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MK Yadav Sir

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LIVE MINT

Page 1

RBI GOLD RESERVE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

RBI fattens gold reserves as it braces for global uncertainty

Anirudh Laskar & Ram Sahgal

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) acquired about 10 tonnes of gold in the March quarter, placing it among the top five gold buyers in that period as central banks seek to diversify their reserves amid economic uncertainties, according to bullion market experts.

The recent purchases have swelled RBI's total gold reserve to just under 800 tonnes, marking a new record for the central bank. Prior to this, RBI acquired about 27 tonnes between April and December 2022.

"RBI has bought close to 40 tonnes of gold in FY23 with an uptrend in the gold price and weakness in other assets, including dollars," a bullion expert said on the condition of anonymity.

The official data on India's gold reserves for the March quarter is yet to be made public by miner's body World Gold Council (WGC)

A query sent to the spokesperson for RBI on its gold-buying programme remained unanswered.

RBI has consistently increased its gold holdings for the past five fiscal years through February 2023, according to research by the World Gold Council (WGC) and Mint. In total, the bank procured about 230 tonnes of gold during this period to bolster its reserves amid rising global economic uncertainty and geopolitical tensions, which threaten to diminish the value of the world's reserve currency, the dollar.

Experts and economists expect the trend to continue.

"Purchases from emerging markets central banks remain high, which should act as a floor for the gold price," said a 24 April report by Swiss private lender Bank J. Safra Sarasin Ltd.

RBI, in the March quarter, has emerged as one of the top five gold buyers in the world, including Singapore, Russia, China and Turkey, as shown by the Swiss bank.

Gold price gained 9% in the January-March 2023 period. "A surge in March to record the highest monthly inflows since 2019 reversed two weak months for global gold ETFs and futures investment," according to a WGC April report.

After buying 200 tonnes from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2009, RBI didn't add much yellow metal to its reserves.

However, from FY18, RBI has steadily increased its gold reserve from 560.3 tonnes to 790.2 tonnes as of February 2023 end, according to WGC, which collates data from IMF.

The latest WGC data on

TURN TO PAGE 6

Shine to yellow

RBI has been building its gold reserves over the years. The trend of central banks diversifying their reserves with gold is expected to continue amid global uncertainties.



SATISH KUMAR/MINT

Context: The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** acquired about 10 tonnes of gold in the March quarter, placing it among the **top five gold buyers** in that period as central banks seek to diversify their reserves amid economic uncertainties, according to bullion market experts.

- The recent purchases have swelled RBI's total gold reserve to just under 800 tonnes, marking **a new record for the central bank.**
- Prior to this, RBI acquired about 27 tonnes between April and December 2022.

Key Points

- **India's Forex Reserve include**: Foreign Currency Assets, **Gold reserves**, Special Drawing Rights and Reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- The gold reserves will help the central banks around the globe to focus on the **measures needed to contain the global economic impact.**
- Gains or losses on valuation of foreign currency assets and gold due to movements in the exchange rates and/or price of gold are booked under a balance sheet head named the **Currency and Gold Revaluation Account (CGRA).**
    - **CGRA represents the value of the gold** and foreign currency that the RBI holds on behalf of India.
    - It shows funds that are available to compensate RBI's loss in the value of gold and foreign exchange reserve holdings.
    - The **balances in CGRA provide a buffer** against exchange rate/gold price fluctuations.

BUSINESS STANDARD

Page 1

PM GATI SHAKTI

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Infrastructure)

Private sector may get limited access to Gati Shakti portal

DPIIT prepares draft framework for data sharing

SHREYA NANDI
New Delhi, 2 May

With an eye on national security and data privacy, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has finalised a draft framework for sharing the Gati Shakti national master plan data with the private sector.

The framework will entail details of the extent of "viewing rights", as well as access rights to social and economic infrastructure-related data with a private entity.

Currently, only state and central government ministries and departments can access the portal for detailed planning and implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects in a time-bound manner.

"While we want to share the data with the private sector, we need to be cautious regarding the extent of data that will be shared. The wealth of data in the national master plan should not be misused. A draft framework has already been developed," a senior government official said. The framework will be rolled out after getting comments and views from relevant ministries.

