

1. PSBs Privatisation

Topic: Economy



In News: The paper published in the RBI monthly Bulletin has suggested that privatization of PSBs should be done in a gradual manner instead of a big bang approach.

More on the Topic:

Arguments Against Privatisation by RBI:

- There is evidence that public sector banks (PSBs) are **not entirely guided by the profit maximization goal alone** and have integrated financial inclusion goals in their objective function unlike their private peers.
- Some of the **recent reforms in the financial sector would also lead to strengthening of these banks.**
- **Labour cost efficiency is higher** in PSBs in comparison to PVBs.
- PSBs have gained higher degree of market confidence in recent years.
- The counter-cyclical role of public sector bank lending. In the recent years, these banks have also gained greater market confidence.
- Despite the criticism of weak balance sheets, data suggests that they weathered the covid-19 pandemic shock remarkably well.

Arguments in Favor of Privatization of PSBs:

- Privatising a few loss-making PSBs will ensure that market discipline forces them to rectify their strategy, and this will have a ripple effect on other PSBs.
- Government’s liabilities will decrease and it could invest resources released by this exercise into welfare schemes.
- The government’s share below 50% would end the government’s diktat in several loan waiver announcements, thus ending vote bank politics.

Source: Indian Express

2. Great Indian Bustard

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: The perceived beliefs and recorded observations pertaining to the egg-laying habits of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) have changed after the recent excessive rains in western Rajasthan.

More on the Topic:

- **The critically endangered bird species** has adopted an altogether new habit of laying a **clutch of two eggs at a time** after having a diet with additional proteins during the monsoon season.
- GIB is one of the heaviest flying bird endemic to the Indian subcontinent.
- It is the State Bird of Rajasthan.
- As per the studies conducted by **Wildlife Institute of India**, there are around 150 Great Indian Bustards left across the country which includes about 128 birds in Rajasthan and less than 10 birds each in the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Protection Status:

- **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered.
- **Listed in Wildlife Protection Act's Schedule 1.**
- The Great Indian Bustard has been included in the **Appendix I of Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)** on the basis of a proposal submitted by India.
- The species has been identified for conservation efforts under the component '**Species Recovery Programme**' of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)-Development of Wildlife Habitat.
- Important Sites: Desert National Park Sanctuary (Rajasthan), Naliya (Gujarat), Warora (Maharashtra) and Bellary (Karnataka).

Source: Indian Express

3. Har Ghar Jal

Topic: Government Policies



In News: Goa become India's first 'Har Ghar Jal' certified State. Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (D&NH and D&D) became India's first 'Har Ghar Jal' UT. Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh became the first Har Ghar Jal certified district in the country.

More on the Topic:

- 'Har Ghar Jal' certified State or UT are where Gram sabha has passed a resolution and declared their village as 'Har Ghar Jal', authenticating that all households in the villages have access to safe drinking water through taps, and confirming that 'No One is Left Out'.
- Har Ghar Jal scheme has been initiated by the Union Government in 2019 under Jal Jeevan Mission to provide tap water to every rural household by 2024.

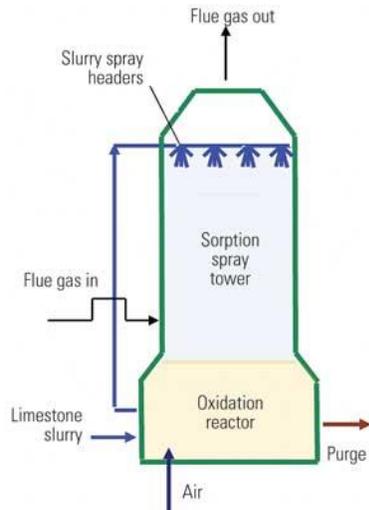
Jal Jeevan Mission:

- Jal Jeevan Mission, is envisioned to **provide safe and adequate drinking water** through **individual household tap connections** by 2024 to all households in rural India.
- The programme will also implement **source sustainability measures** as mandatory elements, such as recharge and reuse through grey water management, water conservation, rain water harvesting.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission will be based on a **community approach to water** and will include extensive Information, Education and communication as a key component of the mission.

Source: Hindu

4. Flue Gas Desulfurisation

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: As part of its commitment towards Net Zero by 2070, NTPC Ltd, India's largest integrated power company has captured its first CO₂ on 15th August 2022 from flue gas stream of coal based power plant at Vindhyachal.

More on the Topic:

- NTPC has become India's first energy company to declare its energy compact goals as part of the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy (HLDE).
- Besides power generation, NTPC has diversified into producing energy through cleaner and greener sources, such as hydro, wind and solar. It also provides green hydrogen solutions.
- The power major has also forayed into a variety of business areas, including fuel cells, e-mobility and waste-to-energy.

