



15 March 2024

### National and International News

#### Yaounde Declaration



#### Context:

- Health ministers from **11 African countries** met in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and pledged to end malaria deaths.

#### Key points:

- In **2022**, malaria cases globally rose significantly from **233 million in 2019 to 249 million**.
- In Africa, cases increased from **218 million to 233 million during the same period**.
- Africa accounts for **94% of global malaria cases and 95% of malaria-related deaths**.
- In 2022, an estimated 580,000 deaths occurred in Africa due to malaria.
- According to the **2023 Africa Malaria Progress Report**, malaria incidence has declined by 7.6% and mortality by 11.3%, falling short of African Union's interim goals.
- The African Union aims to control and eliminate malaria by **2030**.

#### Avaana Sustainability Fund



#### Context:

- SIDBI has secured **\$24.5 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF)** for its Avaana Sustainability Fund (ASF), aimed at promoting sustainability and climate-focused startups and MSMEs.
- The funding was approved during the 38th meeting of the **GCF Board in Kigali, Rwanda**.

#### Project Overview:


- The project is valued at **\$120 million and will support early-stage startups and MSMEs using technology-led innovations for sustainability and climate solutions in India**.
- The ASF initiative aims to fund enterprises using technological innovations to address climate change challenges.
- It will aid in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and improving resilience in sectors vulnerable to climate impacts.

#### Implementation:

- **SIDBI will work with stakeholders and ministries, including the Department of Financial Services of the Ministry of Finance**.



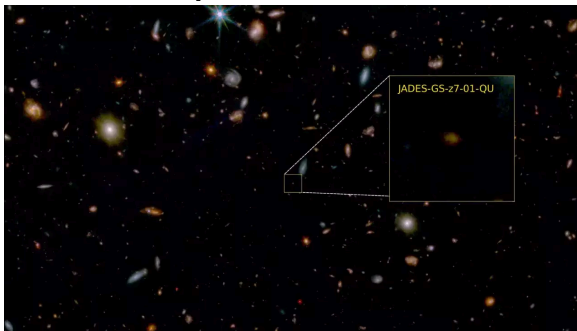
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bank can anchor proposals from other entities and submit its own, supporting the development of MSMEs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Significance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a <b>pioneering move by SIDBI, representing the first such project anchored by the bank and aligning with India's commitments under the Paris Agreement.</b></li> <li>SIDBI, as an accredited and direct access entity with the GCF, will fund projects promoting low-carbon and climate-resilient development across India.</li> </ul> <p><b>Green Climate Fund:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>GCF is the largest climate fund globally, supporting developing countries in meeting their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for global climate action.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Panel recommends simultaneous polls</b></p> 	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>high-level committee headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind has recommended simultaneous elections.</b></li> <li>The recommendation involves a <b>phased approach: Lok Sabha and State Assemblies first, followed by municipal and panchayat polls within 100 days of general elections.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Key points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee submitted an <b>extensive report, spanning 18,000 pages</b>, to President Droupadi Murmu, but a concise 321-page version is available to the public.</li> <li>The <b>22nd Law Commission</b> is also examining the issue and likely to recommend the same from the <b>2029 general election cycle.</b></li> <li>The suggested method involves setting an <b>'Appointed Date'</b> after each general election, initiating a new electoral cycle for synchronizing elections.</li> <li><b>State Assemblies</b> formed post 'Appointed Date' would conclude before subsequent general elections, <b>aligning with the Lok Sabha election cycle.</b></li> <li><b>Fresh Lok Sabha elections</b> might occur in case of a <b>hung House or no-confidence motion</b>, but the House's tenure would be limited to the unexpired term of the preceding full term.</li> <li>Constitutional amendments to <b>Articles 83 and 172 are proposed, requiring no ratification by the States.</b></li> </ul>



- Amendments to **Article 324A and Article 325** are recommended for panchayat and municipality elections and the preparation of a common electoral roll and voter ID cards, necessitating ratification by the States.
- The committee aims to **ease the burden on various stakeholders caused by frequent elections and suggests a mechanism for restoring the cycle of simultaneous elections.**
- Recommendations aim for minimal amendments to the Constitution and have garnered support from 32 out of 47 political parties contacted, including the BJP and the National People's Party.

