



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 22-01-2024**

### **GS-1**

1. Madhika language
2. Zambia

### **GS-2**

3. ANUBHAV Awards Scheme 2024
4. A revival of the IMEC idea amid choppy geopolitics

### **GS-3**

5. Sisal leaves

## **Madhika language**

**Syllabus: GS-1; Art and Culture**

### **Context**

- *With just two speakers, a language in Kannur (Kerala) is on the brink*

### **About**

- *Despite sounding similar to Kannada, Madhika can still bewilder listeners due to its diverse influences. **It is a blend of Telugu, Tulu, Kannada, and Malayalam.***
- *The community was nomadic and worshippers of **Thiruvengktramana and Mariamma.***
- *The community in northern Malabar migrated from the hilly regions of Karnataka centuries ago.*
- *Initially recognised as Scheduled Tribe, it was later included in the Scheduled Caste category in Kerala.*

### **Reason for decline**

- *The younger generation, drawn to mainstream languages like Malayalam, shows little interest in learning this linguistic relic.*

## **Zambia**

**Syllabus: GS-1; Geography**

### **Context**

- **The Mines Ministry has proposed sending an Indian industry delegation to copper-rich Zambia to discuss potential copper exploration and mining projects in the southern African country.**
- *Mining companies including Vedanta and its subsidiary Hindustan Zinc, along with electric vehicle (EV) maker Ola Electric and lithium-ion battery recycler LOHUM, have expressed interest in joining the delegation to Zambia to attend a joint working group (JWG) meeting to discuss cooperation in the field of mineral resources.*

➤ **About**



- Zambia is a **landlocked country** in Southern Africa.
- It's a large, resource-rich country with sparsely populated land.
- Zambia is known for pioneering the walking safari and is considered a mecca for safari and game viewing activities.
- Zambia has about **6 per cent of the world's copper reserves and was the eighth-largest producer of copper in 2022.**

**History**

- Zambia gained independence from Britain on October 24, 1964 and became a middle-income country in 2011.

**Geography**

- Zambia is situated on a high plateau and is named after the **Zambezi River**, which drains all but a small northern part of the country.
- It shares borders with eight countries: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of

**Wildlife**

- Zambia has many waterways, including the **Luangwa River**, where hippos can be seen in groups of over 60.

**Economy**

- *Zambia's currency is the **Zambian Kwacha** and its official language is **English**.*

### **Know more**

- *Copper is widely used in sectors like construction, consumer durables, transportation, and industrial manufacturing.*
- *It is also used in clean energy technologies including solar panels, EVs, and energy efficient motors.*

## **ANUBHAV Awards Scheme 2024**

### **Syllabus: GS-2: Governance**

#### **Context:**

- *Launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in March 2015.*
- *Created for retiring/retired Central Government employees to share their work experiences.*

#### **Purpose:**

- *Aims to build a culture of leaving notes by retirees for better governance and administrative reforms.*

#### **ANUBHAV Awards Scheme 2024:**

- *Retiring Central Government employees/pensioners can participate.*
- *Write-ups should be submitted 8 months prior to retirement and up to 1 year after retirement.*
- *Write-ups published after assessment by Ministries/Departments.*
- *Shortlisted write-ups eligible for ANUBHAV Awards and Jury Certificates.*
- *Submission deadline for ANUBHAV Awards Scheme 2024 is 31.3.2024.*

#### **Past Awards:**

- *54 ANUBHAV awards conferred from 2016 to 2023.*

#### **Consideration for Awards:**

- *Anubhav write-ups published on the Anubhav Portal from 31st July, 2023, to 31st March, 2024, will be considered for 05 Anubhav Awards and 10 Jury Certificates.*

#### **Outreach Campaign:**

- *DOPPW undertaking an Outreach Campaign to encourage broader participation.*
- *Meetings held with Nodal Officers of Ministries/Departments and CAPF's.*
- *Ministries/Departments requested to reach out to pensioners for timely submission of ANUBHAV experiences.*
- *Knowledge-sharing sessions on the format of documentation for award-winning nominations.*

