

## UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 23-11-2023

### AGNI' Initiative to Promote Innovations by Ayurveda Practitioners

AGNI – 'Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative' - A CCRAS, (Ministry of Ayush) Initiative.



CCRAS will document and publish the reported medical practices and therapeutic regimens for education and academic purposes in consultation with NCISM (National Commission for Indian System of Medicine).

AGNI aims to provide a platform to Ayurveda practitioners for reporting their innovative practices & and experiences in various disease conditions.

To promote the culture of reporting evidence-based practice among Ayurveda Practitioners.

To document the reported successful therapeutic regimens for various disease conditions involving Single drug/ Formulation/ Procedures for the purpose of education and academics.

To identify the interested Ayurveda practitioners for collaboration in the creation of a database through applications and capacity building through training in research methods and good clinical practices.



To undertake research for mainstreaming pragmatic practices through scientific validation and evidence-based appraisal

Central Council for Research in Ayurveda Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of Ayush, in its new endeavour to promote research for mainstreaming the pragmatic Ayurveda practices through scientific validation and evidence-based appraisal, has launched “Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative” (AGNI) for physicians practicing in the field of Ayurveda. The interested qualified Ayurveda Practitioners may send the Expression of Interest in the format available on CCRAS Website <http://ccras.nic.in>

To provide a platform for Ayurveda practitioners to report their innovative practices & and experiences in various disease conditions along with promoting the culture of evidence-based practice among Ayurveda Practitioners. The initiative also aims to undertake research for mainstreaming pragmatic practices through scientific validation and evidence-based appraisal.

CCRAS will document and publish the reported medical practices and therapeutic regimens for education and academic purposes in consultation with NCISM. Further research studies may be taken up by CCRAS on the reported medical practices for mainstreaming and scientific validation by developing research proposals in collaboration with Ayurveda Practitioners and other relevant institutes/ organizations.

There are over 500,000 registered Ayurveda practitioners who are mainly practicing in India. CCRAS, under Ministry of Ayush is an apex research organization committed to undertaking, coordinating, formulating, development and promotion of research on scientific lines in Ayurveda. In the recent past, to boost scientific research through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals, CCRAS has initiated the Studentship Program for Ayurveda Research Ken (SPARK) for Undergraduate Scholars, Scheme for Training in Ayurveda Research for PG Scholars (PG-STAR) for PG Scholars and Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals (SMART) program for teachers.

In the recent past, Ayurveda intervention has successfully managed many new disease conditions, both acute and chronic, which are not described in classical texts of Ayurveda. Inevitable streaks of excellence have been happening in many areas, particularly managing the reported adverse effects of synthetic

drugs/ procedures, which has put Ayurveda on the Global platform in a short time.

## Union Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari Inaugurates the 8th India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) in New Delhi.

The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India, inaugurated the 8th Edition of the India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) on November 22, 2023, at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi. The summit, organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the Center for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga), spans three days from November 22 to 24, 2023.



The theme of IWIS 2023 is 'Development vis-à-vis Land, Water and Rivers,' aimed at uniting scientific experts, stakeholders, and government representatives to address dynamic challenges and opportunities in India's water sector.



## NASM-SR

The recent development regarding the successful trial of India's indigenous **Naval Anti-Ship Missile Short Range (NASM-SR)** holds significant importance in the country's defense capabilities.

**Indigenous Missile Advancements:** The NASM-SR test signifies India's progress in developing indigenous naval armaments, boosting self-reliance in defense technology, and reducing dependency on imports.

**Collaboration between DRDO and Indian Navy:** The successful trial represents a collaborative effort between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy, showcasing joint endeavors in enhancing naval firepower.

**Technological Advancements:** The NASM-SR incorporates advanced technologies, featuring an indigenous launcher for helicopters and a guidance system with state-of-the-art navigation and integrated avionics, reflecting India's technological capabilities in missile development.

