



Avian Botulism in Rajasthan | Rajasthan | 18 Nov 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the [Centre for Avian Research Institute](#) reported the death of at least 600 migratory birds in Rajasthan.

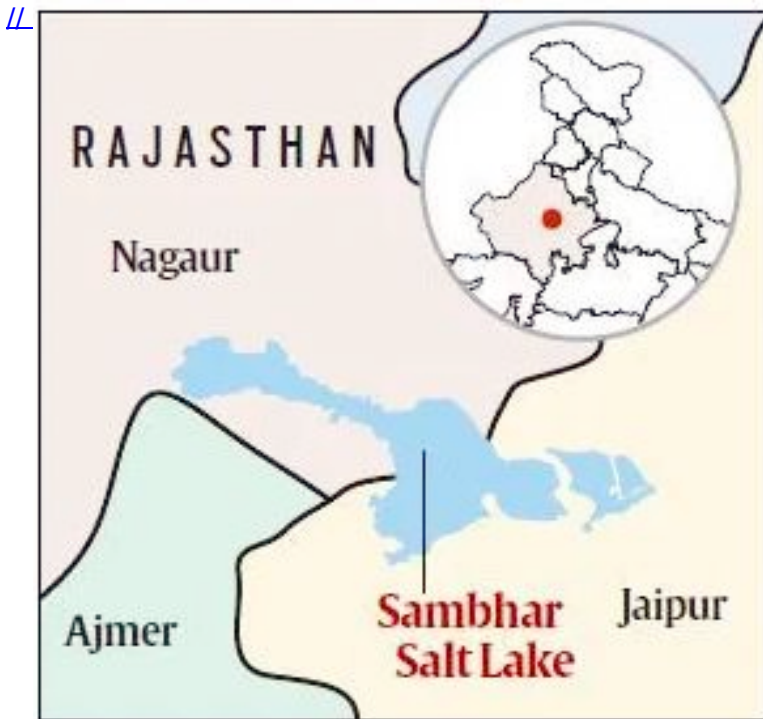
- **High temperatures and reduced salinity in Sambhar Lake** likely created conditions that triggered [Avian Botulism](#), causing the **mass deaths of migratory birds**.

Key Points

- **About Avian botulism:**
 - It is a [neuro-muscular illness](#) caused by **Botulinum (natural toxin)** that is produced by a bacteria [Clostridium botulinum](#).
 - The bacteria is **commonly found in the soil, rivers, and seawater. It affects both humans and animals.**
 - It also needs **anaerobic (absence of oxygen)** conditions and **does not grow in acidic conditions.**
 - It **affects the nervous system** of birds, **leading to paralysis** in their legs and wings.
 - Bacterial spores are widespread in wetland sediments and are commonly found in wetland habitats.
 - They are **present in invertebrates** like insects, mollusks, crustaceans, and even healthy vertebrates, including birds.
 - The outbreaks of avian botulism **tend to occur when average temperatures are above 21 degrees celsius**, and during [droughts](#).
 - The **deaths began on 26th October 2024**, and continued for approximately two weeks.
- **Contributing Environmental Factors:**
 - **Jaipur district**, 70 km from Sambhar Lake, **recorded above-average temperatures** throughout October.
 - Sambhar Lake experienced **reduced oxygen levels due to the absence of rainfall.**
- **Vulnerability of Migratory Birds**
 - Migratory birds arrive **weakened from long journeys**, making them more susceptible to diseases.
 - Decaying bird carcasses attract maggots, which further **contaminate the water and infect other birds** or animals.
- **Management and Challenges**
 - Avian botulism **cannot be treated**, but immediate **removal and disposal of affected birds are recommended** to limit the spread.
 - Sambhar Lake **experienced a similar die-off in 2019**, resulting in the deaths of nearly 18,000 birds.
 - **Outbreaks are hard to predict** as they depend on specific environmental conditions aligning, such as a shift from high to low salinity coinciding with the arrival of migratory birds.
- **Global Perspective**
 - **Spores of Clostridium botulinum can survive for years** but produce toxins only under favorable environmental conditions.
 - Similar outbreaks have been observed in **Australia and the United States** during periods of reduced salinity.
 - Globally, **around 57 diseases have been reported among wild birds**, highlighting the

broader ecological risks.

