UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 13-12-2023

PROCLAMATION ON 1949

The Proclamation of 1949 by Yuvraj Karan Singh was a significant document that played a role in the Supreme Court's judgment upholding the abrogation of Article 370.

In post-judgment statements, the court emphasized that the proclamation of 1949 was issued for the country's and the state's benefit. It was seen as a necessary step to remove any ambiguity and to align Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional framework with that of the newly-formed Republic of India.

The Supreme Court, in its judgment, referred to the Proclamation of 1949 as a significant legal document. It argued that with the issuance of the proclamation, paragraph 8 of the Instrument of Accession ceased to have legal consequences, implying that the state had effectively surrendered its sovereignty.

Repeal of the Government of India Act 1935

The proclamation explicitly stated that the Government of India Act 1935, which governed the constitutional relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and the Dominion of India, would be repealed. This indicated a clear break from the existing constitutional arrangement.

Adoption of the Indian Constitution

Karan Singh declared that the Constitution of India, then in the process of being adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India, would govern the relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and the Union of India.

He affirmed that the provisions of the Indian Constitution would be enforced in Jammu and Kashmir by him, his heirs, and his successors.

Superseding and Abrogation of Inconsistent Constitutional Provisions

The proclamation explicitly stated that the provisions of the Indian Constitution would supersede and abrogate all other constitutional provisions inconsistent with it that were in force in the state at that time.

Full and Final Surrender of Sovereignty

The critical phrase used in the proclamation was the "full and final surrender of sovereignty." This indicated an unambiguous commitment by the leadership of Jammu and Kashmir, represented by Yuvraj Karan Singh, to surrender the state's sovereignty to India.

Ambiguity Resolution

Karan Singh, in later statements, explained that the proclamation was issued to eliminate any ambiguity regarding Jammu and Kashmir's status. There was uncertainty about whether the state had become an integral part of India after Hari Singh, Karan Singh's father, signed the Instrument of Accession.

Acceptance of the Indian Constitution's Supremacy

The Proclamation reflected a clear acceptance of the supremacy of the Indian Constitution. By stating that the Constitution of India would govern the relationship, it acknowledged the legal framework and principles outlined in the Indian Constitution.

Karan Singh's Proclamation of 1949 served as a foundational document that clarified and affirmed the integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the Union of India. The Supreme Court, in upholding the abrogation of Article 370, relied on this proclamation as evidence of the state's full and final surrender of sovereignty to India under the Indian Constitution.

YUVAi

YUVAi, a collaborative initiative of the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and Intel India, aims to equip Indian school students (class 8-12) with essential AI skills, fostering human-centric design and problem-solving capabilities for real-world challenges.

YUVAi is an initiative launched by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, in collaboration with Intel India.

The initiative focuses on equipping youth in India with essential Artificial Intelligence (AI) skills, aiming to create a future-ready workforce.

YUVAi has gained attention for its innovative approach and commitment to fostering a deeper understanding of AI among school students.

Objective

The primary goal of YUVAi is to empower students from classes 8 to 12 across the nation to become proficient in AI, enabling them to be human-centric designers and users of AI.

The initiative seeks to guide the next generation in responsibly using AI to address real-world social challenges.

Phases of the YUVAi Program

Cohort Registration and Orientation

More than 8,500 students registered for the program.

Participants attended online orientation sessions to grasp fundamental AI concepts.

Teachers also enrolled in the program and underwent orientation sessions.

Idea Submission under Core Themes (Phase 1)

Students submitted innovative AI-based ideas under one of the eight core themes of the program.

An overwhelming response was received, with over 750 students submitting their ideas in Phase 1.

Shortlisting and Training (Phase 2)

The top 200 AI-based ideas were shortlisted.

Shortlisted students attended online deep dive AI training and mentorship sessions with certified Intel AI coaches and experts.

This phase aimed to enhance students' solutions and prepare them for the next stage.

Prototype Development and Mentorship (Phase 3)

The top 50 students from Phase 2 were shortlisted.

They attended a four-day face-to-face rapid modelling workshop, receiving one-on-one mentorship, apprenticeship, and guidance from industry experts.

An on-spot project presentation was conducted by a jury panel to shortlist the top 10 students.

