



News Analysis (04 May, 2020)

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1-D Simulation Code to Study Earth's Magnetosphere

Why in News

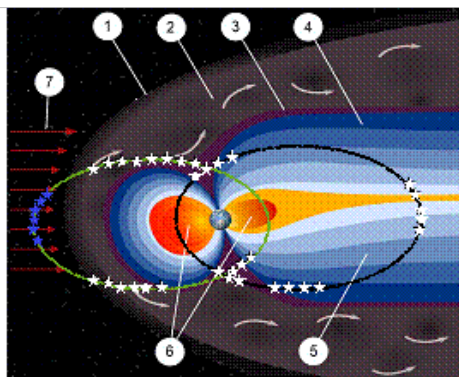
Scientists at the **Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG)** have developed a generalized **one-dimensional fluid simulation code** capable of **studying** a wide spectrum of coherent **electric field structures** in **near-earth plasma environments** or earth's **magnetosphere**.

The developed simulation code is expected to help in planning of future space missions.

Key Points

- **Formation of Earth's Magnetosphere:**

- Sun is the major source of **plasma deposition** in space around the Earth. Thus, the Sun forces some of its plasma towards the earth in the form of the solar wind.
 - Plasma is the most common state of matter in the universe as a whole. It consists of a gas of ions and free electrons.
- The speed of solar wind varies between 300 to 1500 km/s, which carries with it a solar magnetic field, called the **Interplanetary Magnetic Field (IMF)**.
- The **interaction of the IMF with the earth's magnetic field** creates the magnetosphere of the earth.
- The magnetosphere shields our home planet from solar and cosmic particle radiation, as well as erosion of the atmosphere by the solar wind - the constant flow of charged particles streaming off the sun.



- **Regions of the Earth's Magnetosphere:**

The schematic diagram of Earth's magnetosphere shown consists of different regions namely,

- **Bow shock :** It occurs when the magnetosphere of an Earth interacts with the nearby flowing ambient plasma such as the solar wind.
- **Magnetosheath:** It is the region of space between the magnetopause and the bow shock of a planet's magnetosphere.
- **Magnetopause :** It is the boundary between the planet's magnetic field and the solar wind.
- **Northern tail lobe :** The magnetosphere of the earth contains two lobes, referred to as the northern and southern tail lobes. Magnetic field lines in the northern tail lobe point towards the earth.
- **Southern tail lobe:** The magnetic field lines in the southern tail lobes point away from the earth. Usually, the tail lobes are almost empty, with few charged particles opposing the flow of the solar wind.
- **Plasmasphere :** The plasmasphere, or inner magnetosphere, is a region of the Earth's magnetosphere consisting of low energy (cool) plasma.
- **Solar winds:** It is a stream of charged particles released from the upper atmosphere of the Sun, called the corona.

- **Significance of Study of Plasma Processes:**

- The plasma processes have the ability to hamper the working of a number of satellites that have been placed in orbit in the magnetospheric region.
 - However, the morphology of these plasma processes changes over space and time. These changes can be ideally deciphered only through computer simulations.
- The study will help advance the knowledge of plasma waves, instabilities, and coherent effects associated with wave-particle interactions that are useful in planning future space missions.
- It can also lead to precisely controlled fusion laboratory experiments for ever-expanding energy needs of humanity.

Indian Institute of Geomagnetism

- Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG) is an **autonomous institution** functioning directly under the **Department of Science and Technology**.
- It has its main Campus at Panvel, Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra).
- It conducts basic and applied research in Geomagnetism (study of dynamics of earth's magnetic field) and allied fields like Solid Earth Geomagnetism/Geophysics, Magnetosphere, Space and Atmospheric Sciences.
- The Institute also supports a **World Data Centre for Geomagnetism (WDC, Mumbai)**, which is the only International centre for Geomagnetic data in South Asia and caters to the needs of Space and Earth Scientists and researchers from various universities and research institutions.

Source:PIB

Drop in FPI Outflows

Why in News

According to recent data from Central Depository Services Limited (CDSL), the **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs)** have significantly reduced the pace of outflows from the **equity and debt market** in April, 2020, after a record net outflow of Rs 1,18,203 crore in March 2020.

