

19th Nov – 25th Nov Weekly Compilation

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

India must resume its vanguard role in ridding the world of nuclear weapons (Source: Indian Express)

Why in News- The article explains the ICJ ruling on nuclear weapons and international law on this subject. It also explains India's position on this matter.

What are the main points of ICJ ruling on nuclear weapons in 1996?

It permitted a state to use nuclear weapons in self-defence when its survival was at stake. In the absence of a definitive law on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the ICJ cannot conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful.

What is the current opinion of the world community about nuclear weapons?

Now, we do have an international law on this subject.

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was passed in January 2021

It was passed by 122 members of the UN General Assembly, a clear majority.

It entered into force after its ratification by 50 member-States of the UN. The number of signatories has since risen to 91.

Any threat or use of nuclear weapons is now a clear violation of international law.

What has been India's position on nuclear weapons?

Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi were opposed to possession, threat and use of nuclear weapons.

Rajiv Gandhi presented to the UN in 1988 a detailed action plan on how to arrive in stages to a nuclear-weapons-free and nonviolent world order within a timeline of 22 years.

Pranab Mukherjee, as foreign minister, proposed in the UN in 2006 a summary of the main objectives of the action plan as a working paper

India appears to have disavowed both the action plan and the working paper after the NDA government came to power.

What is the way forward for India?

India should assume its vanguard role for elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is the only state with the capacity and stockpile of nuclear weapons to join the current tide of world opinion for prohibition of these weapons.

National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme

(Source: PIB)

Context: The last date for submission of applications for NMMSS for the year 2022-23 is 30th November 2022.

About National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme:

- It is the **Central Sector Scheme** which was launched in 2008, after getting approval from CCEA, with the objective to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop out at class VIII and encourage them to continue their education at secondary stage.
- One **lakh fresh scholarship is awarded to selected students of class IX every year** and their continuation / renewal in **classes X to XII for study in State Government, Government-aided and Local body schools under the scheme.**
- The amount of scholarship is Rs. 12000/- per annum from 1st April 2017 (earlier it was Rs. 6000/- per annum).
- **Eligibility:** Students whose parental income from all sources is not more than Rs. 3,50,000/- per annum are eligible to avail the scholarships.
- The students must have a **minimum of 55% marks or equivalent grade in Class VII examination for appearing in the selection test for award of scholarship (relaxable by 5% for SC/ST students).**
 - The students should be studying as regular student in a Government, Government-aided and local body school.
 - Students of **NVS, KVS and residential schools** are not entitled for the scholarship. There is reservation as per State Government norms.
- **Disbursal of Scholarship:** The scheme is fully on board the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) from 2018-19.
- NMMSS scholarships are disbursed directly into the bank accounts of selected students by electronic transfer through the **Public Financial Management System (PFMS) following DBT mode.**

Battle of Rezang La

(Source: Indian Express)

Context: November 18, 2022, marks the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Rezang La, one of the few bright spots in the War of 1962 with China.

About Rezang La:

- It is also called Rechin La.

- It is a mountain pass on the **Line of Actual Control** between **Indian-administered Ladakh and the Chinese-administered Spanggur Lake basin** that is also claimed by India.
- The pass is located on the **eastern watershed ridge of the Chushul Valley** that China claims as its boundary.
- It is at the head of the **Rezang Lungpa valley**, which houses a stream draining into the **Spanggur Lake**.

About the war memorial:



- It is dedicated to those who laid down their lives in **the Battle of Rezang La** during the 1962 war.
- It will now include the names of Army personnel who lost their lives in the **violent clash at Galwan last year**.
- 18th November marks the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Rezang La in which Troops from the 13 Kumaon Regiment defeated several waves of the Chinese Army at a height of over 16,000 feet.

