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सत्यमेव जयते



MK Yadav Sir

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HALLMARKING OF GOLD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Context: To protect consumers and enhance their confidence in **hallmarked gold jewellery,** the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has prohibited - from April 1 - their sale and also that of gold artefacts without a six digit alphanumeric Hallmark Unique Identification Number (HUID).

- BIS also plans to bring **gold bullion** under mandatory hallmarking.

Hallmarking of gold

- **About**: Hallmarking is the "**accurate determination and official recording** of the proportionate content of precious metal in precious metal articles."
  - So, it is like a "**guarantee of purity or fineness**" of precious metal articles.
- **Nodal Agency**: The **Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS)** operates a gold and silver hallmarking scheme in India.
  - The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the **National Standards Body** of India under Department of Consumer affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India.
  - It is established by the **Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016.**
- **Metals covered**:
  - **Gold** jewellery and gold artefacts.
  - **Silver** jewellery and silver artefacts.
- **Exceptions**:
  - **Export and re-import** of jewellery as per Trade Policy of Government of India - Jewellery for international exhibitions, jewellery for government-approved B2B domestic exhibitions.
  - **Watches, fountain pens and special types of jewellery** such as Kundan, Polki and Jadau.

Bullion

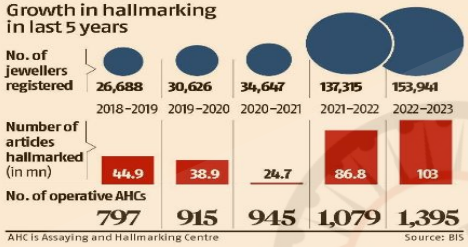
- **About**: Bullion refers to **physical gold and silver of high purity** that is often kept in the form of bars, ingots, or coins.
- **Legal Tender**: Bullion can sometimes be considered **legal tender**, and is often held as reserves by central banks or held by institutional investors.
- **Investments**: Investors can **buy or sell bullion through dealers** who are active on one of several global bullion markets.
  - Investing in gold and silver bullion can more easily be accomplished via **exchange-traded funds (ETFs) or futures contracts.**

Govt planning hallmarking of gold bullion mandatory: BIS



SHINING BRIGHT

Growth in hallmarking in last 5 years



AHC is Assaying and Hallmarking Centre

Source: BIS

PRATIGYA YADAV
New Delhi, 6 March

To protect consumers and enhance their confidence in hallmarked gold jewellery, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has prohibited — from April 1 — their sale and also that of gold artefacts without a six-digit alphanumeric Hallmark Unique Identification Number (HUID).

BIS also plans to bring gold bullion under mandatory hallmarking. Draft guidelines have already been prepared. It formed an advisory group last month and post group's consideration, guidelines will be issued. It has begun consultations with stakeholders including industry representatives and jewellers.

To date, old hallmarked jewellery with four marks without the HUID is permitted to be sold.

sumers.

"Jewellers had the main argument that they were not able to sell the stocks during the Covid period. We gave them almost two years to clear their four-digit hallmarked stocks but it was being misused by some of them. It's time to stop the selling of old hallmarked jewellery," said Pramod Kumar Tiwari, director general, BIS.

On the question of the short notice, Tiwari said several rounds of consultations were held with stakeholders, including jewellers. The Department of Consumer Affairs held a meeting with them on January 18 this year.

"We prohibited the production of jewellery without the HUID in June 2021 but we allowed jewellers to sell the existing stocks. If the old stocks were so huge, then new jewellery to such a large extent would not have been

LIBOR AND SOFR

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)



A First Since 2007: Libor Cracks 5% on Fed Hike Outlook

Benchmark rate for lending between banks hits 5.008%, highest in 15 years

Bloomberg

The three-month London interbank offered rate for dollars, a major global lending benchmark, surpassed 5% for the first time in more than 15 years on Monday.

The benchmark rate for lending between banks rose 2.4 basis points to 5.008%, the highest since December 2007. The spread of Libor over overnight index swaps — a barometer of funding pressure — widened to 3.2 bps from 1.7 bps the prior session.

