

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 29-01-2024

Supreme Court of India (SC)

The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Supreme Court.



The Supreme Court of India is the apex judicial body under the Constitution of India.

Article 124 of the Constitution states that “There shall be a Supreme Court of India.”

The Supreme Court came into existence **on January 26, 1950, with the coming into force of the Constitution.**

On January, 28, 1950, two days after India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic, the Supreme Court was inaugurated.

The Supreme Court initially functioned from the old Parliament House till it moved to the present building located on Tilak Marg, New Delhi, in 1958.

The first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, inaugurated the present building of the Supreme Court of India on August 4, 1958.



Number of Judges:

The original Constitution of 1950 envisaged a Supreme Court with a Chief Justice and 7 puisne Judges, leaving it to Parliament to increase this number.

Considering the increase in workload, Parliament increased the number of Judges from 8 in 1950 to 11 in 1956, 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986, 31 in 2009, and 34 in 2019 (current strength).

Today, the judges sit in benches of two and three and come together in larger benches of 5 and more (Constitution Bench) to decide any conflicting decisions between benches of the Supreme Court or any substantial questions concerning the interpretation of the Constitution.

The proceedings of the Supreme Court are conducted in English.

Powers and Functions:

The Supreme Court has original, appellate, and advisory jurisdiction.

It serves both as the final court of appeals and the final interpreter of the Constitution.

Its exclusive original jurisdiction extends to any dispute between the Government of India and one or more States or between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more States on the other, or between two or more States, if and insofar as the dispute involves any question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends.

In addition, Article 32 of the Constitution gives extensive original jurisdiction to the Supreme Court for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights.

It is empowered to issue directions, orders, or writs, including writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto, and certiorari, to enforce them.

The Supreme Court has been conferred with the power to direct the transfer of any civil or criminal case from one High Court to another High Court or from a Court subordinate to another High Court.

Under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, International Commercial Arbitration can also be initiated in the Supreme Court.



The appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court can be invoked by a certificate granted by the High Court concerned under Article 132(1), 133(1) or 134 of the Constitution in respect of any judgement, decree, or final order of a High Court in both civil and criminal cases, involving substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution.

Appeals also lie to the Supreme Court in civil matters if the High Court concerned certifies:

The case involves a substantial question of law of general importance, and that, in the opinion of the High Court, the said question needs to be decided by the Supreme Court.

In criminal cases, an appeal lies to the Supreme Court if the High Court has on appeal reversed an order of acquittal of an accused person and sentenced him to death or to imprisonment for life or for a period of not less than 10 years, or

has withdrawn for trial before itself any case from any Court subordinate to its authority and has in such trial convicted the accused and sentenced him to death or to imprisonment for life or for a period of not less than 10 years, or certified that the case is a fit one for appeal to the Supreme Court.

Parliament is authorised to confer on the Supreme Court any further powers to entertain and hear appeals from any judgement, final order or sentence in a criminal proceeding of a High Court.

The Supreme Court also has a very wide appellate jurisdiction over all Courts and Tribunals in India in as much as it may, in its discretion, grant special leave to appeal under Article 136 of the Constitution from any judgment, decree, determination, sentence or order in any cause or matter passed or made by any Court or Tribunal in the territory of India.

The Supreme Court has special advisory jurisdiction in matters which may specifically be referred to it by the President of India under Article 143 of the Constitution.

Election Petitions under Part III of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952, are also filed directly in the Supreme Court.

Under Articles 129 and 142 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court has been vested with power to punish for contempt of Court, including the power to punish for contempt of itself.

The Supreme Court can reconsider its final judgment or order by way of a curative petition on limited grounds after the dismissal of the review petition.

As the highest court in India, the Supreme Court's judgments are binding on all other courts in the country.

