

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 27-06-2024

### Leader of Opposition

*Rae Bareli MP Rahul Gandhi is appointed as the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha recently.*

- **Statutory post** - It is a **statutory post** officially described in the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977. It is **not mentioned** in the constitution.
- **Qualification**
  - The leader of the numerically biggest party in opposition to the government and recognized as such by the speaker/chairman.
  - To be qualified as a Leader of Opposition, a party must have **at least 10% of MPs** in the House.
- The option of not recognizing him/ her by speaker is just not available.
- **Functions** - The main duty of the Leader of Opposition is to serve as the voice of the opposition in the House.
- **Power of Appointment** - Leader of Opposition is the opposition's representative in the high-powered committees headed by the **Prime Minister** for appointment to key posts like
  - Director of CBI,
  - The Central Vigilance Commissioner and Chief Information Commissioner,
  - The Chairperson and Members of the National Human Rights Commission, and
  - The Lokpal.
- **Order of precedence** - Leaders of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha is in order of precedence along with
  - Union cabinet ministers,
  - The national security advisor,
  - The principal secretary to the PM,
  - The vice-chairperson of the NITI aayog,
  - Former PMs, and
  - Chief Ministers.
- He will be a member of several Joint Parliamentary Committees, the committees of Public Accounts, Public Undertakings, Estimates, and many more.
- He will also have a say in the appointment of bureaucrats to key posts.

### References

1. [The Indian Express | Role of Leader of Opposition](#)
2. [Hindustan Times | Powers of Leader of Opposition](#)

## National Investigation Agency (NIA)

Recently, the National Investigation Agency announced reward for information on Canada-based terrorist Goldy Brar.

- It is the Central counter terrorism ***law enforcement agency*** in India.
- **Established on** - 2008.
- **Head Quarters** - New Delhi.
- **Branch offices**- Hyderabad, Guwahati, Mumbai, Lucknow, Kochi, Kolkata, Jammu and Raipur.
- It is constituted under the ***National Investigation Agency Act*** in response to the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.
- It is empowered to deal with the investigation of terror related crimes across states without special permission from the states under written proclamation from the ***Ministry of Home Affairs***.
- **Functions**
  - Setting national standards for counter-terrorism and other national security investigations
  - Developing a highly trained workforce that works in partnerships
  - Deterring existing and potential terrorist groups and individuals
- It deals with offenses under acts that implement international treaties, agreements, conventions, and resolutions of the United Nations (UN), its agencies, and other international organizations.
- The NIA also works with state governments to designate Special Courts, which have precedence over other courts when trying NIA cases.

## References

1. [Times of India | NIA announces reward for information](#)
2. [National Investigation Agency | About](#)

## Rhisotope Project

*South African scientists injected radioactive material into live rhinoceros horns to curb poaching*

*South Africa is home to the largest population of rhinos in the world, including the world's largest population of white rhinos and about half of the African continent's black rhinos.*

- **Aim** - This project aims to insert measured quantities of radioisotopes into the horns of live rhinos.
- It is to reduce the demand and save rhinos from the very real threat of extinction in South Africa.
- It is founded in 2021 by ***Prof. James Larkin and Suzanne Boswell***.

- Radioactively treated horns are more likely to be detected at international borders, making it more likely that smuggling syndicates are exposed, prosecuted and convicted.

## African Rhinos

Species	White Rhino	Black Rhino
Scientific Name	Ceratotherium simum	Diceros bicornis
Habitat	Long and short grass savanna areas in grasslands	Semi-Desert Savannah, Woodlands, Forests, Wetlands
Size	2 <sup>nd</sup> -largest land mammal	It is smaller compared to white ones.
IUCN Status	Near Threatened	Critically Endangered
Distribution	South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Kenya	South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Kenya