Much of the recent surge in Libor, which is set to be phased out on June 30, has been driven by expectations for Fed policy tightening. Traders not only expect a higher terminal rate, but the Fed to stay at that level for a longer period than previously expected.

"The rise in Libor only makes sense as front-end rates continue to move higher on stronger data and expectations for more Fed rate hikes," said TD Securities strategist Gennadiy Goldberg. "Libor-OIS remains quite tight, hinting at few funding pressures."

3.2bps
SPREAD OF LIBOR OVER OVERNIGHT INDEX SWAPS*
*A barometer of funding pressure

While Libor is moving in line with many other short-term rates, there are other elements that feed into the daily setting, including the backdrop for commercial paper transactions and broader credit conditions.

Context: The three-month **London interbank offered rate** for dollars, a major global lending benchmark, surpassed 5% for the first time in more than 15 years.

LIBOR AND SOFR

- **LIBOR**: LIBOR's full form is **London Interbank Offered Rate.**
  - LIBOR is a **benchmark for loan issuers** who wish to set interest rates for various financial products. Every day, 18 global banks participated in setting this value.
  - LIBOR is administered by the **Intercontinental Exchange,** which asks major global banks how much they would charge other banks for short-term loans.
  - The rate is calculated using the **Waterfall Methodology,** a standardized, transaction-based, data-driven, layered method.
  - LIBOR has been **subject to manipulation, scandal, and methodological critique,** making it less credible today as a benchmark rate.
  - LIBOR is being **replaced by the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR)** on June 30, 2023, with phase-out of its use beginning after 2021.
- **SOFR**: The secured overnight financing rate (SOFR) is a **benchmark interest rate for dollar-denominated derivatives and loans** that is replacing the London interbank offered rate (LIBOR).
  - SOFR is **based on transactions in the Treasury repurchase market**,where investors offer banks overnight loans backed by their bond assets.
  - It is seen as preferable to LIBOR since it is **based on data from observable transactions** rather than on estimated borrowing rates.
  - While SOFR is becoming the benchmark rate for dollar-denominated derivatives and loans, other countries have sought their own alternative rates, such as **SONIA and EONIA.**

INDIAN EXPRESS

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SWAMIH FUND

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

The SWAMIH investment fund: Who benefits?

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

THE SPECIAL Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Investment Fund I has raised Rs 15,530 crore so far to provide priority debt financing for the completion of stressed, brownfield and Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA)-registered residential projects that fall in the affordable, mid-income housing category. SWAMIH has so far provided final approval to about 130 projects with sanctions worth over Rs 12,000 crore.

EXPLAINED

What is the SWAMIH investment fund?

The Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Investment Fund I is a social impact fund specifically formed for completing stressed and stalled residential projects. The fund is sponsored by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and is managed by SBICAP Ventures Ltd., a State Bank Group company.

Since the Fund considers first time developers, established developers with troubled projects, developers with a poor track record of stalled projects, customer complaints and NPA accounts, even projects where there are litigation issues, it is considered as the lender of last resort for distressed projects. The Fund's presence in a project often acts as a catalyst for better collections and sales especially in projects that were delayed for years.

How many projects so far have been financed by the Fund?

SWAMIH has so far provided final approval to about 130 projects with sanctions worth over Rs 12,000 crore. The Fund has completed 20,557 homes and aims to complete over 81,000 homes in the next three years across 30 tier 1 and 2 cities.The Fund has been able to complete construction in 26 projects and generate returns for its investors, a government release said.

Launched in November 2019, it has raised Rs 15,530 crore so far with an aim to provide priority debt financing for the completion of stressed, brownfield and RERA registered residential projects that fall in the affordable, mid-income housing category.

Context: The **Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Investment Fund** I has raised Rs 15,530 crore so far to provide priority debt financing for the completion of stressed, brownfield and Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA)-registered residential projects that fall in the affordable, mid-income housing category.

Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Fund

- **About**: A government backed fund that was set up as a **Category-II AIF (Alternate Investment Fund)** debt fund registered with SEBI, launched in 2019.
  - Under this category, funds that are **invested in equity securities and debt securities** are included.
  - Those **funds not already under Category I and III** respectively are also included.
  - **No concession** is given by the government for any investment made for Category II AIFS.
- **Objectives**: Formed **to complete construction of stalled**, Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA)-registered affordable and mid-income category housing projects which are stuck due to paucity of funds.
- **Investment Manager of the Fund:** SBICAP Ventures is a **wholly-owned subsidiary** of SBI Capital Markets, which in turn is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the State Bank of India.
- **Sponsor of the Fund**: **Secretary**, Department of Economic Affairs, **Ministry of Finance**, on behalf of the Government of India.
- **Investor of the Fund:** Alternate Investment Funds created/funded under the **Special Window** would solicit investment from 14 investors:
  - With the **government holding 50%** of the fund.
  - **Life Insurance Corp. and State Bank of India** each having 10%.
  - The **rest with public and private-sector players** which will include cash-rich financial institutions, public and private banks, sovereign wealth funds, domestic pension and provident funds, global pension funds and other institutional investors.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** The **real estate projects seeking last-mile funding from SWAMIH** must be Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA)-registered which have been stalled due to a lack of adequate funds. Each of these projects must be very close to completion.
  - They must also **fall under the 'Affordable and Middle Income Project' category** (any housing projects wherein housing units do not exceed 200 sq.m.).
  - **Net-worth positive projects** are also eligible for SWAMIH funding.
    - Net-worth positive projects are those projects for which the value of their receivables (debts owed to them by buyers), plus the value of their unsold inventories is **greater than their completion costs and outstanding liabilities**

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MUSTARD CROP

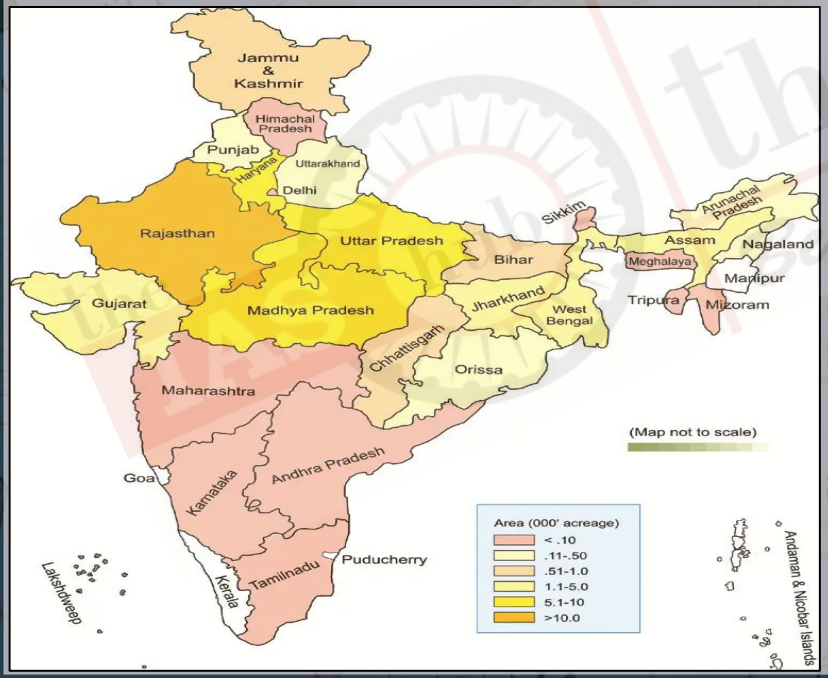
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Agriculture)

High production, palmolein imports to blame for low market price of rapeseed?

Mustard is a key oilseed crop for boosting domestic oilseed production and reducing the country's dependence on import of edible oil

By Shagun
Published: Monday 06 March 2023





Context: Mustard farmers are in a fix as the market prices of the rapeseed mustard crop were hovering close to the **minimum support price (MSP)** or even below in some areas the last few weeks.

- The government has declared an MSP of Rs 5,450 per quintal for rapeseed mustard for the current Rabi marketing season 2023-24.

