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National and International News

Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*)



- Painted stork is a shorebird.
- Distribution: endemic to the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.
- Habitat: freshwater marshes, lakes, flooded fields, irrigation canals, rivers, etc.
- Threats: Habitat loss, hunting, pollution, invasive species and diseases.
- Conservation status: IUCN: NT



Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

SC report on toilets for women in district courts

Context

- Nearly one-fifth of the district court complexes in the country lack separate toilets for women, according to a report published by the Centre for Research and Planning of the Supreme Court recently.
- The report named ‘State of the Judiciary’ — underscored the necessity of women-friendly toilets, stating that sanitary napkin vending machines have been provided at only 6.7% of the toilets meant for women.
- The report also revealed that most district courts did not have toilets for transgender persons and emphasised the need for “gender-inclusive toilets” in every court complex.


KABIL to invest over ₹200 cr. to secure lithium in Argentina

Context

- India’s KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd.) will invest ₹211 crore over a five-year-period for exploration of five lithium blocks in Fiambala area of Argentina.
- An exploration and development agreement is expected to be signed with CAMYEN, a state-owned miner in Argentina’s Catamarca province



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Chile and Argentina account for 30-35% of the world's lithium supplies.
<p>Mount Merapi</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mount Merapi is an active stratovolcano● It is located on the border between the province of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.● It is the most active volcano in Indonesia and has erupted regularly since 1548.● Indonesia, situated on the subduction zone (the Indo-Australian Plate is subducting under the Eurasian Plate), part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, experiences frequent volcanic and seismic events.



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Head of 16th Finance commission

Context

- The government appointed former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission
- It will recommend the tax revenue sharing formula between the Centre and States for the five-year period beginning April 2026.

About FC

- It is a constitutional body constituted every 5 years by the President of India under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution to define the Centre-states financial relations.
- The First Commission was established in 1951 under The Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1951.
- Individual commissions operate under the terms of reference (ToR) which are different for every commission, and they define the terms of qualification, appointment and disqualification, the term, eligibility and powers of the Finance Commission.
- As per the constitution, the Commission consists of a chairman and four other members.



Tehreek-e-Hurriyat declared 'unlawful body'

Context


- The Union Home Ministry declared Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, Jammu and Kashmir (TeH) an “unlawful association” under Section 3 of the anti-terror law, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).
- The TeH is one of the constituents of the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and was founded by separatist Syed Ali Shah Geelani

About UAPA

- UAPA was passed in 1967.
- It aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
- Unlawful activity refers to any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.
- The Act assigns absolute power to the central government, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, by way of an Official Gazette, declare it so.
- It has death penalty and life imprisonment as highest punishments.
- Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged.



Kerala Regional News

<p>Kufos to host int'l fisheries congress</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (Kufos) in Kochi, is gearing up to host a prestigious International Fisheries Congress and Expo from January 12th to 14th, 2024. • It is organized in collaboration with the College of Fisheries Panangad Alumni Association • This event brings together experts, researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders from around the world to discuss and address critical issues facing the fisheries sector. • Theme 2024: "Charting Sustainable Horizons in Fisheries and Blue Economy as a Global Goal"
<p>Surge in POCSO cases but conviction rate less than 16%</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerala has been witnessing a surge in Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) cases since 2018 • However, the conviction rates over all these years range from 15 percent to 36 percent only. • As per data, an average of 2,000 POCSO cases are registered every year. <p>List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022: 3,334 (15.4%) • 2021: 2,647 (19.83%) • 2020: 2,163 (24.85%) • 2019: 1,283 (19.42%) • 2018: 1,153 (35.98%)
<p>Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO)</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, is a landmark legislation in India aimed at protecting children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. • It defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 and outlines various offenses against children, ranging from touching with sexual intent to aggravated sexual assault and pornography.



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	<p>Key Features of POCSO Act:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stringent Punishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> POCSO prescribes stringent punishments for offenders, with sentences ranging from 3 years to life imprisonment, depending on the severity of the offense. Special Courts and Procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Act mandates the establishment of special courts and simplified procedures for child-friendly trials to minimize trauma and ensure speedy justice. Focus on Child Protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> POCSO emphasizes providing comprehensive support to child victims, including medical aid, counseling, rehabilitation, and witness protection.
<p>Kerala Edu Dept violates PoSH Act</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kerala Education Department has come under fire for a circular issued which mandates the inclusion of local people's representatives (ward members or councillors) in Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) constituted under the PoSH Act (Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace- 2013). <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PoSH Act specifies that ICCs should comprise internal members of the organization, including at least one woman and one external member from a panel of non-governmental organizations or associations of women. The inclusion of local people's representatives, who are not part of the organization and may not have the necessary training or sensitivity to handle sexual harassment complaints, raises several concerns

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