Sambhar Lake



- **Location:**
 - Situated about 80 km southwest of [Jaipur](#), in east-central **Rajasthan**.
- **Features:**
 - It is the **largest inland salt lake in India**. It represents the depression of the [Aravalli Range](#).
 - The lake's **salt supply was worked by the Mughal dynasty** (1526-1857) and it was **later owned jointly by the Jaipur and Jodhpur princely states**.
- **Ramsar Site:**
 - It is a **wetland of 'international importance'** under the [Ramsar Convention](#), declared in 1990.
- **Rivers:**
 - It receives water from **six rivers**, namely Samaod, Khari, Mantha, Khandela, Medtha, and Roopangarh.
- **Vegetation:**
 - The vegetation present in the catchment area is **mostly xerophytic type**.
 - Xerophyte is a **plant adapted for growth under dry conditions**.

The Central Avian Research Institute of India (CARI)

- It is a **research institute located at Izzatnagar near Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh**.
 - It was **established in 1979** under the administrative control of **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**.
 - It **studies poultry science**, including avian genetics, breeding, nutrition and feed technology, and avian physiology and reproduction, for the betterment of the Indian poultry industry.
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Mass Vaccination of Stray Dogs in Panna Tiger Reserve | Madhya Pradesh | 18 Nov 2024

Why in News?

To prevent the spread of [Canine Distemper Virus \(CDV\)](#) infection among wild animals, a **mass vaccination campaign for stray dogs** has been launched in and around [Panna Tiger Reserve \(PTR\)](#), Madhya Pradesh.

Key Points

- **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV):**
 - It is a **highly contagious and potentially fatal viral infection** affecting a dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems.
 - In 2015, one tiger and two leopards in PTR died due to CDV, highlighting the threat posed by the virus.
 - The aim is to curb the spread of CDV and protect wild animals in and around the reserve.
- **Vaccination Plan:**
 - Approximately 1,150 stray dogs in 36 forested villages in the buffer zone of PTR will be vaccinated.
 - The campaign will be carried out over three and a half months in two phases.
- **Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR):**
 - Panna National Park was **established in 1981**. It has a geographical extension in the **districts of Panna and Chhatarpur**.
 - This national park was declared as **Tiger Reserve in the year 1994** by the Central Government.
 - [UNESCO](#) designated the **Panna Tiger Reserve as a Biosphere Reserve on August 25, 2011**.
 - PTR **now houses 62 tigers and over 500 leopards**, making it critical to safeguard them from infections.
 - **Tiger Reintroduction:**
 - PTR became famous for **successfully reintroducing tigers** after poaching wiped out the population in 2009.
 - The Panna Tiger Project began with three relocated tigers: two tigresses from [Bandhavgarh](#) and [Kanha National Parks](#) and a male tiger from [Pench National Park](#).
 - Between 2009 and 2015, three additional tigresses and one male tiger were relocated to PTR from other national parks in Madhya Pradesh.
 - The tiger population in PTR has grown from zero in 2009 to 62 in 2024.

Kanha National Park

- It stretches over an area of 940 square km in the **two districts - Mandla and Balaghat - of Madhya Pradesh**.
- The present-day Kanha area **was divided into two sanctuaries, Hallon and Banjar. Kanha National Park was created in 1955** and in **1973** was made the **Kanha Tiger Reserve**.
 - Kanha National Park is the **largest National Park in Central India**.

Pench National Park

- It is located in **Nagpur District** of Maharashtra and **named after the pristine Pench River**.
 - The Pench river flows right through the middle of the park.
 - It **descends from north to south**, thereby **dividing the reserve into equal eastern and western parts**.
- PTR is the **joint pride of both Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra**.
 - The Reserve is located in the southern reaches of the [Satpura hills](#) in the Seoni and Chhindwara districts in Madhya Pradesh, and continues in Nagpur district in Maharashtra as

a separate Sanctuary.