Post 120 Memorial:

- In October 2020, the Army had built a memorial at Post 120 in Eastern Ladakh for the 20 personnel killed in the violent clash at Galwan Valley on June 15 that year.
- Post 120 lies along the **Darbuk Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO)**

Melocanna Baccifera

(Source: The Hindu)

Context: Melocanna Baccifera, a tropical bamboo species, has long intrigued researchers for its association with the occurrence of 'bamboo death,' 'rat floods' and famines in northeast India.

About Melocanna Baccifera:

- Melocanna Baccifera is an evergreen bamboo with an elongated rhizome that produces single culms arising at a distance of about 60 cm apart and reaching a height of 10 – 20 metres.
- The thin-walled culms have a diameter of 50 – 90mm, with internodes 30 – 60cm long. It is an aggressive bamboo, easily occupying large open areas, due to its vigorous long rhizomes and, when fruiting, due to its easily germinating fruits.



- One of the most useful bamboos within its native range, especially in Bangladesh, it provides edible shoots, medicine and culms that have a wide range of uses.
- The plant is also grown as an ornamental purpose.

Cultivation of Melocanna Baccifera:

- A plant of the moist tropics. It grows best in areas where the mean annual temperature falls within the range 20 – 33°C, though it can tolerate 15 – 38°C.
- It prefers a mean annual rainfall in the range 2,000 – 3,000mm, tolerating 600 – 4,400mm.
- Succeeds in moist soils, preferring a fertile medium to heavy soil.
- Young shoots are harvested in the rainy season. Culms are considered mature when 2 years old.

- The average green culm yield is estimated at 12,000 culms/ha per 3 years, weighing about 84 tonnes.
- Bamboos have an interesting method of growth. Each plant produces a number of new stems annually – these stems grow to their maximum height in their first year of growth, subsequent growth in the stem being limited to the production of new side branches and leaves.
- Bamboos in general are usually monocarpic, living for many years before flowering, then flowering and seeding profusely for a period of 1 – 3 years before usually dying.
- The plant flowers gregariously, with a flowering cycle of 30 – 45 years. In the season before flowering no new shoots are produced. Flowering may continue for about 10 years over a tract that is sometimes called a flowering wave.

Uses of Melocanna Baccifera:

Edible Uses:

- Young shoots – cooked
- The shoots are also sliced and dried in the sun for preservation
- The remarkable large fruits are fleshy and edible
- They are used as a famine food
- The leaves may be used in brewing liquor

Medicinal Uses:

- Tabashir, which is a siliceous concretion found in the culms of the bamboo stem, can be collected from the culms.
- It is used as a tonic in treating respiratory diseases.

Other Uses:

- The culms are widely used in house building; to make woven wares such as baskets, mats, handicrafts, wall plates, screens and hats; and for domestic utensils
- The culms are an important source of superior paper pulp

Why regulators must take a coordinated approach to protect financial consumers (Source: The Indian Express)

News- The article explains the G20/OECD draft of the proposed revisions to their 2011 High-level Principles on Financial Consumer Protection.

What has been proposed by G20/OECD released a draft of the proposed revisions to their 2011 High-level Principles on Financial Consumer Protection (FCP)?

The 2011 principles covered 10 thematic areas reflecting the market and consumer issues, including **equitable and fair consumer treatment, disclosures and transparency, and financial education.**

In 2022, two additional principles were included, that are **access and inclusion and quality financial products.**

The updated principles also recommend intervention by regulators in certain high risk products, cultivating appropriate firm culture and using **behavioural insights** to better consumer outcomes.

These principles deal with three cross-cutting themes — **financial well-being, digitalisation and sustainable finance.**

What should be the consideration of FCP policies?

Financial well-being– FCP policies must contribute to overall financial well-being and resilience of consumers.

An effective FCP regime should provide information to consumers that is **adequate and understandable.** However, merely providing information for compliance is not enough, especially in India where financial literacy is low.

Digitalisation– FCP must factor in the increasing number of digital channels used by consumers to interact with financial products and services. The impact of greater use of **artificial intelligence** and other emerging technologies also needed to be considered.

