

# 1. International Big Cats Alliance

**Topic: Environment and Ecology**



**In News:** The Prime Minister has launched the International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA).

## More on the Topic

- In July 2019, the Prime Minister called for an Alliance of Global Leaders to obliterate demand and firmly curb poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Asia.
- Taking the message of the Prime Minister forward, the International Big Cats Alliance is being launched which will focus on the protection and conservation of **seven major big cats of the world, viz. Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Puma, Jaguar and Cheetah.**
- With IBCA, India plans **to collaborate with 97 range countries** covering the natural habitats of these seven big cats to strengthen global cooperation and efforts to protect these magnificent animals.

## Significance of the Alliance:

- Protecting big cats and their habitats could **secure some of the most critical natural ecosystems on Earth.**
- This could **lead to natural climate change adaptation, water and food security for millions of people, and provide livelihoods and sustenance to forest communities.**
- The alliance will strengthen global efforts and partnerships on big cat conservation while creating a **platform for sharing knowledge and best practices.**
- The IBCA will **support existing species-specific inter-governmental platforms and provide direct support to recovery efforts** in potential range habitats.

- Big cats will now serve as mascots for sustainable development, leading to environmental resilience and climate change mitigation.

**India and the Big Cats:**

- India is **the only country in world to have 5 big cats in wild (except pumas and jaguar).**
- IUCN Status: Endangered (Royal Bengal Tiger, Asiatic Lions); Vulnerable (Snow Leopards, African Cheetahs); Least Concerned (Common Leopard).

Source: PIB

## 2. India argues at WTO in favour of its MSP scheme for foodgrain

Topic: Economy



**In News:** India has stoutly defended its minimum support price (MSP) scheme for foodgrain at the World Trade Organization.

**More on the Topic:**

**About the Background:**

- Large foodgrain exporters including the US and Canada last month challenged India's public stockholding (PSH) programme on the grounds that it is highly subsidized, especially for rice.
- They argued that **this is affecting food security of other countries.**



- India has invoked the 'peace clause' several times at the WTO for breaching the prescribed 10% subsidy ceiling on rice procurement.
- Indian rice prevented traditional exporters from increasing their prices during the food crisis and that is the reason large exporters such as Australia, US, Canada and Japan are unhappy with India's presence in the international market.

#### India's Arguments:

- India has argued that its public stock holding programme (PSH) **not only supported small and marginal farmers and fed the poor but also kept global prices in check ensuring food security for LDCs and vulnerable countries.**
- India defended saying MSP based PSH has **not only ensured food security but also kept global food prices from surging in the backdrop of the Ukraine war.**
- India argued at the WTO's Committee on Agriculture that it does not export common paddy which it procures under the MSP programme.
- It mainly exports premium quality rice that is in demand the world over.

#### Agreement on Agriculture and Peace Clause:

- The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is a World Trade Organisation treaty that focuses on **reducing the agricultural support and subsidies given to domestic producers by countries.**
- It is one of the most contentious agreements within the WTO.
- The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is a WTO treaty that was negotiated during the **Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and formally ratified in 1994 at Marrakesh, Morocco. The AoA came into effect in 1995.**
- According to its provisions, developed countries were to complete their reduction commitments by 2000 and developing countries by 2004.
- **The Least Developed Countries were not required to make any reductions.**
- The Agreement covers products that are normally considered part of agriculture but excludes forestry and fishery products and also rubber, sisal, jute, coir and abaca.
- The focus of the AoA is **the elimination of what are called "trade distorting" agricultural subsidies.**
- According to the WTO, the overall aim of the Agreement is "to establish a fairer trading system that will increase market access and improve the livelihoods of farmers around the world."

#### The Peace Clause:

- High subsidies are seen to be distorting global trade.
- The peace clause protects a developing country's food procurement programmes against action from WTO members in case subsidy ceilings are breached.
- **The peace clause protects India's food procurement programmes against action from WTO members in case the subsidy ceilings 10 per cent of the value of food production in the case of India and other developing countries are breached.**



- India informed the WTO that the value of its rice production in 2019-20 was \$46.07 billion while it gave subsidies worth \$6.31 billion, or 13.7 per cent as against the permitted 10 per cent.

Source: Hindu

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### 3. Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

Topic: Government Schemes



**In News:** PM MUDRA Yojana has completed 8 years and Rs 23.2 lakh crore has been sanctioned till now.

#### More on the Topic:

- The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) was launched on April 8, 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- It aims to facilitate **easy collateral-free micro-credit of up to Rs 10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro-entrepreneurs.**

#### Achievements under PMMY (as of March, 2023):

- **About 68 per cent of accounts under the scheme belong to women entrepreneurs and 51 per cent of accounts belong to entrepreneurs of SC/ST and OBC categories.**
- This demonstrates that easy availability of credit to the budding entrepreneurs of the country has led to innovation and sustained increase in per capita income.

#### Eligibility:

- Any Indian Citizen who has a business plan for a non-farm sector income generating activity such as manufacturing, processing, trading or service sector and whose credit need is less than Rs 10 lakh can approach either a Bank, MFI, or NBFC for availing of Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd. (MUDRA) loans under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY).