## Development in Long-Range Missiles

**Long Range Anti-Ship Missile:** India's preparations for the inaugural trial of a new Long Range Anti-Ship Missile, surpassing the range of the BrahMos missile, demonstrate the country's endeavor to develop missiles with extended operational ranges, enhancing maritime defense capabilities.

**Enhanced Range of BrahMos:** The BrahMos missile, developed jointly by India and Russia, has undergone advancements, with an extended range from its original 290 km to a range of 350 to 400 km, further bolstering India's missile capabilities.

## Complementary Defense Capabilities

**MRSAM's Effectiveness:** The successful firing of the Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) from INS Visakhapatnam in March





demonstrates India's capability to intercept Anti-Ship Missiles, showcasing a multi-layered defense approach.

**Collaboration with International Entities:** Collaborative efforts between DRDO and Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI) for the development of MRSAM highlight India's engagements with global defense entities to strengthen its defense systems.

## About

Anti-ship missiles (ASMs) are advanced guided projectiles specifically designed to target and destroy surface ships, making them a critical component of naval warfare.

These missiles are engineered to be launched from various platforms such as aircraft, ships, submarines, and coastal defense batteries.

## Key Features of Anti-Ship Missiles:

**Guidance Systems:** ASMs employ advanced guidance systems such as radar, infrared, GPS, and inertial navigation systems to locate and home in on their targets accurately.

**Versatile Platforms:** They can be deployed from different launch platforms, including aircraft (air-launched), ships (surface-launched), submarines (submarine-launched), and coastal defense systems (land-based launchers).

**Stealth and Maneuverability:** Modern ASMs are designed to be stealthy and possess high maneuverability to evade enemy defenses, including anti-missile systems and countermeasures.

**Warhead Options:** These missiles are equipped with various warhead types, including high-explosive, armor-piercing, shaped charges, and sometimes even nuclear warheads, maximizing their impact on targets.

## Types of Anti-Ship Missiles:

**Subsonic Missiles:** These travel at speeds below the speed of sound and are often used for shorter-range engagements, typically utilizing cruise missile technology.

**Supersonic Missiles:** Known for their high speeds surpassing the speed of sound, these missiles have enhanced striking capabilities, providing limited reaction time for adversaries.



**Hypersonic Missiles:** The latest advancements in missile technology have led to the development of hypersonic ASMs, capable of achieving speeds more than five times that of sound, making them extremely difficult to intercept.

### **Notable Anti-Ship Missile Systems:**

**Harpoon:** A widely used anti-ship missile system by various navies globally, known for its effectiveness and operational history.

**BrahMos:** Jointly developed by India and Russia, this supersonic cruise missile is one of the fastest anti-ship missiles in service, known for its accuracy and range.

**Exocet:** A French-built missile system deployed by numerous navies worldwide, recognized for its potency and successful track record in conflicts.

**YJ-18:** A Chinese anti-ship missile system with unique capabilities, including subsonic and supersonic flight modes, making it difficult to counter.

### **Strategic Importance and Military Applications:**

**Naval Warfare:** ASMs play a crucial role in naval warfare, acting as a deterrent and a primary offensive weapon against enemy ships, disrupting maritime operations.

**Strategic Defense:** They provide a layer of defense against hostile naval forces, securing territorial waters and strategic maritime regions.

**Force Projection:** The possession of advanced anti-ship missiles enhances a nation's ability to project power and influence in maritime regions, shaping geopolitical strategies.

### **Evolving Threats and Countermeasures:**

**Counter-ASMs:** Nations continuously develop and deploy counter-ASM systems, including anti-missile defense, electronic warfare, and decoy systems, to neutralize incoming ASMs.

**Technological Advancements:** Ongoing research focuses on improving missile accuracy, range, speed, stealth, and maneuverability to stay ahead of evolving threats and defenses.

## Exercise AUSTRAHIND-23

The Indian Armed Forces contingent, comprising 81 personnel, departed for Australia to take part in the second edition of Joint Military Exercise AUSTRAHIND-23.



