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20 April 2024

National & International News

<p><b>BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India delivered the first batch of <b>BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles</b> to the <b>Philippines</b>.</li> <li>The Philippines concluded a \$375-million deal with India in January 2022 for three batteries of the BrahMos, <b>becoming the first export customer</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>delivery comes amid the ongoing showdown</b> between the <b>Philippines</b> and <b>China</b> in the <b>South China Sea</b>.</li> <li>Several countries have expressed interest in acquiring BrahMos systems, and discussions are in advanced stages with <b>Indonesia</b> and <b>Thailand</b> among others.</li> </ul> <p><b>About BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Type:</b> Supersonic cruise missile.</li> <li><b>Developed by:</b> Joint venture between India's <b>Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)</b> and <b>Russia's NPO Mashinostroyenia</b>.</li> <li><b>Name Origin:</b> Named after the <b>Brahmaputra River</b> in India and the <b>Moskva River in Russia</b>.</li> <li><b>Speed:</b> Mach 2.8 to 3.0 (supersonic speed).</li> <li><b>Range:</b> Approximately <b>290-450 kilometers</b>, with extended range versions in development.</li> <li><b>Warhead:</b> <b>Conventional</b> and <b>nuclear options</b>, with a payload capacity up to <b>300 kilograms</b>.</li> <li><b>Launch Platforms:</b> Versatile launch capabilities from land, sea, sub-sea, and air platforms.</li> <li><b>Guidance System:</b> Equipped with an inertial navigation system and a terminal active radar guidance system.</li> <li><b>Stealth Technology:</b> Designed to reduce radar cross-section for stealthier approach.</li> <li><b>BrahMos-II:</b> Development of a <b>hypersonic version</b> of the missile, BrahMos-II, which is <b>expected to travel at speeds of Mach 7+</b>.</li> <li><b>Extended Range:</b> Ongoing efforts to extend the missile's range beyond 450 kilometers under international missile treaties.</li> </ul>
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### BrahMos Cruise Missile

#### Air-launched variant tested

BrahMos, the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile, successfully flight-tested for the first time from a Sukhoi-30MKI fighter of the Indian Air Force against a sea based target in Bay of Bengal

The missile is now capable of being launched from land, sea and air, completing the tactical cruise missile triad for India

#### Technical Specifications

Maximum range	400+ km	Warhead mass	200-300 kg
Velocity	Mach 2.8	Altitude	
Weight	2.5 tonnes	■ Cruise: 15 km	
		■ Terminal:	10-15 metre

#### Special Features

- Universal for multiple platforms
- "Fire and Forget" principle of operation
- High supersonic speed all through the flight
- Long flight range with varieties of flight trajectories
- Low radar signature
- Shorter flight times leading to lower target dispersion and quicker engagement
- Pin point accuracy with high lethal power aided by large kinetic energy on impact



#### Compared to existing state-of-the-art subsonic cruise missiles, BrahMos has

- 3 times more velocity
- 2.5 to 3 times more flight range
- 3 to 4 times more seeker range
- 9 times more kinetic energy

National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education 2024 - Aadharshila

#### Why in news?

- The Central government has released a curriculum for children aged **three to six-years-old**, aiming to **boost pre-school learning** in 14 lakh **anganwadis** across India.
- The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** has released the 'Aadharshila,' the **National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education 2024**.



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	<p><b>About Aadharshila:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aadharshila is a detailed <b>48-week curriculum for three to six-year-olds in anganwadis.</b></li> <li>• The curriculum aims to <b>strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy concepts.</b></li> <li>• The curriculum includes a <b>weekly play calendar</b> with activities such as <b>storytelling, singing rhymes, art and craft,</b> and more.</li> <li>• The curriculum <b>targets at least 48 weeks of learning in three years.</b></li> <li>• The curriculum helps in developing listening skill, vocabulary building, boosting imagination, narration, following instructions, creativity, social development, developing self-expression and self-esteem.</li> <li>• <b>The national framework will serve as a base for States to develop their own culturally appropriate curriculums.</b></li> <li>• <b>Training of Anganwadi workers</b> towards providing early childhood education started under the <b>'Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi'</b> scheme by the <b>MWCD.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>United Nations membership for the state of Palestine</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>United States vetoed a U.N. resolution</b> that would have allowed full <b>United Nations membership for the state of Palestine.</b></li> <li>• The vote in the 15-member Security Council was <b>12 in favour,</b> the <b>United States opposed,</b> and <b>two abstentions.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Key points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>resolution</b> would have recommended the 193-member General Assembly <b>to approve Palestine becoming the 194th member of the United Nations.</b></li> <li>• <b>140 countries have already recognized the state of Palestine,</b> so its admission would have been approved.</li> </ul> <p><b>Think:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know about the process for obtaining full membership of the United Nations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fourth global mass coral bleaching</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>fourth global mass coral bleaching event</b> has been triggered by <b>extraordinary ocean temperatures,</b> as stated by the <b>US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).</b></li> </ul>