#### Types of loans provided:



- Shishu : covering loans upto 50,000/-
- Kishor : covering loans above 50,000/- and upto 5 lakh
- Tarun : covering loans above 5 lakh and upto 10 lakh
- The interventions have been named 'Shishu', 'Kishor' and 'Tarun' to signify the stage of growth / development and funding needs of the beneficiary micro unit / entrepreneur and also provide a reference point for the next phase of graduation / growth to look forward to.
- It would be ensured that **at least 60% of the credit flows to Shishu Category Units and the balance to Kishor and Tarun Categories.**
- There is no subsidy for the loan given under PMMY.
- However, if the loan proposal is linked some Government scheme, wherein the Government is providing capital subsidy, it will be eligible under PMMY also.

Source: Hindu

## 4. Dakar Declaration

**Topic: International Relations**



**In News:** 21 African countries has adopted The 'Dakar Declaration'.

**More on the Topic:**

- It has been adopted after the first African sub-regional conference on the implementing the Global Plan for Road Safety in Dakar, Senegal.
- It sets the ambitious target of **preventing at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.**



- The declaration includes actions to enhance data capture, analysis, sharing and coordination to shape better road safety policies.
- The Dakar Declaration, currently being finalised, is in line with the work of the African Road Safety Observatory, which works to harmonise road safety related indicators across the continent.

Source: Hindu

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## 5.National Mission in Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems

Topic: Science and Technology



**In News:** Experts deliberated on ways to strengthen the National Mission in Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).

**More on the Topic:**

- The Union Cabinet approved the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical System (NM-ICPS) in December, 2018 for a period of five years to be implemented by the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- As part of the Mission implementation, **25 Technology Innovation Hubs (TIHs)** have been established in advanced technologies in reputed institutes across the country.
- These TIHs focus on technology development and translation, human resource and skill development, entrepreneurship and start-ups development, and international collaborative research.
- NM-ICPS is a **comprehensive Mission that brings together academia, industry, government and international organizations** and has created an ecosystem that fosters

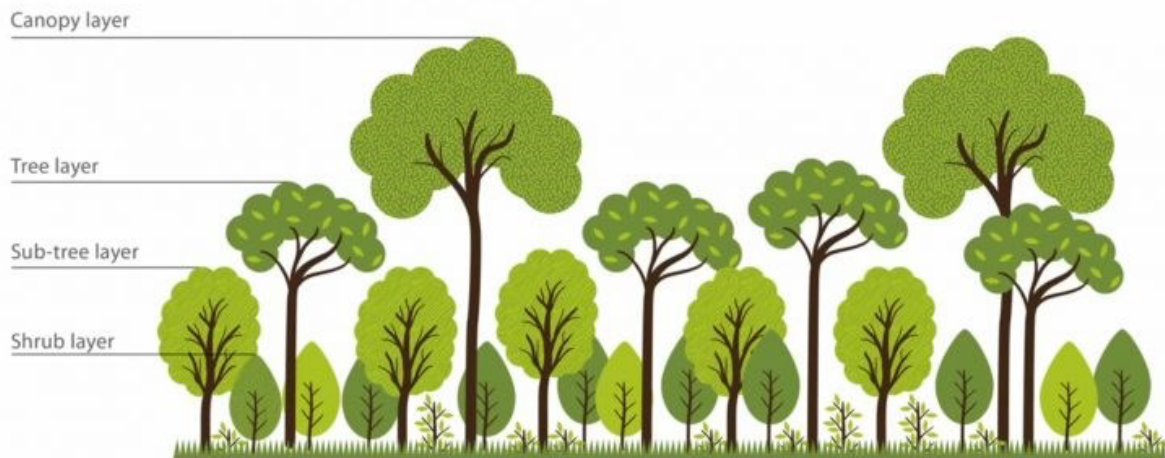
entrepreneurship, develops next-generation skilled manpower, catalyses translational research, and promotes the commercialisation of CPS technologies.

**Source: Business Standard**

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## 6. Miyawaki Forest

**Topic: Environment and Ecology**



**In News:** To tackle climate change and pollution, the government of Maharashtra has started creating a Miyawaki forest at Deonar village in Govandi.

**More on the Topic:**

- Named after Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, this involves planting two to four types of indigenous trees within every square metre.
- In this method, **the trees become self-sustainable and grow to their full length within three years.**
- It helps lower temperatures in concrete heat islands, reduce air and noise pollution, attract local birds and insects, and create carbon sinks.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 7. Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)

Topic: Science and Technology



### ESSO- Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services

**In News:** The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) launched two fresh modern deep sea 'Slocum' gliders in the Bay of Bengal, to study the physical and biogeochemical parameters of the sea and get an insight into the climate change.

**More on the Topic:**

- The state of the art gliders are equipped with sensors to track temperature, salinity, chlorophyll, dissolved oxygen, PAR – photosynthetic active radiation in the sea water among others.
- While the project comes under the 'Deep Ocean Mission' of the Ministry, it is not for the first time that the institute has deployed gliders to scour around the sea.

**Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS):**

- It was established as an autonomous body in 1999 under Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and is a unit of the Earth System Science Organisation (ESSO).
- It is one of the five regional commissions of United Nations.
- Its objectives include,
- To provide ocean data, information and advisory services to society, industry, the government and the scientific community
- To establish an Early Warning System for Tsunami and Storm Surges.
- To promote research in field of ocean information and related services including satellite oceanography.





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**Source: Business Standard**

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