Additionally, concerns regarding **redress of grievances** against payment service providers in the UPI ecosystem should be taken care of.

Sustainable finance– There is growing consumer demand for **sustainable financial investments.** Financial services providers are incorporating **environmental, social and governance factors** into their operations, products and services.

FCP recommends improved **transparency** to help consumers make informed choices.

Avoid greenwashing– The 2022 draft also warns against “**greenwashing**”. Financial regulators must monitor that corporations are not misleading consumers with false claims regarding progress towards climate targets.

What steps are taken by India regulators in this regard?

SEBI prescribes certain financial service providers to assess **customer suitability** and undertake **risk profiling** before providing services.

The RBI has released guidelines on digital lending. It has mandated entities providing digital lending services to have a grievance redress officer, assess a borrower’s creditworthiness before extending credit and allow a borrower to exit without penalty.

SEBI has transitioned from “**business responsibility reporting**” to “**business responsibility and sustainability reporting**”. The purpose is to promote responsible **corporate governance** for climate change. Eligible companies under BRSR must provide **environmental sustainability** related disclosures, including a **sustainability performance report.**

Why and how the focus of our industrial policy needs to shift (Source: The Indian Express)

News- The article explains the important aspects that should be considered while designing the industrial policy.

Which aspects should be considered while designing industrial policy?

Job creation– The industries need to be very carefully selected. Many of the industries currently chosen to be under PLI are highly **capital and skill intensive**. **Goal of job creation** for our massive numbers of unskilled workers should be considered.

Job creation or even economic growth may not always be the main goal of industrial policy. In a world of **geo-political conflicts and supply chain disruptions**, **national security** is often considered a major goal. But unnecessary subsidies should be avoided.

Disciplining the firms– In **policy implementation**, there is a need for **monitoring the performance** of the target firms. We have to be strict with non-performing firms. If necessary, we can withdraw support from them. It requires extra efforts that go beyond the **traditional culture of bureaucracy** in India.

We have to be careful while disciplining the firms. They should not become **white elephants** or they acquire too much market power. South Korea and Taiwan used the discipline of success in export markets to nudge the firms supported by their industrial policy to have international standards of quality and cost-consciousness. They followed a **stick-and-carrot policy**: The stick of export market discipline and the carrot of generous credit subsidies.

Soft industrial policies- These are policies like encouraging research and development, extension services, vocational training, improving regulations and infrastructure are needed. The goal should be to develop domestic policies of coordination that improve **productivity** more than interventions that distort prices.

soft industrial policies need to be customised to **local decentralised contexts**, particularly when you want to help small and medium sized firms.

Focus on green products– The **2017 United Nations publication on Green Industrial Policy** suggests many examples of new green products and service opportunities that have a great deal of job-creating potential. These are from renewable energy generation and storage, bioplastics, decentralised miniature electric grids, technologies of drip irrigation and rainfall harvesting, the reinforcement of sea walls, green energy-powered three-wheeler public transportation, and so on.

The support for industrial policy has to be **nuanced, multi-faceted and vigilant** in its disciplining functions.

Vikram-S launch

(Source: The Indian Express)

News- The article explains the importance of the private sector in manufacturing quick launch capabilities for small satellites.

What is the potential of the Indian private sector in the space sector?

India has more than 350 private firms in the space sector making it the fifth-largest in the world in this respect after the US, UK, Canada and Germany. But the country's share in the global space economy is barely 3%.

According to this year's **Economic Survey**, the country's space regulator has received close to 40 proposals from the private sector and the academia for activities ranging from manufacturing launch vehicles to **earth observation applications**.

Other private firms are close to emulating Skyroot. Agnikula Cosmos, a Chennai-based start-up, is planning the commercial launch of its rocket Agnibaan in the first quarter of next year.

What are the steps taken by the government to increase private sector participation?

The government intends to increase the country's share in the global space economy to 10 per cent by 2030.

In June 2020, it approved the **participation of private players** in all sectors of space activity.