- It was **declared a National Park by the Government of Maharashtra in 1975** and the identity of a **tiger reserve was granted to it in the year 1998-1999**.
- However, PTR Madhya Pradesh was granted the same status in 1992-1993. It is one of the major Protected Areas of **Satpura-Maikal ranges** of the Central Highlands.
- It is among the sites notified as [Important Bird Areas \(IBA\)](#) of India.
 - The IBA is a programme of [Birdlife International](#) which **aims to identify, monitor and protect a global network of IBAs for conservation of the world's birds** and associated diversity.

Maoists Encounter in Bastar | Chhattisgarh | 18 Nov 2024

Why in News?

In an **anti-insurgency operation in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region**, five Maoists were killed and two security personnel were injured.

Key Points

- **Forces Involved in the Operation:**
 - The operation involves personnel from the [Border Security Force \(BSF\)](#), [District Reserve Guard \(DRG\)](#), and **Special Task Force (STF)**.
 - **The Border Security Force (BSF)** is a paramilitary force established in India in 1965 primarily for guarding the country's land borders and maintaining peace and security in border areas.
- **Maoist Casualties in Bastar Region:**
 - **In 2024, a total of 197 Maoist bodies were recovered** in separate encounters across the Bastar region.

District Reserve Guard (DRG)

- The District Reserve Guard (DRG) is a **specialized police unit in Chhattisgarh, established in 2008** to combat [Maoist violence](#).
- It consists of **specialized personnel operating** in affected districts, conducting anti-Maoist operations, **search and seizure, and gathering intelligence**.
- The DRG collaborates with other security forces, like the [Central Reserve Police Force \(CRPF\)](#), to counter the Maoist insurgency.

LEFT WING EXTREMISM

ABOUT

- 📍 **Originated:** 1967 uprising in Naxalbari, West Bengal
- 📍 **Aim:** Societal and political change through revolutionary methods

IDEOLOGY

- 📍 Overthrow central government through armed revolution (Violence and guerilla warfare)
- 📍 Establishment of a communist state based on Maoist principles

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE

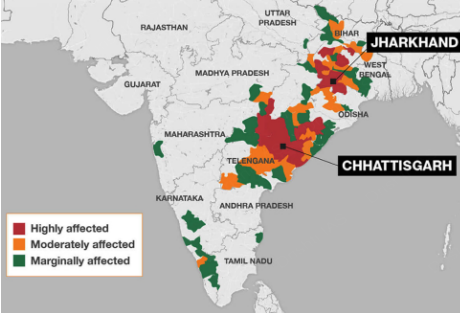
- 📍 **Massive displacement of tribal population;** Due to development projects, mining operations
- 📍 **Tribal dissatisfaction;** Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 prohibits tribes from harvesting forest resources
- 📍 **Poverty and lack of sustainable means;** Driving factors for joining Naxalite movement
- 📍 **Lack of effective governance;** Insufficient technical intelligence against Naxalism

STATES AFFECTED BY LWE

- 📍 **Red Corridor:** Experiences severe Naxalism-Maoist insurgency
- 📍 Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala

A map of India's Maoist conflict

A crackdown on Maoist rebels has led to a rise in the number of casualties in the country's tribal areas. Here are the regions that are most affected.



GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO CURB LWE

- 📍 National Policy and Action Plan to address Left Wing Extremism 2015
- 📍 **SAMADHAN Doctrine**
 - 📍 **S-** Smart Leadership
 - 📍 **A-** Aggressive Strategy
 - 📍 **M-** Motivation and Training
 - 📍 **A-** Actionable Intelligence
 - 📍 **D-** Dashboard Based KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and KRAs (Key Result Areas)
 - 📍 **H-** Harnessing Technology
 - 📍 **A-** Action plan for each Theatre
 - 📍 **N-** No access to Financing
- 📍 **Special Central Assistance (SCA)** in Public Infrastructure and Services
- 📍 **Operation Green Hunt**
- 📍 **Greyhounds** (Elite commando force in Andhra Pradesh)
- 📍 **Bastariya Battalion** (local recruits in Chhattisgarh who know the language and terrain that could generate intelligence and conduct operations)

