nd} International Day of Cooperatives.

Co-operatives are people-centred enterprises owned, controlled, and operated by their members to meet their shared economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations.

- Background- The International Day of Cooperatives, established by the <u>UN on</u>
 <u>December 16, 1992</u>, is celebrated on the <u>1st Saturday of July.</u>
- Aim- It aims to raise awareness of cooperatives and further the values of the movement, which includes:
 - International solidarity
 - Economic efficiency
 - Equality
 - Global peace
- Nodal ministry Ministry of Cooperation.
- **Objective-** Its goal is to *promote and expand cooperatives globally*, highlighting their role in addressing major UN issues and strengthening international partnerships.

• 3rd Foundation Day- The day also marks the 3rd foundation day of the Union Ministry of Cooperation, which came into being on July 6, 2021.

Recent Highlights, 2024

- Recognition by UN- The year 2025 has been declared the <u>International Year of</u>
 <u>Cooperatives (IYC2025)</u> by the <u>United Nations General Assembly</u> recently.
- Theme, 2024 Cooperatives Build a Better Future for All.
- **New Initiatives in India** The Ministry of Cooperation has launched over <u>54</u> initiatives in the cooperative sector recently.
- The ministry will also inaugurate launch of 'Bharat Organic Atta' produced by the National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL).
- The ministry will launch the scheme for 50% assistance on the purchase of nanofertilizer by the farmers for the FY 2024-25.

Reference

PIB | International Cooperative Day

Money mule

The Reserve Bank of India has warned banks about mule accounts and urged them to strengthen their security measures to curb digital fraud.

- A money mule is someone who receives and moves money that came from <u>victims of</u> fraud.
- A person may become a money mule intentionally or unintentionally and receive
 illegally acquired funds and help in its transfer to others.
- The Money mules are frequently innocent individuals who are drawn into the plan by a
 variety of tactics, such as job offers, online classified ads, or social media
 postings.
- **Financial Frauds-** Money Mule Actions are commonly associated with various types of financial crimes, such as **money laundering**, **fraud**, **and cybercrime**.
- **Types of Money Mules-** The FBI categorizes money mules into 3 categories based on their goals and degree of involvement:
 - Unknowing/unwitting money mules
 - Witting money mules
 - Complicit money mules
- Process Fraudsters contact customers via <u>e-mails, chat rooms, job websites or</u>
 <u>blogs</u> and convince them to receive money into their bank accounts, in exchange of attractive commissions.
- The fraudsters then transfer the illegal money into the money mule's account.
- The money mule is then directed to transfer the money to another money mule's account starting a chain that ultimately results in the money getting transferred to the fraudster's account.
- When such frauds are reported, the money mule becomes the target of police

investigations.

- Mule Accounts It is a bank account used to receive/transfer funds acquired illegally
 on behalf of others.
- These accounts are often used for money laundering and tax evasion.
- Mule accounts are in violation of several rules and individual involved in it can be prosecuted under the *Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)*.

References

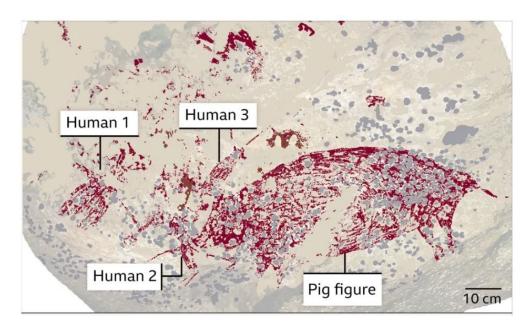
- 1. Newindianexpress | Money Mule
- 2. Sanctionscanner | Money Mule

Limestone cave, Leang Karampuang

A team of Indonesian and Australian researchers discovered the cave painting inside the Leang Karampuang cave.

Findings

- Location- South Sulawesi, Indonesia.
- These caves on Sulawesi have revealed the world's oldest hunting scene, now dated to at least 48,000 years.
- It is famous for its prehistoric rock art, specifically hand stencils and animal paintings, which are estimated to be around 35,000 to 40,000 years old.
- Evidence- Prehistoric people painted <u>3 human figures</u> and a <u>wild pig</u> on a limestone cave ceiling using red pigment.
- Flickering torchlight in the dark cave would have brought this art work to life.
- This innovative method is poised to revolutionize rock art dating globally.



Limestone caves

• Limestone caves are formed when rainwater seeps through cracks in limestone rock

and dissolves it.

- Limestone is generally formed in a warm shallow sea where plants and animals thrive.
- **Speleogenesis** Limestone caves are primarily formed through the process of *chemical weathering*. The process of cave formation is known as speleogenesis.

References

- 1. The Hindu | Discovery of Limestone cave
- 2. Nypost | Limestone cave

