

## **16<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> Aug Weekly Compilation**

### **(The Hindu+ Indian Express + PIB + Other World Wide News)**

#### **❖ NEW RAMSAR SITES**

**(Source: PIB)**

**Why in News:** Four more wetlands from India: two from Haryana and two from Gujarat have been recognised as Ramsar sites of international importance.

The wetlands that have received the Ramsar Site tag are:

- **Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary and Sultanpur National Park from Haryana**
- **Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary and Wadhvana Wetland from Gujarat**

According to recent estimates by **Wetlands International** South Asia, nearly 30% of the natural wetlands in India have been lost in the last three decades. Majorly, the loss of Wetlands is more prominent in Urban areas.

**Wetlands International South Asia** was established in 1996, with an office in New Delhi, as a part of Wetlands International network to promote conservation and sustainable development of wetlands in the South Asia region.

#### **Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary**

- Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in Gujarat. The sanctuary lies on the Central Asian Flyway.
- Built in: Thol Lake was initially built in 1912 as a tank by the Gaekwad regime to provide irrigation facilities to farmers.
- In 1988, it was declared as a wildlife sanctuary by the state government to protect the birdlife found in this open-water wetland site.
- The lake supports more than 320 bird species, including more than 30 threatened water bird species such as the critically endangered White-rumped Vulture and Sociable Lapwing; and the vulnerable Sarus Crane and Common Pochard.

#### **Wadhvana Wetland**

- Wadhvana Wetland is situated in Gujarat. The wetland was created as an irrigation dam in 1910 in Dabhoi taluka of Vadodara, Gujarat.

- The wetland is internationally important for its birdlife as it provides wintering ground to migratory water birds, including over 80 species that migrate on the Central Asian Flyway.
- These include some threatened or near-threatened species such as the endangered Pallas's fish-eagle, the vulnerable common pochard and the near-threatened Dalmatian pelican, grey-headed fish-eagle and ferruginous duck.
- In addition the red-crested pochard (*Netta rufina*), a duck which is otherwise rare in Western India, is regularly recorded here during winter.

### **Sultanpur National Park**

- Sultanpur National Park is situated in the Gurgaon district of Haryana. The park is spread across 353 acres.
- The park is an important wetland that harbours rich plant and animal life. It supports more than 220 species of resident, winter migratory and local migratory waterbirds at critical stages of their life cycles.
- More than ten of these are globally threatened, including the critically endangered sociable lapwing.

### **Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary**

- Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Jhajjar district of Haryana. In 2009, it was declared as a bird sanctuary by the Indian Government.
- The sanctuary is an important part of the ecological corridor along the route of Sahibi River which traverses from Aravalli hills in Rajasthan to the Yamuna. The sanctuary is located just 1.5 km from Khaparwas Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The sanctuary is an important wetland that provides a safe habitat to numerous animals and plants.
- A total of 265 species of birds have been reported from the site. More than 30,000 migratory birds belonging to over 250 species visit Bhindawas throughout the year.

### **Ramsar Convention**

- It was signed in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar and is one of the oldest inter-governmental accord for preserving the ecological character of wetlands.
- It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands.
- Its aim is to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.

## ❖ **TAPAS Portal**

**(Express)**

**Why in News:** The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment has launched an online portal named TAPAS (Training for Augmenting Productivity and Services).

### **TAPAS Portal**

- It is developed by National Institute of Social Defence, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- It is a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) platform that offers various courses in the field of social defence.
- The main objective of introducing courses on social defence is to impart training and enhance the knowledge and skills for the capacity building of the participants
- It will provide five basic courses
  - Drug (Substance) Abuse Prevention,
  - Geriatric/Elderly Care,
  - Care and Management of Dementia,
  - Transgender Issues
  - Comprehensive course on Social Defence Issues.

The courses can be taken up by anyone who wishes to enhance his or her knowledge on the topics and there is no fee for joining.

### **National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)**

- NISD was originally set up as the Central Bureau of Correctional Services in 1961 under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Since 1975, the Institute has functioned as a subordinate office under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- In 2002, NISD became an Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and is registered under Societies Act 1860 with the Government of NCT, Delhi.
- NISD is the nodal training and research institute in the field of social Defence. It is currently focusing on human resource development in the areas of drug abuse prevention, welfare of senior citizens, beggary prevention, transgender and other social defence issues.

