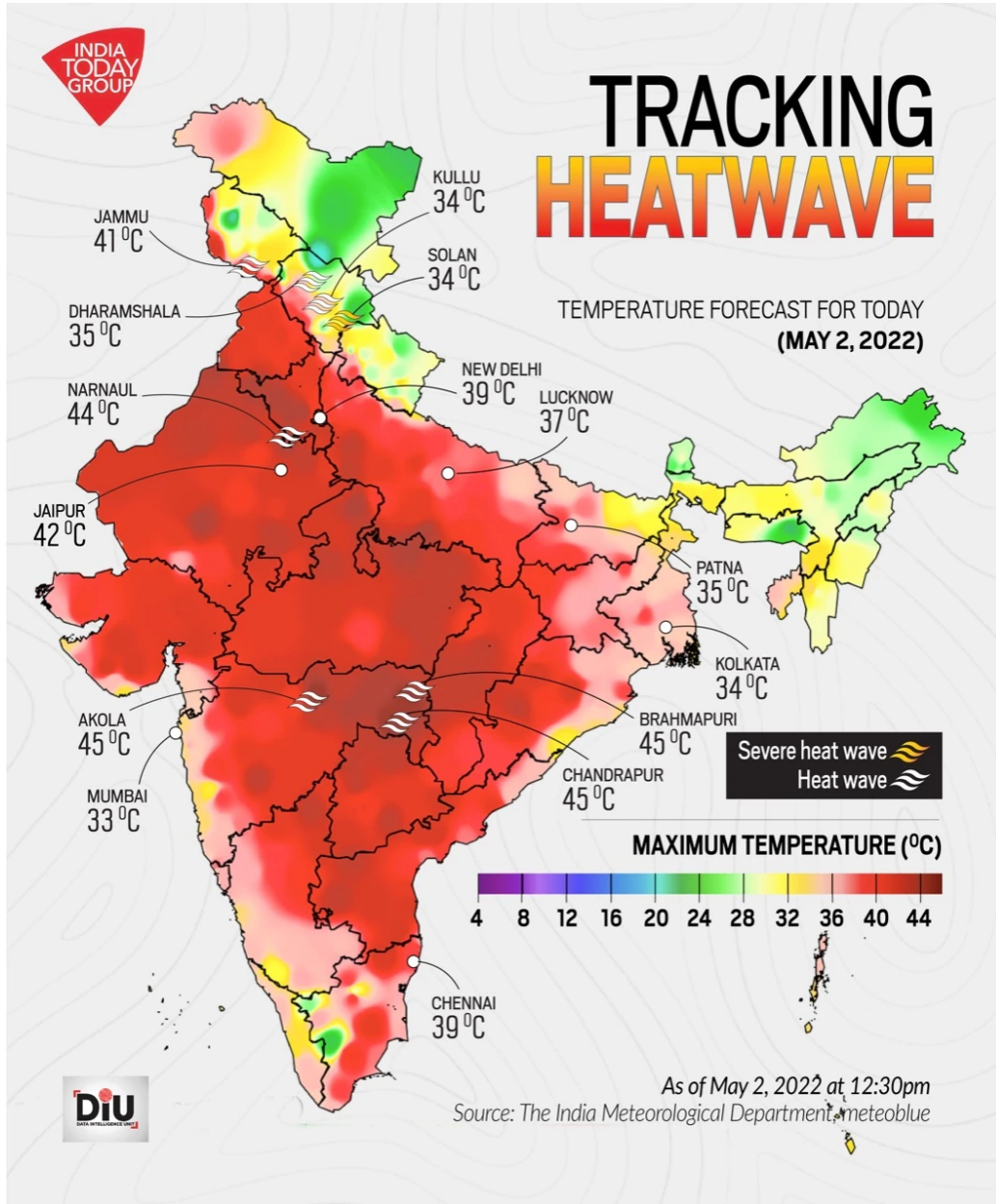


1. Heat index

Topic: Reports and Indices



In News: India Meteorological Department (IMD) is planning to issue a heat hazard analysis in the form of Heat Index for the country.

