



## President of India Presents Sports and Adventure Awards 2023

[Source: PIB](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the [President of India](#) presided over a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan to bestow the prestigious [National Sports and Adventure Awards 2023](#).

- The awards are administered by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India**.

### What Awards Were Included in the Ceremony?

#### ▪ [Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award:](#)

- India's highest sporting honor established in **1991-92**.
- Named after hockey legend **Major Dhyan Chand**.
- Given for outstanding performances over **4 years**.
- Notable awardees include **MC Mary Kom, PV Sindhu, Sachin Tendulkar, and Virat Kohli**.
- **2023: Chirag Shetty and Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy (badminton).**

#### ▪ **Arjuna Award:**

- Instituted in **1961**, it was India's highest sporting honor before the Khel Ratna came into being.
- Named after the **Mahabharata character Arjuna**.
- Awarded for consistent good performance over 4 years.
- Winners receive a statuette of Arjuna, a certificate, and a cash prize.
- First awarded to football **Olympian PK Banerjee in 1961**.
- First woman awardee: **Hockey player Anna Lumsden**.
- **2023: Aditi Gopichand Swami (archery), Mohammed Shami (cricket), Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar (shooting), among others.**

#### ▪ **Dronacharya Award:**

- India's highest sports honor for coaches, instituted in **1985**.
- Named after **Dronacharya**, Arjuna's coach in Mahabharata.
- Awardees receive a bronze statue of Dronacharya, a certificate, and a cash prize.
- First woman awardee: **Athletics coach Renu Kohli in 2002**.
- Given for both recent accomplishments and lifetime contributions.

##### • **2023:**

- **Regular Category:** Lalit Kumar (wrestling), RB Ramesh (chess) among others.
- **Lifetime Category:** Jaskirat Singh Grewal (golf), Bhaskaran E (kabaddi) among others.

#### ▪ **Major Dhyan Chand Award:**

- Instituted in **2002**, honors lifetime achievements in sports.
- Recognizes contributions to the promotion of sports in an individual capacity.
- First awardees include **Olympian boxer Shahuraj Birajdar and hockey player Ashok Diwan**.
- **2023: Manjusha Kanwar (badminton), Vineet Kumar Sharma (hockey), Kavitha Selvaraj (kabaddi).**

▪ **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy (MAKA):**

- Oldest National Sports Award in India, instituted in 1956-1957.
- Given to an **institution or university for top performance** in inter-university tournaments.
- Award comprises a rolling **MAKA Trophy and a cash prize.**
- First awarded to **Bombay University in 1956-57.**
  - **2023:** Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (overall winner university); Lovely Professional University, Punjab (first runner -up); Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (second runner-up).

▪ **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar:**

- Instituted in **2009.**
- Awarded to organizations and individuals for sports promotion and development.
- Categories include talent identification, corporate social responsibility, employment of sportspersons, and sports for development.
  - **2023:** JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University), Odisha Mining Corporation Limited.

▪ **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award:**

- It has been presented since 1993-1994 and is named after **Tenzing Norgay**, one of the first two individuals to reach the summit of **Mount Everest** along with Edmund Hillary in 1953.
- The recipients are honored for their "outstanding achievement in the field of adventure activities on **land, sea and air**" **over the last three years.**
- The status of this award is considered to be equivalent to the Arjuna Award conferred in the field of sport.
  - **2022:** Late Ms. Savita Kanswal (land), Shri Tulsi Chaitanya Mothukuri(water), Shri Anshu Kumar Tiwari (air).



**UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question: (2023)**

**Q. Consider the following pairs with regard to sports awards:**

1. Major Dhyhan Chand Khel Ratna Award- For the most spectacular and outstanding performance by a sportsperson over period of last four years
2. Arjuna Award- For the lifetime achievement by sportsperson
3. Dronacharya Award- To honor eminent coaches who have successfully trained sportspersons or teams
4. Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar- To recognize the contribution made by sports persons even after their retirement