### About Exercise AUSTRAHIND-23:

It was instituted in 2022, and the first edition was conducted in Mahajan, Rajasthan.

It is planned to be an annual training event to be conducted alternatively in India and Australia.

The aim of the exercise is to foster collaborative partnerships and share best practises between the two sides.

This year, the exercise will be conducted in Perth, Australia, from November 22nd to December 6th, 2023.

The Indian Army contingent, comprising 60 personnel from a battalion of the Gorkha Rifles will take part in this exercise.

The exercise will also promote inter-operability while undertaking multi-domain operations in urban and Semi-Urban terrain under Chapter VII of the United Nations on peacekeeping operations.

The joint exercise will promote the exchange of ideas and jointly rehearse tactics, techniques and procedures for conducting tactical operations.

The exercise will also help in promoting understanding between the two militaries and further strengthening defence cooperation between the two friendly nations.

## Gujarat gets a state fish

Ghol fish

About



It is a rare and expensive marine species.





From iodine, omega-3, DHA, EPA, iron, taurine, magnesium, fluoride, to selenium, it is loaded with rich nutrients.

The fish is usually found in the Indo-Pacific region that stretches from the Persian Gulf to the Pacific Ocean.

### Length

The length of the Ghol fish is around one-and-a-half meters. The longer the Ghol fish, the higher its price.

The price of the Ghol fish per unit length can go up to Rs 5 lakh.

### In India

Ghol fish is one of the largest fish found in India. It is found in the marine areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra in a golden-brown colour.

### Called as 'Sea Gold'

What makes this fish to be called as 'Sea Gold' is a pouch in its stomach, which has potent medicinal properties and has a high valuation in the overseas market.

### Benefits of Ghol fish

**Good for eye health:** This fish contains many vitamins, minerals, proteins, which helps in maintaining eyesight.

**Prevent ageing and wrinkles:** The collagen content in the ghol fish prevents wrinkles and also keeps the elasticity of the skin intact.

**Improves IQ of infants:** Omega-3 content in it improves IQ of infants if fed on a regular basis – it stimulates the growth of brain cells.

### Toning muscles

### Economic value

The fish is in demand because of its meat and air bladder (sold separately).

Ghol fish is used to make beer and wine and its air bladder is used in pharmaceuticals.

News Summary: Gujarat gets a state fish

Why was the Ghol chosen?



The Gujarat government chose the ghol because of its economic value and its uniqueness. The declaration will enable Gujarat to be a part of its conservation efforts. There is need to conserve it and prevent it from over-exploitation.

What is the commercial importance of this fish species?

Being an expensive fish, the local consumption of this variety is not widely heard of. But the fish has a huge market in China and other countries.

The fish is not only tasty, it is considered a delicacy in many countries. In others, it is used for medicinal purposes.

The meat of the fish is exported as frozen fillet or whole fish to European and Middle-Eastern countries.

Its air bladder — which is cut open from the stomach and dried — is mainly exported to China, Hong Kong and other Asian countries where it is in high demand for its medicinal values.

### **How much fish does Gujarat export?**

During the year 2021-22, the total fish production of Gujarat was estimated at 8.74 lakh tonne, worth Rs 11,221 crore.

Of this, 2.3 lakh tonne of fish and fish products worth Rs 5,233 crore were exported.

### **Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary**

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) recently recommended to the authorities that the Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary abutting the Bandipur Tiger Reserve be declared a core critical tiger habitat.

#### **About Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary:**

It is situated north of Bandipur National Park in Mysore District, Karnataka.

It covers about 30 sq km, and the northern part of the sanctuary is occupied by the Nugu Reservoir. It is built across the Nugu River, a tributary of the Cauvery.

In 1974, Nugu was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary, and later, in year 2003-2004, the area of Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary was added to the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.



**Rainfall:** The area receives rainfall from both southwest and northeast monsoons. The average amount of rainfall received in this area is 1000 mm.