More on the Topic:



- The heat hazard analysis will be calculated considering five meteorological factors — **relative humidity, minimum and maximum temperatures, wind speed and duration of heatwave spell.**
- A daily bulletin in summer season giving heat hazard analysis will be provided.
- It is colour-coded forecast and impact-based heatwave warning so that precautionary measures can be taken.

Significant Heat Index:

- It will not only warn against Heat waves hazard but also list precautions people can take.
- Calculation of HI will help states in formulating better Heat Action Plans (HAPs) for heatwave assessment, forecast, preparedness and mitigation.

About Heat Waves:

- In India Heat waves typically occur from March to June, and in some rare cases, even extend till July.
- On an average, five-six heat wave events occur every year over the northern parts of the country.
- Single events can last weeks, occur consecutively, and can impact large population.
- In 2016, severe heat wave conditions affected Bihar, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, West Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

What is criterion for declaring heat wave in India?

- Heat wave is considered if maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40°C or more for Plains and at least 30°C or more for Hilly regions.
- **a) Based on Departure from Normal Heat Wave:** Departure from normal is 4.50°C to 6.40°C Severe Heat Wave: Departure from normal is >6.40degree C
- **b) Based on Actual Maximum Temperature Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature $\geq 45^{\circ}\text{C}$ Severe Heat Wave: When actual maximum temperature ≥ 47
- **c) If above criteria met at least in 2 stations** in a Meteorological sub-division for at least two consecutive days and it declared on the second day.

What is a criterion for describing Heat Wave for coastal stations in India?

- When maximum temperature departure is 4.50°C or more from normal, Heat Wave may be described provided actual maximum temperature is 37°C or more. The peak month of the heat wave over India is May.

Source: Indian Express

2. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

Topic: International Relations



In News: Saudi Arabia has agreed to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as a “dialogue partner”.

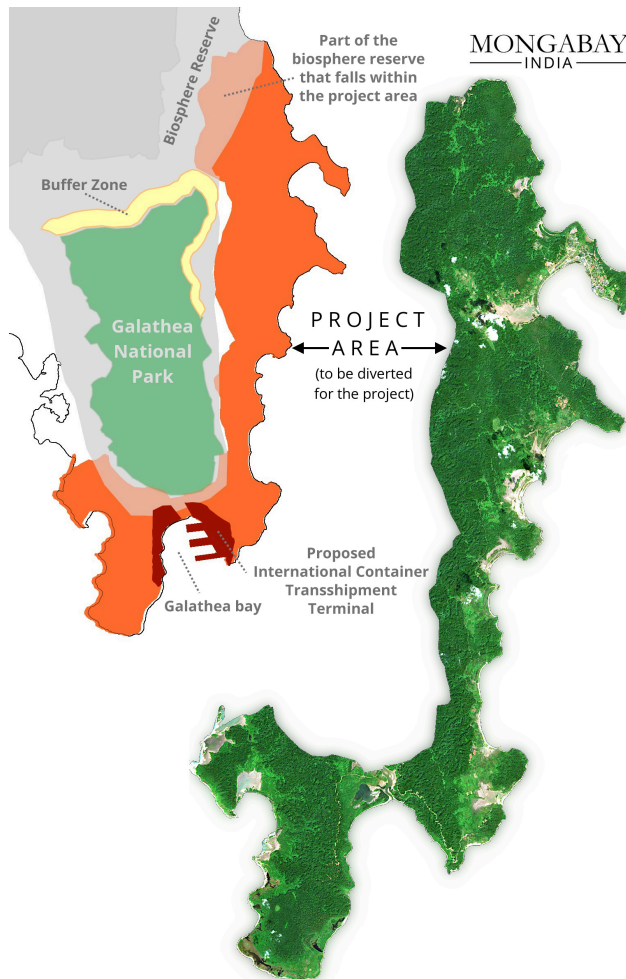
More on the Topic:

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is an intergovernmental organisation founded in Shanghai in 2001.
- **The SCO currently comprises eight members:** China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, four observer states interested in acceding to full membership: Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia, and six “Dialogue Partners”: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey.
- Since its inception in 2001, **the SCO has mainly focused on regional security issues, its fight against regional terrorism, ethnic separatism and religious extremism.**
- The SCO’s priorities also include regional development.

