



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 25-09-2025**

### **GS-1**

1. Sarcophagus

### **GS-2**

2. International Criminal Court (ICC)

### **GS-3**

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4. Fishing Cat
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## **Sarcophagus**

**Syllabus: GS-1; Ancient History**

### **Context**

- A terracotta sarcophagus was recently discovered in **Kilnamandi village, Tiruvannamalai district, Tamil Nadu**.
- For the first time, this sarcophagus has been scientifically dated.
- The dating indicates that **Tamil Nadu might have had trade contact with North India** during the period of the **Late Harappan civilisation**.



### **What is it?**

- A **stone coffin** or a container designed to hold a coffin.
- Primarily used for the burial of **leaders and wealthy residents** in ancient societies.
- They were often displayed above ground but could also be placed in burial chambers or tombs.

### Origin and History

- First used in **Ancient Egypt** by the pharaohs of the 3rd dynasty (c. 2686–2613 B.C.E.).
- The practice later became popular in **Ancient Greece and Rome**.
- Its use continued in Europe for high-status members of the clergy, government, or aristocracy.

### Meaning of the Name

- The word "**sarcophagus**" comes from ancient Greek.
- *Sarx* means "flesh," and *phagein* means "to eat."
- So, it literally means "**flesh-eating**."
- This name came from a type of limestone that was believed to help bodies decompose quickly.

### Features and Construction

- Almost always made of **stone**.
- The most popular material was **limestone**, but others like granite, sandstone, or marble were also used.
- They were **elaborately decorated** with carvings, images, and writing, usually including the name of the deceased.
- The specific design details differ from one culture to another.

## International Criminal Court (ICC)

### Syllabus: GS-2; International Institutions

#### Context

- The most significant recent development concerning the ICC is the collective announcement by the military-led governments of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger of their intention to withdraw from the Rome Statute.

### What is the International Criminal Court (ICC)?

- The ICC is a permanent international tribunal established to prosecute individuals for the most serious crimes of international concern. It is **not** part of the United Nations, but it has a cooperation agreement with it.
- **Core Principle:** The ICC is a court of **last resort**. It complements national judicial systems and only steps in when countries are unwilling or unable to genuinely investigate and prosecute these grave crimes themselves.

### Founding and Legal Basis

- **The Rome Statute:** The ICC was established by an international treaty called the Rome Statute, which was adopted on **17 July 1998**.
- **Entry into Force:** The Statute entered into force on **1 July 2002**, after 60 countries ratified it. This is the official birth date of the Court.
- **Location:** The seat of the Court is in **The Hague, Netherlands**.

### Crimes Within the ICC's Jurisdiction (The "Gravest Crimes")

The ICC has jurisdiction over four core crimes:

1. **Genocide:** Acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.
2. **Crimes Against Humanity:** Widespread or systematic attacks directed against any civilian population, including murder, enslavement, torture, sexual violence, and apartheid.
3. **War Crimes:** Grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and other serious violations of the laws of war during international or non-international armed conflicts (e.g., willful killing, torture of prisoners, attacking humanitarian personnel).
4. **Crime of Aggression:** The planning, preparation, initiation, or execution of an act of using armed force by a state against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence of another state.

### Key Principles of Jurisdiction (When can the ICC act?)

The ICC's jurisdiction is triggered only under specific conditions:

- **Temporal Jurisdiction:** It can only investigate crimes committed **after 1 July 2002**.
- **Territorial or Nationality Basis:** The ICC can exercise jurisdiction if:
  - The crime was committed on the territory of a **State Party** to the Rome Statute; or
  - The accused person is a **national of a State Party**.
- **Complementarity:** The ICC is a court of last resort. It will only intervene if a national legal system is **unwilling or unable** to carry out genuine proceedings.
- **Triggering Mechanisms:** A case can be brought before the ICC in three ways:
  - a. **State Party Referral:** Any country that is a member of the ICC can refer a situation.
  - b. **UN Security Council Referral:** The UN Security Council can refer a situation, even if it involves a country that is not a member of the ICC (e.g., the referral of Darfur, Sudan, and Libya).
  - c. **Proprio Motu Investigation:** The ICC Prosecutor can initiate an investigation independently based on information received.

## Membership

- As of now, there are **123 States Parties** to the Rome Statute.
- **Major Non-Member States:** Several major powers are not members, including the **United States, China, Russia, India, and Israel**. Their absence is a significant challenge to the Court's universality and perceived legitimacy.