**How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?**

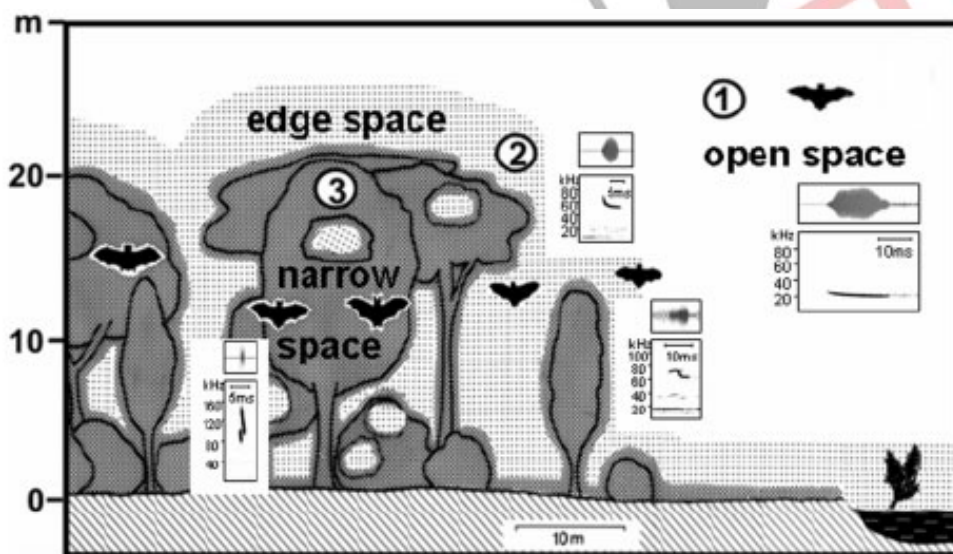
- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Ans: (b)

## Impact of Wind Turbines on Forest Bats

A recent study conducted by scientists from Germany, has revealed the impact of **wind turbines on the activity of forest bats**.

- Three foraging groups of bat species were studied: **narrow-space**, **open-space** (hunt in open areas with few obstacles), and **edge-space** (specialized on hunting prey close to background objects), within a radius of 80 to 450 meters under variable wind conditions.
- **Narrow-space foraging bats**, which are particularly reliant on forest habitat, showed a **77% decline in activity as wind speed increased** in operational wind turbines.
  - The avoidance behavior was **not observed in edge-space and open-space** foraging bats, indicating a **habitat-specific response**.
  - The noise emitted by wind turbine rotors was identified as a significant cause of the avoidance behavior.
- Wind turbines, a key element in **national climate strategies**, are increasingly erected in forest sites worldwide, posing potential challenges to bat populations.
- The study, initially focusing on short-term impacts, suggests **potential long-term effects** on bat activity near operational wind turbines, particularly if noise emissions are the cause.



Read more: [Bamboo-Dwelling Bat](#)

## Darjeeling Zoo's Conservation Breeding Programme for Snow Leopards

Source: IE

Why in News?

The **Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (PNHZP), West Bengal** also commonly known as **Darjeeling zoo** has achieved international recognition from the **World Association for Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)** for its successful conservation breeding programme (CBC) for [snow leopards](#).

- This recognition is a testament to the zoo's dedication to wildlife conservation and the preservation of endangered species.

### **What is the World Association for Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)?**

- WAZA is the **global alliance of regional associations, national federations, zoos and aquariums**, dedicated to the care and conservation of animals and their habitats around the world.
- The membership consists of nearly 400 leading institutions and organisations around the world, and this number continues to grow.

### **What are the Conservation Efforts of Snow Leopards in the Darjeeling Zoo?**

#### **▪ About:**

- Darjeeling Zoo has the **only conservative breeding programme for snow leopards** in India.
- Apart from snow leopards, it has conservative breeding programmes for [red pandas](#), **mountain orals and pheasants**.
- Darjeeling zoo is the largest **high altitude zoo in India**.

#### **▪ Conservation Breeding Programme:**

- The first ex-situ conservation breeding program started in 1986 as a Snow Leopard conservation breeding project.
- The CBC at Darjeeling Zoo **recorded the first birth of a snow leopard** in 1989. Since then, **77 snow leopards have been born at the zoo**, marking a remarkable achievement in wildlife conservation.
- The zoo's success in breeding snow leopards can be attributed to careful **pairing of male and female snow leopards**, creating a **natural environment** within the enclosures, and using a wide **genetic pool to avoid inbreeding**.
  - Before pairing, the snow leopards are kept in **adjoining enclosures to develop courtship**. Once their compatibility is observed, they are paired and kept in the same enclosure.
  - Pregnant female leopards are separated and kept under 24X7 CCTV surveillance, with regular blood tests and monitoring of body weight.
- The zoo practices the highest biosecurity protocols for all captive animals, including regular screening for parasites, deworming, and advanced veterinary facilities.



