



मराठी

08 July 2024

National and International News

Vaquita



Why in the news?

- The **vaquita**, the **world's most endangered marine mammal**, is on the **brink of extinction**.

About Vaquita:

- **Scientific Name:** Phocoena sinus
- **Endangered Status:** Vaquitas are the most endangered marine mammals in the world, with **less than 20 individuals remaining in the wild**.
- **Distribution:**
 - **Smallest range among whales, dolphins, and porpoises.**
 - Exclusively **found in the northern part of the Gulf of California.**
 - Typically sighted in shallow waters up to 50 meters deep.
- **Unique dorsal fins:**
 - Taller and wider than other porpoises.
 - Distinctive dark ring around the eyes.
- **Behavior:**
 - Shy and elusive, tend to avoid boats and human activity.
 - Communicate using **echolocation (sonar) by emitting high-frequency clicks.**
- **Threats:** The primary threat is gillnets illegally set for **totoaba**, a large fish similar in size to vaquitas.
- **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered.



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Shree Jagannath Temple

Why in the news?

- A **high-level committee, chaired by an Orissa High Court judge**, has expedited the **process of opening the Ratna Bhandar treasury of Shree Jagannath Temple** after 46 years.

About Shree Jagannath Temple:

- **Location:** Puri, Odisha
- **Dedication:** Lord Jagannath, a **form of the Hindu deity Vishnu**
- **Historical Significance:** Built during the reign of **King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva** of the **Eastern Ganga dynasty in the 12th century**.
- **Architecture:**
 - Exemplifies **Kalinga architecture**, distinct to the Odisha region
 - Complex includes **shrines, gardens, and sacred tanks**
 - Main structure (sanctum sanctorum/garbhagriha) **houses idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra**
 - 20-foot-high chakra at the pinnacle visible from any part of the city
- **Ratha Yatra:**
 - Commemorates **Jagannath's annual visit to Gundicha Temple via Mausi Maa Temple**
 - Begins on the second day of the bright half of the lunar month of Ashadha (June–July) and lasts nine days
 - Deities placed on three massive chariots during the festival
- **Religious Significance:** One of the four sacred pilgrimage sites, known as the **Chaar Dhaams**
- **Recognition:** **UNESCO World Heritage Site**



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NIRMAN Scheme	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Union Minister for Coal and Mines recently launched the NIRMAN portal. <p>About NIRMAN Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheme Name: Noble Initiative for Rewarding Mains Aspirants of the National Civil Services Examination (NIRMAN)• Organizer: Coal India Limited (CIL)• Type: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme• Objective: Support meritorious candidates from CIL's operational districts• Financial Assistance: ₹1,00,000 to candidates who cleared the preliminary round of UPSC Civil Services and Forest Service Examinations in 2024• Eligibility:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Annual family income less than ₹8 lakhs○ Permanent residents of the 39 districts where CIL operates○ Includes Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), female, and third-gender candidates
SEHER programme	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform and Credit Bureau have collaborated to launch the SEHER programme. <p>About SEHER programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A comprehensive credit education program aimed at enhancing financial literacy and business skills among women entrepreneurs.• Expected to enable women to access financial tools necessary for business growth and job creation.• An initiative of NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL.• Supports WEP's goal of improving financing access for women in India's 63 million MSMEs.



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Kaziranga National Park

Why in the news?

- A **devastating flood in Assam's Kaziranga National Park** has claimed the lives of 114 wild animals, while 95 others have recently been rescued.

About Kaziranga National Park:

- **Location:**
 - Situated in the **north-eastern part of Assam**, in the districts of **Golaghat and Nagaon**.
 - It is the **largest undisturbed area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain**.
- **National Park Status:**
 - Declared a **National Park in 1974**.
 - **First national park in Assam**, covering 400 sq. km.
 - Declared a **World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985**.
- **Flora:**
 - Dominated by **dense, tall elephant grass mixed with small swamplands**.
 - Includes **water lilies, water hyacinths, lotus, and Rattan Cane (climbing palm)**.
- **Fauna:**
 - Inhabited by the **world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceroses**.
 - Other mammals include **tigers, elephants, panthers, bears, Eastern swamp deer, buffalo, Hoolock gibbon, capped langur, and Gangetic River dolphin**.
- **Rivers:**
 - The **river Difalu (tributary of the Brahmaputra)** flows **through the core/critical tiger habitat**.
 - Another tributary, **Moradifalu**, flows along its southern boundary.



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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

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