**Oldest 'Dead Galaxy' Discovered by James Webb Telescope**



**Context:**

- Astronomers using the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) have found the oldest known **"dead" galaxy.**
- Named **JADES-GS-z7-01-QU**, it **ceased star formation when the universe was just 5% of its current age.**

**Significance:**

- This discovery surpasses **prior findings by approximately 500 million years.**
- It marks the earliest instance of a **"dead" galaxy.**
- Astrophysicist Tobias Looser likens its star formation pattern to James Dean's sudden halt, post a rapid burst of activity.
- Despite ample gas availability in the early universe, **star formation abruptly stopped.**

**Characteristics:**

- **Estimated to contain 100 million to one billion stars.**
- Comparable in size to the Small Magellanic Cloud but devoid of ongoing star formation.
- Existing stars **will expire without replacement, leading to a color shift from blue to yellow to red.**

**Potential Causes:**

- Researchers speculate on **reasons for cessation, including the influence of a supermassive black hole or gas depletion.**
- The JWST's advanced capabilities enabled a snapshot observation, leaving open the



possibility of resumed star formation.

**About James Webb Space Telescope:**

- Launched in **December 2021**, it's the most potent space telescope constructed to date.
- Tailored for **infrared astronomy**, it explores **objects beyond the reach of the Hubble Space Telescope.**
- Primarily aims to **study the earliest stars and galaxies, providing insights into the universe's infancy.**
- Its inaugural image was captured in **July 2022**, leading to numerous discoveries, including ancient galaxies.

**Kochrab Ashram**



**Context:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the redeveloped **Kochrab Ashram in Ahmedabad, Gujarat**, marking the **94th anniversary of the Dandi March.**
- Kochrab Ashram was Gandhi's first home in India after returning from South Africa in **1915.**
- Modi also revealed the master plan for the Rs 1,200 crore Gandhi Ashram Memorial and Precinct Development Project.

**Future Plans for Gandhi Ashram Memorial**

- The master plan aims to expand the ashram to 55 acres, restoring and conserving 36 buildings, including Gandhi's residence, Hriday Kunj.
- It includes new structures for administration facilities, visitor amenities, interactive workshops, and public utilities.
- An orientation center, a library, and archive buildings will be built to safeguard and disseminate Gandhi's ideas.

**Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary**



**Context:**

- The Supreme Court stopped the **Assam government from withdrawing a 26-year-old notification that established the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, known for its significant rhino population.**
- The Supreme Court stated that revoking a notification for a wildlife sanctuary requires permission from the **National Board of Wildlife.** It clarified that its order does not hinder efforts to protect the rights of forest dwellers.

**About:**



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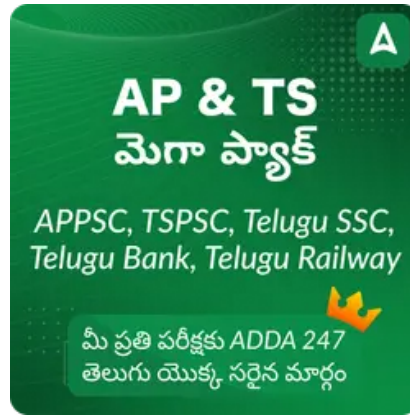


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- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is known for holding the highest density of **Greater One Horned Rhinoceros in the country.**
- The Sanctuary consists of the Rajamayong Reserve Forest and Pobitora Reserve Forest. The Rajamayong hills harbor several species including Leopard, Capped Langur, Porcupine, Pangolin, etc.
- Often called '**Mini Kaziranga,**' it shares similar landscape and vegetation with its renowned counterpart.
- Approximately **72% of Pobitora's area comprises a wet savannah dominated by Arundo donax and Saccharum grasses, with the rest covered by water bodies.**

### About One-Horned Rhino:

- **IUCN Red List Status:** Vulnerable.
- **Habitat:** Mainly found in **Assam, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh.**
- Assam is home to an estimated **2,640 rhinos in four protected areas: Pobitora Wildlife Reserve, Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, Kaziranga National Park, and Manas National Park.**



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