Turn to Page 6



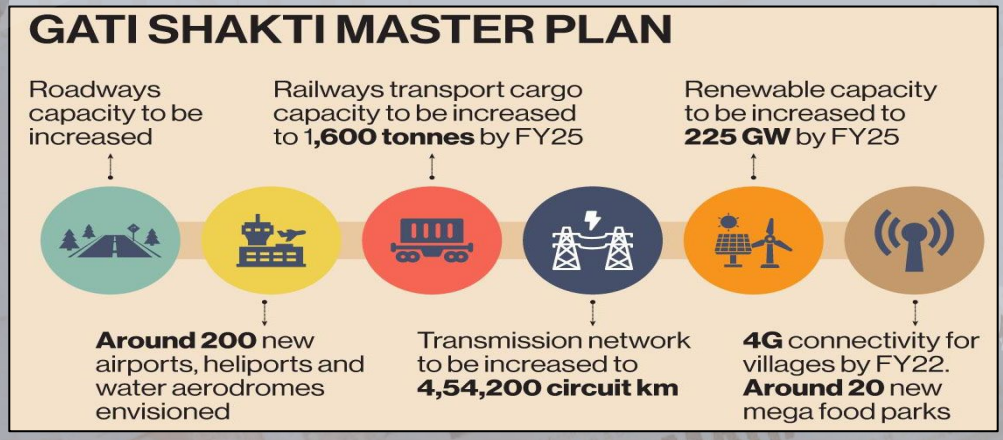
- **Gati Shakti master plan was launched in Oct 2021** for planning multimodal infra connectivity to economic nodes
- **It is a GIS-enabled platform that has integrated data layers** of roads, railway, ports, inland waterways, telecom lines, etc
- **Can help private players in execution of infra projects,** depending on the extent to which data is shared with them

Context: With an eye on national security and data privacy, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** has finalised a draft framework for sharing the **Gati Shakti national master plan** data with the private sector.

- The framework will entail details of the extent of **"viewing rights",** as well as access rights to social and economic infrastructure related data with a private entity.
- Currently, **only state and central government ministries and departments can access the portal** for detailed planning and implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects in a time bound manner.

PM Gati Shakti

- **About**: PM Gati Shakti plan envisages a **centralised portal to unite the infrastructural initiatives** planned and initiated by as many as 16 central ministries and departments.
- **Objectives**: GatiShakti targets to **cut logistic costs, increase cargo handling capacity** and reduce the turnaround time.
  - It is a **campaign to lend more speed (Gati) and power (Shakti)** to projects by connecting all concerned departments on one platform.
  - This way, the **infrastructure schemes of various ministries** and state governments will be designed and executed with a common vision.
- **Pillars**: PM Gati Shakti is based on six pillars: **Comprehensiveness, Prioritization, Optimization, Synchronization, Analytics and Dynamic.**



INDIAN EXPRESS

Page 17

STAND-OFF BETWEEN IAMAI AND START-UP

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Infrastructure)

Why Indian start-ups have accused IAMAI of spreading 'Big Tech propaganda'

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, MAY 2

THERE IS a widening rift between some Indian start-ups and the industry body Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). Prominent founders of some of the company's new age businesses have accused IAMAI of "promoting the views" of big tech companies, and have called into question its organisational structure, which is led by representatives of tech companies like Google and Meta.

The tussle signals towards a growing divide between Indian start-ups and the Big Tech, with the former increasingly framing the debate as a 'foreign versus local' issue, irked by policies they say are often imposed on them by the bigger companies.

The rift

The latest stand-off emanated after the IMAI criticised the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Finance to introduce a new law to tackle Big Tech firms' anti-competitive practices, claiming that it would stifle innovation.

"IAMAI is concerned that the recommendations in the Report (of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Finance) are neither targeted nor proportionate," the industry body said in its submission.

To curb anti-competitive practices in digital markets, the panel, last December had proposed ex-ante regulations, category of systemically important digital intermediaries and a new digital competition law.

It also asked digital market entities to desist from "anti-steering", "deep discounting", "self preferencing", "search & ranking preferencing" and other practices that will impact competition in the market.

Unimpressed by the recommendations, IAMAI said, "Lack of a well-articulated policy objective, (and) failure to adopt an evidence-based approach to identify the need for the regulation, have led to ambiguous, broad recommendations (in the report), which will stifle innovation, competition and the benefit that accrues to markets and users".

