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## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 02-12-2024**

### **GS-1**

1. Cyclone Fengal

### **GS-2**

2. PAN 2.0
3. ISKCON

### **GS-3**

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5. High Seas Treaty

## **Cyclone Fengal**

**Syllabus: GS-1; Geography, GS-3; Disaster Management**

### **Context**

- Cyclone Fengal landfall in hours, flights hit as rain pounds Chennai

### **About**

- **Cyclone Fengal** is a significant weather system forming in the Bay of Bengal in November 2024.

### **Formation and Path:**

- Cyclone Fengal originated as a depression over the southeast Bay of Bengal and intensified into a deep depression. It is forecasted to further develop into a cyclonic storm.
- It is moving northwestwards, potentially making landfall between Chennai and Puducherry or impacting northern Sri Lanka.

### **Meteorological Features:**

- The system's movement is characterized by speeds of 30 km/h and potential intensification, with models predicting it may reach a peak intensity of 15-30 knots before weakening slightly during landfall.
- Heavy rainfall and strong winds across Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Sri Lanka, with significant impacts on coastal regions

### **Naming of Cyclones in the Indian Ocean Region:**

- Cyclones in the Indian Ocean region are named according to a system established by the **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** and the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)**.
- The naming helps in easy identification, public awareness, and effective communication during disaster management efforts.

### **Process of Naming:**

- **Member Countries:** The responsibility of naming cyclones in the North Indian Ocean, including the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, lies with 13 member countries of the WMO/UNESCAP panel: Bangladesh, India, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE, and Yemen.

- **List Submission:** Each country submits a list of names. Names are assigned sequentially in the order of the countries' names in English alphabetical order.
- **Neutral Names:** Names must be neutral, culturally sensitive, and not associated with any particular group, ethnicity, or sentiment.
- **Example of Recent Names:** Recent cyclones include Biparjoy (India), Tej (Oman), and FENGAL (Saudi Arabia).

### Naming Criteria:

- The name should not exceed eight characters and must be simple to pronounce.
- It should not be controversial or offensive.
- Once used, a name cannot be reused for another cyclone in the region.

### Purpose of Naming:

- Simplifies communication between meteorologists, media, and the public.
- Reduces confusion when multiple systems are active simultaneously.
- Enhances disaster preparedness and awareness campaigns.

## PAN 2.0

### Syllabus: GS-2; e-Governance

#### Context

- The Income Tax Department has launched PAN 2.0 to improve the efficiency of assigning and maintaining Permanent Account Numbers (PAN).



## About

- This initiative is designed to enhance convenience and security by providing **e-PAN cards with a QR code to applicants' registered email IDs at no charge**.
- It aimed at re-engineering the business processes related to taxpayer registration services.
- The project's objective is to improve the quality of PAN services by incorporating the latest technology.
- A nominal fee is required for a physical PAN card. It is important to note that existing PAN cards will remain valid even without the QR code.

## Key features of PAN 2.0 include:

- **Unified Portal:** All PAN/TAN-related services will be centralized on a unified portal, managed by the Income Tax Department (ITD), which aims to streamline access and services for users.
- **Enhanced Security through QR Code:** The new PAN cards will feature a **QR code**, which facilitates **digital verification**. This improves identity authentication for both individuals and businesses.

## Role of the QR Code in PAN 2.0:

- **Improved Security:** The QR code strengthens security by making card duplication or tampering more difficult. The data encoded within the QR code is encrypted and can only be accessed using authorized software, which reduces the potential for fraud.
- **Efficient Identity Verification:** The QR code enables quick and accurate identity verification, reducing the risk of impersonation and minimizing transaction errors.
- **Ensured Data Accuracy:** The new PAN cards ensure that user information is up-to-date and complies with the latest regulations, helping promote a more secure financial environment while preventing misuse of personal data.

## Significance

- **Enhanced Security:** The encrypted QR code on the PAN card adds a layer of security, making the cards difficult to forge or tamper with. This initiative aligns with broader efforts to combat fraud and identity theft, ensuring that the data associated with PAN is more securely handled.
- **Increased Accessibility:** By centralizing all PAN-related services, users can access them more easily, streamlining processes such as verification, issuance, and updates.