## ❖ **SAMVAD Program**

**(PIB)**

**Why in News:** The Union Minister of Women and Child Development has launched the 2nd phase of SAMVAD program.

## **SAMVAD Program**

- **SAMVAD stands for Support, Advocacy & Mental health interventions for children in Vulnerable circumstances And Distress.**
- It is a National Initiative and Integrated Resource that works in child protection, mental health and psychosocial care.
- To provide mental health outreach for children who are abandoned and orphaned, child survivors of trafficking, or in conflict with law.
- The program is led by National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). It is funded by Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- NIMHANS is the apex centre of mental health and neuroscience education. It operates autonomously under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Under the Program, training is being provided to Child Protection Functionaries, tele-counsellors, educators, law professionals among others. The training will be provided to cope mechanisms for children in distress.
- **In the second phase, SAMVAD is slated to begin work with Panchayati Raj institutions to integrate child protection and mental health in aspirational districts across the country.** This will help facilitate awareness generation and improve service delivery at the grassroot level.

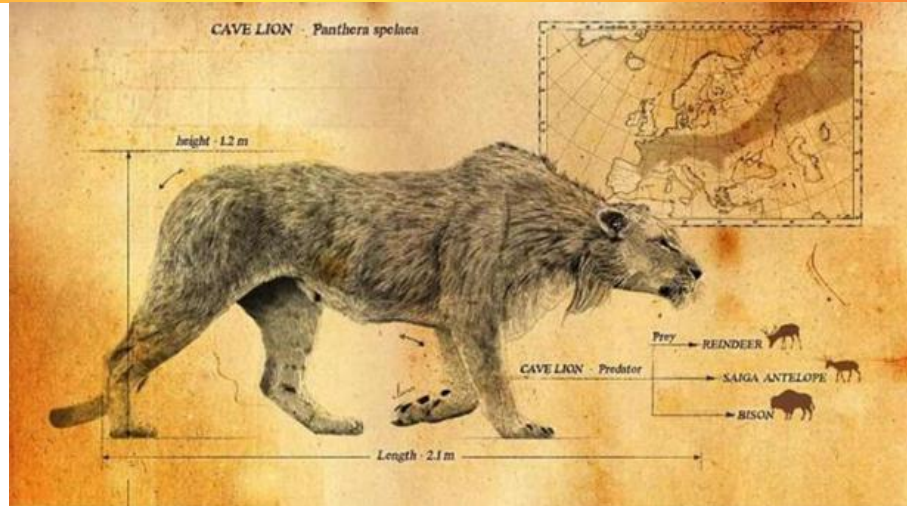
## **❖ Cave Lion Cubs**

**(The Hindu)**

**Why in News:** Recently, scientists have found two nearly perfectly preserved cave lion cubs which lived 28,000 years ago, nicknamed Boris and Sparta. They were found in Siberia's permafrost, Russia. The cubs were found 15 meters apart but are not only from different litters but were also born thousands of years apart.

## **Key Points**

- The Cave Lion (*Panthera spelaea*), often nicknamed the Mega-Lion, is a genus of prehistoric lion that originated during the last Ice Age (2.6 million years ago to 11,700 years ago) in what is now Europe.



- It is generally placed as a subspecies of the lion.
- It was one of the most common large predators during the last Ice age, with a distribution throughout northern Eurasia and North America. It became extinct about 14,000 years ago.

### Behaviour & Traits

- The Cave Lions were major predators, hunting ice age deer, bison, and other animals. These lions also were ambush predators, laying in wait and erupting out of the brush to tackle their prey with impressive speed, agility, and strength.
- Measuring 3 meters long and weighing 340 kilos; this was the largest cat species of all time.
- However, like all cats, the Cave Lion could only chase prey over a short distance.
- Despite their size, strength, and relatively long legs, Cave Lions were not designed for long-distance chases.

### Significance of Finding

Similar finds in Russia's vast Siberian region have turned up with increasing regularity. Climate change is warming the Arctic at a faster pace than the rest of the world and has thawed the ground in some areas long locked in permafrost.

### ❖ Slender Loris

(Source: Express)

**Why in News:** The district forest officer (DFO) of Karur district has recently submitted a proposal for implementing a species recovery program to protect and improve the population of the endangered slender loris.

Since there is great demand for keeping these animal as pets, they are illegally smuggled. Habitat loss, electrocution of live wires and road accidents are other threats that have caused its populations to destabilise.