It also instituted the **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre**, a unit of ISRO, to enable private companies to become independent players.

What is the utility of small satellites?

Small satellites can be assembled today in less than a week at a fraction of the cost of conventional satellites.

Currently, ISRO launches less than ten rockets each year. India must hit double-digit launches each year to stay competitive with its peers.

Small rockets allow light payloads weighing 500 kg or less to be placed precisely in preferred orbits.

What are the advantages of rapid launch capabilities?

A decade ago, **rapid and tactical space launch capabilities** were considered extremely difficult to acquire due to the high costs of constructing rockets. They are now a reality because of innovations like 3D printing of components and carbon-fibre body construction.

The primary use is for **military purposes**. During a conflict with an adversary, India's communications assets might be destroyed by an adversary's **offensive cyberattacks, kinetic kill capabilities or directed energy weapons**.

This would be requiring quick replacement. In such cases, accessing reliable rockets launched on short notice becomes a **strategic necessity**.

Other use cases could include the deployment of small satellites for **surveillance of borders** during a crisis.

For small satellites, we can not rely on vehicles designed for satellites weighing around 1500 kg to launch these satellites.

At present ISRO's **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle** is the only rocket in the small launch vehicle range capable of delivering a payload of up to 500 kg into orbit. But its tech demonstration mission earlier this year failed.

SSLV is a three-stage rocket powered by solid rocket motors. But having a solid propellant rocket for quick response comes with limitations. We need more innovative launch vehicles.

What is the way forward?

Private sector participation is necessary for making India a thriving space power.

Govt must remain consistent with its current policy to achieve its goals.

Developing an ecosystem for private players will not be possible without ISRO's support. In the US, NASA still reserves a part of its budget for such enterprises.

There is a need for **close collaboration** between India's premier space research institution and private players.

Uda Devi

(Source: Indian Express)

Context: On November 16, events to commemorate the martyrdom of Uda Devi, a freedom fighter from the Pasi community, were held at various places in Uttar Pradesh, including Sikandar Bagh in Lucknow.

- Uda Devi The Dalit Women Warrior from Lucknow Who Single-Handedly Killed Over 30 British Soldiers In 1857 Rebellion.

About Uda Devi:

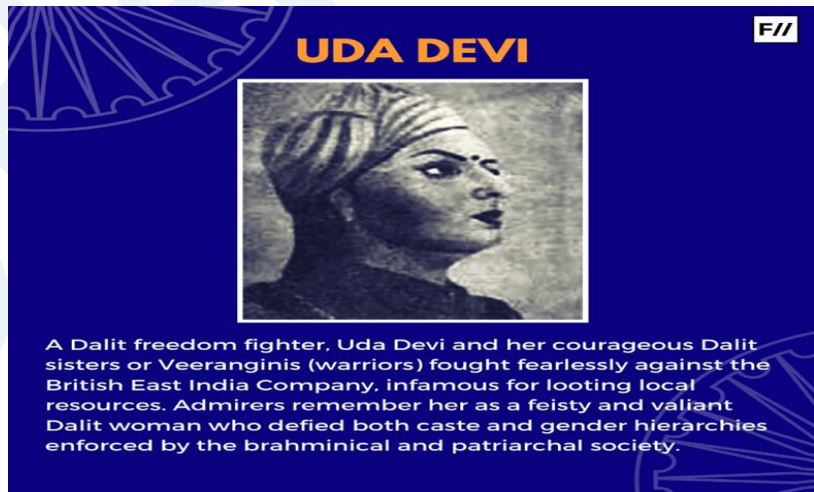
Personal life:

- Uda Devi was born in a small village in Awadh, Uttar Pradesh. Seeing the rising anger of the Indian people against the British administration, she reached out to Begum Hazrat Mahal to enlist for war.

- In order to prepare for the battle that was headed their way, the Begum helped her form a women's battalion under her command.
- Uda Devi and her Dalit sisters were the warriors or **Veeranginis (amazons/heroines)** of the **1857 Indian Rebellion against the British East India Company**.