This is particularly valuable for businesses and individuals who rely on PAN for a variety of financial and legal functions.

- **Boosting Data Accuracy:** With the new infrastructure, PAN will serve as the **primary and reliable source of data** for citizens, ensuring that the information held in the system is accurate and compliant with evolving regulations.

This minimizes discrepancies and enhances the credibility of India's financial ecosystem.

- **Promoting Digital Governance:** The move towards a **technology-driven framework** supports India's goal to digitize government services, which is a cornerstone of initiatives like **Digital India**.

The use of digital solutions like QR codes simplifies and accelerates identity verification, which will be crucial for future government reforms in taxation, subsidies, and other services.

## **ISKCON**

### **Syllabus: GS-2; Cultural Diplomacy**

#### **Context**

- The Hindu spiritual organisation Iskcon has dismissed the claims that it has distanced itself from Chinmoy Krishna Das, the Hindu monk who was arrested and jailed by the Bangladesh government.

#### **About**

- The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), also known as the Hare Krishna Movement, is a prominent spiritual and religious organization based on the teachings of **Gaudiya Vaishnavism**, a branch of Hinduism.
- It was founded in **1966 in New York City** by **A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**, with the aim of spreading the teachings of **Lord Krishna** as described in the **Bhagavad Gita** and **Srimad Bhagavatam**.

#### **Key Aspects of ISKCON**

##### **Philosophy and Teachings:**

- ISKCON emphasizes **Bhakti Yoga (Devotion to God)** as the supreme means to attain self-realization.

- The movement promotes the chanting of the **Hare Krishna Mahamantra**: "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare."
- It is rooted in the teachings of **Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**, a 16th-century saint who popularized Krishna Bhakti.

#### **Activities:**

- **Preaching and Education:** ISKCON organizes lectures, spiritual discourses, and study groups on scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam.
- **Cultural Preservation:** It promotes traditional Indian music, dance, and art forms.
- **Temple Construction:** ISKCON has built over **850 temples** worldwide, serving as hubs for spiritual activities and community service.

#### **Humanitarian Work:**

- **Food for Life Program:** ISKCON's food distribution initiative provides free, nutritious meals to millions globally, particularly to underprivileged communities.
- **Environmental Initiatives:** Promotes cow protection (Goseva) and organic farming as part of sustainable living practices.

#### **Global Impact:**

- ISKCON has expanded to over **150 countries**, spreading Indian spiritual and cultural heritage.
- It has attracted followers from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.
- The movement plays a significant role in the **promotion of Vedic literature** and spiritual values globally.

## **Imperial Eagle**

#### **Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity**

#### **Context**

- Rare imperial eagle spotted in Kole fields, Kerala.



### Taxonomy and Description

- **Scientific Name:** *Aquila heliaca*
- **Family:** Accipitridae
- **Common Name:** Imperial Eagle
- **Size:** It is a large eagle, with a wingspan of about 2 meters (6.5 feet) and weighs between 3 to 5.5 kg (6.6 to 12.1 lbs).
- **Physical Features:** The Imperial Eagle has a dark brown body with pale golden-brown plumage on the nape and back of the head. It has a relatively large head and a strong, powerful beak.

### Habitat and Distribution

- **Range:** The Imperial Eagle is primarily found across Eastern Europe, parts of Central Asia, and the Middle East. They migrate between Europe and Asia depending on the season.
- **Habitat:** They prefer open, semi-arid regions such as steppes, grasslands, and agricultural lands, where they can find prey. They are also found in mountainous regions but avoid dense forests.
- **Migration:** In the winter, they migrate to warmer regions like India, the Middle East, and parts of North Africa.

### Diet and Hunting

- The Imperial Eagle is carnivorous, primarily preying on small to medium-sized mammals like hares, rabbits, and ground squirrels.
- They also hunt birds, and occasionally reptiles.