Key Points

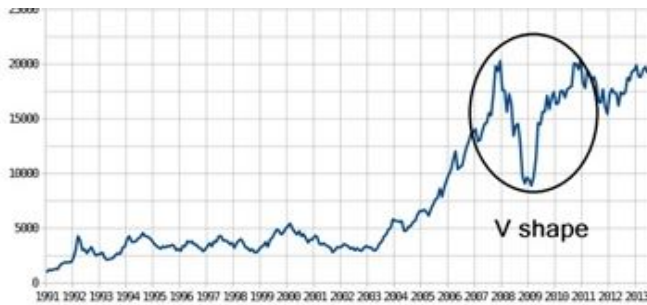
- FPIs sold a net of Rs 6,883 crore from the **equities market** and net holdings worth Rs 12,551 crore from the **debt market** in April.
 - In **equity market shares are issued and traded**, either through exchanges or over-the-counter markets (i.e directly). It is also known as the stock market.
 - The **debt market** is the market where **debt instruments are traded**.
 - Debt instruments are instruments that require a fixed payment to the holder, usually with interest. E.g. **bonds** (government or corporate) and **mortgages**.
- However, they invested a net of Rs 4,032 crore in debt **Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) scheme**. VRR scheme allows FPIs to participate in **repo transactions** and also invest in **exchange traded funds** that invest in debt instruments.
- Outflows have continued **due to uncertainty surrounding economic conditions** caused by Covid-19 lockdown and investors are cautious. However, the **pessimism** also continues to grip the markets.
- So far, India has been able to contain the Covid-19 pandemic from spreading aggressively. The measures announced by the government and the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** periodically to revitalize the sagging economy have also resonated well with investors.
- With selective relaxation in the lockdown and gradual opening up of economic activity in the country, foreign investors will be closely watching the developments on this front.
- A success on developing medicine and vaccines will lead to a **V-shaped recovery** in the economy and markets.

Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) scheme

- The VRR scheme is **aimed at attracting long-term and stable FPI** investments into debt markets.
- Investments through the route will be **free of the regulatory norms** applicable to FPI investments in debt markets, provided investors maintain a minimum share of their investments for a fixed period.
- VRR Scheme has a minimum retention period of **three years** and investors need to **maintain a minimum of 75% of their investments** in India.
- FPIs registered with **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** are eligible to voluntarily invest through the route in government and corporate bonds.

V-Shaped Recovery

- A V-shaped recovery is characterized by a **sharp economic decline followed by a quick and sustained recovery**.
- The **recession of 1953** is an example of a V-shaped recovery.
- A V-shaped recovery is different from an L-shaped recovery, in which the economy stays in a slump for a prolonged period of time.



Foreign Portfolio Investment

- **Foreign portfolio investment (FPI)** consists of securities and other financial assets **passively held by foreign investors**.
 - It does **not provide the investor with direct ownership** of financial assets and is relatively liquid depending on the volatility of the market.
 - Foreign portfolio investment is **part of a country's capital account** and is **shown on its Balance of Payments (BOP)**.
 - The BOP measures the **amount of money flowing from one country to other** countries over one monetary year.
- The investor **does not actively manage** the investments through FPIs, he does not **have control over the securities or the business**.
- The investor's goal is to create a quick return on his money.
- FPI is more liquid and **less risky than Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**.
 - A Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is an investment made by a firm or individual in one country into business interests located in another country. FDI lets an investor **purchase a direct business interest** in a foreign country.
- FPI is often referred to as **"hot money"** because of its tendency to flee at the first signs of trouble in an economy.
- FPI and FDI are both important sources of funding for most economies. Foreign capital can be used to develop infrastructure, set up manufacturing facilities and service hubs, and invest in other productive assets such as machinery and equipment, which contributes to economic growth and stimulates employment.

Source: IE

RBI Cancels Licence of CKP Co-op Bank

Why in News

Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has cancelled the licence of Mumbai-based CKP Co-operative Bank.

Key Points

- RBI has cancelled the licence of the bank as the financial position of the bank was highly adverse and unsustainable.
 - The bank is not in a position to pay its present and future depositors.
 - The bank failed to meet the regulatory requirement of maintaining a **minimum capital adequacy ratio** of 9% and reserves.

