

## 1. Ramsar Sites

Topic: Environment and Ecology



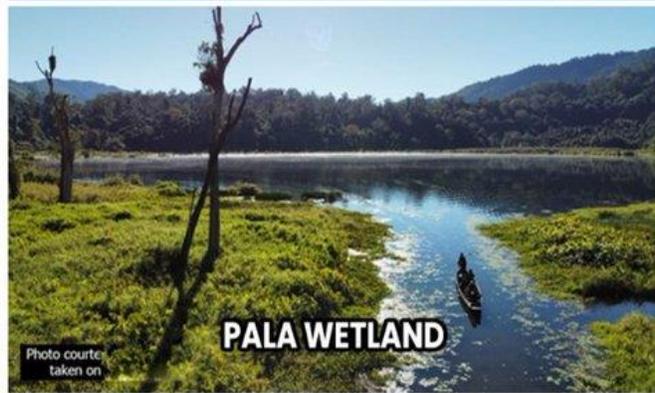
**PICHAVARAM MANGROVE**



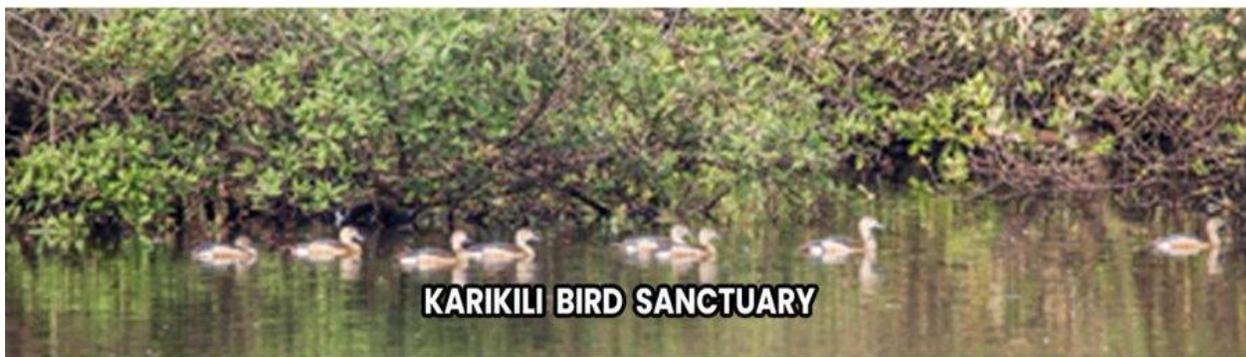
**SAKHYA SAGAR**



**PALLIKARANAI MARSH**



**PALA WETLAND**



**KARIKILI BIRD SANCTUARY**

**In News:** Five more Indian wetlands have got Ramsar recognition as “wetlands of international importance”.

**More on the Topic:**

**The five newly designated wetlands are:**

- Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu
- Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest, Tamil Nadu
- Pichavaram Mangrove, Tamil Nadu
- Pala wetland, Mizoram



- Sakhya Sagar, Madhya Pradesh.
- India's tally of 54 designated wetlands is the largest network of Ramsar Sites in South Asia.

#### **Ramsar Sites:**

- The Convention on Wetlands is also known as the Ramsar Convention. It is an intergovernmental environmental treaty established in 1971 by UNESCO and came into force in 1975.
- Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines of the convention.
- The aim of the Ramsar list is to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.

#### **Definition of Ramsar Sites:**

- **The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands defines wetlands as** "areas of marsh, fen, peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters".
- However, **the Indian government's definition** of wetland excludes river channels, paddy fields and other areas where commercial activity takes place.