# Snow Leopard

*Panthera Uncia*

Often referred to as the "ghost of the mountains"

## HABITAT

- Mountainous regions of **Central and Southern Asia**
- **12** Range Countries
- In India:
  - **Western Himalayas:** Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh
  - **Eastern Himalayas:** Uttarakhand and Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh

## MAJOR SITES

- Hemis National Park, Ladakh
  - **Snow leopard capital of the world**
- Great Himalayan National Park, Himachal Pradesh
- Gangotri National Park, Uttarakhand
- Khangchendzonga National Park, Sikkim

## PROTECTION STATUS

- **Vulnerable:** IUCN Red List
- **Appendix I:** CITES
- **Schedule I:** Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972

## THREATS

- Human Snow Leopard Conflict
- Climate Change
- Loss of Prey and Habitat
- Poaching

## CONSERVATION EFFORTS

- Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Programme
- Himal Sanrakshak- Community Volunteer Programme
- Project Snow Leopard
- Snow Leopard Conservation Breeding Programme- Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, West Bengal



## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following: (2012)

1. Black-necked crane
2. Cheetah
3. Flying squirrel
4. Snow leopard

Which of the above are naturally found in India?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 1, 3 and 4 only  
(c) 2 and 4 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

## Sisal Leaves: A Green Revolution in Menstrual Hygiene

Recently, scientists at Stanford University have devised an innovative method utilizing [sisal leaves](#) to create a highly absorbent material, potentially **replacing cotton, wood pulp, and chemical absorbents in sanitary napkins**.

- This environmentally-friendly approach boasts higher absorption capacity than commercial alternatives, while the **cultivation of sisal requires significantly less water compared to cotton**.
- Sisal is a **xerophytic, semi-perennial leaf fiber** producing plant. Leaves are thick, fleshy and often covered with a **waxy layer**.





## World Economic Situation and Prospects Report for 2024

**For Prelims:** [United Nations](#), [Inflation](#), [Headline Inflation](#), [El Nino](#), [Net-zero-emissions](#), [Artificial Intelligence](#), [Loss and Damage Fund](#)

**For Mains:** World Economic Situation and Prospects, Impact of Climate Change on Global GDP

**Source:** [DTE](#)

### Why in News?

A recent [United Nations](#) report titled [World Economic Situation and Prospects report for 2024](#) forecasts a **decline in global inflation in 2024**, but warns of a **simultaneous rise in food inflation**, particularly in developing nations.

- The implications of this phenomenon, coupled with **climate-related challenges** and geopolitical tensions, pose threats to food security, poverty alleviation, and economic growth.

### What are the Key Highlights of the World Economic Situation and Prospects Report for 2024?

- **Global GDP Growth:**
  - The report forecasts a **deceleration in global gross domestic product (GDP) growth**, from an estimated **2.7% in 2023 to 2.4% in 2024**.
  - Developing economies, in particular, are struggling to recover from **pandemic-induced losses**, with many facing high debt and investment shortfalls.
  - It is anticipated that **many low-income and vulnerable nations** will experience **only moderate growth** in the upcoming years.
    - The reasons are persistently **high-interest rates, escalating geopolitical conflicts, slow international trade** and an increase in **climate-related calamities**.
- **India's Perspective:**
  - South Asia grew by an estimated 5.3% in 2023 and is projected to increase by 5.2% in 2024, driven by a robust expansion in **India, which remains the fastest-growing large economy in the world**.
  - India is projected to grow by 6.2% in 2024, supported by domestic demand and **growth in manufacturing and services**.
- **Inflation:**
  - Global inflation, a key concern over the past two years, shows **signs of easing**.
    - Global **headline inflation** fell from 8.1% in 2022 to an estimated 5.7% in 2023 and is projected to decline to 3.9% in 2024.
      - Headline inflation measures the **total inflation within an economy**, which includes commodities like food and energy prices.
    - The decline in inflation was attributed to ongoing **moderation in international commodity prices** and a decrease in demand due to monetary tightening by the UN.
  - However, **food price inflation remains critical**, exacerbating food insecurity and poverty, particularly in developing countries.

- An estimated **238 million people experienced acute food insecurity in 2023**, an increase of 21.6 million from 2022.
  - Weak local currencies, climate-related shocks and limited pass-through from international prices to local prices will be the causes of this ongoing increase in food inflation.
- The resurgence of **El Nino** can disrupt climate patterns, leading to both excessive and insufficient precipitation affecting food production.

#### ▪ **Climate Change:**

- 2023 experienced extreme weather conditions, leading to devastating wildfires, floods, and droughts worldwide.
  - These **events have direct economic impacts**, such as damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihoods.
- Studies project significant economic losses due to **climate change**.
  - Estimates suggest a potential **10% reduction in global GDP by 2100**, considering events like the Greenland ice shelf collapse.
  - Without mitigation, models indicate a **potential 23% decrease in average global incomes by 2100**.
- IPCC estimates predict a range of 10 to 23% global GDP losses by 2100 due to temperature impacts alone.