Source: AIR

3. Great Nicobar island project

Topic: Polity and Governance



Map by T Ramachandran/Mongabay

Source: Modified Copernicus Sentinel data 2022; Pre-feasibility report for the holistic development of the island prepared for Niti-Aayog; OpenStreetMap

In News: The Ministry of Tribal Affairs told the Rajya Sabha that Displacement of tribespeople will not be allowed to make room for the Great Nicobar island project.

More on the Topic:

- The Tribal Affairs Ministry said that the utilisation of tribal reserve area will be subject to the interests of the local tribespeople living in the area, especially **the Shompen tribe, which is classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).**



About Great Nicobar Island Project:

- The project being implemented by the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO)**, includes a transshipment port, an airport, a power plant, and a greenfield township.
- The port will be controlled by the Indian Navy, while the airport will have dual military-civilian functions and will cater to tourism as well.
- Roads, public transport, water supply and waste management facilities, and several hotels have been planned to cater to tourists.

Significance of the Project:

- **Economic Objectives:** The government's greater goal is to leverage the locational advantage of the island for economic and strategic reasons.
- Great Nicobar is equidistant from Colombo to the southwest and Port Klang and Singapore to the southeast, and positioned close to the East-West international shipping corridor, through which a very large part of the world's shipping trade passes. The proposed ICTT can potentially become a hub for cargo ships travelling on this route.
- **Security Objective:** its importance for national security and consolidation of the Indian Ocean Region. Increasing Chinese assertion in the Bay of Bengal and the Indo-Pacific has added great urgency to this imperative in recent years.

Concerns:

- The proposed massive infrastructure development in an **ecologically important and fragile region**, including the felling of almost a million trees is raising concerns.
- **The loss of tree cover** will not only affect the flora and fauna on the island, it will also lead to increased runoff and sediment deposits in the ocean, impacting the coral reefs in the area.
- **Coral reefs, already under threat from warming oceans**, are of enormous ecological importance.
- **The loss of mangroves** on the island as a result of the development project is also a concern.
- This project will increase the population to over 3.5 lakh (350,000), **which may cause a threat to the indigenous communities.**

Government Solutions:

- Government plans to **translocate the coral reefs**. India has successfully translocated a coral reef from the Gulf of Mannar to the Gulf of Kutch earlier.
- The government has said that a conservation plan for the leatherback turtle is also being put in place.
- According to the government, expediting the project is of paramount national security and strategic importance.
- The project site is outside the **eco-sensitive zones of Campbell Bay and Galathea National Park.**



- The Centre has said that the development area is only a small percentage of the area of the island and its forest cover, and that **15% of the development area itself will be green cover and open spaces.**

Source: Hindu

4. Zero Waste Day

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to proclaim March 30 as International Day of Zero Waste every year, and 105 countries have adopted it so far.

More on the Topic:

- During this time, UN member states, civil society, the private sector, academia, the youth and other stakeholders are invited to raise awareness of all available zero-waste and waste-management initiatives in the hope that we could come together to eliminate the problem entirely.
- The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) jointly facilitate the observance of International Day of Zero Waste.
- Zero Waste Day aims to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns and encourage the global community to shift towards circularity.
- 'Swachhotsav - 2023' was organised by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs as part of India's celebration of the International Day of Zero Waste 2023.

Source: Indian Express



5. New India Literacy Program

Topic: Government Schemes



Ministry of Education
Government of India

75
Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

New India Literacy Program

A new scheme on 'Education for All' -
erstwhile termed as 'Adult Education'

Estimated budget for 5 years

Total budget
Rs. 1037.90 Cr.

In News: Ministry of Education has launched New India Literacy Program.

More on the Topic:

- The scheme aims to cover a **target of five crore non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above.**
- **It is centrally sponsored scheme.**
- The beneficiaries under the scheme are identified through door to door survey on Mobile App by the surveyors in the States and union Territories.
- The non-literate can also avail the benefit of the scheme through direct registration from any place through mobile app.
- **The scheme is based on technology and implemented predominantly through online mode.**
- The Scheme has 5 components:
 - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
 - Critical Life Skills
 - Vocational Skills Development



- Basic Education
- Continuing Education

Source: Business Standard

6. Corporate Debt Market Development Fund

Topic: Economy



In News: SEBI has decided to set up a corporate debt market development fund in the form of an AIF.

