

1. Assam Meghalaya Border Dispute

Topic: Polity and Governance

In News: The chief ministers of Assam and Meghalaya signed an agreement to resolve part of their five-decade-old inter-state border dispute.

More on the Topic:

- Assam and Meghalaya share an 885-km-long border. As of now, there are 12 points of dispute along their borders.
- **Meghalaya was carved out of Assam under the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971.**
- This law was challenged by Meghalaya and that led to disputes.
- A major point of contention between Assam and



Meghalaya is the district of Langpih in West Garo Hills bordering the Kamrup district of Assam. Langpih was part of the Kamrup district during the British colonial period but post-Independence, it became part of the Garo Hills and Meghalaya.

Major Point of Contention:

- Assam considers it to be part of the Mikir Hills in Assam. Meghalaya has questioned Blocks I and II of the Mikir Hills -now Karbi Anglong region - being part of Assam. Meghalaya says these were parts of erstwhile United Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts.

Efforts to solve the issues:

- Both Assam and Meghalaya have constituted **border dispute settlement committees**. They also set up **two regional committees** to resolve the border disputes in a phased manner.
- Five aspects considered while resolving the border dispute. They are historical facts, ethnicity, administrative convenience, mood and sentiments of the people concerned and the contiguity of the land.

Assam And Border Issues:

- **The states of the Northeast were largely carved out of Assam**, which has border disputes with several states. Assam's border disputes with Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland are pending in the Supreme Court.

- Assam's border disputes with Meghalaya and Mizoram are currently in the phase of resolution through negotiations. The border dispute with Mizoram recently turned violent, leading to intervention from the Centre.

Source: The Hindu

2. Vinaya Samarasya Yojana

Topic: Government Schemes

In News: The Karnataka government has announced Vinaya Samarasya Yojana, an awareness programme meant to eradicate untouchability in Gram Panchayats across the state.

More on the Topic:

- The scheme has been named after a three-year-old Dalit Vinay, whose family, residents of Miyapur village in Koppal district, was slapped a fine of Rs 25,000 by the village leaders in September last year for the boy's "offence" of straying into a local temple.
- The plight of the Vinay family seems to have turned more abysmal, though. The village leaders, belonging to the locally dominant Ganiga community, stepped up "social boycott" of the victim Dalit family. Reeling under it, the family was forced to escape from the village leaving behind their house and agricultural land.
- The conviction rate in cases of atrocities against the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs) has stood at **barely 7 per cent in Karnataka, as per recent data.**



Untouchability and Indian Laws:

- **The abolition of untouchability (Article 17)** was incorporated in Part III of the Indian constitution's Fundamental Rights section.
- It provides security not only against the government but also against private individuals. The state has a legal obligation to take the appropriate efforts to ensure that it is not violated.
- **Untouchability is not defined in the Indian Constitution** or any act passed by the Indian Parliament. However, in one of its judgments, the Mysore High Court confirmed its meaning.
- According to the court, the subject matter of Article 17 is not untouchable in its literal or grammatical sense but the 'practice as it had developed historically in the country'.
- It refers to the social disabilities imposed on certain classes of persons because of their birth in certain castes. Hence, it does not cover the social boycott of a few individuals or their exclusion from religious services, etc

Other Measures to End Untouchability:

- **The Untouchability Offences Act of 1955:** If untouchability is proven, a sentence of six months in prison or a fine of 500 rupees, or both, may be imposed.
- If a candidate for Parliament or a state election is found guilty, he/she will be disqualified.
- **The Protection of Civil Liberties Act 1976:** The Untouchability Offences Statute of 1955 was amended by this act.
- On proving charges, the sentence was raised to two years in prison or a fine of Rs. 2000, or both.
- **The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989:** Its principal goal is to avoid atrocities by increasing surveillance and collecting permits from upper castes, among other things.
- Provides victims with assistance and rehabilitation.

Source: Indian Express

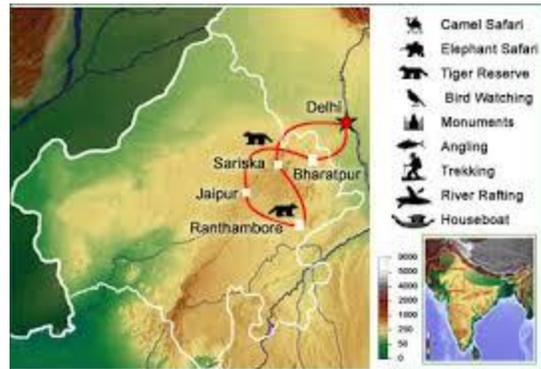
3.Sariska Tiger Reserve

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: A forest fire that began in the Sariska Tiger Reserve (STR) has gone out of control and has endangered the lives of tigers in the reserved forest.