**Vegetation:** Most of the vegetation in the forests is dry, deciduous and interspersed with patches of plantations.

**Flora:**

Common species of trees found in this sanctuary are *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Tectonia grandis*, and *Terminalia tomentosa*.

Other species of trees that are dominant in this forest canopy include medicinal and commercially important tree species like *Emblica officinalis*, *Santalum album*, *Albizia spp.*, and *Dendrocalamus strictus*.

**Fauna:** The wildlife population includes elephant, leopard, jungle cat, wild pig, spotted deer, sambar deer, barking deer, mouse deer, jackal, hare, common mongoose, common otter, small Indian civet, common palm civet, and porcupine.

**India-US Security Cooperation: US Warned India over Alleged Assassination Attempt of Another Khalistan Leader**

The US government foiled a conspiracy to assassinate Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, leader of Khalistani separatist organisation Sikhs for Justice (SFG), on American soil and issued a warning to India's government over concerns it was involved in the plot.

The alleged plot against Pannun comes after Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Sikh separatist based in Canada was gunned down in June this year.

Earlier (in Sept 2023), Canadian PM said there were "credible allegations" linking the Indian government to Nijjar's killing, which triggered a diplomatic stand-off between the two countries.

The US protest was issued after the Indian PM made a high-profile state visit to Washington (in June 2023).

It remains unclear whether the US protest led the plotters to abandon their plan, or whether the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) intervened to foil a scheme already in motion.



The US federal prosecutors have filed a sealed indictment against at least one alleged perpetrator of the plot in a New York district court.

India (in its response) said that during the course of recent discussions on India-US security cooperation, the US side shared some inputs pertaining to nexus between organised criminals, gun runners, terrorists and others.

The inputs are a cause of concern for both countries and they decided to take necessary follow up action.

On its part, India takes such inputs seriously since it impinges on India's own national security interests as well.

Who is Pannun and What does his Organisation SFJ do?

Pannun, who comes from Khankot village on the outskirts of Amritsar, is a Pro-Khalistan lawyer based in the US.

He is best known as the founder and leader of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), a pro-Khalistan advocacy organisation based in New York.

SFJ was formed in 2007 with the express intent of achieving self-determination for the Sikh people in their historic homeland in the region of Punjab (India) and establishing a sovereign state, popularly known as Khalistan.

SFJ was founded with the explicit understanding that the Khalistan movement's weakness had been its needless use of violence.

As a result, Pannun had started SFJ with the motto of "ballots not bullets". Perhaps the SFJ's most famous activity so far has been the so-called "Referendum 2020".

It was conducted among the Sikh diaspora in cities around the world, and SFJ claimed grand support for it.

How has the Indian Government Reacted to Pannun and the SFJ?

Almost a dozen cases have been registered against Pannun and SFJ in India, including 3 sedition cases in Punjab.





In 2019, posts on social media by SFJ asserted that the Pulwama attack cannot be termed as an act of terrorism and backed Kashmiri separatists.

In 2021, during the farmers' agitation, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) registered an FIR against Pannun and issued summons to various farmer leaders and activists to probe their source of funding.

After his most recent video threatening a repeat of Air India 1985, the NIA booked Pannun under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 [UAPA].

The agency and the GoI as a whole refer to him as a "terrorist".

The Home Ministry's notification banning the SFJ under the UAPA held that SFJ is actually espousing secessionism and militant ideology in Punjab.

### **The U.S.-India Defence and Security Relationship:**

It has continued to deepen, aided by robust political commitments in both countries and converging concern about growing Chinese assertiveness across the Indo-Pacific.

The US and India have expanded their defence activities and consultations. For example, the so-called "foundational defence agreements" concluded in 2020 between the two includes -

#### **General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA);**

Logistic Support Agreement (LSA); Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA).

This positive trajectory is, however, by no means guaranteed to continue apace. There are rising concerns in the US about India's fiscal limitations, its ties with Russia, etc.