Flue gas desulfurization (FGD):

- Flue gas desulfurization (FGD) is a set of technologies used to remove sulfur dioxide (SO₂) from flue gases.
- Flue gas (sometimes called exhaust gas or stack gas) is **the gas that emanates from combustion plants.**
- It contains the reaction products of fuel and combustion air and residual substances such as **particulate matter (dust), sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and carbon monoxide.**

- The removal of sulphur dioxide is critical to establishing a **safe and clean environment** where toxic emissions are kept to a safe low.
- Fossil fuels such as coal and oil often contain high amounts of sulphur.

Source: Indian Express

5. Megalodon

Topic: Environment and Technology



In News: New research published in the journal Science Advances suggests that the extinct Otodus megalodon shark could eat up giant sharks like orca (or killer whales) in just five bites.

More on the Topic:

- Megalodon is one of the biggest predatory fish of all time and the meaning of megalodon is "big tooth".
- **It is an extinct species of mackerel shark that lived approximately 23 to 3.6 million years ago.**
- It was estimated to be lived at around 23 million to 2.6 million years ago.
- It was around 50 feet (16 meters) from nose to tail.
- That's about two to three times the size of today's great white shark.
- Its average cruising speed was faster than sharks today and it could have migrated across multiple oceans with ease.

Source: Business Standard

6. Italy's Lake Garda

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Water levels on Italy's Lake Garda is at 15-year low.

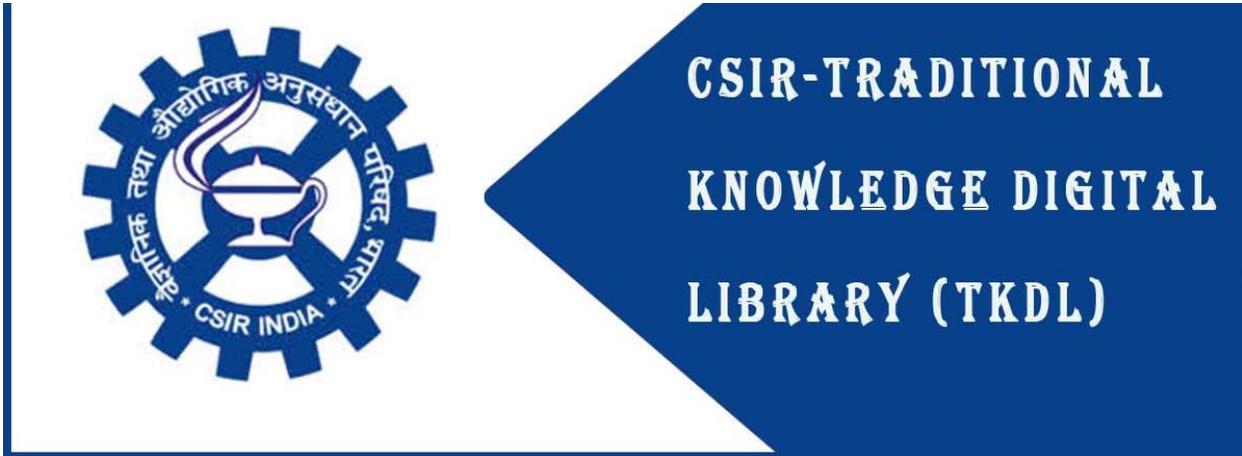
More on the Topic:

- Italy's largest lake, a popular tourist destination, has been severely affected by hot temperatures and a lack of significant rainfall for months.
- Parts of northern Italy are experiencing their worst drought in 70 years.
- The northern end belonged to Austria until 1919.
- Well sheltered by the Alps to the north, Lake Garda has a temperate Mediterranean climate.

Source: Hindu

7. Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: The Cabinet has approved the “Widening access of the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) database to users, besides patent offices”.

More on the Topic:

- The Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) is a **prior art database of Indian traditional knowledge established in 2001**, jointly by the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H, now Ministry of AYUSH)**.
- The TKDL is a **first of its kind globally** and has been serving as an exemplary model to other nations.
- The TKDL currently contains information from existing literature related to ISM such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Yoga.
- The information is documented **in a digitized format in five international languages** which are English, German, French, Japanese and Spanish.
- TKDL provides information in languages and format understandable by patent examiners at Patent Offices worldwide, so as to prevent the erroneous grant of patents.
- Until now, access to the complete TKDL database is restricted to 14 Patent Offices worldwide for the purposes of search and examination.

Source: Hindu

8. BioSentinel

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: The Biosentinel Mission will be a part of the secondary payloads of Artemis I mission.

More on the Topic:

- **The BioSentinel will carry microorganisms in the form of yeast.**
- Its main job is to monitor the vital signs of yeast so that they can observe the effect of deep space radiation on them.
- It is important because yeast cells have similar biological mechanisms to human cells. Thus, needless to say, this experiment will help NASA understand the risks of space radiation to humans.
- The space agency can then accordingly plan crewed exploration missions to the Moon and beyond.

Source: Hindu