- RBI has asked the **Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Maharashtra** to start the process of winding up operations of CKP Co-operative bank and appoint a liquidator.
On liquidation, every depositor of the bank is entitled to get up to Rs 5 lakh from the **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation**.
- In September last year, **RBI had imposed restrictions on Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank** not to do any business for six months after it found major irregularities, which included financial irregularities, complete failure of internal control and systems, and wrongdoing and under-reporting of its lending exposure.

Capital Adequacy Ratio

- Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) is the **ratio of a bank's capital in relation to its risk weighted assets and current liabilities**. It is also known as **Capital-to-Risk Weighted Asset Ratio (CRAR)**.
- It is decided by central banks to prevent commercial banks from taking excess leverage and becoming insolvent in the process.
- The **Basel III norms** stipulated a capital to risk weighted assets of 8%.
- However, as per **RBI** norms, Indian scheduled commercial banks are required to maintain a CAR of 9%.

Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation

- DICGC came into existence in 1978 after the merger of Deposit Insurance Corporation (DIC) and Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd. (CGCI) under the **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961**.
 - It serves as a **deposit insurance and credit guarantee** for banks in India.
 - It is a fully owned subsidiary of and is governed by the **Reserve Bank of India**.
- DICGC charges 10 paise per ₹100 of deposits held by a bank. The premium paid by the insured banks to the Corporation is paid by the banks and is not to be passed on to depositors.
- DICGC last revised the deposit insurance cover to ₹5 lakh in Feb, 2020, raising it from ₹ 1 lakh since 1993. The protection cover of deposits in Indian banks through insurance is among the lowest in the world.
The **Damodaran Committee on 'Customer Services in Banks' (2011)** had recommended a five-time increase in the cap to ₹5 lakh due to rising income levels and increasing size of individual bank deposits.
- Banks, including regional rural banks, local area banks, foreign banks with branches in India, and cooperative banks, are mandated to take deposit insurance cover with the DICGC.

Co-operative Banking

- A **Co-operative bank** is a financial entity which belongs to its members, who are at the same time the owners and the customers of their bank. It is **distinct from commercial banks**.
- Co-operative banks in India are registered under the **States Cooperative Societies Act**. The Co-operative banks are regulated by both **Registrar of Co-operative Societies** and **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **governed by the**
 - Banking Regulations Act 1949.
 - Banking Laws (Co-operative Societies) Act, 1955.

- **Features of Cooperative Banks:**
 - **Customer Owned Entities:** Co-operative bank members are both customer and owner of the bank.
 - **Democratic Member Control:** Co-operative banks are owned and controlled by the members, who democratically elect a board of directors. Members usually have equal voting rights, according to the cooperative principle of “one person, one vote”.
 - **Profit Allocation:** A significant part of the yearly profit, benefits or surplus is usually allocated to constitute reserves and a part of this profit can also be distributed to the co-operative members, with legal and statutory limitations.
 - **Financial Inclusion:** They have played a significant role in the financial inclusion of unbanked rural masses.
- Co-operative Banks are broadly **classified into Urban and Rural co-operative banks** based on their region of operation.

Difference between UCBs and Commercial Banks

- **Regulation:** Unlike commercial banks, UCBs are **only partly regulated by the RBI**. Their banking operations are regulated by the RBI, which lays down their capital adequacy, risk control and lending norms. However, their management and resolution in the case of distress is regulated by the **Registrar of Co-operative Societies** either under the State or Central government.
- **Borrower can be a Shareholder:** In general for a commercial bank, there is a clear distinction between its shareholders and its borrowers whereas in a UCB, borrowers can even double up as shareholders.

Source: IE

Combating Bioterrorism

Why in News

The **Covid-19 pandemic** has exposed the vulnerability of several world powers in the event of use of **biological weapons** against them by rogue states and terrorist groups.

The **United States, Britain and the Soviet Union** were involved in developing complex biological weapons programs **after World War II** and several nations continue to do so currently as well.

Key Points

- **Bioterrorism or Biological Attack:**
 - It is the intentional release of viruses, bacteria, or other germs that can sicken or kill people, livestock or crops.