### Slender loris (*Loris tardigradus*)

- Slender loris (*Loris tardigradus*) is secretive and has nocturnal habits. It usually travels from the canopy of one tree to another.
- Commonly found in the tropical scrub and deciduous forests as well as the dense hedgerow plantations bordering farmlands of Southern India and Sri Lanka.
- It has been listed as 'Endangered' by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- It is under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, to provide the highest level of legal protection
- They are usually solitary, but sometimes found in pairs
- It is believed that these animals have some medicinal properties, they are captured and sold.
- Habitat loss, electrocution of live wires and road accidents are other threats that have caused its populations to dwindle

### ❖ Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme (Hindu)

**Why in News:** The government of India has notified the rates and norms for the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme.

#### RoDTEP Scheme

- Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- The RoDTEP scheme is replacing the earlier Merchandise and Services Export Incentive Schemes (MEIS and SEIS) that were in violation of WTO norms.
- Its aim is to reimburse all the taxes/duties/levies being charged at the Central/State/Local level which are not currently refunded under any of the existing schemes but are incurred at the manufacturing and distribution process.
- The refund under the scheme shall not be available in respect of duties and taxes already exempted or remitted or credited.

**Implementation:** The refund under the scheme will be credited in an exporter's ledger account with the customs. It will be used to pay basic duty on imported goods. The credits can also be transferred to other importers.



## **Key Features of the Scheme**

- The scheme covers over 8,555 tariff products, accounting for about 75% of traded items and 65% of India's exports.
- The tax refund rates will vary between 0.5% and 4.3% of the export value of goods.
- The lowest rate is offered on items like chocolates, toffees and sugar confectionery
- Yarns and fibers have been granted the highest rate.
- The scheme covers sectors such as marine, agriculture, leather, gems and jewellery automobile, plastics, textiles, electronics among others.
- **Sectors Excluded:** Pharmaceutical, steel and chemicals have been kept out of the purview of the scheme. Products manufactured at export-oriented units and special economic zones have also been excluded from the scheme for the time being.

## **❖ Financial Inclusion Index**

**(The Hindu)**

**Why in News:** The Reserve Bank of India has released India's First composite Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index).

Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index)

Released by: Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Its aim is to capture the extent of financial inclusion across the country.

Parameters: The index comprises three broad parameters:

- Access (35%)
- Usage (45%)
- Quality (20%)
- Each of these parameters will consist of various dimensions, which are computed based on 97 indicators.
- A unique feature of the index is the parameter related to the quality of financial inclusion. It captures information related to financial literacy, consumer protection and inequalities and deficiencies in services,
- The index captures information on various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging between 0 and 100 where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 indicates full financial inclusion.
- The index will be published in July every year.

- The index has been constructed without any “base year”. It reflects the cumulative efforts of all stakeholders.

### **Key Findings of the Index**

- The FI-Index for the financial year ended March 2021 crossed the halfway mark to 53.9, as compared to 43.4 for the year ended March 2017.
- This indicates that 46.1% of the parameters considered are still financially excluded, despite the launch of several initiatives by the Government.

### **❖ United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) (The Hindu)**

**Why in News:** The Global Geospatial Information Community was sensitized about the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) to be organized by India in 2022.

### **United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC)**

- United Nation Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) every four years.
- Its aim is to enhance international collaboration among the Member States and relevant stakeholders in Geospatial information management and capacities.
- A geographic information system (GIS) integrates hardware, software, and data for capturing, managing, analysing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.
- The first UNWGIC was organized by China in 2018.

**India is going to host the second UNWGIC in 2022, at Hyderabad. The theme is: “Towards Geo-enabling the Global Village.”**

### **United Nation Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)**

- **Established by:** United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2011.
- Its aim is to play a leading role in setting the agenda for the development of global geospatial information and to promote its use to address key global challenges.
- The committee consists of government experts from United Nations Member States as well as experts from international organizations, as observers. The UN-GGIM is scheduled to meet at least once a year and reports directly to ECOSOC.



## ❖ **Start-Up Women Entrepreneur Awards**

**(PIB)**

**Why in News:** The government has announced the winners of the Start-up Women Entrepreneur Awards 2020-21. It has also launched the Amrit Mahotsav Shri Shakti Innovation Challenge.

