



29 January 2024

National and International News

Laughing gull (Leucophaeus atricilla)



First-Time Sighting in the Country:

- Laughing gull, a migratory bird from **North America**, discovered for the first time in the country.
- Sightings reported at the **Chittari estuary in Kasaragod district**.

Key Points:

- Known for **unique laughter-like calls**, the laughing gull traveled thousands of kilometers from North America to the **coastal region of Kerala**.

Identification Amidst Diverse Avian Population:

- Smaller than the **brown-headed gull**, with distinctive features such as a **dark upper part, black legs, long drooping bill, and a dark smudge on the back of the head**.

Contribution to India's Bird Species Count:

- The discovery elevates the total number of bird species found in India to **1,367**.
- Kasaragod district contributes **400 species** to the state's overall count of **554**.

Conservation Status:

- **Least Concern (LC) on the IUCN Red List**, as the species has a large and stable population.

ISRO's INSAT-3DS Satellite


Context:

- The INSAT-3DS satellite flagged off to the launch port at **Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota** by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- Scheduled to be launched on board **GSLV F14** next month.

Objectives and Significance:

- Exclusive meteorological satellite designed



	<p>to provide continuity of services to existing INSAT-3D and 3DR satellites (which aid in weather monitoring)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to significantly enhance the capabilities of the INSAT system. <p>Advanced Payloads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-of-the-art payloads include a six-channel imager and 19-channel sounder meteorology payloads. • Communication payloads, a data relay transponder (DRT), and a satellite-aided search and rescue (SAS&R) transponder. • DRT instrument receives meteorological and oceanographic data, augmenting weather forecasting capabilities. • SAS&R transponder incorporated for relaying distress signals/alerts, facilitating global search and rescue services.
<p>Nitish Kumar's Ninth Term as Bihar Chief Minister</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitish Kumar, President of Janata Dal (United), took oath as Bihar Chief Minister for the ninth time. • This marks his fifth switch in political alliances since 2015. • He rejoined the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) after leaving it 18 months ago. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside Nitish Kumar, six Ministers and two Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha from the BJP were sworn in. • The Cabinet is expected to be expanded further in the near future.
<p>Germany seeks inter-governmental deal for submarines with India</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany presents an inter-governmental proposal to sell 6 advanced conventional submarines to India. • The proposal is part of India's Navy P-75I procurement program. • Discussions were recently held in New Delhi with a senior German delegation. • The deal, expected to cost over ₹45,000 crore, is in competition between Germany and Spain.



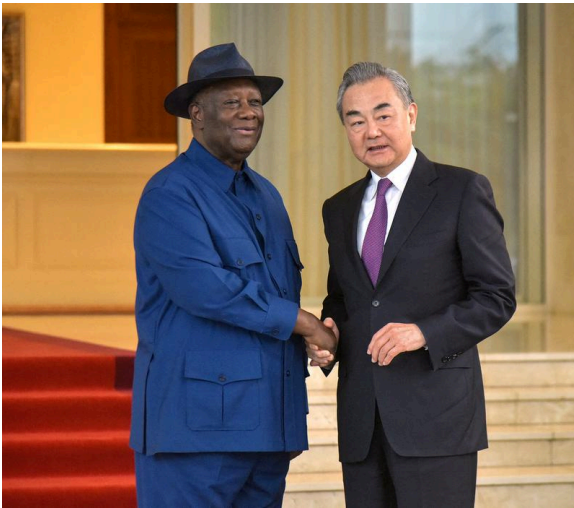
India's Navy P-75I procurement program

- Planned class of diesel-electric submarines for the Indian Navy.

Project Overview

- It is an acquisition plan for six conventional diesel-electric attack submarines.
- Project mainly emphasizes advanced capabilities, including air-independent propulsion (AIP), ISR, SOF, ASHW, ASW, ASuW, land-attack capabilities, and more.
- All six submarines to be constructed in India.
- **The project aligns with the Make in India initiative**, emphasizing self-sufficiency and indigenous manufacturing in defense projects.

China's ties with Africa



Context:

- Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Wang Yi**, embarked on his 11th annual trip to **Africa**, visiting Egypt, Tunisia, Togo, and the Ivory Coast.
- The visit aimed at enhancing economic and security cooperation, implementing outcomes of the **China-Africa Leaders Dialogue in August 2023**.

Key Points:

Purpose of visit:

- Execution of three key initiatives: industrialization support, agricultural modernization, and talent development cooperation.
- Setting the groundwork for the upcoming Forum on **China-Africa Cooperation 2024 (FOCAC)**.
- Mediation efforts for peace in Gaza, specifically addressing the **Rafah border shared with Egypt**.

Why is Africa China's Primary Focus?

- Historical ties dating back to the **1950s**, with China supporting African liberation movements.
- Importance of African support in China **acquiring a UN Security Council seat in the 70s**.



Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

- Evolution from ideological support to the **"Go Out Policy"** encouraging Chinese companies to invest in Africa in 1999.
- Growth of **Sino-African relations through FOCAC dialogues, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, and strategic military presence.

Objectives of China in Africa:

- Securing access to **crucial resources (cobalt, platinum, coltan)** vital for China's tech industry.
- Strengthening geopolitical alliances with Africa to sway **international resolutions in forums like the UN General Assembly.**
- Promoting the use of the **Chinese Yuan (RMB)** in trade, offering financial incentives, and restructuring African debt.
- Exploiting commercial opportunities through Africa's import of **finished goods, supporting Chinese exports and economy.**

Concerns and Criticisms:

- Western concerns about Chinese investments being **predatory, leading to debt traps.**
- Varied African responses, with some poorly managing debt (**e.g., Kenya, Zambia**) and others benefiting from manageable arrangements.
- Chinese **'non-interference'** stance providing space for authoritarian regimes in Africa to maintain power.

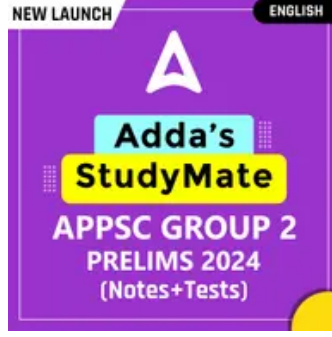


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