## References

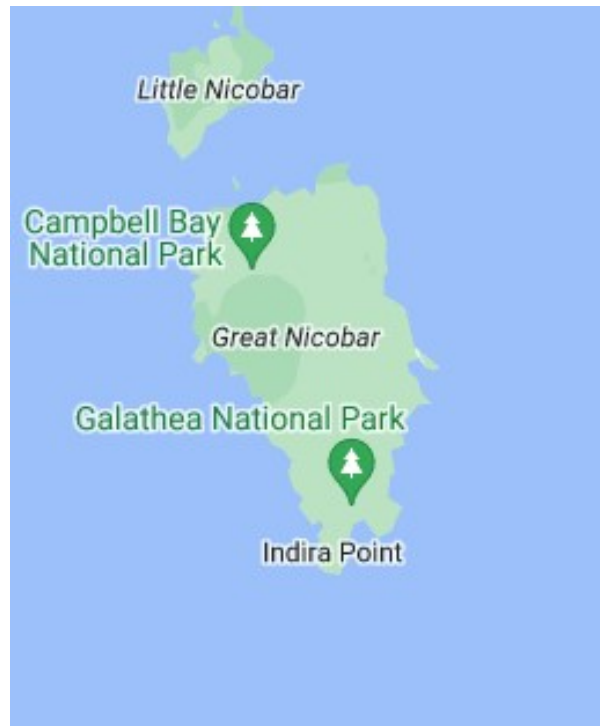
[The Hindu | Rhisotope Project](#)

[WWF | African Rhinos](#)

## Great Nicobar Island

*Recently, the Congress party demanded an immediate suspension of all clearances granted to NITI Aayog's mega project on Great Nicobar Island.*

- Great Nicobar Island is the largest and southernmost island in the ***Nicobar Islands archipelago***, located in the Bay of Bengal.
- **Headquarters** - Campbell bay.
- **Vegetation** - It is a hilly island mostly covered in tropical rainforest, with mangroves and Pandan forests along the coast.
- The island's main hill range runs from north to south, and its highest peak is Mount Thullier.
- **Rainfall** - Great Nicobar also receives an annual rainfall of around 3,500 mm.
- **Rivers** - Galathea, Alexandra and Dagmar are the major rivers.
- **Species** - It is known for its diverse wildlife, including many endangered and endemic species, such as the
  - Giant leatherback turtle,
  - Nicobar megapode, and
  - Nicobar crab-eating macaque.
- **UNESCO Listing** - Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve is designated as part of the ***UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)*** in 2013.
- **Indigenous communities** - The Shompen and the Nicobarese.



## References

1. [The Hindu | Great Nicobar island](#)
2. [Nicobar District | About](#)

## **Dendrophthoe longensis & Petrocosmea arunachalense**

*Researchers have discovered 2 new species of plants, Dendrophthoe longensis & Petrocosmea arunachalense recently.*

### **Dendrophthoe longensis**

- It is an ***aerial stem-parasitic flowering plant*** discovered in long islands of Andaman and Nicobar islands.
- **Family** - Mistletoe (group of hemi-parasitic flowering plants).
- **Habitat** - It is found on the specific host plant, Mango (*Mangifera indica*) in the edge of evergreen forests, low land areas of tropical forests.
- **Distribution** - The species is sparsely scattered and confined to a few localities of Long Island.
- **Conservation status** - It is assessed as ***Endangered*** based on the IUCN categories and criteria.

*Indian Dendrophthoe are represented by 9 species - 4 are from Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 2 species are endemic to the region.*



### **Petrocosmea arunachalense**

- Petrocosmea arunachalense is ***only the second known species*** from the genus Petrocosmea in India.
- **Family** - Gesneriaceae.
- It is a new herbaceous plant species discovered from West Kameng district in ***Arunachal Pradesh***.
- It is a very very small herb, requires less sunlight.
- **Appearance** - It is completely white with purple blotch and the plant has a hairy texture.



## Reference

[The Hindu | Dendrophthoe longensis & Petrocosmea arunachalensis](#)



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