GPAI Summit Representation

The YUVAi program and its top 10 finalists will be showcased at the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit.

The GPAI Summit is a global platform that brings together leaders, policymakers, and experts in the field of AI.

YUVAi aims to inspire collaboration among policymakers, educators, and industry leaders to shape a future where AI becomes a force for positive change.

YUVAi's innovative approach and commitment to equipping the youth with essential AI skills have garnered attention. The program not only imparts technical knowledge but also encourages students to apply AI to address social challenges, fostering a responsible and impactful use of AI among the next generation.

Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary

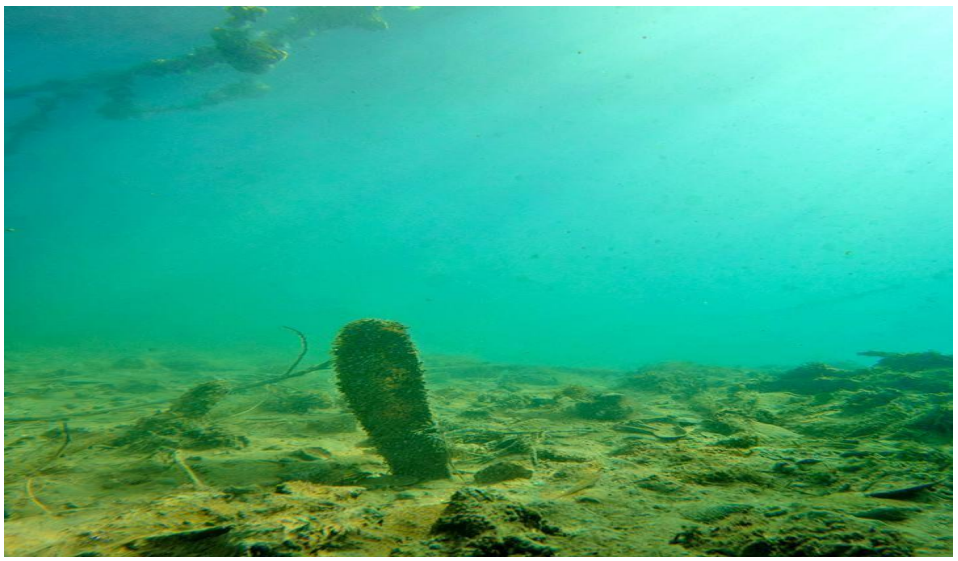
A Royal Bengal Tiger was spotted in Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary in Sikkim.

Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary

- The Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary is located at the tri-junction of Sikkim, Bengal and Bhutan.
- It is the largest wildlife sanctuary in Sikkim.
- This wildlife sanctuary is linked to the forests of Neora Valley National Park of West Bengal as well as forests of Samtse, Bhutan and Haa district Bhutan.
- The sanctuary is home to a diverse range of species, including red pandas, snow leopards, Himalayan musk deer, Himalayan goral, and Himalayan black bears.
- Pangolakha range in the east separates Sikkim from its eastern neighboring country Bhutan, whereas it is linked through forest patches to the south with Neora Valley National Park in West Bengal.
- Some high-altitude lakes are present there, including Lake Tsongmo, which acts as a biodiversity hotspot for migratory birds.
- Rangpo River and Jaldhaka River are the major rivers originating from the nearby lakes, which occur in this sanctuary.

- This wildlife sanctuary supports a large variety of species since it falls at the junction of the Palearctic realm and the Indomalayan realm.
- The sanctuary is home to a diverse range of species, including red pandas, snow leopards, Himalayan musk deer, Himalayan goral, and Himalayan black bears.

