



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 09-12-2024

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GS-3

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Hornbill Festival

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

Context

- Mizoram Governor Hari Babu Kambhampti Attends Hornbill Festival In Nagaland.



About

- The **Hornbill Festival**, often referred to as the "**Festival of Festivals**," is one of the most vibrant and celebrated cultural events in **Nagaland**, India.
- It showcases the rich traditions, heritage, and culture of the Naga tribes and promotes tourism in the state.

Key Highlights

- **Time & Venue:**
 - Held annually from **1st to 10th December** at the **Naga Heritage Village, Kisama**, near Kohima.
- **Cultural Significance:**
 - Named after the **Great Indian Hornbill**, a bird revered in Naga folklore.
 - Highlights the unique customs, crafts, and cuisines of the **16 Naga tribes**.
- **Main Attractions:**
 - Traditional dances, folk music, and tribal games.

- Display of traditional attires, jewelry, and artifacts.
- The famous **Naga Morungs (tribal huts)** exhibition.
- **Hornbill Rock Festival**, featuring performances by national and international bands.

➤ **Food & Crafts:**

- Traditional Naga cuisine, including smoked meats, bamboo shoots, and spicy chutneys.
- Handicrafts like bamboo products, Naga shawls, and beaded jewelry.

➤ **Contemporary Additions:**

- Motorcycle rallies, fashion shows, and photography contests.
- Adventure sports like trekking and camping.

Importance

➤ **Cultural Preservation:**

- Promotes awareness of and respect for Naga tribal culture and traditions.

➤ **Economic Boost:**

- Encourages tourism and provides a platform for local artisans and businesses.

➤ **Unity in Diversity:**

- Acts as a unifying event for Nagaland's tribes and showcases their harmony.

➤ **National Integration:**

- Attracts visitors from across India and abroad, fostering cultural exchange.

Government Support

➤ Organized by the **Government of Nagaland** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Tourism, Government of India**.

➤ Recognized as a key event under **Incredible India Campaign** to promote cultural tourism.

Copper

Syllabus: GS-1: Minerals Resources – Copper & GS-3: Industries – Metals.

Context:

- India is ensuring sufficient suppliers of refined copper (domestic and foreign) certified by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) by mid-December 2024.
- No serious supply constraints are expected, as stated by the Ministry of Mines.
- India will remain partially dependent on imports until Adani Group's new copper smelter in Gujarat reaches full capacity by March 2025.

Refined Copper Imports

- **FY 2023-24 Imports:**
 - Total: **363 Thousand Tonnes (THT)** valued at **Rs. 24,552 crore**.
 - **Major Sources:**
 - **Japan:** 69% of quantity; Rs. 16,500 crore (67% by value).
 - **Tanzania:** 18% of imports.
 - **Mozambique:** 5% of imports.
 - **Others:** Austria and Malaysia contribute 1% each in value terms.

Quality Control Order (QCO) Implementation

- QCO for refined copper effective **December 1, 2024**.
- Certification delays led to a temporary **90-day supply crunch** reported by downstream users.
 - Japanese suppliers halted shipments in mid-October to avoid clearance issues.
 - Shipments may take 45 days to arrive, exacerbating the shortage.
- The Ministry held stakeholder consultations and extended the QCO twice to address supply concerns.

BIS Certification

- **Current BIS-certified suppliers:**
 - **Domestic (4):**

1. Adani's Kutch Copper Ltd.
2. Hindalco Industries Ltd.
3. Gujarat Victory Forgings Pvt Ltd.
4. Vedanta Ltd.

- **Foreign (4):**

- 1 from Japan, 1 from Austria, and 2 from Malaysia.

➤ **Upcoming Certification:**

- 2 additional licenses (including Japanese smelters) to be issued by mid-December 2024.

Domestic Copper Production

➤ **Current Major Players:**

- **Hindalco Industries:** Largest operational refining capacity (~5 lakh tonnes per annum).
- **Vedanta:** 2 lakh tonnes per annum.
- **Gujarat Victory Forgings Pvt Ltd:** Smaller capacity of 6,000 tonnes per annum.

➤ **Adani's Kutch Copper Refinery:**

- Commissioned in 2024; peak capacity of 5 lakh tonnes per annum by 2025-26.
- Full ramp-up expected by February-March 2025, achieving self-sufficiency in refined copper.

Government Measures

- Extended QCO implementation to provide a 15-month period for suppliers to obtain BIS certification.
- Stakeholder meetings held to mitigate supply risks and ensure smooth transition.