- **Biological Weapons:**
 - They use microorganisms and natural toxins to produce disease in humans, animals, or plants.
 - Biological weapons can be **derived from: bacteria, viruses, rickettsia, biological toxins and fungi.**
 - These agents can be **deployed as biological weapons** when **paired with a delivery system**, such as a **missile** or **aerosol** device.
 - **Bacillus anthracis**, the bacteria that causes **anthrax**, is one of the most likely agents to be used in a biological attack.
 - The most destructive bioterrorism scenario is the **airborne dispersion of pathogens** over a major population region.
 - **Tropical agricultural pathogens or pests** can be used as anticrop agents to hamper the food security worldwide.
- It is a **substantial threat** because small amounts of biotic agents can be **effortlessly hidden, transported and discharged** into vulnerable populations.
- It can **impact and expose military and civilian susceptibilities** to biological weapons and to the complexity of offering ample safeguards.
- Bioweapons experts believe that **currently bioterrorists probably lack the biotechnological capability** to produce-super pathogens or super pests.

Covid-19: Bioweapon or Not

- **Novel-coronavirus** is **alleged** to have **originated in bats.**
- Some intelligence agencies initially proclaimed that coronavirus **occurred naturally** but later on, they **claimed that the pandemic might have begun from the Wuhan lab in China** after the researchers were probably able to figure out how bat coronaviruses could mutate to attack humans.
- However, there is **no proof that the pandemic virus was engineered or manipulated**, yet.
- In the **Indian context**, with the existence of **hostile neighbours** like Pakistan and China, the **threat of biological warfare becomes important** and cannot be ruled out entirely.

Combating Bioterrorism

- The **European Union (EU), Russia** and **China** are finding ways to deter bioterrorism and biowarfare. The aim is to make it **harder for terrorists to obtain the resources** for designing biological weapons.

- These efforts should include:
 - **Intelligence Sharing & Rapid Detection**
 - Global intelligence agencies should operate together and share credible intelligence.
 - Combining human resources, laboratory resources and information supervision in novel, legal and satisfactory ways that allow for timely detection and categorization of hazards.
 - Rapid detection and surveillance are important for an efficient response to a bioterror strike.
 - **Pathogen Analysis**
 - Speedy, uniform techniques that allow for the discovery of an extensive range of pathogens used as biological weapons in a measurable fashion.
 - Pathogens are a usual part of the environment and can complicate detection attempts.
 - **Strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**
 - The **Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) of 1972 prohibits** signatory nations to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise, acquire or retain:
 - **Microbial or other biological agents** or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes.
 - Weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.
 - However, there is no exact authentication method that can ensure compliance with the BTWC. Therefore, efforts must be made to strengthen the BTWC so that it helps to uncover and successfully prevent biological weapons programs.
 - **India ratified and pledged to abide by its obligations in 2015.**
 - **Biodefense Systems**
 - Upgrading and installing biodefense systems in major urban conglomerates to protect against deadly disease outbreaks initiated by bioterrorism.

During the **Cold War**, Soviet Union had set up several Biodefense systems across the country.
 - Developing and stockpiling vaccines and antimicrobial medicines that can be used to defend the people against infections triggered by biological weapons.
 - Coaching first responders on how to deal with a biological weapons attack.
 - Refining diagnostic laboratory capability and epidemiological capabilities.

Way Forward

- The **studies** conducted to assess the actual efficiency of counter bioterrorism measures are **insufficient** which needs to be changed.
- It becomes important that **engaged and methodical efforts in studying** the efficiency of counter bioterrorism measures are **applied in a meticulous way**.
- It should be taken into account that the implementation of some specific counter bioterrorism practices can **possibly have consequences** with respect to human rights, institutional liberties, fundamental democratic values and the Rule of Law.

Source: FE

MSP Hiked for Minor Forest Produce

Why in News

Recently, the Central government has revised the **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Minor Forest Produce (MFP)**.

- The MSP is the rate at which the government buys produce from farmers and tribals.
- The idea of MSP is to **counter price volatility of commodities** due to the factors like variation in their supply, lack of market integration and information asymmetry.

Key Points

- The increased Minimum support price (MSP) ranges from 16% to 66%.
- MSP for MFPs is revised **once every three years** by the **Pricing Cell constituted under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.

However, the authorities have revised the MSP much earlier than 3 years.

- This will offer much-needed support to tribal gatherers in view of the "exceptional and very difficult" circumstances prevailing in the country due to the **Covid-19 pandemic**.
- The Centre has also asked all the states to speed up procurement operations.
- The central government has also created an **online monitoring dashboard, called the Van Dhan Monit Dashboard**, for reporting the procurement activities undertaken at the state level.