#### **Wetlands in India:**

- Globally, wetlands cover **6.4 per cent of the geographical area of the world.**
- In India, according to the National Wetland Inventory and Assessment compiled by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), wetlands are spread over 4.63 per cent of the total geographical area of the country.
- Of this inland-natural wetlands account for 43.4% and coastal-natural wetlands 24.3%.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 2. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

Topic: Governance



### Functions of CCPA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Issue directions to the <b>concerned trader, manufacturer, endorser, advertiser, publisher</b> to either discontinue a false or misleading advertisement, or modify it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Issue safety notices to <b>consumers against unsafe goods and services</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigate <b>violations of consumer rights</b> and pursue prosecution in the appropriate fora</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Impose penalties if cases are proven</li> </ul>

■ Pass orders to recall goods or withdraw services that are hazardous, reimburse the price paid, and discontinue unfair trade practices, as defined in the Act

RIGHTS UNDER THE NEW ACT

*Consumers are now legally entitled to the following broad categories of rights as defined in the Act*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Right to be protected against marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Right to be informed of the <b>quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price</b> of goods or services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Right to be assured of access to a <b>variety of goods or services at competitive prices</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Right to seek redressal against unfair or restrictive trade practices</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Right to seek justice in a time-bound manner</li> </ul>		

**In News:** The Central Consumer Protection Authority has completed two years of its establishment.

**More on the Topic:**

- CCPA is a **regulatory body** established in 2020 based on the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- CCPA works under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs**.

**Mandate:**

- The objective of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) is **to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class**.
- It will be empowered **to conduct investigations into violation of consumer rights** and institute complaints / prosecution, order recall of unsafe goods and services, order discontinuation of unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements, impose penalties on manufacturers/endorsers/publishers of misleading advertisements.

**Composition:**

- It will have a Chief Commissioner as head, and only two other commissioners as members one of whom will deal with matters relating to goods while the other will look into cases relating to services.

- The CCPA will have an Investigation Wing that will be headed by a Director General.
- District Collectors too, will have the power to investigate complaints of violations of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and false or misleading advertisements.

**Achievements:**

- CCPA has issued guidelines on misleading advertisements
- Frame work for checking fake reviews in e commerce platforms.

**Source: Indian Express**

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### 3.Freebies in Election

**Topic: Polity and Governance**



**In News:** Supreme Court has asked central government to take a stand on the issue of freebies in election.

**More on the Topic:**

- Political parties promise to offer free electricity/water supply, monthly allowance to unemployed, daily wage workers and women as well as gadgets like laptops, smartphones etc. in order to secure the vote of the people. These categories of promised services are known as election freebies.
- **Supreme Court Observation:** SC observed that the Finance Commission is an independent financial recommendatory body. Therefore, the Commission, can take into account the debts of each individual State and examine whether offers of freebies would be viable for them.

- **Election Commission on the Issue:** Election commission has informed the SC that the EC cannot regulate state policies and decisions which may be taken by the winning party when they form the government.
- EC added that Offering freebies before polls and their execution after the results are the policy decisions of political parties, and **the Central government and not EC will be the best suited for dealing with this issue.**

#### Arguments in Favor of Freebies:

- **Essential for Meeting Expectations of Citizens:** In India, not every state has a certain level of development, upon the emergence of the elections, there are expectations from the part of people which are met by such promises of freebies.
- **Helps Lesser Developed States to Develop:** With the states that have comparatively lower level of development with a larger share of the population suffering from poverty, such kind of freebies become need/demand-based and it becomes essential to offer the people such subsidies for their own **upliftment.**

#### Arguments Against Freebies:

- **Negative impact on Public Exchequer:** Most of the states of India do not have a robust financial health and often have very limited resources in terms of revenue. Offering freebies, ultimately, has an impact on the public exchequer.
- **Irrational Expenditure:** Announcing freebies in haste without legislative debate results in the wasteful expenditure of public finance without tangible returns.
- **impractical announcements:** Welfare schemes in the form of power and water bill waivers could be justified if it were to help the poor.
- However, election-induced impractical announcements by parties turn out to be far removed from the budgetary and infrastructure realities of the States.
- **Greater Risks:** Lead to greater risks including sub-national bankruptcy (fiscal crisis of local government that undermine its service delivery).
- Gives **advantage to the political party in power.**

