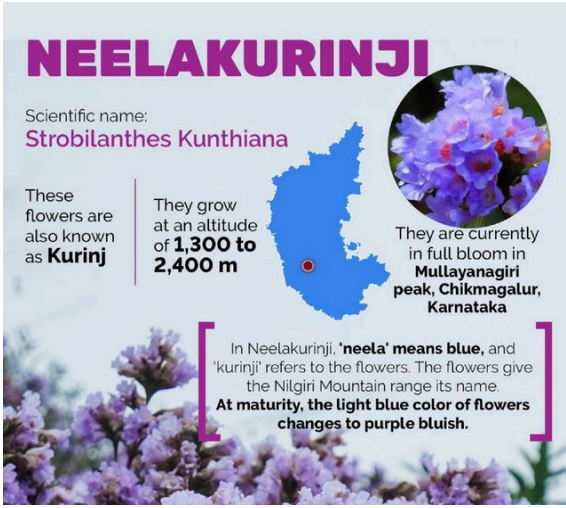




12 August 2024

National and International News

<p><b>Exercise Udara Shakti</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Indian Air Force</b> and the <b>Royal Malaysian Air Force</b> recently participated in <b>Exercise Udara Shakti 2024</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About Exercise Udara Shakti:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>joint air exercise</b> was conducted in collaboration with the <b>Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) at Kuantan, Malaysia</b>.</li> <li>The exercise aimed to <b>bolster operational efficiency between the two air forces</b>.</li> <li>The <b>Indian Air Force's (IAF) Su-30MKI fighter jets</b> participated in air combat missions alongside the RMAF's Su-30MKM fighters.</li> <li>The focus was on <b>enhancing interoperability, commonality, and overall effectiveness in Su-30 aircraft operations</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neelakurinji</b></p>  <p><b>NEELAKURINJI</b></p> <p>Scientific name: <b>Strobilanthes Kunthiana</b></p> <p>These flowers are also known as <b>Kurinji</b></p> <p>They grow at an altitude of <b>1,300 to 2,400 m</b></p> <p>They are currently in full bloom in <b>Mullayanagiri peak, Chikmagalur, Karnataka</b></p> <p>In Neelakurinji, <b>'neela'</b> means <b>blue</b>, and <b>'kurinji'</b> refers to the flowers. The flowers give the Nilgiri Mountain range its name. <b>At maturity, the light blue color of flowers changes to purple bluish.</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Neelakurinji</b> has recently been included on the <b>IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) official Red List of threatened species</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About Neelakurinji:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Plant Description:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Purplish flowering shrubs that bloom once every 12 years.</b></li> <li><b>Endemic shrub, approximately three meters in height.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Habitat:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found only in high-altitude <b>shola grassland ecosystems</b>.</li> <li>Grows at an <b>elevation of 1,340–2,600 meters</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Distribution:</b></li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 34 subpopulations within 14 ecoregions of high-altitude mountain ranges in <b>southwest India</b>.</li> <li>○ 33 subpopulations in the <b>Western Ghats</b> and 1 in the <b>Eastern Ghats (Yercaud, Shevaroy Hills)</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Cultural Significance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Nilgiri Hills</b>, meaning "blue mountains," are named after the blue flowers of Neelakurinji.</li> <li>○ The <b>Paliyan tribes</b> of Tamil Nadu use the blooming cycle to calculate their age.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Threats:</b> Habitat threatened by <b>conversion for tea and softwood plantations</b>, as well as <b>urbanization</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Conservation Status:</b> <b>First-ever Global Red List assessment</b> confirms the species is categorized as <b>Vulnerable (Criteria A2c)</b> by the IUCN.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clean Plant Programme</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved the <b>Clean Plant Programme (CPP)</b> proposed by the <b>Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About Clean Plant Programme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Affordable Access:</b> Prioritize <b>affordable access to clean plant material</b> for all farmers, regardless of landholding size or socioeconomic status.</li> <li>○ <b>Women Farmers' Involvement:</b> Actively engage women farmers in planning and implementation, ensuring their access to resources, training, and decision-making opportunities.</li> <li>○ <b>Region-Specific Solutions:</b> <b>Address diverse agro-climatic conditions</b> by <b>developing region-specific clean plant varieties</b> and technologies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Clean Plant Centers (CPCs):</b> Establish <b>nine world-class CPCs</b> with advanced diagnostic, therapeutic, and tissue culture labs across India.</li> <li>● <b>Purpose:</b> <b>Produce and maintain virus-free planting material</b> for large-scale propagation.</li> <li>● <b>Implementation:</b> <b>National Horticulture Board</b> and <b>Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)</b>.</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Overnight Index Swap</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Reserve Bank of India (RBI)</b> has recently been reviewing the investment limits for foreign investors in the <b>Overnight Index Swap (OIS)</b> market.</li> </ul> <p><b>About Overnight Index Swap:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An <b>Overnight Index Swap (OIS)</b> is a <b>derivative instrument where returns under a fixed-rate asset are swapped against a pre-determined published index</b> of a daily overnight reference rate for an agreed period of time.</li> <li><b>Purpose:</b> The primary purpose of an OIS is to <b>manage interest rate risk</b>, particularly the <b>risk associated with fluctuations in the overnight lending rate</b>.</li> <li><b>Calculation:</b> The interest rate for the OIS is <b>calculated each day</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Juanga Tribe</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>District Level Committee of Keonjhar in Odisha</b> recently <b>approved the habitat rights claim for the Juanga</b>, a <b>particularly vulnerable tribal group</b>, under the <b>Forest Rights Act (FRA)</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About Juanga Tribe:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Community Name:</b> Juanga or Juang</li> <li><b>Location:</b> Concentrated in <b>Keonjhar district, Odisha</b>.</li> <li><b>Traditional Name:</b> Originally known as <b>Patuas</b> due to their <b>traditional attire of leaf skirts</b>.</li> <li><b>Language:</b> Juang (Mundari), belonging to the <b>Austroasiatic language family</b>.</li> <li><b>Occupation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditionally engaged in <b>shifting cultivation</b>.</li> <li>Occasionally <b>engage in hunting</b>.</li> <li>Juangs of Pallahara are skilled in <b>basket weaving</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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