Pinna nobilis



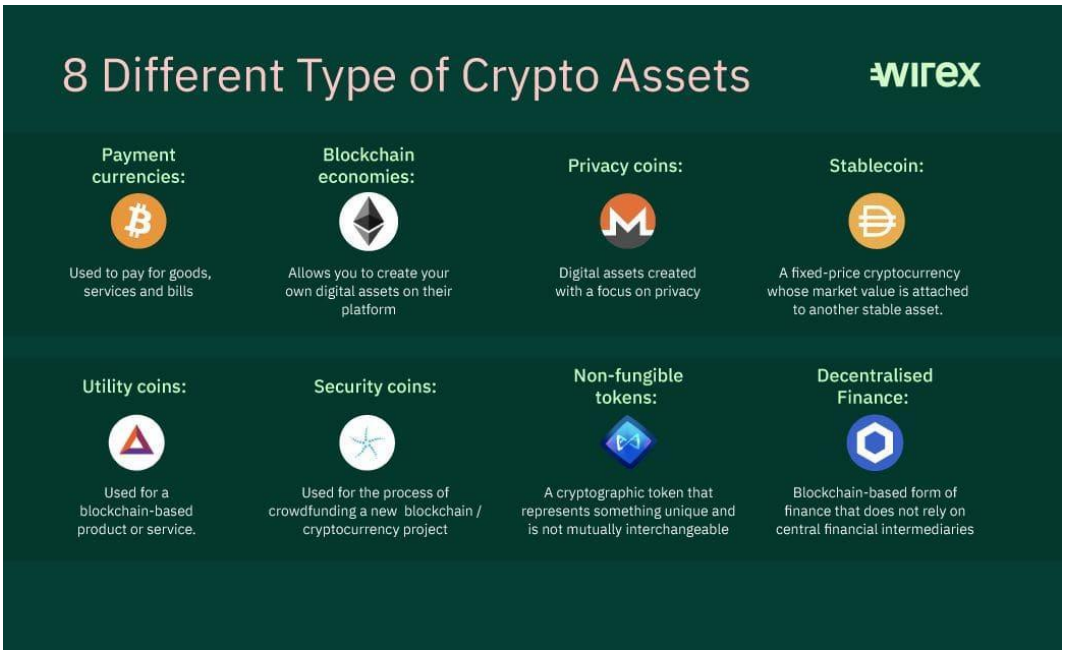
A huge clam that was on the verge of extinction has made a comeback, with a surge in numbers in waters off Croatia, marine biologists say. The clam, is known as the noble *pen shell or pinna nobilis.*

Pinna nobilis

- Pinna nobilis, whose common name is the noble pen shell or fan mussel, is a large species of Mediterranean clam, a marine bivalve mollusc in the family Pinnidae, the pen shells.
- It reaches up to 120 cm of shell length. It produces a rare manganese-containing porphyrin protein known as pinnaglobin.
- The bivalve shell is usually 30–50 cm long, but can reach 120 cm.
- Its shape differs depending on the region it inhabits. Like all pen shells, it is relatively fragile to pollution and shell damage.
- It attaches itself to rocks using a strong byssus composed of many silk-like threads which used to be made into cloth.

- The animal secretes these fibres from its byssus gland; they consist of keratin and other proteins and may be as long as 6 cm.
- The inside of the shell is lined with brilliant mother-of-pearl.
- As with other members of its genus, Pinna nobilis hosts symbiotic shrimp which live inside its shell.
- is believed that when it sees a threat, the shrimp warns the host, perhaps by retracting its claws or even by pinching.
- The clam then closes shut. It has been demonstrated that the shrimp has a similar filter-feeding diet to its host and the relationship is likely mutualistic.
- This species is endemic to the Mediterranean Sea, where it lives offshore at depths ranging between 0.5 and 60 m.
- It could be found buried beneath soft-sediment areas (fine sand, mud, often anoxic).
- In December 2019, Pinna nobilis has entered the IUCN Red List as critically endangered.

CRYPTO ASSET INTERMEDIARIES



The Financial Stability Board (FSB) has expressed concerns about crypto-asset intermediaries (CAIs), particularly multi-function crypto-asset intermediaries (MCIs), in its latest report.

Crypto-asset intermediaries (CAIs) are businesses that facilitate the exchange, trading, and storage of crypto-assets. They play a crucial role in the crypto-asset ecosystem, providing services to both retail and institutional investors.

Key Highlights of the Report released by the Financial Stability Board (FSB)

Cross-Border Cooperation and Information Sharing

The FSB emphasizes the need for enhanced cross-border cooperation and information sharing among local authorities to regulate and address gaps in the operations of multi-function crypto-asset intermediaries (MCIs) on a global scale.

The report highlights potential risks associated with MCIs, especially those that combine different activities within the platform. It specifically references the collapse of FTX in November 2022 as an example of such risks.