Future Outlook

- India's reliance on imports will reduce once Adani's Kutch Copper Refinery achieves full capacity.

- With domestic capacity ramping up, India aims to become self-reliant in refined copper production by 2025-26.

Code of Conduct for Judges

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Judiciary.

Context:

- **Law Minister Arjun Meghwal** recently addressed the lack of a formal code of conduct for judges, pointing to existing frameworks like the **Supreme Court's Restatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997)** and the in-house procedure for action against errant judges.

What is a Code of Conduct?

- A **code of conduct** is a set of ethical guidelines that delineates acceptable behavior and standards for individuals in specific roles or professions.
- For judges, it underscores principles like **impartiality, integrity**, and adherence to constitutional values, serving as a moral compass for judicial responsibilities.

Present Code of Conduct for Judges

- **Restatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997):**
 - Adopted by the Supreme Court to outline judicial behavior, emphasizing impartiality, transparency, and accountability.
 - Example: Judges are advised to avoid public commentary on pending cases.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - Articles **124** and **217** govern the **appointment** and **removal** of judges, emphasizing ethical behavior.
- **In-House Procedure (1997):**
 - Empowers the Chief Justice of India (CJI) to address complaints of misconduct against judges.

➤ **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:**

- Establishes a legal framework for investigating allegations of misconduct or incapacity.

➤ **Declaration of Assets:**

- Judges are expected to disclose their assets to promote transparency, though enforcement remains weak.

Why Do Judges Need a Code of Conduct?

➤ **Prevent Judicial Misconduct:**

- Ensures accountability and prevents misuse of judicial authority.
- Example: Allegations of ethical violations have highlighted lapses in standards.

➤ **Strengthen Public Trust:**

- Promotes confidence in judicial impartiality and fairness.
- Example: Alleged biases in the Andhra Pradesh High Court case (2021) caused public distrust.

➤ **Uniform Standards:**

- Provides consistent handling of ethical violations across all courts and states.

➤ **Combat Corruption:**

- Addresses concerns over financial irregularities and nepotism in judicial functioning.

➤ **Align with Global Practices:**

- Incorporates international principles like the **Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct**.

Government and Judicial Efforts

➤ **Restatement of Judicial Values (1997):**

- Reaffirmed by the Supreme Court as guiding standards.

➤ **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:**

- Framework for investigating allegations of judicial misconduct.

➤ **Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill (2010):**

- Proposed legislation aimed at enforcing ethical standards (not yet passed).
- **Judicial Training Programs:**
 - Conducted by the National Judicial Academy to instill awareness of ethical guidelines.

Significance of a Formal Code of Conduct

- **Protects Judicial Independence:**
 - Defines ethical boundaries while safeguarding judges from undue influence.
- **Strengthens Rule of Law:**
 - Reinforces impartiality and fairness in judicial processes.
 - Example: The **Ayodhya verdict** showcased adherence to legal principles.
- **Enhances Credibility:**
 - Positions the judiciary as a globally respected institution.
- **Encourages Accountability:**
 - Prevents arbitrary decision-making and ensures adherence to constitutional mandates.
- **Addresses Systemic Bias:**
 - Helps curb favoritism and discrimination in judicial practices.

Challenges in Implementing a Code of Conduct

- **Lack of Enforceability:**
 - Current guidelines are advisory, lacking binding authority.
- **Judicial Independence vs. Accountability:**
 - Overregulation may threaten judicial autonomy.
- **Resistance to Change:**
 - Judges often resist scrutiny, citing independence concerns.
- **Political Interference:**
 - Risks misuse of the code to target dissenting judges.
 - Example: Allegations of executive overreach in appointments.

➤ **Awareness Gaps:**

- Insufficient training on ethical guidelines limits effective adherence.

Way Forward

➤ **Formalization:**

- Introduce a legally binding and enforceable code of conduct.

➤ **Independent Oversight:**

- Establish an independent body to oversee judicial accountability.

➤ **Regular Training:**

- Conduct ethics workshops to promote awareness among judges.

➤ **Transparent Appointments:**

- Improve the selection and removal process for judges to enhance public trust.

➤ **Public Involvement:**

- Engage civil society in discussions on judicial accountability to foster trust.

Conclusion

A formal and robust code of conduct is imperative to maintain judicial **integrity**, ensure **accountability**, and strengthen public confidence in the judiciary. By balancing independence with oversight, such a framework ensures that the judiciary remains a steadfast pillar of democracy and justice.