IAMAI's submission was similar to the comments submitted by the Asia Internet Coalition (AIC), which also counts big tech companies like Meta, Apple, Amazon, Twitter, and Google, among others.

EXPLAINED E.

The reactions

IAMAI's submission drew sharp criticism from some prominent Indian start-up founders, who accused the industry grouping of furthering views of big tech companies.

"It's distressing to know that IAMAI is parroting and promoting views that are anti-Indian and pro-foreign Big Tech," said Rohan Verma, CEO, MapMyIndia.

"I hope everyone realises that the chair and vice chair of IAMAI are from the foreign Big Tech. Sad to see an organisation originally founded by and for Indian companies, taken over & now promoting a false narrative."

Verma, who is building a competing product for Google Maps, was referring to IAMAI's executive council which is currently chaired by Sanjay Gupta, country head and vice president of Google, and Shivnath Thukral, public policy director for India at WhatsApp, who is vice-chairman.

Founder of Shaadi.com and judge and one of the investors in Shark Tank India, Anupam Mittal also weighed in on the issue. "Start-ups are strongly in favour of a strong anti-monopoly Digital Act. In fact, IAMAI is a failing lobby for BigTech propaganda and misinformation," Mittal said in a tweet.

Flashback

This is not the first time that start-ups have criticised IAMAI for its views on key policy issues. Earlier this year, a number of online gaming companies, that are also members of IAMAI, had written to Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) opposing the industry body's submission on draft online gaming rules that the scoping of the rules was done poorly" and the some aspects needed a "major re-look".

Context: There is a widening rift between some Indian start-ups and the industry body **Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).**

- Prominent founders of some of the country's new age businesses have accused the IAMAI of "**promoting the views" of big tech companies** such as Google and Meta and have called into question its organisational structure, which is led by representatives of such tech companies.

Background

- The latest stand-off came after the IAMAI criticised the **recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance** to introduce a new law for tackling Big Tech firms' anti-competitive practices.
- To **curb anti-competitive practices** in digital markets, the panel proposed measures in December 2022 like having ex-ante regulations, which are meant to protect consumers by requiring companies to follow certain standards of behaviour, as opposed to post-ante regulations that can only punish an entity after it has breached a law.

Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)

- **About**: It is a **not-for-profit industry body** representing the interests of online and mobile value added services industry.
  - It is registered under The **Societies Registration Act, 1860.**
- **Objectives**: Its mandate is to **expand and enhance the online and mobile value** added services sector.
  - It is **dedicated to presenting a unified voice** of the businesses it represents, to the government, investors, consumers and other stakeholders.

PIB

MAY 3

FASTag

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Infrastructure)

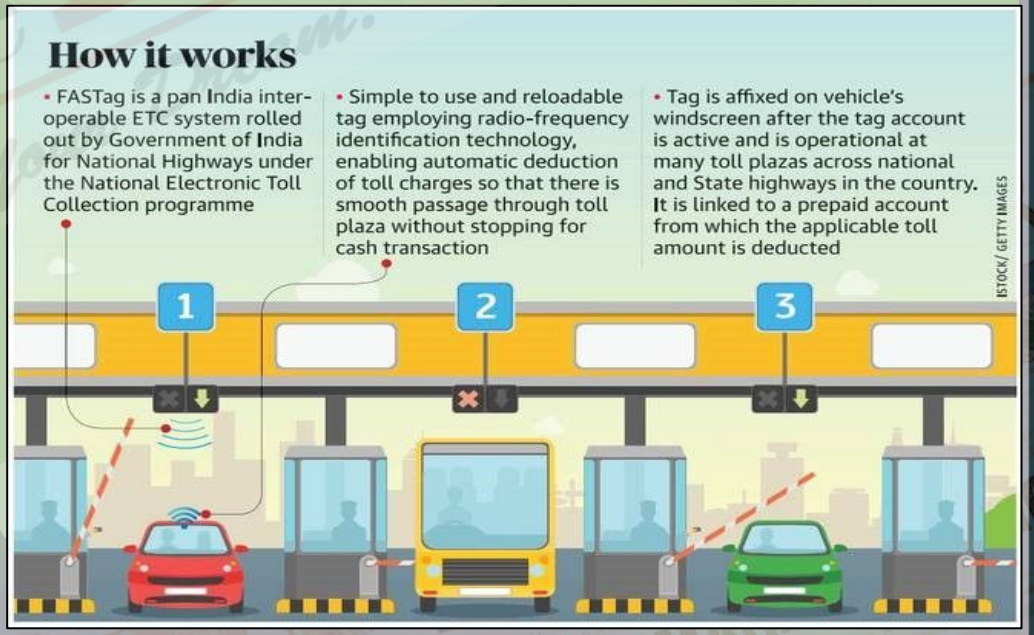
Daily Toll Collection Through FASTag Reaches Record High of Over Rs. 193 Crore