Role in the Revolt of 1857:

- In the centre of an intersection outside Sikandar Bagh in Lucknow, stands a statue of a patina-covered, sexually ambiguous figure carrying a rifle and walking forward with a determined glare.
- The inscription on the base of the statue named the figure as Uda Devi Pasi, a heroine of the Mutiny of 1857.
- In the fall of 1857, northern India was in a state of virtual anarchy. A general revolt against the growing hegemony of the British East India Company consumed the cities of Delhi, Jhansi and Kanpur.
- During this '**Second relief of Lucknow,**' **Campbell's 93rd Highland Regiment advanced along the Southern bank of the Gomti** until they reached the *Palace of Sikandarbag*.
- The British forces met desperate resistance from rebels who had fortified the position. In the battle that followed, over 2,000 rebels and many soldiers lost their lives in hand-to-hand combat.
- After the British overran Sikandarbag, an officer noted that many of the British casualties had bullet wounds indicating a steep, downward trajectory. Suspecting that a sniper remained hidden in a nearby pipal tree, British officers fired at the tree and dislodged a rebel who fell to the ground with a thud, dead.
- Further investigation revealed that the rebel was in fact, a **non-dominant caste woman named Uda Devi Pasi, who had donned men's clothing to participate in the uprising.**



Contemporary Influence:

- Today Uda Devi is an inspiration to women from non-dominant castes. Each year, on November 16, members of the Pasi caste gather at the sight of her final plunge and celebrate her as an anti-imperialist rebel who defied convention and struck a blow for the embryonic cause of Indian Independence.

- For Pasis, traditionally a caste of pig-herders and toddy-tappers, Uda Devi Martyrdom Day is the day to revel in the **bravery and martial spirit of their ancestors and to chant the rousing slogans, Uda Devi amar rahe! (Uda Devi is immortal!) and Uda Devi Zindabad! (Long live Uda Devi!).**

Global Anti-Terror Conference

(Source: The Hindu)

Context: Recently during his address at third ‘No Money for Terror’ (NMFT) Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism Financing, The Prime Minister of India has strongly asked for avoiding any ambiguity in dealing with terrorism and also warned against nations that use terrorism as a tool of foreign policy.

About No Money for Terror (NMFT) conference:

- It is a collaborative initiative of the international community that was held for the first time in Paris in 2018.
- Subsequently the 2nd edition of the conference was held in Melbourne in 2019.
- It aims to progress the discussions on combating terrorist financing.
- It also intends to include discussions on technical, legal, regulatory and cooperation aspects of all facets of terrorism financing. It focuses on-
 - Global trends in terrorism and terrorist financing.
 - Use of formal and informal channels of funds for terrorism.
 - Emerging technologies and terrorist financing.
 - Requisite international co-operation to address related challenges.
- This international “No Money for Terror” conference along with special UNSC briefing (which will be held in December) is part of a series of measures that the Government appears to be making to keep up the momentum from the recently held Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) meet.



Agenda of the conference:

- The conference agenda does not include country-specific discussions rather the participants will discuss issues ranging from sources of terror to the threat or its funding.
- India is expected to draw global attention towards issues such as-
- Lack of universal consensus on laws regarding cybercrimes.

- Weak control of social media platforms and their misuse by terrorist and extremist groups.
- Dark web and crypto-currency related issues.
- Crowdfunding along with anonymous, decentralized and untraceable nature of terror financing.
- It will also focus on effective multilateral and multi-stakeholder approaches in identification and mitigation of threats of emerging terror-financing mechanisms.
- Deliberation on misuse of non-profit and non-government organizations as front structures for financing terror activities.