The dashboard is a part of the **"TRIFED E- Sampark Setu"** that aims to facilitate exchange of information to and from every Panchayat and **Van Dhan Kendra**, either through email or mobile phone.

- States have appointed the **Van Dhan Kendras** as their primary procurement agents for MFP procurements from haat bazaars.

Van Dhan Vikas Kendra

- **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras** have been set up under the program 'Van Dhan Yojana' which was launched in 2018, in Chhattisgarh.
- The Van Dhan Vikas Kendra caters to ten Self Help Groups of thirty tribal gatherers each.
- The selection of the tribal beneficiaries and formation of the SHGs has been undertaken by the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)**.
- The Van Dhan Vikas Kendras boost the economic development of tribals involved in the collection of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) and provide a sustainable MFP-based livelihood in MFP-rich districts.

Minor Forest Produce (MFP)

- MFP **includes all non-timber forest produce of plant origin** and includes **bamboo, canes, fodder, leaves, gums, waxes, dyes, resins and many forms of food including nuts, wild fruits, honey, lac, tusser etc.**
- It provides both **subsistence and cash income** for people who live in or near forests. They form a major portion of their food, fruits, medicines and other consumption items and also provide cash income through sales.

Source: PIB

Opposition to Permanent Bru Settlement in Tripura

Why in News

In the middle of the **Covid-19 lockdown**, two community-specific groups have renewed their opposition to the permanent settlement of Bru refugees from Mizoram in Tripura.

The two groups namely, Nagarik Suraksha Mancha (mostly representing Bengali people displaced from erstwhile East Pakistan post-partition in 1947) and the Mizo Convention have submitted a memorandum protesting against the proposed settlement of the displaced Brus in Tripura.

Background

- **Bru or Reang** is a community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in **Tripura, Mizoram and Assam**. In **Tripura**, they are recognised as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group**.
- In Mizoram, they have been targeted by groups that do not consider them indigenous to the state. In 1997, following ethnic clashes, nearly 37,000 Brus fled Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts of Mizoram and were accommodated in relief camps in Tripura.
- Since then, 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in eight phases of repatriation, while 32,000 still live in six relief camps in North Tripura.
 - In June 2018, community leaders from the Bru camps signed an agreement with the Centre and the two state governments, providing for repatriation in Mizoram. But most camp residents rejected the terms of the agreement.
 - The camp residents say that the agreement doesn't guarantee their safety in Mizoram.
- **The Centre, the governments of Mizoram and Tripura and leaders of Bru organisations signed a quadripartite agreement in January** (2020) to let the remaining 35,000 refugees who have stayed back to be resettled in Tripura.

The rehabilitation package offered included financial assistance of ₹4 lakh and land for constructing a house for each family.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

- In India, tribal population makes up for 8.6% of the total population.
- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are more vulnerable among the tribal groups.
- In **1973**, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs.
- PVTGs have some basic characteristics - they are mostly homogenous, with a small population, relatively physically isolated, absence of written language, relatively simple technology and a slower rate of change etc.
- Among the **75** listed PVTG's the **highest number** are found in **Odisha**.

Source:TH

African Swine Fever in Assam

Why in News

The Centre has advised the Assam state government to go for culling of pigs affected by the **African Swine Fever** (ASF).

Key Points

- It has been advised to divide the affected areas into zones and go for culling accordingly.

- The disease was first reported in November-December, 2019 from the areas of China bordering Arunachal Pradesh.
- A few organised piggeries in Assam have been affected and the possible carrier could be humans. However, there is **no confirmation on humans being the carrier** of the virus.
- Earlier in April, there were reported deaths of pigs due to the **Classical Swine Fever** (CSF).
- ASF and CSF are different from **Swine Flu (H1N1)** and do not affect humans.
- **CSF can be prevented by proper vaccination** but there is **no vaccination for ASF**. Culling of the affected pigs is the only option.

African Swine Fever

- It is a **highly contagious** and **fatal animal disease** that infects and leads to an acute form of **hemorrhagic fever in domestic and wild pigs**.
- It was **first detected in Africa** in the **1920s**.
- The **mortality** is close to **100%** and since the fever has no cure, the only way to stop its spread is by culling the animals.
- ASF is **not a threat to human beings** since it only spreads from animals to other animals.
- ASF is a disease listed in the **World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code** and thus, reported to the OIE.