Context: Since FASTag was mandated by the Government in February 2021, the number of toll plazas under **FASTag programme** has increased from 770 to 1,228, including 339 state toll plazas.

- With a **penetration rate of around 97 percent and over 6.9 crore FASTag issued to users**, the system has significantly improved the user experience by reducing waiting times at NH Fee Plazas.

FASTag

- **About**: FASTag is an easy-to-use, reloadable tag that is **affixed on our vehicle's windscreen.**
  - It was **rolled out in April 2016.**
- **Implementing agency**: **Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCL)** (a company incorporated by National Highways Authority of India) and National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) are implementing this program.
  - FASTag is presently **operating at both, national and state highways.**
- **Key Features**: It enables **automatic deduction** of toll charges, so one can pass through toll plazas without stopping to pay the fees manually.
  - FASTag is **linked to a prepaid account** from which the applicable toll amounts are deducted.
  - The tag makes use of **Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) technology** to ensure that the relevant charges are automatically deducted from our prepaid account.
  - A FASTag is **valid for five years**, and can be recharged as and when required.
  - It comes in **seven different colours** - violet, orange, yellow, green, pink, blue, black. Each colour is assigned to a particular category of vehicles.



PIB

MAY 3

MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Polity & Governance)

ECI issues advisory to all Star Campaigners, recognized National & State Political Parties in view of plummeting level of campaign discourse in the ongoing GE to Karnataka Legislative Assembly

Context: The Election Commission of India, taking serious note of plummeting level of campaign discourse during ongoing General Election to Karnataka Legislative Assembly has **issued an advisory to all National and State Parties and candidates to exercise caution and restraint** in their utterances during campaigning and not to vitiate the election atmosphere.

- In the advisory, ECI has invited the attention of the political parties to the provisions of **Model Code of Conduct** and other statutory provisions which hold the field and fix the framework of the expected campaign discourse.

Model code of conduct (MCC)

- **About:** A set of guidelines i**ssued by the Election Commission** to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections, to ensure free and fair elections.
- **Origin**:The form of the MCC was **first introduced** in the state assembly elections in **Kerala** in 1960.
  - The Election Commission issued the code for the first time in **1971 (5th General Election)** and revised it from time to time.
- **A consensus document**: This set of norms has been e**volved with the consensus of political parties** who have consented to abide by the principles embodied in the said code and also binds them to respect and observe it in its letter and spirit.
- **Not enforceable by law**: The EC uses **moral sanction or censure** for its enforcement.
- **Duration**: operational from the date that the election schedule is announced t**ill the date that results are announced**.
- **Key Provisions:** The MCC c**ontains eight provisions** dealing with general conduct, meetings, processions, polling day, polling booths, observers, party in power, and election manifestos.
  - The MCC **forbids ministers (of state and central governments) from using official machinery** for election work and from combining official visits with electioneering.
  - **Advertisements extolling** the work of the incumbent government using public money are to be avoided.
  - The government **cannot announce any financial grants,** promise construction of roads or other facilities, and make any ad hoc appointments in government or public undertaking during the time the Code is in force.
  - Ministers **cannot enter any polling station** or counting centre except in their capacity as a voter or a candidate.
  - MCC will also **apply to content posted** by political parties and candidates on the Internet, including on **social media sites.**

DTE

MAY 3

BLACK TIGER

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)



Context: The **death of a rare black tiger** reported after three decades in the **Similipal Tiger Reserve** in Odisha Mayurbhanj district could have a big impact on the population of the animals.

