



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 22-03-2024

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Pandavula Gutta and Ramgarh Crater as Geo-Heritage Sites

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Geography –geomorphology

Context:

- **Pandavula Gutta**, an ancient geological marvel predating the Himalayan hills, has been officially designated as the sole Geo-heritage site in Telangana.
- Additionally, the Rajasthan government designates Ramgarh Crater in Baran district as a geo-heritage site.

About Pandavula Gutta:

- Pandavula Konda (Pandavula Gutta) is a geological marvel located in the **Jayashankar Bhupalpally district of Telangana**.
- It boasts rich rock shelters, showcasing habitation **from the Mesolithic period** (around 10,000 B.C. to 8,000 B.C.) to medieval times.
- Pandavula Gutta features **Palaeolithic cave paintings** (500,000 BCE–10,000 BCE) offering insights into prehistoric life.
- The cave paintings depict **various wildlife species** such as Bison, Antelope, Tiger, and Leopard, along with symbols like swastikas, circles, squares, and weapons.
- They are adorned with **geometrical designs and impressions** in colors like green, red, yellow, and white pigments.
- The topography of Pandavula Gutta makes it a sought-after destination for rock climbing enthusiasts.



About Ramgarh Crater:

- **Ramgarh Crater in Rajasthan** was formed **approximately 165 million years ago** due to a meteor impact, creating a 3-kilometer diameter crater.
- This geological marvel provides essential ecosystem services, contributing significantly to the region's ecological balance and biodiversity.
- Recognized as the **Ramgarh Conservation Reserve under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, the Ramgarh Crater is safeguarded to preserve its unique ecological and cultural heritage.
- It holds the status of the Ramgarh Conservation Reserve under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Additionally, the **presence of the Pushkar Talab complex** within the crater has been acknowledged as wetlands under the Wetland (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017.



Geo-Heritage Site/National Geological Monuments:

- **Geoheritage** refers to sites or areas with significant scientific, educational, cultural, or aesthetic value due to their geological features.
- **Characteristics:** These sites may showcase unique rock formations, fossils, or landscapes crucial for education, research, cultural significance, or visual appeal. They often contribute to local and regional economies as tourist destinations.
- **Protection Measures:** The Geological Survey of India (GSI) or respective State governments undertake necessary measures to safeguard these sites.
- **Declaration and Maintenance:** The Geological Survey of India (GSI) declares geo-heritage sites/national geological monuments for protection and maintenance.
- **Role of GSI:** Established in 1851, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) was initially tasked with locating coal deposits for the Railways.
- **Headquartered in Kolkata**, it operates as an attached office to the Ministry of Mines.
- Its primary functions include the creation and updating of national geoscientific information and the assessment of mineral resources.

LAMITIYE-2024

Syllabus: GS-2: International relations – military exercises.

Context:

- *Indian Army contingent departed for Seychelles for Joint Military Exercise “LAMITIYE-2024”.*
- *Exercise conducted from 18-27 March 2024.*

More about exercise:

- *'LAMITIYE' means 'Friendship' in Creole language*
- *Biennial training event since 2001 in Seychelles*
- *45 personnel each from GORKHA RIFLES of Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces participating*

Aim:

- *enhance interoperability in Sub-conventional Operations in Semi-Urban environment*
- *Focus on Chapter VII of UN Charter on Peace Keeping Operations*

Goal:

- *enhance cooperation and interoperability during Peace Keeping Operations*
- *Building and promoting bilateral military relations*
- *Exchange of skills, experiences, and good practices*
- *Joint training, planning, and execution of tactical drills*
- *Neutralization of likely threats in Semi-Urban environment*
- *Showcasing new-generation equipment and technology*
- *10 days long Joint Exercise with various activities including Field Training Exercise, combat discussions, lectures & demonstrations*
- *Culminates with two days of Validation Exercise*
- *Aims to develop mutual understanding and jointness between troops*
- *Foster collaborative partnership and sharing of best practices between the two sides*

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Syllabus: GS-3; Balance of Payment, International Institutions

Context

- 1) **Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif** said the economy of the country can't survive without another assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- 2) The International Monetary Fund announced that it has reached a staff-level agreement on economic policies with **Sri Lanka** to conclude the second review of a four-year bailout programme.

About

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a global organization that **supports economic policies that promote monetary cooperation and financial stability.**

Role

- The IMF's three main roles are **economic surveillance, lending, and capacity development.**
- The IMF also provides emergency assistance to members facing urgent balance-of-payments needs through the **Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI).**

Reports

- The IMF publishes a survey called the **World Economic Outlook** twice a year that analyzes the global economy in the near and medium term.

History

- The IMF was founded in July 1944 at the Conference of 44 nations in **Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA**, by John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White.
- The IMF's parent organization is the United Nations, and 187 nations are members of the IMF, including India, a founder member.
- The countries that are not a part of the IMF are Cuba, North Korea, Monaco, Taiwan, Vatican City, and East Timor Liechtenstein.