Key points

- **Mustard is a key oilseed crop** for boosting domestic oilseed production and reducing the country's dependence on import of edible oil.
- **India imports around 56 per cent** of the edible oil it consumes annually.
  - **China is the largest producer** of mustard in the world. China, India and Pakistan grow about 90% of the world production of mustard.
- Of the 44 percent it produces domestically, **mustard has the highest share of 39 per cent,** followed by soybean at 24 per cent and groundnut at seven per cent.
- As of February 3, 2023, the **area under mustard in 2022-23 crop season was recorded to be 9.8 million hectares,** an increase of 777,000 ha compared to 2021-22 crop season, according to data uploaded by the agriculture department.
- While one of the reasons for reduced rates can be an increase in the quantity of mustard, another reason was the **heavy imports of refined palmolein.**
- The Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) blamed **unbridled imports of palmolein (refined palm oil)** for the collapse of edible oil prices.
- The body suggested that **palmolein should be put under restricted category** or the differential between crude palm oil and palmolein be raised to minimum 20 per cent to discourage import of palmolein.

INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - International Relations)

India, Russia agree to boost bilateral trade

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Foreign minister **S Jaishankar** held a virtual meeting with Russia's deputy PM and minister for trade and industry Denis Manturov and co-chaired the India-Russia Inter-governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC).



Both sides agreed to work together to unlock the full potential of India-Russia bilateral trade and economic relations including through addressing the trade deficit and market access issues, said the government in a statement.

IRIGC-TEC is a mechanism for regularly monitoring bilateral progress across the sectors of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. It was set up by an agreement on Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation signed in May 1992. So far, 23 IRIGC meetings have been held.

"The co-chairs reviewed the progress achieved in the various working group and sub-group meetings under the IRIGC-TEC framework since their meeting in Moscow in November 2022 and gave guidance to prepare ground for the next in person meeting of IRIGC-TEC which will be held in New Delhi at mutually convenient dates," said the government.

70 studying medicine in Ukraine pass examination to practise in India

A year after they were forced to discontinue their course and abruptly flee from Ukraine amid a raging war, about 70 medical students from India received their Foreign Medical Graduate Examination degrees at a ceremony in Hyderabad, on Monday, reports **NirupaVatyam.** The students were at the fag end of their six-year degree at Zaporizhzhia State Medical University, when war struck. "We had to run from the country to save our lives," recollected Salugu Shailaja from Warangal, during the graduation ceremony organised at AIG Hospitals, Gachibowli.

Dr Divya Raj Reddy, director, Neo Institute of Medical Sciences (CEO), said that 70% of the students — 72 out of over 110 — clearing FMGE in the first attempt is a great achievement.

Context: Foreign minister held a virtual meeting with Russia's deputy PM and minister for trade and industry and co-chaired the **India-Russia Inter-governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC).**

- **IRIGC-TEC** is a mechanism for regularly monitoring bilateral progress across the sectors of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.
- It was set up by an agreement on Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation signed in May **1992**.

Institutional Framework for Bilateral Cooperation between India and Russia

- **Government-to-Government:**
  - **IRIGC-TEC** is the apex G2G forum for bilateral economic cooperation. It is chaired by the External Affairs Minister from the Indian side and Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.
  - **India-Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue (IRSED)** is another G2G mechanism co-chaired by Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog on Indian side and Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation. There are six coordination committees under the IRSED in six areas– Transport, Agriculture, Digital transformation, SMEs, Trade and Banking and Tourism.
- **Business-to-Business:**
  - Conscious efforts are being made by both India and Russia to promote **establishment of new contacts and wider cooperation** between commercial and industrial circles and business associations of the two countries.
  - India and Russia have agreed to have enhanced Indian participation in the prestigious **Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).**
  - **Eastern Economic Forum** is another important platform for engagement between businesses of both sides.
  - A **business delegation of over 20 women entrepreneurs** from FICCI visited Moscow and St Petersburg during September 20-24 to explore opportunities for Indian business in Russia, particularly for women entrepreneurs.