## ICC vs. ICJ: A Crucial Distinction

It is vital to distinguish the ICC from the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**.

| Feature        | International Criminal Court (ICC)                      | International Court of Justice (ICJ)             |
|----------------|---|--|
| Type of Entity | Criminal Tribunal                                       | Civil Tribunal                                   |
| Subject        | Prosecutes <b>individuals</b> (e.g., leaders, soldiers) | Hears disputes between <b>states</b> (countries) |

| Feature                   | International Criminal Court (ICC)                  | International Court of Justice (ICJ)   |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Primary Function</b>   | Criminal prosecution for genocide, war crimes, etc. | Settles legal disputes submitted by states (e.g., border disputes, treaty interpretations) |
| <b>Location</b>           | The Hague, Netherlands                              | The Hague, Netherlands   |
| <b>Relationship to UN</b> | Independent, cooperative agreement                  | The <b>principal judicial organ</b> of the United Nations                                  |

## Lactifluus Khasianus

**Syllabus:** GS-3; New Species

### **Context**

- Researchers have formally identified and named a new species of edible mushroom, *Lactifluus khasianus*.



### Local Name

- The mushroom has been long known to the Khasi tribal communities in Meghalaya, who call it "**Tit iongnah**".

### Location

- It was discovered in the forests of **East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya**.

### Scientific Significance

- It is the **first edible species** to be reported from its scientific section (*Lactifluus* sect. *Gerardii*) in India. It is the fifth confirmed species from this group in the country.

### Key Identifiers

The species can be recognized by its:

- Chocolate-brown cap.
- Symbiotic relationship with **Khasi pine (*Pinus kesiya*)** trees at high altitudes (~1,600 metres).

### How it was Distinguished

It was differentiated from similar species like *Lactifluus gerardii* based on:

- **Larger cystidia** (specialized cells).
- Distinct **DNA signatures**.

### Cultural Importance

- For Khasi villagers, it is not a new discovery. It has been traditionally gathered, sold in local markets during the monsoon, and consumed as a **seasonal delicacy**.

### Broader Implication

- This discovery highlights the rich biodiversity of Meghalaya and serves as a prime example of **scientific validation of traditional knowledge**.



## **Fishing Cat**

**Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity**

### **Context**

- A Fishing Cat was spotted for the first time via a camera trap inside the **Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve (RVTR)** in Rajasthan.

### **Key Facts about the Fishing Cat**



### **1. Basic Description**

- **Scientific Name:** *Prionailurus viverrinus*
- **Type:** A medium-sized, stocky, and powerfully built wild cat.
- **State Animal:** It is the official state animal of West Bengal.

### **2. Physical Features**

- **Build:** Short limbs, a stocky body, and a short tail (about one-third of its body length).



- **Coat:** Coarse, grey-brown fur with dark markings that are a unique combination of spots and stripes.
- **Distinct Markings:** Six to eight dark lines run from the forehead over the head to the neck.
- **Size:** Shows strong sexual dimorphism, with males being significantly larger. They stand about 15-16 inches tall and are 38-47 inches long.

### 3. Habitat and Distribution

- **Global Distribution:** Native to South and Southeast Asia (India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, etc.).
- **Distribution in India:** Found in:
  - The mangrove forests of the Sundarbans.
  - The foothills of the Himalayas along the Ganga and Brahmaputra river valleys.
  - The Western Ghats.
- **Preferred Habitat:** Wetlands, including swamps, marshes, mangroves, and areas near rivers and lakes. It is adapted to both fresh and saltwater habitats.

### 4. Behaviour

- **Swimming Proficiency:** An adept swimmer, it frequently enters water and can dive to catch fish.
- **Activity:** Primarily nocturnal (active at night).
- **Diet:** Primarily piscivorous (fish-eating), but also preys on other aquatic animals like frogs and snails.

### 5. Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable.
- **Threats:** Habitat destruction and degradation of wetlands are the primary threats to its survival.

### About Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve (RVTR)

- **Location:** Bundi district of Rajasthan, India.
- **Status:** It was notified as Rajasthan's **fourth tiger reserve** in 2021.
- **Role:** It serves as a buffer for the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, helping in tiger dispersal and population management.
- **Corridor:** It is a part of the larger tiger corridor connecting Ranthambore to Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve.

