

1. "Karakoram Anomaly"

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Scientists have found out that Karakoram Anomaly is affected by Western disturbances.

More on the Topic:

- Scientists have defined The Karakoram Anomaly (KA) as **the stability or abnormal growth of glaciers in the central Karakoram, in contrast to the retreat of glaciers in nearby mountainous ranges of the Himalayas and other mountainous ranges of the world.**
- While previous studies have highlighted the role of temperature in establishing and sustaining the anomaly over the years, it is for the first time that the impact of precipitation in feeding the anomaly has been highlighted.
- Calculations by the scientists reveal that **contribution of WDs in terms of snowfall volume over the core glacier regions of Karakoram have increased by about 27% in recent decades**, while precipitation received from non-WD sources have significantly decreased by around 17%, further strengthening their claims.

Significance of The glaciers in the Himalayas:

- The Himalayas are home to the **third-largest deposit of ice and snow in the world.**
- Only Antarctica and the Arctic have more. These glaciers feed some of the planet's most important river systems, directly and indirectly **supplying billions of people with water, energy, and incomes.**
- Clearly, the Himalayan glaciers are **an essential part of life for the eight surrounding countries, as well as further beyond.**

Source: Indian Express

2. Bharatmala Pariyojana programme (BMP)

Topic: Economy

BharatMala:

Connecting India Like Never Before



**34,800 km of roads
to be constructed**



**Rs. 5,35,000
crores to be invested**



- **Economic Corridors (9000 km):**
To unlock full economic potential
- **Inter Corridor and Feeder Route (6000 km):**
Ensuring holistic connectivity
- **National Corridors Efficiency Improvement (5000 km):**
Enhancing efficiency
- **Border Roads and International Connectivity (2000 km):**
Boosting Border Connectivity
- **Coastal Roads and Port Connectivity (2000 km):**
Leveraging Ports for Progress
- **Green field Expressways (800 km):**
Express speeds for Express gains
- **Balance NHDP works (10,000 km):**
Boosting all round connectivity

In News: As The government's ambitious road connectivity project under the Bharatmala Pariyojana programme (BMP) may face significant delay with completion expected only by FY28, a lag of nearly six years from the expected deadline.

More on the Topic:

- The major reasons for delay can be attributed to delay in land acquisition, significant rise in land acquisition cost, and the covid-19 pandemic.
- The completion cost of BMP is estimated is 99% higher than the initial estimates owing to substantial rise in land acquisition cost, and steep increase in input costs.

About Bharatmala Pariyojana programme (BMP):

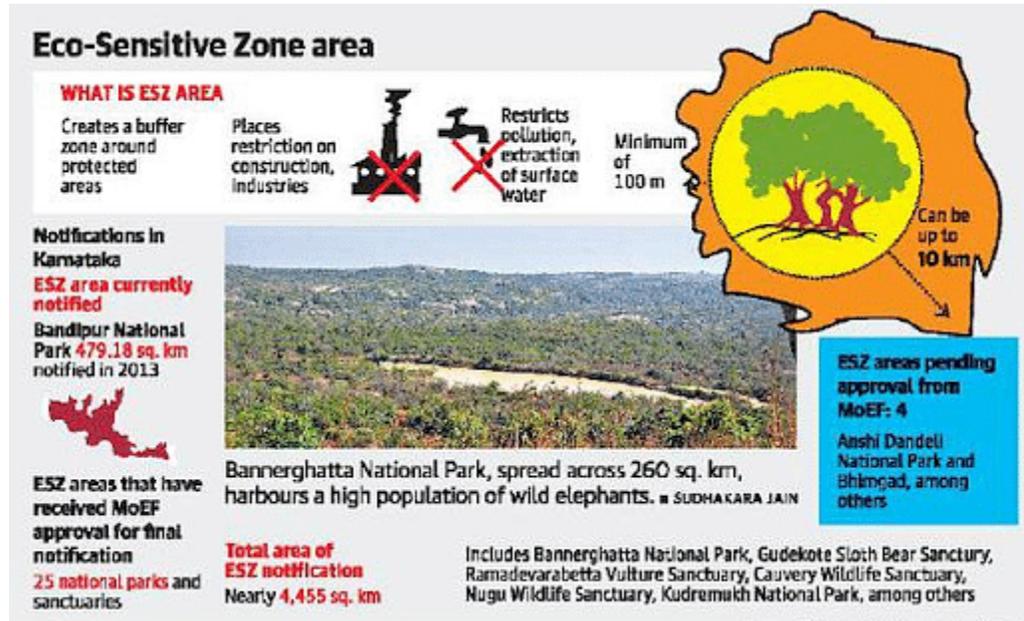
- The Bharatmala Pariyojana is a **centrally-sponsored and funded Road and Highways project of the Government of India.**
- The project comes under Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- Announced in July 2015, **BMP involves the development of 24,800 km of national highways and a residual 10,000 km of highways pending under the erstwhile National Highway Development Program (NHDP) by FY2022.**
- The programme is being implemented by three agencies, namely, **the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the Roads Wing of the Ministry of Road Transport**