#### **ANUBHAV Awardees Speak Webinar Series:**

- *ANUBHAV Awardees share their experiences in a national forum under the ANUBHAV Awardees Speak Webinar Series.*

## **A revival of the IMEC idea amid choppy geopolitics**

### **Syllabus: GS-2: International events affecting India's interest.**

#### **Context:**

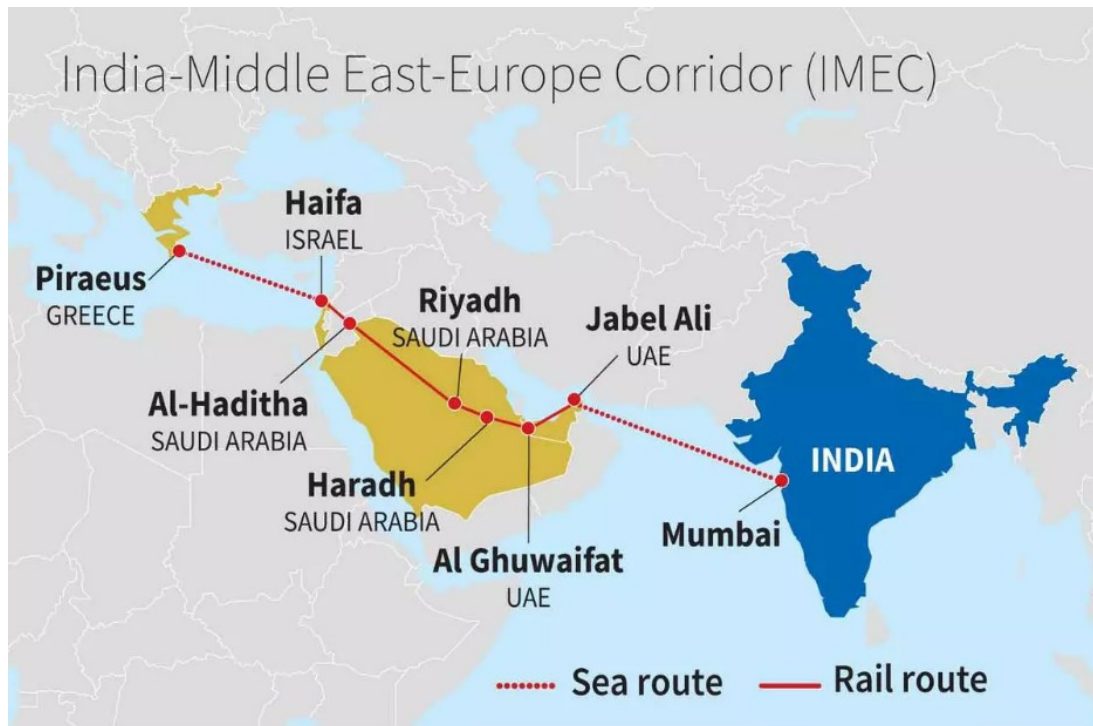
- *The Yemen conflict has seen an alarming erosion in the shipping industry's confidence in the Suez Canal continuing to be the backbone of east-west trade. Shippers are not baulking at taking the long, circuitous voyage around Africa.*

#### **Yemen Conflict and IMEC:**

- *Yemen conflict strengthens the case for the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.*
- ***Gaza war** appears to have negatively impacted the Gaza-Israel trade link.*

#### **IMEC Core Connection:**

- *IMEC focuses on connecting **Al Haditha in Saudi Arabia to Haifa in Israel**.*



### Critics of IMEC:

- Critics argue that the Arab Street may resist a major trade link between Saudi Arabia and Israel post the Gaza war.

### IMEC Memorandum of Understanding:

- A United States government press release on the IMEC memorandum of understanding (MoU) promised a meeting within 60 days, but the Gaza war has likely hindered this.