More on the Topic:

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) warned in its **annual Frontiers report** released in early 2022 that wildfires have become more dangerous and now affect larger areas.
- A total of 381 forest fires have been reported in India by March 30, 2022, according to the Forest Survey of India. Madhya Pradesh has recorded the highest number of fires at 133.



About Sariska Tiger Reserve:

- Sariska Tiger Reserve is located in **Aravali hills and forms a part of the Alwar District of Rajasthan.**
- The Reserve is immensely rich in flora and fauna, and is famous for Royal Bengal Tiger.
- Sariska was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1955 and was declared the tiger reserve later in 1978, making it a part of India's Project Tiger.
- Sariska is the first tiger reserve to have successfully relocated Royal Bengal tigers in India and at present there are around 20 tigers in the reserve.

Source: PIB

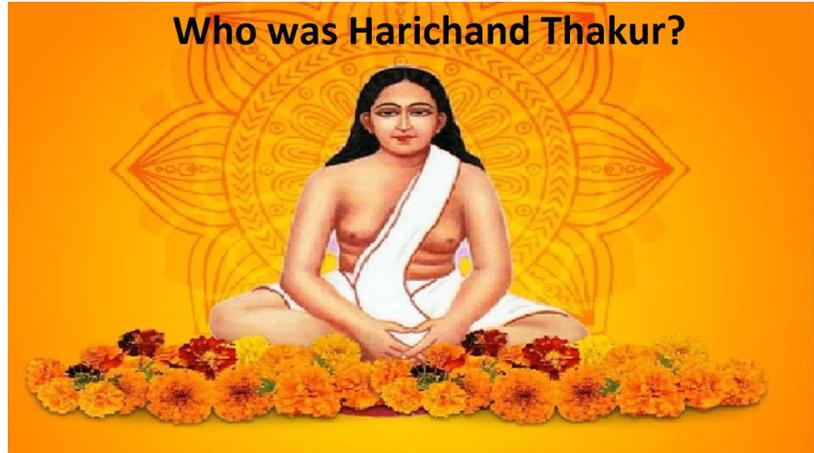
4. Matua Community

Topic: Art and Culture

In News: Prime Minister has virtually addressed the Matua community during the opening of 'Matua Dharma Maha Mela 2022'.

More on the Topic:

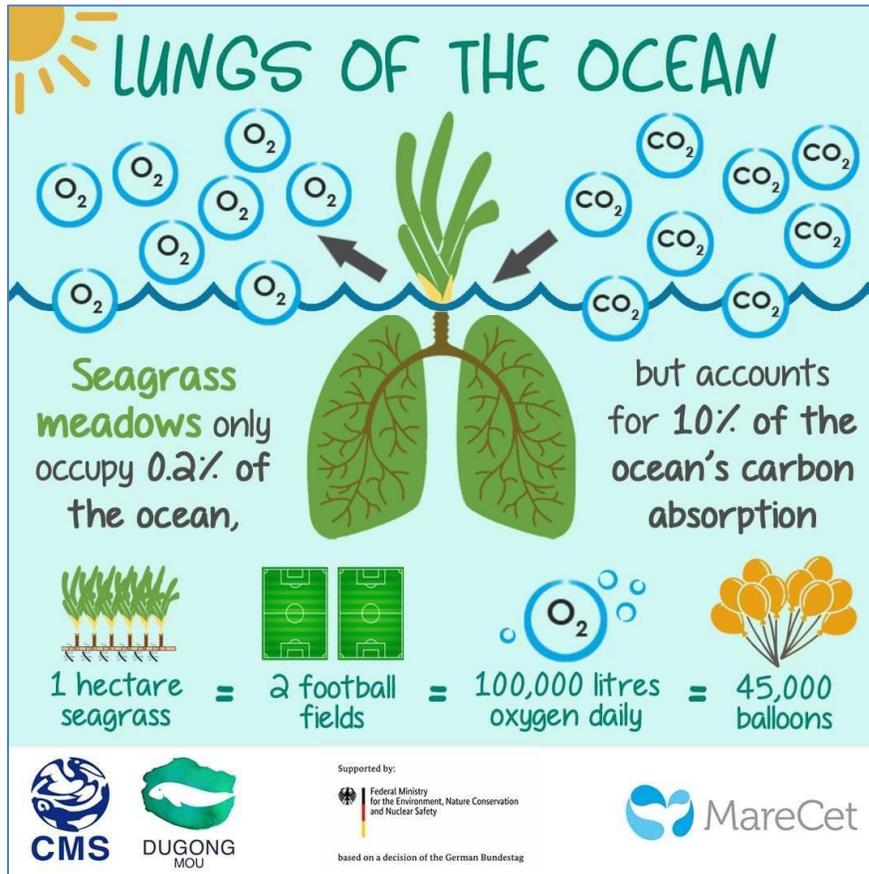
- The Mela, being organised on the occasion of the 211th birth anniversary of Shree Shree Harichand Thakur.
- Harichand Thakur was born in 1812 in Orakandi in Bangladesh in a peasant farmer family of the Thakur community (SC community).
- Thakur, whose family were Vaishnavite Hindus, founded a sect of **Vaishnavite Hinduism called Matua.**
- This was adopted by members of the Namasudra community, who were then also known by the common pejorative name of **Chandalas and considered untouchable.**
- The sect, opposed to caste oppression, later **attracted adherents from other communities marginalised by the upper castes**, including Malis and Telis.
- **Harichand Thakur devoted his life to the cause of betterment of the oppressed, downtrodden and deprived people in undivided Bengal during the pre-independence era.**
- Matuas are originally from East Pakistan, the Matuas migrated to India during Partition and after the creation of Bangladesh. However, a sizable number are yet to get Indian citizenship.