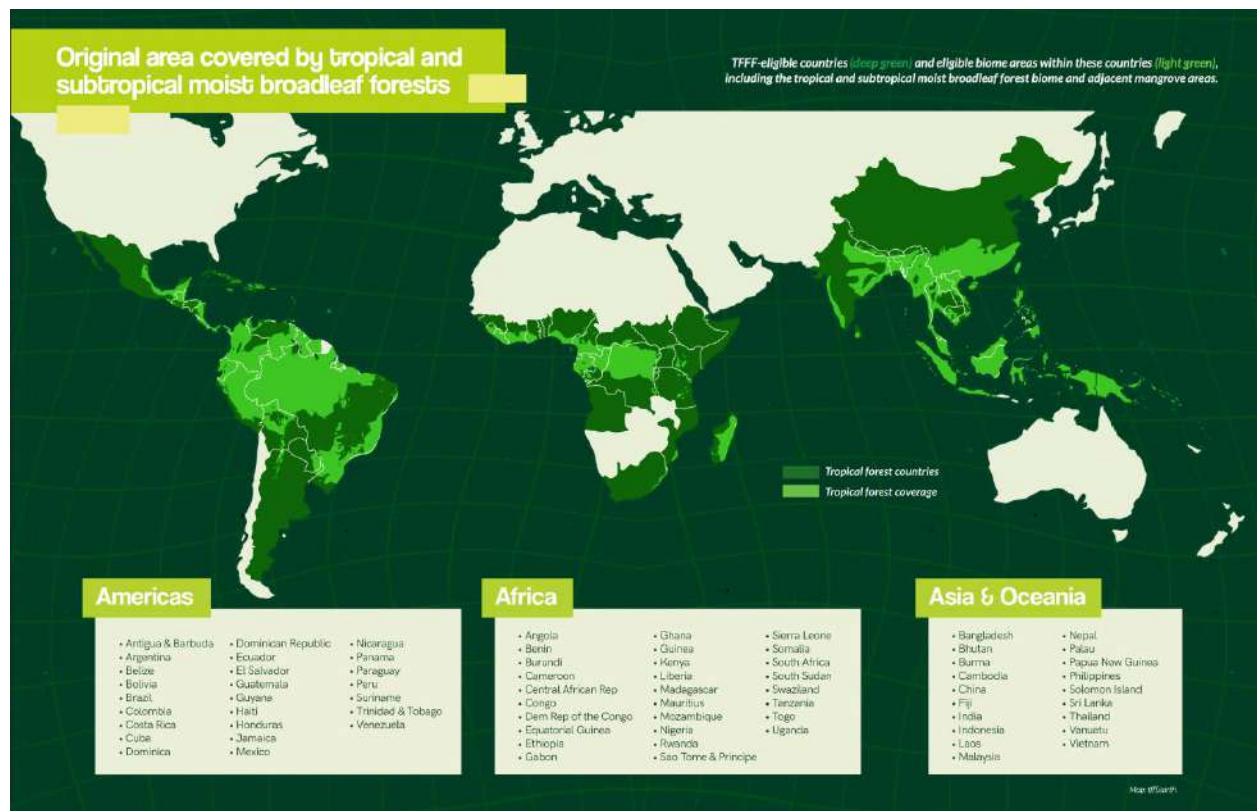
- **Ecology:** The reserve features a mix of dry deciduous forests, grasslands, and rocky hills, making it a biodiversity-rich area.

## Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF)

### Syllabus: GS-3; International Institutions

#### Context

- The Tropical Forests Forever Facility is a **Brazil-led global initiative** to create a permanent financial mechanism for the long-term conservation of tropical forests. It was first proposed by Brazil at **COP28 in 2023**.



#### Key Objectives

- **Long-term Funding:** To provide a stable, perpetual source of funding for forest conservation, moving beyond short-term projects.

- **Financial Incentive:** To pay tropical forest countries (TFCs) a **fixed amount per hectare of standing forest** they maintain, creating a direct financial reward for preservation.
- **Capital Mobilization:** To mobilize a target of **US \$125 billion** from both public and private sources.

### How It Works: The Financial Mechanism

The TFFF is a **blended finance** structure, meaning it uses public or philanthropic funds to attract larger amounts of private capital.

1. **Raising Capital:** The fund aims to raise money from two sources:
  - a. **Sponsors (20% of corpus):** High-income countries (as classified by the World Bank) and philanthropic organizations. This portion acts as a financial cushion or "first-loss capital" to attract private investors.
  - b. **Market Investors (80% of corpus):** Institutional investors (like pension funds), sovereign wealth funds, and endowments. They would invest by purchasing bonds or other debt instruments issued by the TFFF.
2. **Generating Returns:** The raised capital is invested into a diversified portfolio managed by a Multilateral Development Bank (MDB), such as the World Bank. The goal is for this portfolio to generate a financial return that is **higher than the cost of paying investors**.
3. **Paying for Conservation:** The returns generated are used to make annual payments to tropical forest countries based on the amount of forest they keep standing.

### Significance

- **Scalable Solution:** By tapping into vast global financial markets, it has the potential to generate funding on a scale needed to combat deforestation effectively.
- **Performance-Based:** Payments are directly linked to results (hectares conserved), ensuring accountability.
- **Brazil's Leadership:** Brazil's role as the proponent and first investor is crucial, given it is home to a significant portion of the world's tropical forests (the Amazon).