Curative Petition

It is the last resort to the highest court that can be petitioned for redressal of grievances in court, and its ruling is final. It is a way to ask the court to review and revise their own decision, and it is filed after a review petition is dismissed or used. It can be entertained if the petitioner establishes there was a violation of the principles of natural justice and that he was not heard by the court before passing an order. It will also be admitted where a judge fails to disclose facts that raise the apprehension of bias.

Kinnow Farming

Kinnow growers in Punjab are apprehending losses this season as nearly half of the 13 lakh tonnes of the crop are yet to be harvested even as the season will end in less than two months.





About Kinnow Farming:

- Kinnow / Mandarin, commonly pronounced as Kinoo or Kinu is a **citrus fruit**.
- It is a largely cultivated fruit of **North India**, and **Punjab holds the major share** of Kinnow / Mandarin producing area of the country, with other states including Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, and Kashmir.
- It is a **hybrid of two varieties** viz. **Citrus nobilis** and **Citrus deliciosa**.
- It is commonly confused with Oranges, due to the similarity in their appearances, seasonal availability and nutritional benefits offered by both the fruits.
- It comprises a high amount of juice content, making them ideal for extracting juice and pulp.

Climatic conditions

Temperature: It can be grown successfully in a temperature range of 10-35°C. It has the ability to withstand soaring temperatures as high as 40°C during summer and 0°C during winter.

Soil: Sites having well drained clay-loam soils with 6.0-7.5 pH are ideal for its cultivation.

Rain: 300-400mm

Key facts about citrus fruit

- Citrus originates in **South East Asia**.
- It comprises Kinnow, Oranges, Lime and Lemon
- In India, Citrus is the third largest fruit crop after Banana and Mango. Citrus fruits are an important source of Vitamin C.

Alpenglow

Astronaut Lora O'Hara, currently stationed aboard the International Space Station, recently shared images showcasing the **Alpenglow phenomenon** near the **Hindu Kush mountain range**.



About Alpenglow:

It is a natural phenomenon when mountain slopes are illuminated by the sun as it rises or sets.

The slopes turn a rosy, reddish, or orange hue depending on the angle of the sun and atmospheric conditions.

It occurs during the twilight hours before sunrise or after sunset. It can also occur in the first minutes after the sun rises or sets.

Alpenglow typically occurs in the range of colors between red, pink, and orange.

This is because, these are the longest warm rays of electromagnetic wave (light) — they reach various surfaces, while cold rays are shorter and disappear faster in the atmosphere.

Its vibrancy and color depends on the location of the sun, the angle of the light, and other atmospheric conditions like clouds, humidity, and particulates.

It can change quickly depending on how fast the sun sets on any given day.

Key Facts about Hindu Kush Himalayan Region (HKH):

It stretches over 3500 kilometres across eight countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, Myanmar and Pakistan.

It is the source of ten of Asia's largest rivers – the Amu Darya, Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong, Yangtze (Jinsha), Yellow River, and Tarim (Dayan).

- It has the largest concentration of frozen water on Earth after the North Pole and South Pole; hence it is referred to as “the third pole”.

What is the International Space Station (ISS)

It is a habitable spacecraft that orbits Earth at an average altitude of approximately 420 kilometers (260 miles). It is a permanently crewed on-orbit laboratory that enables scientific research supporting innovation on Earth and future deep space exploration. From design to launch, 15 countries collaborated to assemble the world's only permanently crewed orbital facility, which can support up to seven astronauts and 300 to 400 experiments per crew increment, across an array of disciplines.

Nitrogen hypoxia

Recently, Alabama successfully executed a man who spent decades on death row using a new method called nitrogen hypoxia.

About Nitrogen hypoxia:

Hypoxia is a medical term for a state of insufficient oxygen in the body.

Nitrogen hypoxia is a process where pure nitrogen gas, or nitrogen gas at concentrations high enough to be lethal, is inhaled to the point of causing asphyxiation.

It is a relatively new alternative to more common forms of capital punishment, like lethal injection and electrocution

In this method of execution, a respirator mask is placed over the inmate's face, pure nitrogen is pumped into the person's lungs instead of oxygen.