Source: Hindu

5. Sea Grasses

Topic: Environment and Ecology



LUNGS OF THE OCEAN

Seagrass meadows only occupy 0.2% of the ocean, but accounts for 10% of the ocean's carbon absorption

1 hectare seagrass = 2 football fields = 100,000 litres oxygen daily = 45,000 balloons

Supported by:
 Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
 based on a decision of the German Bundestag

CMS DUGONG MOU MareCet

In News: Based on field surveys and satellite data, the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management has estimated the total extent of seagrass ecosystem in India.

More on the Topic:

- Seagrasses have been studied for over two decades with the financial support of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the State/UT Governments.
- Academic and research institutions have been actively involved in seagrass research pertaining to seagrass mapping, species diversity and its transplantation.

About Sea Grass:

- Seagrasses are **flowering plants** which are found in our sea beds and ocean floors.
- The major seagrass beds exist along our coastline of Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay regions on the east coast, Gulf of Kachchh region on the west coast, the lagoons of islands in Lakshadweep in the Arabian Sea and Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.
- Seagrass ecosystems are recognized globally for their **ability to sequester carbon, nurture fish communities and support marine mammals such as sea cows or dugongs.**

Threats:

- Seagrass beds are facing decline all over the world at the rate of **2-5% annually.**
- They face natural disturbances like **grazing, storms, ice-scouring and desiccation.**

- Human disturbances like **eutrophication, mechanical destruction of habitat, overfishing and release of nutrients play havoc on seagrasses.**
- Siltation, trawling, coastal engineering construction, pollution, etc, are considered to be significant causes for the deterioration of seagrasses.

Source: Hindu

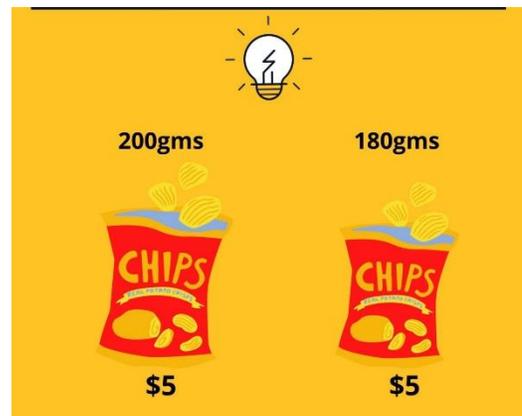
6. Shrinkflation

Topic: Economy

In News: The Cadbury’s Dairy Milk bars downsized the size or quantity of their products while keeping them at the same price in UK due to inflation.

More on the Topic:

- “Shrinkflation” is a combination of the words shrink and inflation.
- The “shrink” refers to the change in the size of the product, while the “flation” part refers to inflation i.e.the rise in the price level.
- Shrinkflation is a form of hidden inflation. It refers to downsizing a product while keeping its price the same.



Source: Hindu

7. Kaziranga Rhino Population

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: According to the latest census of the UNESCO World Heritage Site’s flagship animal - greater one-horned or Indian rhinoceros, rhino population has increased in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

More on the Topic:

- In the Kaziranga





National Park and Tiger Reserve recorded an increased population of the animal by 200 in 4 years. There are total 2,613 Rhinos at present

- A similar census was conducted in two more of Assam's rhino habitats earlier.
- Orang National Park recorded an increase of 24 rhinos over the figure of 101 in 2018.
- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary recorded five more rhinos than in 2018.

About Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve:

- Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve is a **protected area in the northeast Indian state of Assam.**
- It is the oldest park in Assam that covers the floodplains of the river Brahmaputra on the North and the Karbi Anglong hills on the South.
- Its **forests, wetlands and grasslands** are home to Indian one-horned rhinoceroses, tigers and elephants.
- The forest region of Kaziranga Park is home to **world's largest population of Indian Rhinoceros.**

Source: Hindu