- **Regional Engagements:**
  - Collaboration between States of India and Regions of Russia in the **trade and economic sphere** is an important pillar of overall bilateral relations.
  - There exist **many sister-city/state arrangements** between the two countries which include economic cooperation.
  - For the Far East, in continuation of the **Act-Far East focus,** NITI Aayog and Ministry for Development of Russian Far East and Arctic of the Russian Federation are in the process of finalizing the five-year programme 2021-2025 of cooperation in the region.
- **Banking Links:**
  - Development of banking links between India and Russia has witnessed some concrete progress. Several Russian banks have **opened their Representative Offices/Branches in India.**
  - Commercial Bank of India LLC (JV of two major Indian banks: SBI & Canara Bank) is providing banking services in Russia.

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EXERCISE FRINJEX-23

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - International Relations)

INDO-FRANCE JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE FRINJEX-2023 TO COMMENCE AT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Context: The maiden **Joint Military Exercise FRINJEX-23 between Indian Army and French Army** will be conducted at Pangode Military Station, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on 07th and 08th March 2023.

Exercise FRINJEX-23

- **About**: It is the **first joint military exercise** between the Indian Army and French Army.
  - This is the first time the two countries have engaged in a military exercise in a **team format** consisting of a company group.
- **Objective**: Enhancing interoperability, coordination, and cooperation between both forces at the tactical level.
- **Theme**: Based on "**Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations in a Contested Environment**".

Other Indian-France Military Exercises

- **Exercise Garuda**: Air Force
- **Exercise Varuna**: Navy
- Exercise Shakti: Army

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GREENHOUSE GAS PLATFORM

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

UN takes new measures to fight climate change

Agence France Presse
GENEVA

The UN announced on Monday that it had taken a significant step towards trying to fill a key gap in the fight against climate change: standardised, real-time tracking of greenhouse gases.

The UN's World Meteorological Organization has come up with a new Global Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Infrastructure that aims to provide better ways of measuring planet-warming pollution and help inform policy choices.

The WMO's new platform will integrate space-based and surface-based observing systems, and seek to clarify uncertainties about where greenhouse gas emissions end up. It should result in much faster and sharper data on how the planet's atmosphere is changing.

Context: The U.N.'s World Meteorological Organisation has come up with a new **Global Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Infrastructure** that aims to provide better ways of measuring planet-warming pollution and help inform policy choices.

- The WMO's new platform will **integrate space-based and surface-based observing systems**, and seek to clarify uncertainties about where greenhouse gas emissions end up.
- The three major greenhouses gases are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Of those, **CO2 accounts for around 66% of the warming effect on the climate.**

Greenhouse gas monitoring

- It is the **direct measurement** of greenhouse gas emissions and levels.
- There are several **different methods** of measuring carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere, including infrared analyzing and manometry.
- **Methane and nitrous oxide** are measured by other instruments.
- Greenhouse gases are measured from space such as by the **Orbiting Carbon Observatory and networks of ground stations** such as the Integrated Carbon Observation System.

Global Warming Potential of Primary Greenhouse Gases

Greenhouse Gas	Chemical formula	Global Warming Potential [Time Horizon] 20 years	100 years
Carbon Dioxide	CO_2	1	1
Methane	CH_4	42-70	16-26
Nitrous Oxide	N_2O	280	310
Hydrofluorocarbons	HFCs	460 - 9,100	140-11,700
Perfluorocarbon	PFCs	4,400-6,200	6,500-23,900
Sulphur Hexafluoride	SF_6	16,300	23,900

INDIAN EXPRESS

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GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

CEA regulations violate SC rules, pose threat to endangered species: petitioners

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 6

THE CENTRAL Electricity Authority (CEA) has issued Draft Central Electricity Authority (Construction of Electric Lines in Great Indian Bustard Area) Regulations, 2023, according to which all electric lines of 33 kV and below passing through the 'Great Indian Bustard Area' will be underground, while those above 33KV will be overhead lines installed with bird flight diverters.

The regulations, issued on February 1, came in light of a case in the Supreme Court on the issue of threat to the endangered Great Indian Bustards. The petitioners in the Supreme Court case have objected to the regulations, saying they are in direct violation of the court's directives and a threat to the endangered species.