Channels and sources of funds to terrorists:

- Direct smuggling of cash through international borders along with movement of goods through the trade system.
- Use of hawala networks with the support of local criminals, fugitives etc. They also use charities and alternative remittance systems.
- Formal Banking networks including SWIFT and other international channels.
- Block chain or cryptocurrencies which transcend national boundaries and international currency systems.
- Derive funding from a variety of criminal activities: ranging in scale and sophistication from low-level crime to organized fraud or narcotics smuggling or illegal activities in failed states and other safe havens.

Crowdfunding terror is a new age challenge:

- The exponential growth and reach of social media platforms have posed a challenge to the governments and security forces across the globe.
- These social media platforms are being used to raise financing, funding as crowdfunding platforms.
- These new ways of crowdfunding that are developing are critical issues that warrant close global scrutiny.

Efforts to tackle terror financing:

At National level

- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) to prevent money-laundering and to provide for confiscation of property in money-laundering and related matters including the terrorist activities.
- The **National Investigation Agency**, a specialized agency to deal with terrorist offences was set up and has been functioning since January 2009.
- The **National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)** has been constituted to create an appropriate database of security-related information.

At Global level:

- The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** which is a global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog aims to prevent illegal activities and the harm they cause to society.
- **UNSCR resolution 1267** in 1999 and **UNSCR resolution 1373** in 2001: They formed the bedrock of the financial sanctions regime for terrorist organizations.

Way Forward:

- The adaptability and opportunism shown by terrorist organizations are highly sophisticated; only accurate and well linked financial intelligence can reveal the structure of terrorist groups and also the activities of individual terrorists.
- There needs to be a global consensus on to curb terror financing and needs concerted efforts of all the International and national stakeholders.

In India's hosting of the "No money for terror" conference there is an opportunity for the world leaders which should go a long way in focusing on the issue of state sponsored terror financing.

Additional Information:

About Crowdfunding:

- Crowdfunding is a method of raising capital/resources through the collective effort of a large number of individual investors/contributors.
- Crowdfunding taps into the collective efforts of a large pool of individuals, primarily online via social media and crowdfunding platforms and leverages their networks for greater reach and exposure.

Types of Crowdfunding:

- **Rewards-Based Crowdfunding:** It involves individuals contributing to a business in exchange for a "reward," typically a form of the product or service which the company/organization offers.
- **Donation-Based Crowdfunding:** a way to source money for a project by asking a large number of contributors to individually donate a small amount to it.
- **Equity-Based Crowdfunding:** equity-based crowdfunding allows contributors to become part-owners of the company by trading capital for equity shares.

Rani Lakshmbai

(Source: PIB)

Context: The Prime Minister of India has remembered Rani Lakshmbai on her Jayanti and said that her courage and monumental contribution to our nation can never be forgotten.

About Rani Lakshmbai:

- The Lakshmibai, the Rani of Jhansi, was an Indian queen of the Maratha princely state of Jhansi in North India currently present in Jhansi district in Uttar Pradesh, India.
- She was one of the leading figures of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and became a symbol of resistance to the British Raj for Indian nationalists.
- When growing up with Nana Sahib and Tatya Tope, she got training in martial arts, sword fighting and horse riding and became proficient in them. She was more independent than other girls of her age, due to her unconventional upbringing.
- In 1853, when the Maharaja of Jhansi died, the East India Company took advantage of the situation and applied the Doctrine of Lapse to annex Jhansi.
- The Lakshmibai fought bravely against the British and gave a tough fight to Sir Hugh Rose so as to save her empire from annexation. She died fighting on the battlefield on June 17, 1858.
- When the Indian National Army started its first female unit (in 1943), it was named after the valiant queen of Jhansi.

About Doctrine of Lapse:

- It was an annexation policy followed widely by Lord Dalhousie when he was India's Governor-General from 1848 to 1856.
- According to this, any princely state that was under the direct or indirect control of the East India Company where the ruler did not have a legal male heir would be annexed by the company.
- As per this, any adopted son of the Indian ruler could not be proclaimed as heir to the kingdom.



