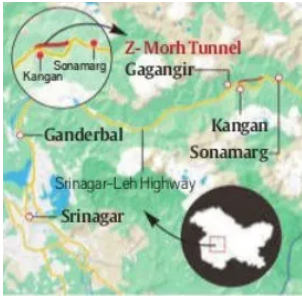




14 January 2025

National and International News

<p>Inflation 2024</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflation dropped to its lowest level of 5.22% in four months in December. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It refers to a steady rise in the prices of various goods and services in the economy. Rate of Inflation = (Price in this Period – Price in the Previous Period) X 100/Price in the Previous Period To effectively monitor and control the level of inflation in an economy, policymakers use various kinds of instruments. In India, inflation is mainly measured through 2 price indices – the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Another measure of inflation frequently used across the world is – GDP Deflator.
<p>Places in news: Z-Morh tunnel</p> 	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who inaugurated the strategic Z-Morh tunnel in the Sonamarg area of Ganderbal has refrained from committing to a timeline for the restoration of Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Z-Morh tunnel is a 6.4-kilometer tunnel connecting the Sonamarg health resort with Kangan town in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. It is located near Gagangir village, just ahead of Sonamarg, and will ensure all-weather connectivity to the popular tourist destination on the Srinagar-Leh highway. The tunnel gets its name from the Z-shaped road stretch at the construction site. The stretch where the tunnel is under construction is situated at an altitude of over 8,500 feet, and is prone to snow avalanches in the winter. The road to Sonamarg as such remains closed for most part of the winter. Strategic importance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Zojila tunnel, linking Sonamarg to Drass in Ladakh, is under construction and is expected to be completed by December 2026. The Z-Morh tunnel will provide all-weather access to Sonamarg, a health resort, and is essential for ensuring rapid military access to Ladakh. The Z-Morh tunnel will enable all-weather road connectivity



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	<p>between Srinagar, Drass, Kargil, and Leh, reducing reliance on air support for forward military positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This connectivity will enhance troop and supply transport, lower costs, and extend the operational life of aircraft used by the Indian Air Force. ○ The project is critical for the Indian defense forces stationed in Siachen and Eastern Ladakh, areas where tensions with Pakistan and China continue.
Rat-Hole Mining	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An oral question from the Supreme Court to the Union government remains unanswered, even as rescue workers retrieved the bodies of four workers from a flooded rat-hole coal mine in Dima Hasao district, Assam. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rat Hole Mining is a method of extracting coal from narrow, horizontal seams, widely prevalent in Meghalaya. ● The term “rat hole” refers to the narrow pits dug into the ground, typically just large enough for one person to descend and extract coal. ● Once the pits are dug, miners descend using ropes or bamboo ladders to reach the coal seams. ● The coal is then manually extracted using primitive tools such as pickaxes, shovels, and baskets. ● Rat-Hole mining is broadly of two types. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the side-cutting procedure, narrow tunnels are dug on the hill slopes and workers go inside until they find the coal seam. ○ The other type of rat-hole mining is called box-cutting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In this type, a rectangular opening is made, varying from 10 to 100 sqm, and through that a vertical pit is dug, 100 to 400 feet deep. ■ Once the coal seam is found, rat-hole-sized tunnels are dug horizontally through which workers can extract the coal. ● Ban on Rat-Hole Mining by NGT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned rat-hole mining in 2014 and upheld the ban in 2015. ○ Highlighted numerous fatalities caused by flooding in mining areas during the rainy season.
Makar Sankranti	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The nation celebrates Makar Sankranti, heralding the end of winter. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It marks the Sun changing directions and shifting its trajectory towards the north, therefore, entering the Makara or Capricorn zodiac sign.



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- The day is a marker for a change of season – warmer months are close and we are moving away from winter, which is seen as a period of inactivity in many ways.
- It is said that the **northward journey of the sun (Uttarayan) begins on this day.**
- Makar Sankranti follows the solar cycle and thus, is celebrated almost on the same day every year.
- Astronomically, the Earth revolves around the Sun in an elliptical orbit that requires about **365 1/4 days to complete, as it continues to rotate on its own axis.**
- The earth's spin axis is tilted with respect to its orbital plane. This, along with its distance from the Sun, determines the change in seasons for life on Earth.
- For the Northern Hemisphere, the axis points most toward the sun in **June (specifically around June 21), and away from the sun around December 21.**
- This corresponds to the Winter and Summer Solstice (solstice is Latin for "the sun stands"). For the Southern Hemisphere, this is reversed."
- **It is also called as –**
 - Paush Parbon in Bengal
 - Pongal in Tamil Nadu,
 - Uttarayan in Gujarat,
 - Bhogali Bihu in Assam,
 - Lohri in Punjab and Jammu,
 - Makar Sankramana in Karnataka,
 - Saen-kraat in Kashmir.
 - Khichdi Parwa in parts of Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Genome India Project



Why in news?