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- This event could have **serious consequences for ocean life** and **millions of people** who rely on reefs for food, jobs, and coastal defence.

### Key points:

- The **primary reason** behind the **soaring temperatures** is the **rising emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases (GHGs)** such as **carbon dioxide** and **methane** in the atmosphere.
- Nearly 90% of the extra **heat trapped by GHGs** has been **absorbed by the oceans**.

### About Corals:

- **Coral Reefs:** Coral reefs are **large underwater structures composed of the skeletons of colonial marine invertebrates called coral**.
- **Types:** The three main types of coral reefs are **fringing reefs, barrier reefs, and atolls**.
- **Composition:** Reefs are built by and made up of thousands of tiny animals called **coral polyps**, which **secrete a hard exoskeleton of calcium carbonate**.
- Corals are classified as either **hard coral** or **soft coral**. Hard corals are the architects of coral reefs.
- Coral reefs, also referred to as “**rainforests of the sea**”, have existed on the Earth for nearly 450 million years.
- **Australia’s Great Barrier Reef is the largest in the world**, stretching across 2,028 kilometres.

### Did you know:

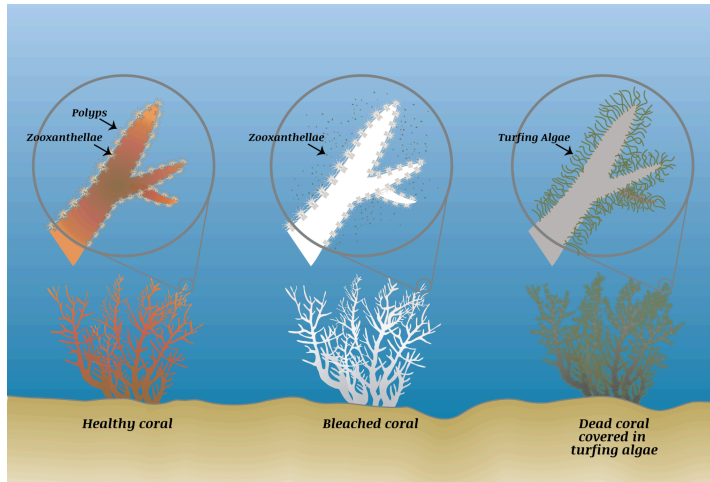
- **Coral Bleaching:** The phenomenon where **coral colonies lose their vibrant colors** due to the expulsion of **symbiotic zooxanthellae algae** from their tissues, leaving them white or pale. This is usually a **stress response**.
- **Primary Causes:** Major factors include **increased sea temperatures, solar irradiance, ocean acidification, pollution, and changes in sea level**.



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### Fossils of prehistoric snakes found in in Gujarat

#### Why in news?

- Researchers at IIT Roorkee discovered fossils of one of the **largest snakes**, named **Vasuki Indicus**, in **Kutch, Gujarat**.
- The snake likely lived 47 million years ago during the **Middle Eocene period**.

#### Key points:

- Vasuki Indicus belonged to the now-**extinct Madtsoiidae snake family** but represents a unique lineage from India.
- The researchers found 27 pieces of a well-preserved vertebral column of the snake at the **Panandhro Lignite Mine in Kutch**.
- The discovery could improve understanding of how the **madtsoiid species** evolved in different climates and the **factors that contributed to large body sizes**.
- **Much like present-day pythons and anacondas**, Vasuki Indicus killed its prey by suffocation.
- The name **Vasuki** refers to the **mythical snake** often depicted around the neck of the Hindu god Shiva.

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