- The exact reason for the **tiger's death was not ascertained** immediately, but the injury marks on the carcass indicate it might have died while fighting with another big cat inside the sanctuary area.

Black Tiger

- Simlipal has the **world's highest rate of black tiger** sightings in the world.
- Black tigers were first officially recorded in the **forests of Similipal in 1975-76.**
    - The reserve had last reported eight tigers, according to the Tiger Status Report 2018.
- They are a rare colour variant of the tiger and are **not a distinct species or geographic subspecies.**
- The abnormally dark or black coat in such tigers is termed **pseudo melanistic or false coloured.**
- The tigers in the **Similipal Tiger Reserve** are an isolated population in eastern India and gene flow between them and other tiger populations is very restricted.
- The rare big cats with **distinctive dark stripe patterns** are Bengal tigers with a gene mutation and are only found in the region.

ECONOMIC TIMES

Page 8

ADB IF-CAP

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

ADB Unveils New Facility to Speed Up Climate Financing

Our Bureau

New Delhi: In an effort to accelerate climate financing, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday announced the Innovative Finance Facility for Climate in Asia and the Pacific (IF-CAP).

The programme is expected to help the ADB achieve its target of raising $100 billion from its own resources for climate change between 2019 and 2030.

"Climate change is the critical issue of our lifetime and here in Asia and the Pacific we are on the frontlines of that battle," ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa said on the opening day of the bank's 56th annual meeting in Incheon in South Korea.

The programme will rely on a leveraged guarantee mechanism, under which it is expected that initial $3 billion in guarantees will free up $15 billion in new loans for climate projects in Asia and the Pacific. This is the first time a multilateral institution is deploying such a mechanism for climate financing.

Denmark, Japan, South Korea, Sweden, the UK and the US are initial partners to the ADB's programme. They are expected to provide grants for project preparation along with guarantees for parts of the ADB's sovereign loan portfolios, which will allow the bank to free up capital to loan for climate projects.

"IF-CAP is an exciting, innovative programme that will have a real impact. And it is another example of how ADB serves as the climate bank for Asia and the Pacific," Asakawa said, pressing for bold action. "The climate events we have experienced over the past 12 months will only increase in intensity and frequency."

Context: In an effort to accelerate climate financing, the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** announced the **Innovative Finance Facility for Climate in Asia and the Pacific (IF-CAP).**

- The programme is expected to help the ADB achieve its target of **raising $100 billion from its own resources** for climate change between 2019 and 2030.

IF-CAP

- The Innovative Finance Facility for Climate in Asia and the Pacific, or IF-CAP, is **a multi-donor financing partnership facility** with the goal of scaling-up finance for accelerated action against climate change in Asia and the Pacific.
- IF-CAP partners **will provide guarantees for parts of ADB's sovereign loan portfolios** to enable ADB to free up capital to increase lending for climate investments.
- **Supplementary grants** will facilitate project preparation, capacity building, and knowledge solutions.
- IF-CAP will **allow ADB to significantly increase climate investments** that are aligned with the Paris Agreement and other key ADB policies, including the forthcoming Climate Change Action Plan.
- IF-CAP financing **will not support new fossil-fuel-based electricity generation**, consistent with ADB's energy policy approved in 2021.
- All ADB's **developing member countries (DMCs)** are eligible.
- **Individual financing partners** may exercise discretion for certain projects based on their policies and priorities.

TIMES OF INDIA

Page 3

NILGAI

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Nilgai may lose its 'status symbol'

Kushagra.Dixit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Nilgai could lose its state animal status in popular perception soon as the Delhi forest department has clarified that it has no document to support the claim that the large antelope was ever accorded this status.

The Delhi forest department made this clear in reply to an RTI query. "Delhi has a state bird, which is House Sparrow… Document is attached herewith for declaring House Sparrow as the State bird of Delhi…. No document is available on declaring the state animal and tree as per office records," the RTI reply said.

The RTI reply has come when the Union environment ministry's website has listed the Nilgai as the state animal of Delhi under the section of state symbols of India.

The forest department stated that a Delhi Gazette order dated October 5, 2012, has declared the house sparrow (Passer domesticas) the state bird on the recommendation of the National Board of Wildlife. The reply demolished another popular perception: that the Gulmohar is Delhi's state tree. A government website even says so, but the forest department differs.