### **Start-up Women Entrepreneur Awards 2020-21**

**Setup by:** Ministry for Electronics and IT (MeitY)-NASSCOM in partnership with UN Women.

#### **Objective**

- To recognize and cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit in women. It also inspires the next generation of women to lead the Indian digital era to serve as guiding role models;
- To encourage promising entrepreneurs who not only contribute to the nation's economy but also to the social community
- To provide leadership and serve as guiding examples for emerging and young future entrepreneurs.

**Significance:** The winners of the awards have also been selected for the MeitY-NASSCOM Tech Women Entrepreneur Accelerator Program. The program gives them access to networks, connections, learning and resources that are needed to build scalable, profitable and global businesses.

### **Amrit Mahotsav Shri Shakti Innovation Challenge**

**Launched by:** My Gov under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and UN Women.

The aim of the Challenge is 'Nari Sashaktikaran', which is, to empower women to help them achieve their full potential.

#### **Objective:**

- To support and promote women entrepreneurs and women-led Startups to find innovative solutions in the area of Women Safety and Empowerment.
- The Challenge is being implemented under the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19) Program
- The five winners of this challenge will be awarded INR 5 lakh each to develop, market and implement their solutions.

## ❖ **National Mission on Edible Oils**

**(Express)**

**Why in News:** The Union Cabinet has given its approval to launch a new Mission on Oil palm, to be known as the National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP).

### **National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)**

- NMEO-OP is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme that aims to boost domestic production of Palm Oil and reduce its dependence on imports.
- The mission has a special focus on the North-eastern region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The mission hopes to increase the area under oil palm by an additional 6.5 lakh hectares by 2025-26. It also has a target to increase the production of crude palm oil to 11.2 lakh tones by 2025-26 and up to 28 lakh tones by 2029-30.

### **Major Focus Areas of the scheme**

#### **Price Assurance**

- The oil palm farmers will produce Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFBs) from which Palm oil is extracted by the industry.
- Presently, the prices of these FFBs are linked to the international Crude Palm Oil (CPO) prices fluctuations. So if the market is volatile, then the Centre will pay the difference in price to the farmers through direct benefit transfer
- This price assurance will be given in the form of viability gap funding, and the industry will be mandated to pay 14.3% of crude palm oil prices.
- Moreover, in a bid to encourage oil palm cultivation in northeastern India and in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Centre will bear an additional cost of 2% of the crude palm oil prices in these States. Hence, this will protect the farmers from the fluctuations of the international CPO prices and protect them from volatility.

**The assistance of Inputs/Interventions:** The scheme has been made a substantial increase in the assistance of inputs/interventions:

- A substantial increase has been made for planting material for oil palm and this has increased from Rs 12,000 per ha to Rs 29000 per ha.
- Further, a substantial increase has been made for maintenance and intercropping interventions.
- Moreover, assistance will be provided to seed gardens to address the issue of shortage of planting material in the country.

## ❖ **Portals for Geo Spatial Data**

**(Source: The Hindu)**

**Why in News:** The government of India has launched three web portals to offer the geospatial data collected by the Survey of India and the National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organization (NATMO) either free or at a nominal cost.

- **GEO Spatial Data Dissemination Portal**  
**Developed by: Survey of India (SOI)**

The portal is a rich repository of maps and functionalities. It will provide in various downloadable formats of 4,000 maps with national, state, district and tehsil level data.

- **SARTHI Portal**  
**Developed by: Survey of India(SOI)**

It is a geographic information system(GIS) that will help users in creating applications for geospatial data visualisation, manipulation and analysis without a lot of resources at their end.

- **MANCHITRAN Portal**  
**Developed by: National Atlas & Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO)**

It is a geo-portal that showcases the huge, authenticated, and valuable data that NATMO acquired during its long 65 years of service.

**Survey of India (SOI):** SOI is the National Survey and Mapping Organization of the country under the Department of Science & Technology.

It was established in 1767. It is the oldest scientific department of the Government of India.

Headquarters: Dehradun, Uttarakhand

### **National Atlas & Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO)**

- NATMO is a subordinate office under the Department of Science & Technology.
- **Mandate:** It is involved in the compilation of the National Atlas of India. Apart from that, it also makes National Atlas in regional languages. NATMO also helps in increasing speed and efficiency in the field of mapping with the help of installation of Automated Mapping System. It also offers training to geologists who want to venture into this field.
- **Headquarters:** Kolkata, West Bengal