& Highways (MoRTH), and the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) with majority of the project awarding under BMP being undertaken by the NHAI.

Source: Indian Express

2. Eco-Sensitive Zones

Topic: Environment and Ecology



Eco-Sensitive Zone area

WHAT IS ESZ AREA

- Creates a buffer zone around protected areas
- Places restriction on construction, industries
- Restricts pollution, extraction of surface water
- Minimum of 100 m

Notifications in Karnataka

- ESZ area currently notified
- Bandipur National Park 479.18 sq. km notified in 2013

ESZ areas that have received MoEF approval for final notification

- 25 national parks and sanctuaries

Total area of ESZ notification

- Nearly 4,455 sq. km

ESZ areas pending approval from MoEF- 4

- Anshi Dandell National Park and Bhimgad, among others

Bannerghatta National Park, spread across 260 sq. km, harbours a high population of wild elephants. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

Includes Bannerghatta National Park, Gudkote Sloth Bear Sanctuary, Ramadevarabetta Vulture Sanctuary, Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary, Kudremukh National Park, among others

Can be up to 10 km

Source: Ministry of Environment and Forests

In News: Farmers in Kerala continue to protest across several high ranges of the state against the Supreme Court’s recent order to establish 1-km Eco-Sensitive Zones around all protected areas, wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.

More on the Topic:

- The widespread unrest, which has hit districts like Idukki, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta and Wayanad, is borne out of the fear of farmers losing their livelihood, and has found support from the state government, opposition parties and the Catholic Church.
- The Union government said that it will hold discussions with the Kerala government and file an affidavit in the Supreme Court on the matter.

What are Eco-Sensitive Zones?

- As per the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016), issued by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **land within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries is to be notified as eco-fragile zones or Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ).**



- While the 10-km rule is implemented as a general principle, the extent of its application can vary. **Areas beyond 10-km can also be notified by the Union government as ESZs, if they hold larger ecologically important “sensitive corridors.”**

Why are Eco-Sensitive Zones created?

- ESZs are created as “shock absorbers” for the protected areas, to minimize the negative impact on the “fragile ecosystems” by certain human activities taking place nearby.
- Furthermore, **these areas are meant to act as a transition zone from areas requiring higher protection to those requiring lesser protection.**
- The guidelines also state that **the ESZs are not meant to hamper the daily activities of people living in the vicinity**, but are meant to guard the protected areas and “refine the environment around them”.
- To do so, the guidelines list the **activities prohibited in an ESZ, such as commercial mining, saw mills, commercial use of wood, etc.**, apart from **regulated activities like felling of trees.**
- Lastly, there are **permitted activities like ongoing agricultural or horticultural practices, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, among others.**

Source: Hindu

3. National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme

Topic: Government Schemes



In News: Government has formulated a scheme “National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)”, a joint project of Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA),

More on the Topic:

- The objectives of the scheme are as follows,
- **Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India.**
- All sanitation work is performed by skilled workers.
- **No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter.**
- Sanitation workers are **collectivized into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises.**
- All Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers (SSWs) have **access to alternative livelihoods.**
- Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at national, state and Urban Local Body (ULB) levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work.
- Increased awareness among sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers.

Source: Indian Express

5. Salt water Crocodiles

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: A record number of saltwater crocodiles laid eggs during the nesting season this year in Bhitarkanika National Park situated in Odisha's Kendrapara district.

More on the Topic:

- The number of crocodile nests has increased this year due to good weather. The nests are usually prepared with mangrove twigs, leaves, mud, etc.
- The nests are usually **made on high ground to protect them from inundation** during high tide in the rainy season. The high ground also enables the nests to get direct sunlight.
- A female crocodile lays 50-60 eggs in a nest. One out of 500 crocodile hatchlings in the wild turns adult.
- The female guards the eggs from predators like jackals, wild dogs, fishing cats, vultures, water monitors, wild boars and other animals.