Countering Naxalism - Bandyopadhyay Committee (2006)

- Highlighted the lack of governance, economic, socio-political and cultural discrimination against the tribals
- Recommended tribal-friendly land acquisition and rehabilitation



Drishti IAS

Drive Launched to Curb Child Labour | Jammu & Kashmir | 18 Nov 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the administration in **Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district** has intensified efforts to **combat child labor and begging** while taking measures to **address the challenges faced by children living on the streets**.

Key Points

- According to the officials, **collective efforts are essential to eradicate child exploitation** and

create a safer environment for children.

- Authorities urged citizens to stay vigilant and **report any instances of child exploitation or violations.**
- **Anti-Beggary Drive in Katra:**
 - A joint '**Anti-Beggary and Children in Street Situations'** drive was conducted in Katra by the Child Helpline, in partnership with the Police and Health Departments.
 - During the drive, **11 children forced into beggary were rescued.**
- **Ongoing Rescue Initiatives:**
 - The Social Welfare Department will continue similar drives across the district.
 - The **objective is to rescue children from exploitation and ensure they lead a dignified life.**

Child Labour in India

- According to the last available [Census 2011](#), there were 10.1 million child labourers in India.
- **India's biggest child labour employers** states are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **The [Article 23](#)** of the Indian Constitution prohibits human trafficking and begar (forced labour without payment) to protect the millions of underprivileged and deprived people of the country.
 - The right is available to **citizens of India as well as to non-citizens.**
 - The right provides against human trafficking in the form of:
 - Selling and buying of men, women and children.
 - Prostitution
 - [Devadasis](#)
 - Slavery.
 - The [Immoral Traffic \(Prevention\) Act, 1956](#) has been enacted to deal with violations of this fundamental right.
 - [Article 24](#) of the Indian Constitution forbids employment of children below the age of 14 years in hazardous work like factories and mines.
 - However, it did not prohibit their employment in any harmless or innocent work.
 - The [Child Labour \(Prohibition and Regulation\) Act, 1986](#) (renamed as [Child & Adolescent Labour \(Prohibition and Regulation\) Act, 1986](#) in 2016) specifically deals with the violations related to Prohibition of employment of children (below the age fourteen years) in factories, etc.
 - The [2016 amendment](#) of this act completely prohibited employment of children below 14 years of age in all occupations and processes.
 - It also **prohibited the employment of adolescents** (14-18 years of age) in hazardous occupations or processes.
 - **Articles 39** states that, the State shall in particular, direct its policies towards securing:
 - Right to an adequate means of livelihood to all the citizens.
 - The ownership and control of material resources shall be organised in a manner to serve the common good.
 - The State shall avoid concentration of wealth in a few hands.
 - Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
 - The protection of the strength and health of the workers.
 - Childhood and youth shall not be exploited.

Delay Arrival of Migratory Birds in Kashmir Valley | Jammu &

Why in News?

Due to less rainfall in the [Kashmir Valley](#), the [wetlands](#) are left severely dry adversely affecting the arrival of **migratory birds**.

Key Points

- **Decline in Migratory Birds:**
 - Each year, by late September or October, lakhs of migratory birds from **Siberia, China, Central Asia, and Northern Europe migrate to the Kashmir Valley's wetlands**, with [Hokersar Wetland](#) being the most significant site.
 - In 2024, it noted a sharp decline in bird arrivals compared to previous years.
- **Factors Contributing to Fewer Birds:**
 - Experts attribute the decline to [global warming](#), with prolonged summers delaying the onset of winter, resulting in a 10-15 day delay in bird arrivals.
 - **Reduced rainfall and dry wetlands have worsened the situation**, contributing to fewer birds this November. However, experts expect numbers to rise as weather conditions improve.
- **Shrinking Wetlands and Habitat Loss:**
 - Experts have raised **concerns about the shrinking Hokersar wetland**, also known as the **'Queen of Wetlands.'**
 - From **1969 to 2008, the wetland's area reduced from 18.75 sq km to 13 sq km**, with a loss of 150 hectares of marshy land within it.
- **Future Threat to Migratory Birds:**
 - **Without proper action** to restore and protect these wetlands, the **future of both the habitats and the migratory birds** that depend on them **remains uncertain**.