According to the SC order issued on April 19, 2021, all electricity lines passing through the Great Indian Bustard territory needs to be underground – this is for both existing as well as new electricity lines. However, none of the existing lines have been moved underground. "Yes, the new lines are being laid underground but when the authority says that power lines under 33KV voltage will go underground, this primarily means 11, 13 and 15KV lines – which are anyway exempt," says petitioner M K Ranjit Sinh, former director, wildlife, and the chair of the committee on cheetahs set up by the government. The CEA had called for objections and suggestions from the public by March 3.

"This is an attempt by the CEA to circumvent the Supreme Court orders, and we have made this clear in the feedback that we have sent them," says Sinh.



Great Indian Bustard

EXPLAINED

Critically endangered species

THE GREAT Indian Bustard is one of the heaviest flying birds in the world and has disappeared from 90% of its habitat except in parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has categorised the species as 'critically endangered'. According to the petitioners, overhead power lines are the biggest threat to the birds.

Great Indian bustard national park names	Location (India)
Desert National Park	Rajasthan
Kutch Bustard Sanctuary	Gujarat
Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary	Maharashtra
Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary	Andhra Pradesh
Gaga Wildlife Sanctuary	Gujarat
Karera and Ghatigaon Sanctuary Sanctuary	Madhya Pradesh

Context: The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has issued **Draft Central Electricity Authority (Construction of Electric Lines in Great Indian Bustard Area) Regulations, 2023**, according to which all electric lines of 33 kV and below passing through the 'Great Indian Bustard Area' will be underground, while those above 33KV will be overhead lines installed with bird flight diverters.

- According to the SC order issued on April 19, 2021, all electricity lines passing through the Great Indian Bustard territory **needs to be underground** - this is for both existing as well as new electricity lines. However, none of the existing lines have been moved underground.

Great Indian Bustard

- **About**: It is the **State bird of Rajasthan** and is considered India's most critically endangered bird.
- **Flagship species:** It is considered the flagship grassland species, **representing the health of the grassland ecology.**
- **Habitat**: The bird originally belonged to the Indian subcontinent.
  - It is mainly discovered in Desert National park (Rajasthan), Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and even in some parts of Pakistan.
- **Threats**: The bird is under constant threats due to **collision/electrocution with power transmission lines,** hunting (still prevalent in Pakistan), habitat loss and alteration as a result of widespread agricultural expansion, etc.
- **Protection Status:**
  - **International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List:** Critically Endangered
  - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**: Appendix I
  - **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS):** Appendix I
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule 1

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NPDRR

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Disaster Management)

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to inaugurate 3rd Session of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 10th March, 2023

Context: Prime Minister will inaugurate 3rd Session of the **National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR)** at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 10th March, 2023.

- The theme of the third Session of NPDRR is "**Building Local Resilience in a Changing Climate"**, which is aligned with the **10-Point Agenda promulgated by the Prime Minister of India**, to build local capacities, especially in the context of a rapidly changing disaster risk scenario in the wake of climate change.

National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR)

- **About**: The NDPRR was **established by the Indian government in 2013** to bring together all segments of the disaster risk community in India, including government officials, parliamentarians, mayors, the media, international agencies, non governmental organisations, representatives from local communities, scientific and academic institutions, and corporate businesses, among others.
- **Functions**: It facilitates the **exchange of experiences, views, and ideas,** presents the results of research and action, and explores the possibility of cooperating across continents.
    - As a result of this platform, **National Action Plans on Disaster Risk Reduction** will have a strategic direction and an action plan.
- **Organisational Structure:** The **Union Home Minister chairs the NPDRR,** which is also headed by the Minister of State in charge of Disaster Management in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Vice- Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority.
    - In the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Special Secretary/Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary responsible for the Disaster Management Division acts as the convener of NPDRR.