It leads to unconsciousness and then death from lack of oxygen.

Key facts about Nitrogen

It appears as a colorless odorless gas.

It makes up the major portion of the atmosphere.

It is important for plant growth and can be 'fixed' by lightning or added to soils in fertilisers.

It is important to the chemical industry. It is used to make fertilisers, nitric acid, nylon, dyes and explosives.

Nitrogen gas is also used to provide an unreactive atmosphere. It is used in this way to preserve foods and in the electronics industry during the production of transistors and diodes.

Large quantities of nitrogen are used in annealing stainless steel and other steel mill products. Annealing is a heat treatment that makes steel easier to work.

Liquid nitrogen is often used as a refrigerant. It is also used to rapidly freeze foods, helping them to maintain moisture, colour, flavour and texture.



Saheli

Dr. Nitya Anand, who discovered India's first oral contraceptive pill, 'Saheli', passed away recently.

About Saheli:

Saheli is the world's first and only oral non-steroidal contraceptive pill.

'Saheli', aka Centchroman (ormeloxifene 30mg), is the only non-steroidal pill with zero side effects available in the world.

The pill, launched by HLL in 1991, is free from side effects like weight gain, nausea, vomiting and headaches as it contains the molecule Centchroman (ormeloxifene) as the active ingredient.

All common brands of oral contraceptive pills contain hormones like oestrogen or progesterone, or a combination of both; only Saheli is free of these steroids and hence has no side effects.

This drug was included in the National Family Welfare Programme in 1995.

Oestrogen and Progesterone:

Oestrogen (also called 'estrogen') and progesterone are hormones that are important for sexual and reproductive development in women.

Production:

The ovaries are a pair of ova-producing organs (that is, they produce egg cells) that maintain the health of the female reproductive system.

In addition to their role in producing ova, the ovaries also have the distinction of being an endocrine gland because they secrete hormones—primarily estrogen and progesterone.

They are both important for the menstrual cycle and maintenance of pregnancy in females and are combinedly prescribed in birth control pills and hormone replacement therapy for menopause.

· While they are often thought of as 'female hormones', oestrogen and progesterone are also found in men.

Dogri folk dance

Recently, the union government of India conferred Padma Shri award to Jammu's Dogri folk dancer Romalo Ram.



About *Dogri folk dance*:

It is a dance performed in **Duggar region of Jammu**.

It is generally performed by a group of artists whose main leader sings the song as well as dances while others are in the sitting position providing beats of Drums and Chimta.

It is performed in functions and social gatherings.

There are other varieties of this dance with the men and women or only women performing dance in groups to the music of some famous folk song in colourful traditional dresses.

Dogra folk-dances have an important role as a part of worship, ceremonies and a pastime but the main force behind the folk-dances is the celebratory mood.

Other dance forms of Jammu region: Dheku, Phummani, jagarana, Ckauki, Chhajja, Kuddha, Hirana etc. are main dances. Bhagtan, Raas , ChandraulI etc. are main folk-drama styles.

Indian Grey wolf

Wildlife enthusiasts and experts are abuzz with excitement after the recent sighting of Indian grey wolf in the expansive confines of National Chambal Sanctuary in Etawah.



About Indian Grey wolf:

Scientific Name: *Canis lupus pallipes*

It is a subspecies of grey wolf that ranges from Southwest Asia to the Indian Subcontinent.

They live in warmer conditions.

It is intermediate in size between the Tibetan and Arabian wolf and lacks the former's luxuriant winter coat due to it living in warmer conditions.

It travels in smaller packs and is less vocal than other variants. They are nocturnal and hunt from dusk to dawn

Habitat: The Indian wolf inhabits areas dominated by scrub, grasslands and semi-arid pastoral agro-ecosystems.



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Distribution: It has a wide distribution range that extends from the Indian subcontinent to Israel. There are about 3,000 animals in India, some in captivity.

Conservation Status

IUCN: Least concern

Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 : Schedule I

CITES : Appendix 1