

1. Mandatory Gold Hallmarking

Topic: Economy

In News: The second phase of mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts will come into force from June 1 2022.

More on the Topic:

- Gold hallmarking is a **purity certification of the precious metal** and was voluntary in nature till June 16, 2021.
- Hallmarked gold jewellery was only in three grades – 14-carat, 18-carat and 22-carat in the first phase.
- Second phase will cover additional three caratages of gold jewellery/artefacts (ie 20, 23 and 24 carats)
- **It will contain four marks:** BIS mark, purity in carat, assay centre's name and jewellers' identification mark.
- **The Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS)** operates gold and silver hallmarking scheme in India.
- The rule is applicable only on sales by retailers and not to consumers.
- However, it is available for consumers who want to get their old jewellery hallmarked.



Significance of hallmarking?

- The mandatory hallmarking will protect the public against lower caratage and ensure consumers do not get cheated while buying gold ornaments.
- It will also help to get the purity as marked on the ornaments.
- It will bring in transparency and assure the consumers of quality.

About Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):

- The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the National Standards Body of India under Department of Consumer affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution
- It is established by the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016.

Source: Indian Express

2. CAG Report on Sunderbans and East Kolkata Wet Lands

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pointed out illegal construction and violations of environmental norms in two Ramsar sites in West Bengal, the East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW) and the Sunderbans.

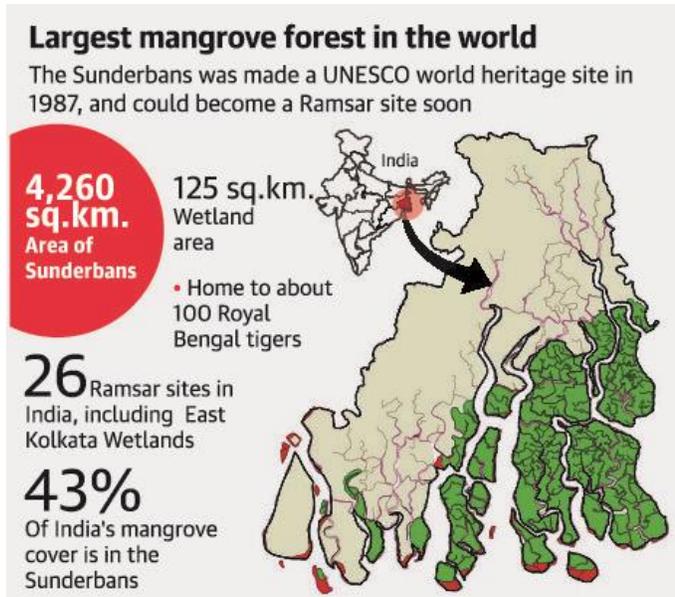
More on the Topic:

- CAG has found out **illegal constructions** in the EKW and Coastal Regulation Zone area in Sunderbans.
- Such violations even in these ecologically fragile areas were rarely found to have been penalised by concerned authorities.
- On a couple of rare occasions when they were done, it was in compliance with the Kolkata High Court's orders.
- CRZ notification disallows construction of residential buildings in the No Development Zone.

Concerns:

- The CAG report pointed out that failure to delineate boundaries of the EKW and uncontrolled transfer of land resulted in the change of character of EKW and lack of effective action by EKWMA (East Kolkata Wetland Management Authority).
- In absence of effective measures by EKWMA, water bodies were dried up and filled illegally.
- **Small patches of mangroves are being lost gradually and quietly** due to their indiscriminate destruction for either coastal development or short-term gains.
- These patches are observed to be enriched habitats of several rare and threatened flora and fauna.
- This irreversible loss of biodiversity is often neglected, which could never be compensated with any 'cut the established and plant the new' theory.

About Sunderbans:



Source: Indian Express

4. National Intelligence Grid

Topic: Security

In News: The Union home minister has inaugurated National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) campus in Bengaluru.

More on the Topic:

- **NATGRID is an intelligence sharing network** that collates data from the standalone databases of the various agencies and ministries of the Indian government.
- **It is a counter terrorism measure** that collects and collates a host of information from government databases including tax and bank account details, credit/debit card transactions, visa and immigration records and itineraries of rail and air travel.
- It will also have **access to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems**, a database that links crime information, including First Information Reports, across 14,000 police stations in India.
- **Accessibility:** It will be a medium for 11 Central agencies such as the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) to access data on a secured platform.

Source: Indian Express



5. Organic Aadhaar

Topic: Agriculture

In News: Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is planning to roll out “Organic Aadhaar” for the farmers engaged in organic farming under the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP).



More on the Topic:

- **Organic Aadhaar is similar to a voter ID card** in that it will provide the farmer in a growers group with exclusive protection of organic status and income.
- This will protect his rights to sell the produce at a higher price while maintaining his organic status.
- The idea is to create an identity for the farmer for the organic certification process based on Personal Aadhar and ULPIN.
- **Every plot of land in the country now has a 14-digit identification number** assigned by the government.
- Last year, the **Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme** was launched in ten states and will soon be rolled out across the country. According to official sources, this could also become a powerful tool for identifying organic land.

Significance:

- The data element of Organic Aadhaar will become **the deep foundation for the integrity of India's organic agriculture.**
- Organic Aadhaar combined with Tracenet will create **a robust system for effectively planning and monitoring policy measures.**
- Tracenet system, which was launched in 2009, provides information on products exported from the country.
- Details about the farmer, his land, and the inputs used in the production of the product are made available through the system for products exported from India.

Source: Business Standard

6. Jivhala

Topic: Government Schemes

In News: The Maharashtra Department of Prisons has launched a loan scheme for inmates serving sentences in jails across the state. The credit scheme titled Jivhala.



More on the Topic:

- It is being offered by the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank. The pilot was introduced for prisoners at Yerawada Central Jail in Pune, and will gradually be extended to nearly 60 prisons across the state.
- While the loan will be disbursed in the name of the inmate, it will be issued to designated family members.
- In the initial phase, a loan of Rs 50,000 will be given at a 7 per cent interest rate. Of the interest the bank earns, one per cent will be given back to the system as a contribution to the Prisoners' Welfare Fund.
- The loan will be provided without any requirement of mortgage or guarantor.

Source: Hindu