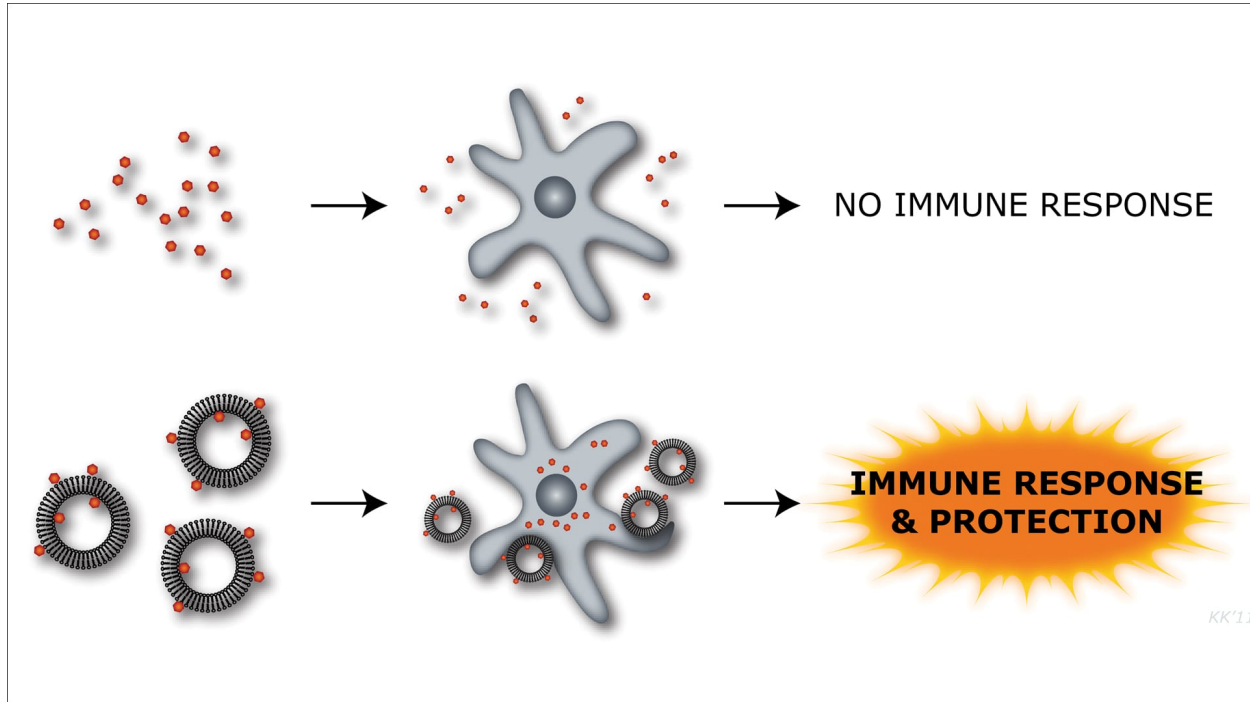
More on the Topic:

- The move is aimed at instilling confidence amongst the participants in the corporate bond market and to generally enhance secondary market liquidity.
- The proposed CDMDf will have **an initial corpus of Rs 3,000 crore contributed by mutual funds.**
- CDMDf, based on a guarantee to be provided by **National Credit Guarantee Trust Company (NCGTC) may raise funds, for purchase of corporate debt securities during market dislocation.**
- The backstop facility will be managed by SBI Mutual Fund.
- Specified mutual fund schemes will have access to the fund for selling securities during market dislocation.
- This access is proportional to the contribution made to the fund at a mutual fund level.

Source: Business Standard

7. Adjuvants

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: A Chinese research team has now created two novel broad-spectrum adjuvants that can dramatically boost the immune response to vaccines using computer-aided molecular design and machine learning

More on the Topic:

- Many vaccines contain compounds known as adjuvants in addition to an antigen that stimulates the immune system.
- Adjuvants allow for lesser quantities of the vaccine and fewer doses.
- Generally, they are injected alongside an antigen to help the immune system generate antibodies that fight the antigen.
- Adjuvants amplify and prolong the effect of vaccine immunizations. Aluminum salts have been successfully used as adjuvants for many decades.

Source: Business Standard