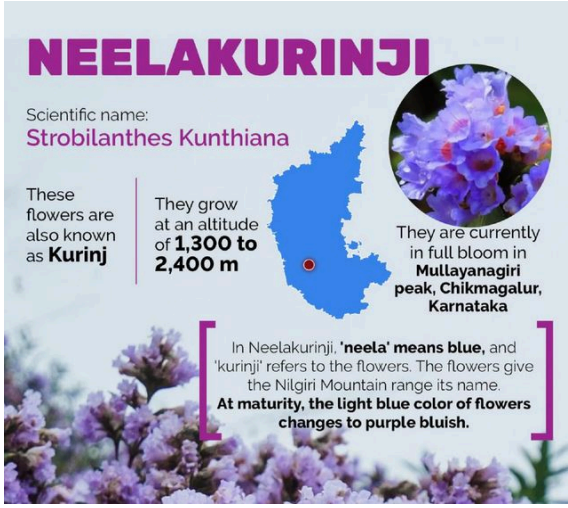




12 Aug 2024

National and International News

<p>Exercise Udara Shakti</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Air Force and the Royal Malaysian Air Force recently participated in Exercise Udara Shakti 2024. <p>About Exercise Udara Shakti:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A joint air exercise was conducted in collaboration with the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) at Kuantan, Malaysia. The exercise aimed to bolster operational efficiency between the two air forces. The Indian Air Force's (IAF) Su-30MKI fighter jets participated in air combat missions alongside the RMAF's Su-30MKM fighters. The focus was on enhancing interoperability, commonality, and overall effectiveness in Su-30 aircraft operations.
<p>Neelakurinji</p>  <p>NEELAKURINJI</p> <p>Scientific name: Strobilanthes Kunthiana</p> <p>These flowers are also known as Kurinj</p> <p>They grow at an altitude of 1,300 to 2,400 m</p> <p>They are currently in full bloom in Mullayanagiri peak, Chikmagalur, Karnataka</p> <p>In Neelakurinji, 'neela' means blue, and 'kurinji' refers to the flowers. The flowers give the Nilgiri Mountain range its name. At maturity, the light blue color of flowers changes to purple bluish.</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Neelakurinji has recently been included on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) official Red List of threatened species. <p>About Neelakurinji:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purplish flowering shrubs that bloom once every 12 years. Endemic shrub, approximately three meters in height. Habitat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Found only in high-altitude shola grassland ecosystems. Grows at an elevation of 1,340–2,600 meters. Distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34 subpopulations within 14 ecoregions of high-altitude mountain ranges in southwest India. 33 subpopulations in the Western Ghats and 1 in the Eastern Ghats (Yercaud, Shevaroy Hills).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural Significance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nilgiri Hills, meaning "blue mountains," are named after the blue flowers of Neelakurinji. ○ The Paliyan tribes of Tamil Nadu use the blooming cycle to calculate their age. ● Threats: Habitat threatened by conversion for tea and softwood plantations, as well as urbanization. ● Conservation Status: First-ever Global Red List assessment confirms the species is categorized as Vulnerable (Criteria A2c) by the IUCN.
Clean Plant Programme	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved the Clean Plant Programme (CPP) proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. <p>About Clean Plant Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Affordable Access: Prioritize affordable access to clean plant material for all farmers, regardless of landholding size or socioeconomic status. ○ Women Farmers' Involvement: Actively engage women farmers in planning and implementation, ensuring their access to resources, training, and decision-making opportunities. ○ Region-Specific Solutions: Address diverse agro-climatic conditions by developing region-specific clean plant varieties and technologies. ● Clean Plant Centers (CPCs): Establish nine world-class CPCs with advanced diagnostic, therapeutic, and tissue culture labs across India. ● Purpose: Produce and maintain virus-free planting material for large-scale propagation. ● Implementation: National Horticulture Board and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
Overnight Index Swap	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently been reviewing the investment limits for foreign investors in the Overnight Index Swap (OIS) market.



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	<p>About Overnight Index Swap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An Overnight Index Swap (OIS) is a derivative instrument where returns under a fixed-rate asset are swapped against a pre-determined published index of a daily overnight reference rate for an agreed period of time.• Purpose: The primary purpose of an OIS is to manage interest rate risk, particularly the risk associated with fluctuations in the overnight lending rate.• Calculation: The interest rate for the OIS is calculated each day.
<p>Juanga Tribe</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The District Level Committee of Keonjhar in Odisha recently approved the habitat rights claim for the Juanga, a particularly vulnerable tribal group, under the Forest Rights Act (FRA). <p>About Juanga Tribe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Name: Juanga or Juang• Location: Concentrated in Keonjhar district, Odisha.• Traditional Name: Originally known as Patuas due to their traditional attire of leaf skirts.• Language: Juang (Mundari), belonging to the Austroasiatic language family.• Occupation:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Traditionally engaged in shifting cultivation.○ Occasionally engage in hunting.○ Juangs of Pallahara are skilled in basket weaving.



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