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National and International News

<p>Sacred Groves</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts suggest that preserving India's sacred groves can contribute significantly to the country's conservation and climate objectives. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacred groves are collectively safeguarded woodlands typically holding profound religious significance for the community responsible for their protection. Also known as sacred forests, these groves consist of sections of natural vegetation, ranging from a few trees to several acres. The preservation of these areas is carried out by local communities, driven by their religious convictions and the observance of traditional rituals passed down through multiple generations. Distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Himachal Pradesh: This state boasts the highest number of sacred groves, characterized by meticulous care and preservation. Shipin is considered the largest deodar grove in Himachal Pradesh, housing trees that are thousands of years old. Maharashtra: Sacred groves in Maharashtra are referred to as deorais or devrais and are predominantly located in Pune, Ratnagiri, Raigad, and Kolhapur. Bihar: Known as sarnas, sacred groves in Bihar are relatively small, typically consisting of 2 to 20 trees. Rajasthan: Oraans cover the largest area in Rajasthan, contributing to a distinct biodiversity in various regions. Meghalaya: The Khasi hills in Meghalaya are home to some of the richest groves in the country, featuring a grove called law kyntangs in almost every village.
<p>Awards & Honors: Indira Gandhi Peace Prize</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On November 19, the Indian Medical Association and the Trained Nurses Association of India were jointly awarded the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development 2022, in recognition of their role as representatives of the COVID-19 warriors in the country. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indira Gandhi Peace Prize, also known as the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development, was instituted in the memory of the former prime minister by a trust in her name in 1986. It consists of a monetary award of 25 lakh rupees along with a citation. The award is given to individuals or organisations who work towards




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	<p>ensuring international peace and development, ensuring that scientific discoveries are used to further the scope of freedom and better humanity, and creating a new international economic order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Past recipients of this award include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mikhail Gorbachev, former leader of the Soviet Union (1987); ○ UNICEF (1989) ○ Jimmy Carter, former president of the US (1997) ○ UN and its secretary-general Kofi Annan (2003) ○ Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany (2013) ○ Indian Space Research Organisation (2014) ○ Former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh (2017) ○ Sir David Attenborough (2019) ○ Pratham NGO (2021) ○ Indian Medical Association and the Trained Nurses Association of India (2022) ○ Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad (2023)
<p>Khorlochhu Hydropower Project</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tata Power has commenced construction on the Rs 6,900 crore Khorlochhu Hydropower Project in Bhutan, with commissioning expected by 2029. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Situated on the Kholongchhu River in Eastern Bhutan's Trashiyangtse district, the project seeks to meet Bhutan's rising electricity demands and aid India's renewable energy transition. ● It is the first-ever energy project to be developed through a joint venture (JV) partnership between India and Bhutan. ● It will be constructed by Khorlochhu Hydro Power Limited (KHPL), a strategic partnership between Bhutan's Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC) and India's Tata Power. ● The 600 MW project is expected to be commissioned in September 2029. ● The electricity generated from the Kholongchhu hydroelectric project will be transmitted to the NEWNE grids of Bhutan and India via 400 kV transmission lines. ● The project is estimated to cost £488.14 m (INR 46.32bn), which is being financed under a debt-equity ratio of 70:30. The Government of India is providing DGPC's share of equity.
<p>Places in news: Anamalai Tiger Reserve</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tribal settlements in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve have been granted community and individual rights. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a protected area located at an altitude of 1400 m in the Anamalai Hills of Pollachi and Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu. ● It lies south of the Palakkad gap in the Southern Western Ghats. ● It is surrounded by the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve on the east, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, and Eravikulam National Park on the



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	<p>southwestern side.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reserve is also surrounded by the Nenmara, Vazhachal, Malayattur, and Marayur reserved forests of Kerala. • It was declared a tiger reserve in the year 2007. • Habitat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It supports diverse habitat types, viz. Wet evergreen forests, semi-evergreen forests, moist deciduous, dry deciduous, dry thorn, and shola forests. ○ Other unique habitats like montane grasslands, savannah and marshy grasslands are also present.
<p>Species in news: Markhor</p> 	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Markhor, a wild goat with spiral-shaped horns, was seen in a rare appearance in Noorkha village of Boniyar in Baramulla district of North Kashmir. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a large wild goat of the family Bovidae (order Artiodactyla). • It is known for its thick fur, flowing beard, and corkscrew horns. • It is a diurnal animal and is mainly active in the early morning and late afternoon. • Distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is found in the moist to semi-arid mountain tracts of Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. ○ In J&K, Markhor's population is found in Shopian, the Banihal pass and the Shamsbari area of the Kazinag Uri and Pir Panjal range in Poonch. • The markhor is the national animal of Pakistan, where it is also known as the screw-horn or screw-horned goat. • Conservation status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IUCN: 'Near Threatened' ○ Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I ○ CITES: Appendix I

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