Cape buffalo

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

➤ A study conducted by researchers in Tanzania's Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) has offered insights into the reasons behind human-Cape buffalo conflict that occurs across sub-Saharan Africa.

About

- The Cape buffalo, also known as the **African buffalo**, is a large African bovid species known for its strength, unpredictable behavior, and ecological significance. Below are key details about this species:



Classification

- **Scientific Name:** Syncerus caffer
- **Family:** Bovidae
- **Order:** Artiodactyla

- **Conservation Status:** Conservation Status: Near Threatened (IUCN Red List)
 - Global population: 569,000–573,000 individuals, with about 398,000–401,000 mature individuals.
- **Habitat and Distribution**
 - Found primarily in **sub-Saharan Africa**, Cape buffalo inhabit a variety of ecosystems, including grasslands, savannas, swamps, and forests.
 - They are most abundant in East and Southern Africa, including countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, and South Africa.

Behavior and Ecology

- **Social Structure:** Cape buffalo are highly social and live in herds ranging from a few individuals to several hundred. Herds provide protection from predators like lions and hyenas.
- **Diet:** Herbivorous, grazing on grasses and occasionally feeding on shrubs.
- **Predation:** While adults are formidable, young and injured individuals may fall prey to large predators.
- **Defense Mechanism:** Cape buffalo are known for their aggressive behavior and will charge predators or threats, making them one of the most dangerous animals in Africa.

Economic and Ecological Importance

- **Ecosystem Role:** As grazers, they help maintain grassland ecosystems and influence vegetation patterns.
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Conflicts arise when buffalo damage crops or pose threats to livestock and humans.

Conservation Concerns

- Although currently classified as Least Concern, Cape buffalo face threats from:
 - **Habitat loss** due to agricultural expansion and deforestation.
 - **Diseases** like bovine tuberculosis and rinderpest, which can spread to livestock.
 - **Poaching** for meat and horns.

Cape Buffalo vs. Other Bovids

- Unlike domestic cattle, Cape buffalo have never been domesticated due to their unpredictable and aggressive nature.

Cultural and Tourism Significance

- Cape buffalo are part of Africa's "Big Five" game animals, making them popular among tourists and safari-goers.

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

Syllabus: GS-3: Environmental Pollution.

Context:

- **Region at Risk:** Millions in the Indo-Gangetic plain and Himalayan foothills face persistent exposure to hazardous air pollution.

Major findings:

- **PM2.5 Levels:**
 - Reported levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) as high as $300 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in November 2024.
 - These levels are **20 times higher** than the WHO daily guideline of $15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
 - Causes severe health risks and high premature death rates in South Asia.
- **Health Impact:** Air pollution was the **second leading risk factor for early death globally in 2021**, with South Asia accounting for approximately **2 million premature deaths annually**.

ICIMOD's Air Quality Dashboard

- **Objective:** Addressing air pollution as a public health crisis by providing real-time and forecasted data on air quality.
- **Technology and Features:**
 - **Ground Sensor Data + Satellite Imagery:** Comprehensive monitoring at local, sub-regional, and regional levels.
 - **Dynamic Timelapse:**

- Powered by the Weather Research and Forecasting model coupled with Chemistry (**WRF-Chem**).
- Visualizes the spread of PM2.5 plumes and identifies pollution hotspots like **Lahore, New Delhi, and Kolkata**.
- **Interaction Insights:** Allows users to study how weather patterns interact with air pollution sources, revealing causes of pollution outbreaks and trends.
- **Forecasting:** Offers **two-day air quality forecasts** for actionable insights.

Regional Challenges and Impacts

- **Transboundary Pollution:**
 - Affects millions across South Asia, highlighting the need for regional cooperation.
 - Examples include smog episodes leading to **school closures in Lahore and northern India**.
- **Pollution Trends:** Visualization of pollution spreading from the Indo-Gangetic plain and Himalayan foothills into the Bay of Bengal.

Significance of the Dashboard

- **Stakeholder Support:**
 - Empowers policymakers, researchers, and communities with actionable data.
 - Aids in anticipating air quality conditions and formulating mitigation strategies.
- **Collaboration and Accountability:** Promotes regional cooperation to combat transboundary air pollution effectively.
- **Policy Implications:** Underlines the urgency of addressing pollution at its source and prioritizing **vulnerable populations** in mitigation efforts.

Conclusion

ICIMOD's Air Quality Dashboard represents a significant technological and collaborative step toward mitigating the hazardous air pollution in South Asia, emphasizing the need for **regional accountability** and **sustainable solutions** to protect public health.

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