How the Nilgai, found in the city's forests, came to be regarded as the state animal is unclear.

"A state animal is declared based on the uniqueness of the animal to that region, or its rarity. For example, the Sangai is unique to Manipur… For Delhi, the deciding factor should be the presence of any native species that still roams the wild. Generally, the state board and wildlife department decide such things," said Dr Bivash Pandav, a scientist at Wildlife Institute of India (WII)

Photo for representation



'There is no rule of thumb on deciding a state symbol'

According to forest officials, there is no rule of thumb on deciding a state symbol and it could be declared by a state board, either on recommendation of the state or central government.

However, conservation plays some part in the selection.

"Usually, a state animal is chosen keeping in mind that how protecting it would help in conserving biodiversity. We don't know how this perception developed, most of it coming from open sources. We don't have any document that shows there is a state animal and that too the Nilgai," a senior forest official said.

Context: The **Nilgai** could lose its **state animal status** in popular perception soon as the Delhi forest department has clarified that it has no document to support the claim that the large antelope was ever accorded this status.

Nilgai (Blue Bull - Boselaphus tragocamelus)

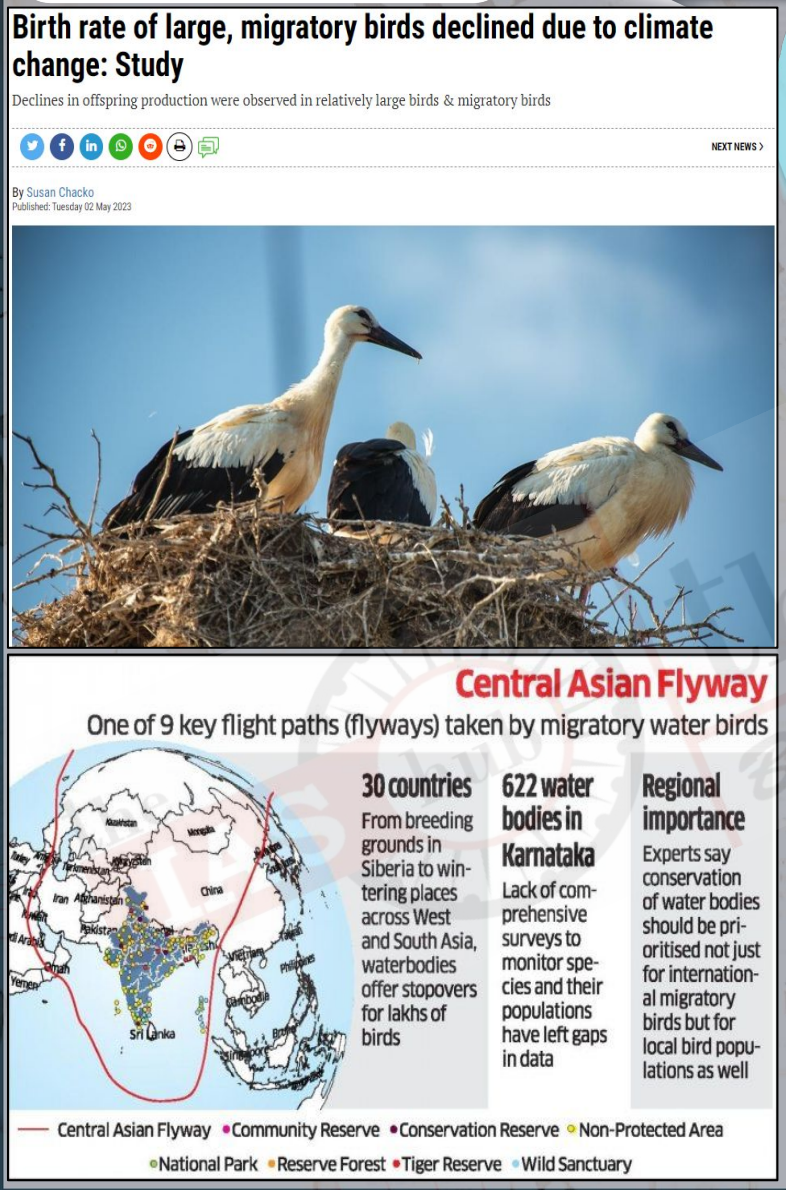
- **About**: It is the **largest Asian antelope** (family Bovidae).
  - The nilgai is **indigenous to the Indian subcontinent,** and Hindus accord it the same sacred status as cattle (both belong to the subfamily Bovinae).
  - Nilgai is the Hindustani word for "blue cow," which describes the **blue-grey of adult bulls.**
- **Key characteristics**: It has a **long neck** with a short upright mane, a bony narrow head, a barrel-like chest, strong legs, and high withers sloping back to the croup.
  - It is a **diurnal and social animal**. Generally, they are found in small herds of 4 to 20 individuals but can form large groups of 20 to 100 individuals.
  - However, the adult male is also seen alone wandering widely at old ages.
- **Habitat**: It **lives in a lightly wooded forest,** wooded grassland, scrub areas and agricultural areas and human settlements. Blue Bull usually avoids dense Forests
  - It is found in Nepal, India and Pakistan.
- **Threats**: It is seldom killed or injured in retaliation in response to **crop-raiding.**
  - The major threat to this species is **habitat loss and degradation due to human encroachment,** clearing of forest for agriculture and overgrazing of livestock in their habitats.
- **Conservation Status :**
  - The IUCN Red List of **Threatened Species** listed it as **Least Concern.**
  - It enjoys legal protection by virtue of the species having been included in **Schedule-III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**