Traditional Financial Landscape v/s MCI

MCIs are defined as individual firms or groups of affiliated firms that offer a range of crypto-based services, products, and functions, primarily focused on operating trading platforms. Examples include Binance, Bitfinex, and Coinbase.

Unlike the traditional financial landscape where different entities provide various functions, MCIs combine multiple functions within the same entity. The report notes that this can lead to conflicts of interest and may impact market integrity, investor protection, and financial stability.

MCIs generate revenue primarily through transaction fees from trading-related activities, particularly involving self-issued crypto assets. These platforms aim to become "one-stop shops" for various crypto-based services, such as prepaid debit cards and lending.

Risk Management and Transparency

The report observes that most MCIs are not transparent about their corporate structure, often being privately held. Limited publicly disclosed information is

available, with press coverage, court filings, and regulatory actions being the primary sources.

The lack of transparency is suggested to be intentional, possibly to limit understanding of vulnerabilities, economic models, and activities, thereby evading regulatory oversight.

The report highlights poor risk management practices among MCIs, which may make it easier for insiders to engage in misconduct. Insufficient transparency could hide risks related to governance and profitability until negative shocks occur.

Spillover Effects

The report notes that, based on available evidence, the threat to global financial stability and the real economy from the failure of an MCI is presently considered "limited."

Recent experiences with the failure or closure of "crypto-asset-friendly" banks reveal concentrated deposit exposures to firms relying on crypto assets. An example cited is Silvergate Bank, which had to wind down operations after the FTX collapse and a subsequent loss of confidence in crypto assets.

Financial Stability Board (FSB)

The Financial Stability Board (FSB) is an international body established in 2009 by the G20 nations. It monitors and makes recommendations about the global financial system, aiming to promote financial stability.

Key Functions of the FSB:

It helps to ensure the resilience of the global financial system by identifying and addressing vulnerabilities.

It facilitates cooperation between national and international financial authorities to promote consistent and effective regulation.

It plays a key role in developing and promoting global standards for financial regulation, such as the Basel III capital adequacy framework.

It conducts research and analysis on financial stability issues to inform its policy recommendations.

The FSB is governed by a Steering Committee, composed of senior representatives from member countries and international organizations.

The FSB's report underscores the need for regulatory attention to address potential risks associated with the operations of MCIs, emphasizing transparency, effective risk management, and cross-border cooperation among authorities.

Exercise VINBAX-2023

Recently, the Indian Armed Forces contingent comprising 45 personnel reached Hanoi, Vietnam to take part in the Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023.

About Exercise VINBAX-2023:

It was instituted in 2018 and the first edition was conducted at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.

It is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Vietnam.

Last edition was conducted at Chandimandir Military Station in August 2022.

This year’s exercise will be conducted at Hanoi, Vietnam.

The Indian contingent comprises 39 personnel from an Engineer Regiment of Bengal Engineer Group and six personnel of Army Medical Corps are participating.

Aim of the exercise is to foster collaborative partnership, promote inter-operability and share best practices between the two sides under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter on Peacekeeping Operations.

The exercise will be conducted as a Command Post Exercise cum Field Training Exercise with focus on deployment and employment of an Engineer Company and a Medical Team.

Both sides will conduct technical military operations in accordance with scenarios akin to worldwide deployment of United Nations’ contingents

Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary

The first-of-its-kind, Nature Interpretation Centre at the Eastern Ghats Biodiversity Centre along the periphery of the Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary in Visakhapatnam was inaugurated.

About Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary:

It is located in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

It is named after the local hillock "Kambalakonda" acting as a green lung for citizens of Vizianagaram, is this large and sprawling sanctuary.

Topography: It is considerably hilly with steep slopes.

Vegetation: It hosts dry evergreen forests, a highly-threatened and unique forest type seen only in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in India.

Flora:

It has wonderful plants like Tectona grandis, Randia dumetorum, Grewia tiliaefolia, Abrus precatorius, etc.

One of the most stunning flowers found in the region includes the Indian screw tree. Other flowers and fruits like flowers of the Bush plum tree, Jungle berry bunches can be found all across the landscape.

Fauna: Mammals like Leopard, Barking Deer, Jackal and Avifauna include Paradise flycatcher, Tree pie, Quails, Partridges, etc.