Functions

- to oversee the **fixed exchange rate arrangements** between countries, thus helping national governments manage their exchange rates and allowing these governments to prioritize economic growth
- to provide short-term capital to aid the **balance of payments** and prevent the spread of international **economic crises.**

- *to help mend the pieces of the international economy after the **Great Depression and World War II** as well as to provide capital investments for economic growth and projects such as infrastructure.*

Funds

- *IMF funds come from two major sources: **quotas and loans**.*
- *Quotas, which are pooled funds from member nations, generate most IMF funds.*
- *The size of members' quotas increase according to their economic and financial importance in the world.*
- *The quotas are increased periodically as a means of boosting the IMF's resources in the form of special drawing rights.*

Other lending facilities

- *Extended Credit Facility (ECF) Extended Fund Facility (EFF) Flexible Credit Line (FCL)*
- *Precautionary and Liquidity Line (PLL) Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)*
- *Short-Term Liquidity Line (SLL) Stand By Arrangement (SBA) Standby Credit Facility (SCF)*

What are the five currency of the IMF?

- *The SDR is an international reserve asset. The SDR is not a currency, but its value is based on a basket of five currencies—the **US dollar, the euro, the Chinese renminbi, the Japanese yen, and the British pound sterling**.*

Significance

- *The IMF supports sustainable growth and prosperity for its member countries through economic policies that promote monetary cooperation and financial stability.*
- *These policies are essential to increase job creation, economic well-being, and productivity.*

India's first Oil Palm Processing Unit

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Agriculture – edible oil.

Context:

- *India's First Integrated Oil Palm Processing Unit by 3F Oil Palm in Arunachal Pradesh:*

More about new plant:

- **India's first integrated Oil Palm Processing Unit** by 3F Oil Palm has initiated operations in Arunachal Pradesh.
- This marks a **significant milestone in India's journey** towards self-reliance in edible oils.

About Palm Oil:

- **Production and Usage:** Derived from the fruit of oil palms, palm oil finds applications in cooking, cosmetics, processed foods, biofuels, and more.
- It serves various industries including food, detergents, cosmetics, and biofuel production.
- **Global Production:** Indonesia and Malaysia collectively account for 90% of global palm oil production, with Indonesia leading the sector with over 45 million tonnes in 2021.

Palm Oil Production in India:

- **Regional Contribution:** Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala are the primary contributors, accounting for 98% of palm oil production in India.

Issues Associated:

Sustainability Concerns:

- Oil Palm plantations often face criticism for unsustainable production practices.
- There are concerns regarding the exploitation of labour within the industry.

About National Mission for Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP):

- Launched by the Government of India in August 2021, NMEO-OP aims at significantly boosting oil palm cultivation and crude palm oil production.
- NMEO-OP is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, with a particular emphasis on the North East region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- It focuses on **expanding the area and enhancing productivity** of oilseeds and oil palm.

Financial Allocation:

- The scheme has a **financial outlay of Rs. 11,040 crores**, comprising Rs. 8,844 crores from the Government of India and Rs. 2,196 crores from the states, which also includes viability gap funding.

Targets:

- *Expand the area under **oil palm cultivation to 10 lakh hectares** from the previous 3.5 lakh hectares during 2019-20, aiming for an additional 6.50 lakh hectares by 2025-26.*
- ***Increase crude palm oil production** from 0.27 lakh tonnes during 2019-20 to 11.20 lakh tonnes by 2025-26.*
- ***Enhance consumer awareness** to maintain a consumption level of 19.00 kg/person/annum until 2025-26.*

Implementing Stakeholders:

- ***Implementation of NMEO-Oil Palm involves** various stakeholders such as the State Department of Agriculture, State Department of Horticulture, Central University, ICAR-Institutions, CDDs, SAUs, KVKs, Central Agencies/Cooperatives, Oil palm processors/Associations, DD Kisan, AIR, DD, TV channels.*

Features:

- *Key features of NMEO-OP encompass assistance for planting material, inputs for intercropping up to a gestation period of 4 years, maintenance support, establishment of seed gardens and nurseries, micro irrigation, bore well/pumpset/water harvesting structures, vermicompost units, solar pumps, harvesting tools, custom hiring centre cum harvester groups, farmers and officers training, and support for replanting of old oil palm gardens, among others.*

Oil Palm Production in India:

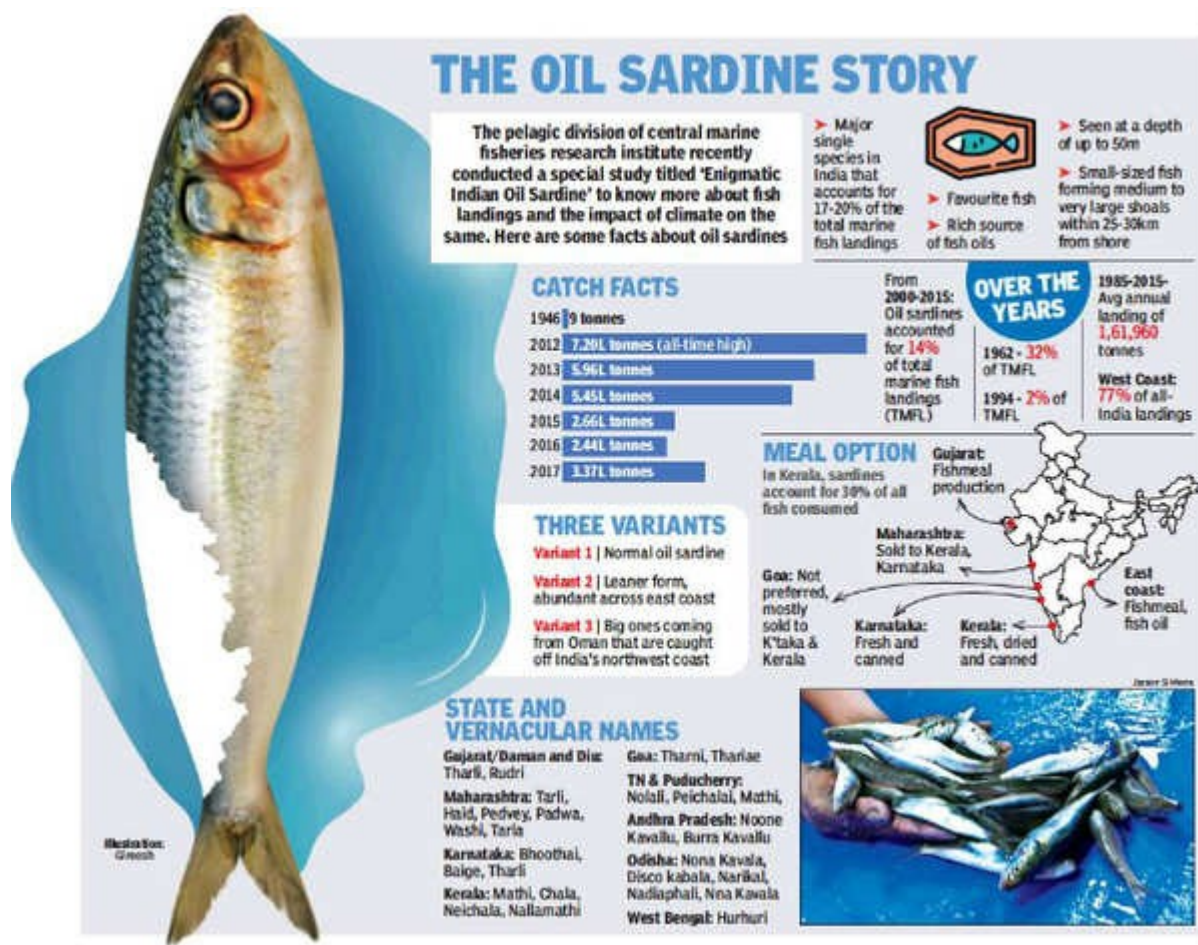
- ***Crop Origin:**Oil Palm (*Elaeisguineensis*), originally from West Africa, is a relatively new crop in India.*
- ***High Yielding Capability:**It boasts the highest vegetable oil yielding capability per hectare among crops cultivated in India.*
- ***Oil Products:**Oil palm yields two distinct oils: palm oil and palm kernel oil, which find applications in both culinary and industrial sectors.*
- ***Major Growing States:**Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala emerge as the primary states for oil palm cultivation, collectively contributing to 98% of the total production.*
- ***Apart from the major states,** Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Gujarat, and Mizoram also have significant areas under oil palm cultivation, showcasing a diverse geographical spread.*

Oil sardines

Syllabus: GS-3; Environment

Context

- Fishermen have demanded a discussion on what they called a “disappearing act” once again in recent years by “enigmatic” oil sardines from the Kerala coast, where sardine fisheries directly support a population of at least 70,000.



About

- **The Indian oil sardine (*Sardinella longiceps*)** is a species of ray-finned fish in the genus *Sardinella*.
- It is one of the two most important commercial fishes in India (with the mackerel).
- The Indian oil sardine is one of the more regionally limited species of *Sardinella* and can be found in the northern regions of the Indian Ocean.
- These fish feed on phytoplankton (diatoms) and zooplankton (copepods).

Economy

- *It is the most important marine fishery resource by volume, contributing 17–20% to the total marine fish landings in India.*
- *Most of these landings come from the southwest coast, including **Kerala, Karnataka, and Goa.***
- *The Indian oil sardine is also a major source of food for fishers and is known as "**Kudumbam Pularthi**" in Kerala, which means "family's provider".*

Other significance

Nutrition

- *The Indian oil sardine is a popular table fish that is rich in nutrition and affordable.*

By-products

- *The Indian oil sardine provides sardine oil for various industries and fish meal for cattle and poultry.*

Ecology

- *The Indian oil sardine is an important part of the marine ecosystem because it is prey for larger predators and forms an intermediate link in the food web.*

Genome assembly

- *The genome assembly of the Indian oil sardine is a valuable tool for studying how fish adapt to climate change.*