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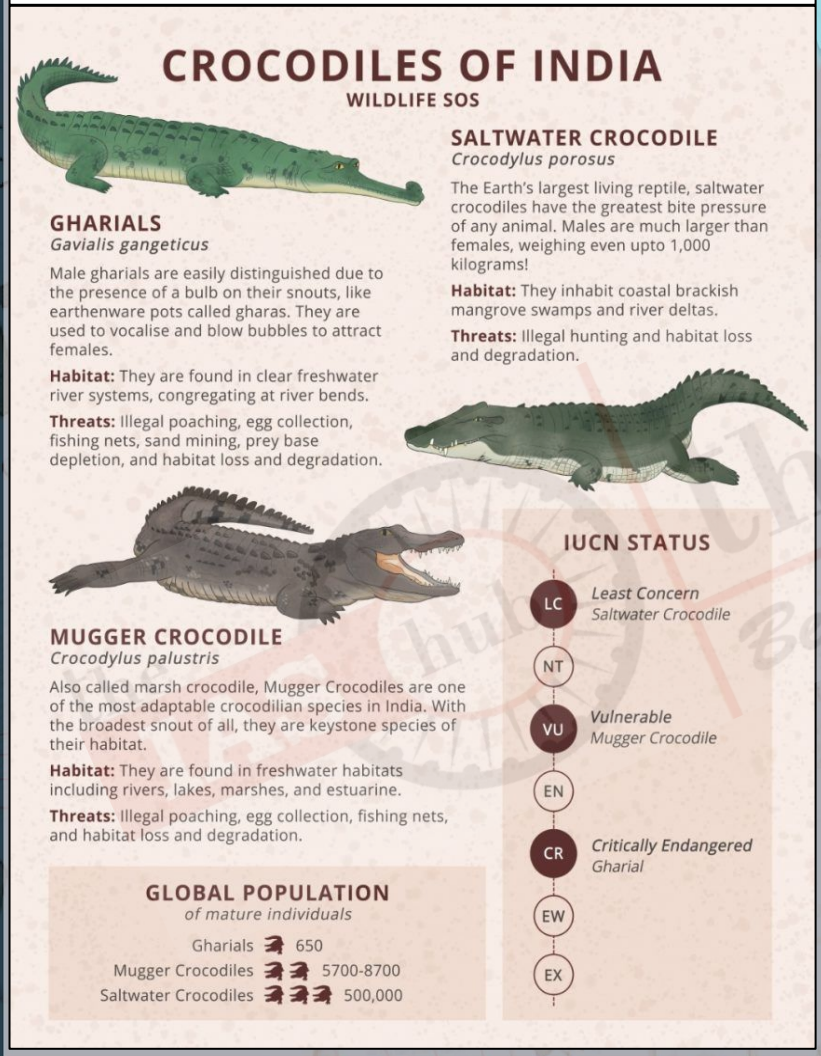
MARCH 7

MUGGER CROCODILES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Muggers of Rapti: Anthropogenic threats pose risk to saurians in Nepal's Chitwan National Park, says study

Park authorities should provide local communities with nature guide training, low interest bank loans for farming and job recruitment in the park office to reduce risks to muggers, say authors



Context: Anthropogenic threats like illegal fishing and sand mining pose a threat to the **mugger crocodiles (Crocodylus plaustris)** of the Rapti river flowing along the **Chitwan National Park (CNP)** in south-central Nepal, contiguous to the Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar, according to a recent study.

Key points

- The **mugger or marsh crocodile** is one of the 24 extant species of crocodilians found globally. It is **found India, Pakistan, Nepal and Iran.**
- The species is listed as **'Vulnerable'** in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List.
- It has been listed on **Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species** of Wild Fauna and Flora since 1975.
- In Nepal, muggers are found in the **Terai lowlands** near the border with India.
- The species has **become extinct locally** in many parts of Nepal due to habitat loss despite being protected by law.
- Muggers have a **sympatric distribution with gharials in the Rapti and Narayani River of Chitwan National Park**, but more research and conservation attention has been focused on gharials in Nepal.
- The **Rapti originates in the Mahabharata Hills** and lower range of the Himalayas and flows westward along the northern border of the CNP.
- The surveys were conducted along a 52 km river stretch from Jindagani Ghat (the eastern side) to **Golaghat (Rapti-Narayani confluence)** on the western side.

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