- The Department of Biotechnology recently announced its new platform and framework for sharing its **10,000 human genome dataset.**
- The sequences of healthy individuals — from 99 ethnic populations of the country — has helped create a baseline map of India's genetic diversity.

Key Points:

- **About Genome India Project:**
 - It is a **Centre-backed, Department of Biotechnology's (DBT) initiative to sequence 10,000 Indian human genomes in three years and create a database.**
 - The project has **sequenced close to 7,000 genomes and 3,000 of these are already available for public access by researchers.**
 - For conducting the project, investigators in hospitals will lead the data collection through a simple blood test from participants and the information will be added to biobanks.
 - Some of the priority areas are **Precision health, Rare**



	<p>genetic disorders, Mutation spectrum of genetic and complex diseases in the Indian population, Genetic Epidemiology of Multifactorial Lifestyle Diseases, and Translational Research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Countries like the UK, China, and the US also have projects to sequence a significant number of genomes. ● What is the Human genome? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The human genome is the entire set of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) residing in the nucleus of every cell of each human body. ○ The DNA consists of a double-stranded molecule built up by four bases – adenine (A), cytosine (C), guanine (G) and thymine (T). ○ Every base on one strand pairs with a complementary base on the other strand (A with T and C with G). ○ In all, the genome is made up of approximately 3.05 billion such base pairs. ● What is Genome sequencing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ While the sequence or order of base pairs is identical in all humans, there are differences in the genome of every human being that makes them unique. ○ The process of deciphering the order of base pairs, to decode the genetic fingerprint of a human is called genome sequencing. ○ There are several methods of genome sequencing, but the most common is called next-generation sequencing (NGS).
<p>Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emphasizing that forest-dwelling communities are safeguarded from illegal eviction under the Forest Protection Act, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has instructed states to establish an institutional framework to ensure adherence to the law and create a system to address grievances. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Forest Rights Act, 2006 (officially known as the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act) is a landmark legislation aimed at recognizing and securing the rights of forest-dwelling communities in India. ● Key Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognition of Rights: To recognize the historical rights of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) over forests they depend on for their livelihood. ○ Protecting Livelihoods: Ensuring the sustainable use of forest resources by local communities. ○ Empowering Communities: Granting legal rights to forest land and resources to these communities. ● Key Features:

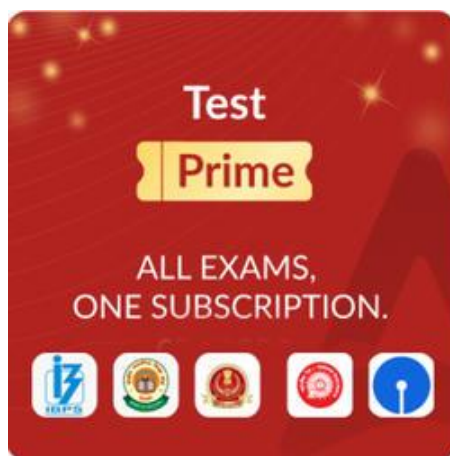


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- Ownership of Land: Recognizes land up to 4 hectares per family for cultivation.
- Protection Against Eviction: Prevents eviction of forest dwellers without proper recognition and settlement of rights.
- Role of Gram Sabha: Empowers the Gram Sabha (village assembly) to determine the rights of individuals and communities.
- Conservation Focus: Encourages sustainable management of forests while protecting biodiversity.
- **Types of Rights Recognized:**
 - **Individual Rights:** Ownership and access to forest land for cultivation and habitation.
 - **Community Rights:**
 - Use of minor forest produce (e.g., bamboo, honey, lac).
 - Grazing rights and access to water bodies.
 - Management and conservation of forests by local communities.
 - **Community Forest Resource Rights:** Rights to protect, regenerate, and manage forests sustainably.





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