DALHOUSIE'S DOCTRINE OF LAPSE

Lord Dalhousie was highly ambitious pro imperialist.

Under his Doctrine of Lapse, any ruler who did not have a natural heir to the throne would have to forfeit the right to rule for his future generation, led to the annexation of states like Satara, Nagpur, Jhansi, Sambhalpur, Udaipur, aitpur and Bhagat.

It raised a wave of discontentment against the British rule.



- By applying the doctrine of lapse, Dalhousie annexed the States of: Satara (1848 A.D.), Jaitpur, and Sambalpur (1849 A.D.), Baghat (1850 A.D.), Udaipur (1852 A.D.), Jhansi (1853 A.D.), and Nagpur (1854 A.D.)

Olive ridley Turtle

(Source: Indian Express)

Context: A large number of the endangered Olive Ridley turtles have started arriving for mating at the Gahirmatha marine sanctuary in Odisha.

About Olive ridley Turtle:

- The Olive ridley turtles are the **smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles** found in the world, inhabiting warm waters of the **Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans**.
- These turtles, along with their **cousin the Kemps ridley turtle**, are best known for their **unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- Though found in abundance, their numbers have been declining over the past few years, and the **species is recognized as Vulnerable by the IUCN Red list**.
- Males and females grow to the same size; however, females have a slightly more rounded carapace as compared to the male.
- They are **carnivores, and feed mainly on jellyfish, shrimp, snails, crabs, molluscs and a variety of fish and their eggs**.
- These turtles spend their entire lives in the ocean, and migrate thousands of kilometers between feeding and mating grounds in the course of a year.
- Interestingly, females return to the very same beach from where they first hatched, to lay their eggs.
 - During this phenomenal nesting, up to 600,000 and more females emerge from the waters, over a period of five to seven days, to lay eggs.
- The **coast of Orissa in India is the largest mass nesting site for the Olive-ridley, followed by the coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica**.
- They usually **mate between November and January and the breeding period is of eight months from October to May**.
- To reduce accidental killing in India, the Odisha government has made it mandatory for trawls to **use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs)**, a net specially designed with an exit cover which allows the turtles to escape while retaining the catch.

About Gahirmatha marine sanctuary:

- It is Located within the close vicinity of the Bhitarkanika National Park is Odisha's only Turtle Sanctuary.
- A part of the Gahirmatha Beach, the Turtle Sanctuary is the place where one can spot Olive Ridley Turtles.



- These turtles travel all the way from South Pacific Ocean to breed on the coast of Gahirmatha. About half a million of these species visit the beach every year for mating.
- It extends from **Dhamara river mouth in the north to Brahmani River mouth in the south**.
- The Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary is the only marine sanctuary of Orissa.
- In 1997 the Government of Orissa declared the area as Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary considering its ecological significance and diverse floral and faunal resources.
- The Gahirmatha beach has been a cradle to adult sea turtles and their babies since time immemorial.

Buddhist Nyingma sect

(Source: The Hindu)

Context: Recently in a significant development in the Tibetan Buddhist circles, the **Nyingma sect** has identified a boy from **Spiti in Himachal Pradesh** as the “reincarnation” of the late **Taklung Setrunga Rinpoche**, a scholar known for his knowledge of Tibetan Tantric school.



About Nyingma Sect:

- The Nyingmapa order has the longest history establishment history of transmitting all the four major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.
 - This is reflected in the name **Nyingma, which literary means “Old Order”**.
 - The Other three main **Tibetan Buddhism schools, Sakya, Kagyu, and Gelug, collectively refer to New Order (Sarma)**.
 - They rely on the translation of Buddhist script from India during the second dissemination of Buddhism to Tibet.