#### Way Ahead:

- **Informed Policy Decisions:** The economic policies or development models that the parties plan to adopt have to be thoroughly researched, clearly stated and implemented effectively.
- **Awareness Generation to the Public:** The parties should have (and provide) a **proper understanding on the economics and expenditure of such policies.**
- **Demand Based Freebies:** The judicious and sensible offering of freebies or subsidies that can be easily accommodated in the states' budget do not do much harm and can be leveraged.
- The subsidies in basic necessities such as giving free education to younger children or offering free meals at schools are rather positive approaches.
- **Distinguish Freebies and Subsidies:** It is essential to distinguish between subsidy and freebies as subsidies are the justified and specifically targeted benefits that arise out of

demands. However, the freebies are quite different in terms of targeted beneficiaries and impact of the expenditure from public exchequer.

Source: Hind

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## 4. United Nations Relief and Works Agency

**Topic: International Relations**



**In News:** India contributed USD 2.5 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

**More on the Topic:**

- The UNRWA, which was established as a humanitarian agency in 1949, **is fully funded through voluntary contributions and grants from donor countries.**
- The agency was mandated to provide **assistance and protection for about 5.6 million Palestinian refugees registered in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.**
- The UNRWA services for Palestinian refugees involve education, health care, relief, infrastructure, camp improvement, protection and microfinance.

Source: Indian Express

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## 5. Light-mantled Albatross

**Topic: Environment and Ecology**



**In News:** Bird researchers have recorded sighting of a light-mantled albatross (*Phoebastria palpebrata*) in Tamil Nadu's Rameswaram.

**More on the Topic:**

- The sighting is considered Asia's first sighting of the Light-mantled Albatross, a seabird native to the Antarctic seas.
- This seabird habits over a **circumpolar distribution in the Southern Ocean and forages over the cold Antarctic.**
- They breed on several sub-Antarctic islands and forage over cold Antarctic waters.
- **The bird is listed as 'near threatened' on the IUCN Red List.**

Source: TOI

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## 6. Antiretroviral (ARV) Therapy

**Topic: Health**

## Antiretroviral Therapy... What does it do?



Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is the daily use of a combination of HIV medicines to treat HIV. ART saves lives, but does not cure HIV.

- Reduces the amount of HIV in the body
- Reduces the risk of HIV transmission
- Prevents HIV from advancing to AIDS
- Protects the immune system

For more information, visit [HIVinfo.NH.gov](http://HIVinfo.NH.gov)

**In News:** AIDS patients at Delhi protested over the shortage of antiretroviral drugs that are considered crucial to curb the disease.

**More on the Topic:**

- While there is no cure for HIV, **antiretroviral (ARV) drugs taken on time and regularly, can help control it** and is considered as one of the few ways to suppress the virus.
- If left untreated, HIV can progress into acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), a disease that damages the immune system.
- Hence, ARV drugs are critical to patient care; they can indeed be life-saving, or at least life-preserving, for people living with HIV, making access to drugs a fundamental right.
- **ART aims to reduce the replication of HIV and bring the viral load to undetectable levels.** It reduces the mortality and illness resulting from HIV infection .
- Dolutegravir is used by adults, adolescents and children (aged more than 6 years with bodyweight more than 20 kg) and Nevirapine syrup is given to infants.

**Source:** Hindu

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## 7. Defence Acquisition Council

**Topic: Governance**



रक्षा मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
**DEFENCE**

**In News:** DAC has approved arms procurement proposals worth Rs 28,732 crore under Buy Indian-IDDM (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured) categories to boost 'Aatmanirbharta' in Defence.

### More on the Topic:

- An overarching structure, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), under the Defence Minister was constituted for overall guidance of the defence **procurement planning process**.
- It is the **highest decision-making body in the Defence Ministry for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Indian Coast Guard**.
- Minister of Defence is the Chairman of the Council.

**Source: Business Standard**

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