African swine fever (ASF)

The infographic provides detailed information about African Swine Fever (ASF). It features a pig on the left, a tick on the right, a biohazard symbol, a map of China with arrows pointing to other regions, a globe, a warning sign with a pig, and a group of people. The text is arranged in several blocks around these images.

The virus is highly resistant to low temperatures and can survive for extended periods of time in the blood, feces and tissue of infected animals.

ASF can be transmitted through **direct contact** between sick and healthy animals. It can also be transmitted **indirectly** through feed containing meat from infected animals (the virus can remain infectious for 3 to 6 months in uncooked pork products); **biological vectors** such as ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*; and contaminated **inanimate objects** (fomites) that can transmit the virus.

ASF is a **highly contagious**, transboundary viral disease (*Asfarviridae* family; *Asfivirus* genus).

Global alarms went off in August 2018, when an ASF outbreak was first reported in **China**. The disease swept through the entire Asian country and spread to **Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Hong Kong**.

It can affect both domestic and wild pigs (wild boars and peccaries). **It is harmless to humans.**

According to the OIE, **24%** of its member countries (48 out of 200) **have reported the disease** as present since 2016.

According to official data for this period, more than **2.5 million domestic pigs** have died or been killed—67.6% of them in Asia over the past 10 months.

Between 2016 and May 2019, there were a total of **10,211 outbreaks in Africa, Europe and Asia.**

Typical clinical signs of ASF are similar to those of classical swine fever (which is endemic in several countries of the Americas); therefore, a **laboratory test** is required to distinguish them.

The **peracute** form of the virus causes sudden death with few signs.

Symptoms include **fever, loss of appetite**, low energy, abortion, internal hemorrhages, visible hemorrhages, and even death.

World Organisation for Animal Health

- OIE is an **intergovernmental organisation** responsible for improving animal health worldwide.
- In 2018, it had a total of **182 Member Countries**. **India is one of the member** countries.
- OIE standards are **recognised by the World Trade Organization** as reference international sanitary rules.
- It is headquartered in **Paris, France**.

Sariska Tiger Reserve

Why in News

The 13th session of the Ministry of Tourism's **Dekho Apna Desh** webinar titled, '**Destination- Sariska Tiger reserve**' was held recently.

The objective of the Ministry of Tourism's webinar series is to create awareness about and promote various tourism destinations of India – including the lesser known destinations and lesser known facets of popular destinations.

Key Points

- Sariska Tiger Reserve is located in Aravali hills and forms a part of the Alwar District of **Rajasthan**.
- The Reserve is immensely rich in flora and fauna, and is famous for Royal Bengal Tiger.
The park has populations of leopards, Nilgai, Sambar, chital etc. It also shelters a large population of Indian peafowl, crested serpent eagles, sand grouse, golden backed woodpeckers, great Indian horned owls, tree pies, vultures, etc.
- Sariska was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1955 and was declared the **tiger reserve later in 1978**, making it a part of India's **Project Tiger**.
- The Sanctuary houses ruined temples, forts, pavilions and a palace.
 - **Kankarwadi fort** is located in the center of the Reserve and it is said that Mughal emperor Aurangzeb had imprisoned his brother Dara Shikoh at this fort in struggle for succession to the throne.
 - The Reserve also houses a famous **temple of lord Hanuman at Pandupole** related to **Pandavas**.

Project Tiger

- Project Tiger is an ongoing **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change providing central assistance to the tiger States for tiger conservation in designated tiger reserves.
- The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** is a statutory body of the Ministry, with an overarching supervisory/coordination role, performing functions as provided in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
The NTCA was launched in 2005, following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force. It was given statutory status by the 2006 amendment of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- India now has as many as 2,967 tigers in the wild, with **more than half of them in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka**, according to the latest tiger estimation report for 2018.
- The population of tigers have **increased by 33%** since the last census in 2014 when the total estimate was 2,226.
- **Sariska is the first tiger reserve** to have successfully **relocated Royal Bengal tigers in India** and at present there are around 20 tigers in the reserve.

Dekho Apna Desh

- Dekho Apna Desh is one of the three components of the Paryatan Parv. The other two are Tourism for All and Tourism & Governance.
- It intends to encourage Indians to travel their own country.