- **Nyingmapa's trace their translation lineage back to the Samye Monastery, the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Tibet.**
 - During the time, hundreds of scholars and translators translated **Sutras and Tantras to the Tibetan Language.**
 - The Same Monastery where the first seven locals are ordained as monk marks the bugging of Monkhood in Tibet.
- The Rinpoche used to live in the **Takthok monastery of Ladakh**, one of the oldest monasteries related to the sect.
- Its followers are spread across **Tibet, Bhutan, Ladakh, Sikkim and other Himalayan pockets.**
- **Nyingma in Tibetan means "ancient" and has roots going back to the 8th century.**
- The Nyingma sect is also known as the **Red Hat sect** because its Lamas wear red robes and hats.

Some Unique Aspects Nyingmapa Tradition:

- The practice of **Dzogchen (Great Perfection)**. It the highest perfection in deity visualization.
 - It seeks to **directly examine the fundamental mind without the aid of Visualization like statue and Thangka.**
- The tradition of Terma. **Padmasambhava has hidden lots of scriptures in a different location for the future master to find and preach.**

Teachings of the Nyingma Sect:

- Its teachings are mainly based on those of **Padmasambhava, called Guru Rinpoche and Shantarakshita** who were brought to Tibet through the rule of the Emperor **Trisong Detsen from 742 to 797 CE.**
- Buddhist teachings are classified into **nine yanas with 'Dzogchen' being most important.**
- Dzogchen (Great Perfection) philosophy revolves around pure awareness which can be achieved through meditation.
- This **Vajrayana tradition involves use of ritual, symbols and tantric practices to achieve nirvana.**
- Therefore, Nyingma stresses on **teachings attributed to Padmasambhava, the Dzogchen doctrines as well as Tantric practices.**
- The Nyingma School is also associated with **Termas (hidden treasures).**

Some major Monasteries of Nyingmapa Sect in Tibet:

- There is the **monastery of Nyingmapa in every corner of Tibet.**

- The most important monastery in Tibet is Mindrolling monastery near Lhasa airport, **Dorjee dark monastery, Rongbuk Monastery at Everest Basecamp and Samye Monastery.**

Pangolins

(Source: DownToEarth)

Context: During recently concluded the **19th Conference of Parties (COP19)** to the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)** urged countries, to remove references to parts and derivatives of pangolins “**from the official pharmacopoeia**” to help save the species.



About Pangolins:

- **Scientific Name:** *Manis crassicaudata*
- The **Indian pangolin** is the **largest among eight pangolin species.**
- Of the eight species of pangolin worldwide, two are found in India. They are **Chinese pangolin (*manis pentadactyla*)**, mostly found in northeast India and **Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*)**.

Animal Description:

- It has large, overlapping scales on its body that act as armour.
- It can also curl itself into a ball (volvation) as self-defence against predators such as the tiger.
- The **nocturnal animal lives in burrows and feed on ants and termites.**

Habitat and Distribution:

- The species is understood to occur in various **types of tropical forests** as well as open **land, grasslands and degraded habitats, including close to villages.**
- The species can adapt well to modified habitats, provided its ant and termite prey remains abundant
- It is widely distributed in **India, except in the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East.**

- It can be found at elevations up to 2500 m. The species also occurs in **Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.**
- **Threats:** Poaching for its meat and scales, which are used and consumed by local people, but are also increasingly traded internationally.
 - The scales serves as base **component for indigenous (traditional) psychotropic substances.**
 - China is main illicit hub (market) for **smuggled scales of Pangolins, where they have huge demand for medicinal and magical purposes.**
- **Protection status : Indian Pangolins**
 - **Schedule I under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**
 - **Appendix I of the International Convention of Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).**
 - **Endangered in IUCN Red List.**
 - **Chinese pangolin has been listed as “critically endangered” by UN affiliated International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) Red List.**

About CITES:

- **CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Washington Convention)** is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals from the threats of international trade.
- It was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).**
- **AIM:** Its aim is to ensure that **international trade (import/export) in specimens of animals and plants included under CITES, does not threaten the survival of the species in the wild.**
 - Although **CITES is legally binding on the Parties it does not take the place of national laws.**
- Rather it provides a framework to be respected by each Party, which has to adopt its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level.