Salt Water Crocodile:

- Apart from the eastern coast of India, the saltwater crocodile is extremely rare on the Indian subcontinent.

- The saltwater crocodile is also found in Bangladesh. A large population is present within **the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary of Odisha** while smaller populations occur throughout the Sundarbans.
- Populations are also present within the mangrove forests and other coastal areas of the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India.**

Conservation Status:

- IUCN : Least Concern
- IWPA : Schedule I
- CITES : Appendix I

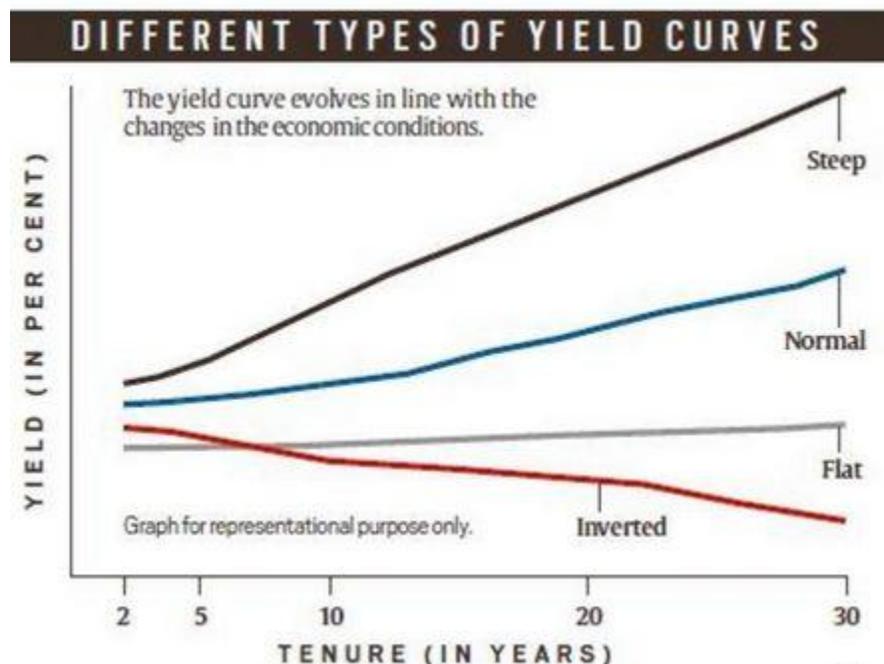
Major Threats:

- **Illegal hunting** for its meat and eggs, as well as for its commercially valuable skin.
- **Habitat loss and habitat alterations.**
- Negative attitude towards the species make conservation measures difficult to implement.

Source: Business Standard

6. Yield inversion, soft-landing and reverse currency war

Topic: Economy



In News: The three words Yield inversion, soft-landing and reverse currency war are constantly in news.

More on the Topic:



Bond Yield Curve:

- Bond yield is the amount of return an investor realizes on a bond. Required yield refers to the amount of yield a bond issuer must offer to attract investors.
- When investors buy Bonds, they essentially lend bond issuers money. In return, bond issuers agree to pay investors interest on bonds throughout their lifetime and to repay the face value of bonds upon maturity. The money that investors earn is called yield.
- **A yield curve is a graphical presentation of the term structure of interest rates, the relationship between short-term and long-term bond yields.** It is plotted with bond yield on the vertical axis and the years to maturity on the horizontal axis.

Soft Landing:

- A soft landing, in economics, is a cyclical slowdown in economic growth that avoids recession.
- A soft landing is the goal of a central bank when it seeks to raise interest rates just enough to stop an economy from overheating and experiencing high inflation, without causing a severe downturn.
- Soft landing may also refer to a gradual, relatively painless slowdown in a particular industry or economic sector.

Reverse Currency War:

- Currency war, also known as competitive devaluations, is a condition in international affairs where **countries seek to gain a trade advantage over other countries by causing the exchange rate of their currency to fall in relation to other currencies.**
- **A reverse currency war, on the other hand, involves competitive appreciation.** Here, countries think their trading partners are deliberately trying to strengthen their currencies in order to rein in inflation.
- This could describe the period that began in 2021, when inflation returned as a serious problem in most countries.
- In reverse currency war countries work to make their currency stronger. Rather than boosting growth, the goal of any such move is **to help tame inflation, since a stronger currency means that imports are relatively cheaper.**

Source: Business Standard



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