#### ▪ **Investment:**

- Global investment growth is **expected to remain low** due to economic uncertainties, high debt burdens, and rising interest rates.
  - Developed nations prioritize **sustainable sectors** like green energy and digital infrastructure.
  - Developing countries grapple with **capital flight and reduced foreign direct investment**.
  - Geopolitical tensions impact regional investment flows, contributing to low global investment growth amid economic uncertainties and rising interest rates.
- Investment in the energy sector, especially in clean energy, is growing but not at a pace sufficient to meet the **net-zero-emissions goal by 2050**.
  - Report estimates USD 150 trillion needed by 2050 for energy transition and infrastructure, requiring USD 5.3 trillion annually for the global energy sector alone.
  - Despite this, **climate finance falls short of requirements**, emphasizing the crucial need for massive scaling up.
  - The report calls for effective operationalization of the **Loss and Damage Fund** and increased financing commitments to aid vulnerable countries facing climate disasters.

#### ▪ **Labour Market:**

- The global labour market displays divergent trends between developed and developing countries post-pandemic.
  - **Developed Countries:**
    - Experienced a robust recovery with **low unemployment rates**, notably 3.7% in the US and 6.0% in the EU in 2023, coupled with rising nominal wages and narrowing wage inequality.
    - However, real income losses and labour shortages pose challenges.
  - **Developing Countries:**
    - Mixed progress with varied unemployment trends (e.g., China, Brazil, Türkiye, Russia report declines).
    - Persistent issues are **informal employment, gender gaps, and high youth unemployment**.
    - Globally, the decline in female labor force participation to 47.2% in 2023 (compared to 48.1% in 2013).
  - **Artificial Intelligence(AI) Impact on Global Employment:**
    - Since **ChatGPT's** introduction in 2022, AI adoption has rapidly advanced.
      - One-third of global firms now use generative AI, with **40% planning to expand AI investment**.
      - **AI could reduce demand for low-skilled jobs**, disproportionately impacting women and lower-income countries. Also, there's a significant gender gap in AI



professions.

▪ **Trade:**

- Global trade growth weakened to 0.6% in 2023, **anticipated to recover to 2.4% in 2024.**
  - The report points to a **shift in consumer spending from goods to services**, rising geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and the lingering effects of the pandemic as factors impeding global trade.

▪ **International Finance and Debt:**

- Rising **external debt and increased interest rates** hinder developing countries' access to international capital markets.
- Decline in **official development assistance** and **foreign direct investment** compounds financial constraints for low-income nations.
- **Debt sustainability** becomes a critical concern, necessitating debt restructuring and relief efforts to manage escalating financial burdens effectively.

▪ **Multilateralism and Sustainable Development:**

- The 2024 WESP report emphasizes the need for **strengthened global cooperation**, particularly in areas like climate action, sustainable development financing, and addressing the debt sustainability challenges of low- and middle-income countries.
- The report underscores the critical role of multilateralism in navigating the complex global economic landscape and achieving the **UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).**

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## Atal Setu Nhava Sheva Sea Link

[Source: IE](#)

### Why in News?

The Prime Minister of India inaugurated the **Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL)** officially known as **Atal Setu Nhava Sheva Sea Link**, a monumental 22 km sea bridge.

- This mega-infrastructure project aims to revolutionize travel between Sewri and Chirle, promising a significant reduction in travel time.

### What are the Key Highlights of MTHL?

▪ **About:**

- Atal Setu is the **longest bridge in India** and also the **longest sea bridge in the country.**
  - The bridge is about **21.8 km long six-lane bridge** having about 16.5 km length over sea and about 5.5 km on the land.
- The bridge has been named after former prime minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee.**
- The bridge originates from **Sewri in Mumbai** and ends at **Nhava Sheva in Uran taluka in Raigad district.**
- The project is financed by the **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**, covering 80% of the total project cost, while the remaining portion is shared between the state and central governments.

### Note

- Earlier **Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Bridge was the longest bridge in India**, over the River **Brahmaputra**, in Assam. The 9.15 Km long river bridge.



### ▪ Technologies Incorporated:

- MTHL incorporates various innovative technologies, such as **Reverse Circulation Drilling (RCD) piling, Orthotropic Steel Deck (OSD) bridge girders, and Open Road Tolling (ORT) system.**
  - **RCD** is used for the first time in India, an innovative technology employed **for pile foundation laying**, it minimizes noise disturbances compared to the traditional vertical drilling method.
  - **OSD** is a construction method that **combines strength and flexibility**. This technology allows the bridge's steel deck to withstand heavy loads, such as vehicles, while maintaining a lightweight structure.
  - MTHL became the **country's first project to adopt the ORT method** of collecting tolls without requiring vehicles to stop or slow down.

### ▪ Benefits:

- According to a study conducted by Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) and JICA, the MTHL will **bring down the average travel time** between Sewri and Chirle from 61 minutes currently to less than 16 minutes.
- Close to 40,000 vehicles are expected to use the link every day in the opening year (2024).
- The project is expected to **facilitate greater economic integration of Navi Mumbai with Mumbai**, with benefits extending to Panvel, Alibaug, Pune, and Goa.
- The bridge also reduces the distance between Mumbai and Pune Expressway.