- They are known for their impressive hunting skills and prefer to hunt by swooping down from a perch or by soaring in search of prey.

### Breeding and Reproduction

- **Nesting:** Imperial Eagles build large nests in trees, often in isolated locations. The nest is typically constructed with twigs and lined with softer material like feathers or fur.
- **Eggs:** The female lays 1–3 eggs, which are incubated for about 45–50 days. Both parents take turns in incubation and care of the chicks.
- **Chick Development:** After hatching, the chicks are cared for by both parents. They fledge (leave the nest) after about 70–80 days but remain dependent on the parents for food for some time.

### Conservation Status

- **IUCN Status:** Near Threatened (NT)
- The Imperial Eagle's population has been declining due to habitat loss, hunting, and poisoning.
- They are vulnerable to disturbances from human activity, including infrastructure development and agricultural expansion.
- Conservation efforts include habitat protection, banning hunting, and awareness campaigns to reduce poisoning.

### Ecological Role

- As apex predators, Imperial Eagles play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of their ecosystem by controlling populations of smaller mammals and birds.
- Their presence is a sign of a healthy, biodiverse environment.

## High Seas Treaty

### Syllabus: GS- 3; Biodiversity Conservation

#### Context

- India's recent signing of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement better known as the High Seas Treaty — has drawn both praise and scepticism from maritime observers.

## About

- The **High Seas Treaty**, also known as the **Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions (BBNJ) Agreement**, is a significant international legal framework aimed at protecting marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, commonly referred to as the "high seas."

## Background and Context

- **High Seas:** The high seas are areas of the ocean that lie beyond the 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of any nation. These areas are not governed by the territorial claims of any country, making them international waters.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Human activities, including overfishing, pollution, and climate change, have caused significant damage to marine ecosystems on the high seas, threatening biodiversity.
- **The Need for a Treaty:** Before the treaty, there was no legally binding international framework to protect marine biodiversity in these areas.

## Key Features of the High Seas Treaty

- **Adopted in 2023:** After years of negotiation, the treaty was adopted in March 2023 under the auspices of the United Nations (UN).
- **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):** The treaty establishes a framework for the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) on the high seas to safeguard vulnerable marine ecosystems.
- **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA):** The treaty mandates Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for activities such as deep-sea mining and fisheries that may impact the high seas' biodiversity.
- **Equitable Benefit Sharing:** It introduces a system for sharing the benefits derived from marine genetic resources (MGRs) in the high seas, ensuring that countries, especially developing ones, can benefit from discoveries.
- **Access to Marine Genetic Resources:** It ensures fair and equitable access to genetic resources found in the high seas, which can have significant economic potential in biotechnology and pharmaceuticals.
- **Strengthened Governance:** The treaty strengthens global governance mechanisms by establishing an intergovernmental conference to oversee the implementation of the agreement.

## Key Players

- **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):** UNCLOS provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, but it did not address the high seas biodiversity issues comprehensively. The High Seas Treaty complements UNCLOS.
- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):** UNEP has been instrumental in supporting the negotiations.
- **The Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI):** An NGO promoting international legal frameworks for high seas biodiversity.

## Challenges and Criticism

- **Enforcement:** One of the key challenges is ensuring that the treaty's provisions are enforced effectively, as the high seas cover vast areas, making monitoring and control difficult.
- **Economic Interests vs Environmental Protection:** There is tension between countries and industries that wish to exploit the high seas' resources and those advocating for conservation.
- **Implementation and Funding:** The implementation of marine protected areas and scientific assessments requires significant funding, especially for developing nations.

## Significance for India

- **Ocean Governance:** India, with its vast coastline and marine resources, is a stakeholder in global ocean governance. The treaty is crucial for India's role in maintaining sustainable practices in international waters.
- **Environmental Leadership:** As a proponent of international environmental agreements (e.g., the Paris Agreement), India's commitment to the High Seas Treaty aligns with its broader environmental and climate change goals.
- **Marine Biodiversity Conservation:** The treaty's provisions on sustainable fishing and marine genetic resources can positively impact India's marine ecosystem management.