Hokersar Wetland

- **Location:**
 - The Hokersar wetland, a [Ramsar site](#), is situated in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. It is **also known as the 'Queen Wetland of Kashmir'**.
- **Geographic Setting:**
 - It is a natural, perennial **wetland that is part of the [Jhelum basin](#)** and is located in the **northwest Himalayan biogeographic province of Kashmir**, at the foot of the snow-draped [Pir Panchal range](#).
- **Water Source:**
 - The wetland receives water from the **Doodhganga River, a tributary of the Jhelum**.
- **Flora and Fauna:**
 - **It is home to the last remaining reedbeds of Kashmir** and serves as a **critical pathway for 68 waterfowl species**.
 - These birds, **migrating from regions like Siberia, China, Central Asia, and Europe**, include species such as the **little cormorant, [common shelduck](#), large egret, and great crested grebe**.
 - The wetland is **vital for local biodiversity**, offering food sources, spawning grounds, and nurseries for fish, along with breeding habitats for various species.

Why in News?

Recently, the **11-day 'Gita Quiz,'** was launched as part of the [International Gita Mahotsav 2024 \(IGM\)](#) celebrations. The competition has daily five questions related to **the Gita, and Mahabharata.** **Odisha** is the **partner state for IGM 2024.**

Key Points

- **Objectives of the Gita Quiz:**
 - The quiz aims to **educate people**, especially the youth, about the **Gita and Mahabharata.**
 - Participants are encouraged to pick up the holy books and explore answers, fostering discussions and awareness.
 - The **quiz serves as an orientation course for devotees and pilgrims before the main mahotsav begins.**
- **Competition Format and Rewards:**
 - The quiz has two categories public and student.
 - Each day, 20 winners from each category will receive Rs 500 each.
 - At the end of the quiz, 25 winners from each category will receive Rs 1,000 each, with 10 winners from Haryana, 10 from other states, and 5 from Odisha, in the IGM 2024.
 - Top motivators will also be **awarded monetary prizes and certificates of excellence.**
- **Focus on School Students and Quality Questions:**
 - School-going children form a significant portion of participants.
 - The number of daily winners has been doubled to encourage participation, while the quality of questions is being improved.

International Gita Mahotsav 2024 (IGM)

- The celebration **fosters a moral and cultural resurgence**, offering relevance in today's challenging times.
- The **festival aims to enlighten people through the timeless teachings of the Bhagavad Gita**, often referred to as the "song celestial."
- **History of the Festival:**
 - The Gita Mahotsav has been **celebrated in Kurukshetra, Haryana, since 1989**, under the joint efforts of the Haryana Government and the Kurukshetra Development Board.
- **International Recognition:**
 - **In 2016**, Haryana declared the celebration as the **International Gita Mahotsav, drawing over two million visitors to Kurukshetra.**
- **Highlights of Recent Celebrations:**
 - Participation of **international artists and craftsmen.**
 - **Large craft fairs and exhibitions** by religious and spiritual organizations.
 - Indian and foreign scholars attended a seminar on the Gita organized by Kurukshetra University.
 - **Global chanting of the Gita** by 18,000 students.
 - Gita Sobha Yatra, food stalls from various Indian regions, and a **grand craft mela.**
- **Cultural and Spiritual Impact:**
 - The festival **promotes cultural exchange and spirituality, attracting global audiences** and enhancing its popularity each year.
 - Through its diverse programs, the Gita Mahotsav unites people across regions and nations, celebrating the essence of the **Bhagavad Gita.**