### Challenges with IMEC:

- Connecting Al Haditha to Haifa faces challenges, with critics highlighting potential obstacles related to regional politics and public sentiment.

### Rail Projects in the Region:

6. Etihad Rail and GCC Railway projects in the UAE and Saudi Arabia are independently underway, potentially aligning with IMEC and targeting ports like Fujairah and Jebel Ali.

### Changed West Asia:

- Geopolitics poses a significant challenge to the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

- **Turkey, excluded from IMEC**, expresses irritation and proposes an alternative route through Iraq for access to the Mediterranean.

#### Abraham Accords and Israel-Arab Relations:

- Optimistic about the Abraham Accords fostering greater trade and strategic links between Israel and Arab nations.

#### Political Resurrection of Donald Trump:

- Donald Trump's potential return to the presidency has two implications:
- IMEC aligns with a **business-focused Trump**.
- Doubts arise about Trump's patience and interest in a major global project, raising concerns about U.S. commitment to IMEC and potentially benefiting China.

#### Hydrogen in IMEC:

- IMEC is proposed to include **hydrogen pipelines as part of its infrastructure**.
- Hydrogen, initially produced from **fossil fuel-based processes like methane reforming**, is seen as a **transitional fuel in the decarbonization process**.
- **Gulf nations** could benefit by supplying hydrogen sourced from fossil fuels through the corridor.

#### Containerisation Benefits:

- Containerisation, **involving rail and road transportation**, is a significant attraction for India within IMEC.
- It **accelerates trade and reduces port costs**, aligning with India's National Logistics Policy goal of lowering logistics costs to global levels by 2030.

#### Indian Logistics Scenario:

- Currently, **about 70% of containers in India are transported by road**.
- Rail movement of containers is considered cheaper than road transport, although road transport is faster.
- Dedicated rail freight corridors linking to IMEC ports like Mundra and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) play a crucial role.

#### Southern India Considerations:

- Existing rail projects largely bypass southern India, leading containers from the south to use alternative routes via **Colombo transshipment container terminal**.
- IMEC could benefit southern India if dedicated freight corridors are developed, promising a 40% reduction in delivery schedules within an all-India network.

#### Gateway Challenges:

- **Haifa cannot serve as India's primary gateway to the West due to its limited container traffic compared to Mundra or JNPT.**
- *Current container traffic at Haifa is **only one-third of Mundra and JNPT**, and only a tenth of India's total container exports.*

#### **Capacity Planning and Syncing:**

- *Adani's stake in Haifa port presents an opportunity to synchronize planning for capacity expansion with Adani-owned Mundra, a major Indian port.*

#### **Financial Dynamics:**

- *IMEC is expected to attract financing from the U.S., Europe, and Saudi Arabia, in addition to Indian financing.*
- *Potential involvement of the United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is mentioned.*

#### **Colombo Terminal as Template:**

- *The funding model for the Adani Ports-owned Colombo deepwater container terminal, involving the United States International Development Finance Corporation, could serve as a template for Haifa's development within the IMEC framework.*

## **Sisal leaves**

### **Syllabus: GS-3: Biodiversity – flora.**

#### **Context:**

- *Recently, researchers at Stanford University innovatively harnessed sisal leaves to develop an absorbent material with the potential to substitute cotton, wood pulp, and chemical absorbents in sanitary napkins.*

#### **Key points:**

- **Innovative Approach:** *Scientists at Stanford University introduced a groundbreaking method utilizing sisal leaves to create a highly absorbent material.*
- **Eco-Friendly Alternative:** *This method presents an environmentally-friendly alternative with a higher absorption capacity compared to conventional options.*





- **Sisal's Advantages:** *Sisal, a xerophytic and semi-perennial leaf fiber-producing plant, offers leaves that are thick, fleshy, and often coated with a waxy layer.*
- **Water Efficiency:** *Cultivating sisal requires significantly less water when compared to the water-intensive process of growing cotton.*