Source:PIB

IDEAthon on 'The Future of River Management'

Why in News

Recently, the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and the **National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)** organized an IDEAthon on **"The Future of River Management"**.

The event aimed to explore how the Covid-19 crisis can shape river management strategies for the future.

Key Points

- The IDEAthon sought to brainstorm the learnings from Covid-19 pandemic, the following lockdown and its impact on river management.
- It examined how the social angle of rivers can be leveraged on to address other crises.
- It sought to create a framework called River Management in a city's Urban river management plan.
- It aimed to garner more attention towards river management and also highlight the interconnectivity of cities with the river.
- **Namami Gange** (implemented by the NMCG) and NIUA plan to bring out a policy paper based on the deliberations of the IDEAthon for river management.

National Mission for Clean Ganga

- It is the **implementation wing** of the **National Ganga Council**.
- **NMCG** was established in the year **2011** as a registered society. It is **under the Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- It has a **two-tier management structure** and comprises the **Governing Council** and **Executive Committee**.
- **Objectives**
 - To ensure effective control of pollution and rejuvenation of the river Ganga by adopting a river basin approach to promote inter-sectoral coordination for comprehensive planning and management.
 - To maintain minimum ecological flows in the river Ganga with the aim of ensuring water quality and environmentally sustainable development.

National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)

- NIUA is an institute for research, training and information dissemination in urban development and management.
- It is located in New Delhi, India.
- It was established in 1976 as an autonomous body under the Societies Registration Act.
- The Institute is supported by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**, Government of India, State Governments, urban and regional development authorities and other agencies concerned with urban issues

Source: PIB

Corona-Killer 100

Corona-Killer 100

- **Corona-Killer 100** is an automated disinfecting **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)** developed by **Garuda Aerospace** - an ISO- 9001 company.
- These drones will aid in the sanitation of public places, hospitals and tall buildings up to 450 feet amid Covid-19 outbreak.
- It is equipped with fuel efficient motors that enable the drone to be deployed for 12 hours a day.
- Drone operations are faster, longer & safer than manual spraying by workers who can become potential carriers of Covid-19.
- It also consists of patented autopilot technology, advanced flight controller systems.

Drone as a Service

- Historically, many UAV applications were developed in the military as spy or reconnaissance vehicles used during wartime.
- However, the development of this type of aircraft has evolved towards commercial, civil and consumer spaces, including professional videography, surveying, construction, inspection, traffic management and last mile delivery.
- Commercial drone services are developing UAV services, sometimes called Drones as a Service (DaaS), to help industries, such as agriculture, construction, search and rescue, package delivery, industrial inspection, insurance and videography, with tasks like collecting imagery and measurements and managing or broadcasting events.
- Drone services seem cost-effective, portable, and – in extreme emergencies like Covid-19 can – provide the first take, including visuals, assessment and extent of damage.

Source: PIB

World Press Freedom Day

Why in News

The **World Press Freedom Day** is observed on **3rd May**, every year.

Key Points

- **Origin and Purpose:**
 - The day was proclaimed by the **United Nations** General Assembly in **December 1993**, following the recommendation of the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** (UNESCO) General Conference.
 - Since then, 3rd May, the anniversary of the **Declaration of Windhoek** is celebrated worldwide as World Press Freedom Day.
- The day acts as a **reminder to governments** of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom.
- It is an **opportunity** to:
 - Celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom.
 - Assess the state of press freedom throughout the world.
 - Defend the media from attacks on their independence.
 - Pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty.
- **Theme for 2020: Journalism without Fear or Favour.**
UNESCO is launching a **global campaign** on media and social media channels, with a focus on this year's theme in an increasingly complex media landscape.

- The **sub-themes** for this year are:
 - Safety of Women and Men Journalists and Media Workers.
 - Independent and Professional Journalism free from Political and Commercial Influence.
 - Gender Equality in All Aspects of the Media.
- After the celebration of this day, there will be **several events** to be held in the upcoming days:
High-level Dialogue on Press Freedom and Tackling Disinformation in the **Covid-19** context, webinars and online discussions via Facebook Live, YouTube and Microsoft teams, amongst other digital platforms.
- In April, 2020 the report on the **World Press Freedom Index, 2020** was released by the global body, **Reporters Without Borders**.
India is at **142nd rank** after dropping two places from last year's ranking.

Source: TH