DTE

MAY 3

MIGRATORY BIRDS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)



Birth rate of large, migratory birds declined due to climate change: Study

Declines in offspring production were observed in relatively large birds & migratory birds

NEXT NEWS >

By Susan Chacko
Published: Tuesday 02 May 2023

Central Asian Flyway

One of 9 key flight paths (flyways) taken by migratory water birds

30 countries
From breeding grounds in Siberia to wintering places across West and South Asia, waterbodies offer stopovers for lakhs of birds

622 water bodies in Karnataka
Lack of comprehensive surveys to monitor species and their populations have left gaps in data

Regional importance
Experts say conservation of water bodies should be prioritised not just for international migratory birds but for local bird populations as well

Central Asian Flyway • Community Reserve • Conservation Reserve • Non-Protected Area
• National Park • Reserve Forest • Tiger Reserve • Wild Sanctuary

Context: Climate change has **reduced the overall birth rate of bird species** across the world, a new study has found.

- Declines in offspring production were observed in relatively **large birds and migratory birds,** whereas species whose production increased were small-bodied and sedentary.

Key Points

- Some of the **species with the largest decreases in offspring production included:** Montagu's harriers and white storks (large and migratory), bearded vultures (large, non-migratory), roseate terns (moderate-sized, migratory), common house martins (small, migratory) and red-winged fairywrens (small, non-migratory).
- Species **with increased offspring production included** bulwer's petrel (medium-sized, migratory), Eurasian sparrowhawk (small, migratory raptor) and Eurasian wrynecks, collared flycatchers and prothonotary warblers (small and migratory).

Migratory birds in India

- India is a **temporary home** to several migratory animals and birds.
- The important among these include **Amur Falcons, Bar-headed Geese, Black-necked cranes, Marine turtles, Dugongs, Humpback Whales, etc.**
- The Indian sub-continent is also part of the major bird flyway network, i.e, the **Central Asian Flyway (CAF)** that covers areas between the Arctic and Indian Oceans.
- India is a signatory to the **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) or the Bonn Convention.**
    - It is an **international agreement** that aims to conserve migratory species throughout their ranges. The agreement was signed under the auspices of the **United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)** and is concerned with conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale.
- India has also launched the **National Action Plan for the conservation of migratory species** under the Central Asian Flyway.

DST

MAY 3

STARBERRYSENSE PAYLOAD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci & Tech)

First test launch of new low-cost star sensor developed from off-the-shelf components successfully conducted

Context: A new low-cost star sensor, **StarBerrySense payload**, developed by astronomers from off-the-shelf components was recently launched by ISRO on board PSLV C-55.

- In its first-ever space test, the sensor, which is mounted on the **PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM)**, is performing well, and the initial data has now validated its design as well as its function.
- POEM is an **experimental mission by ISRO** which performs in-orbit scientific experiments during the 4th stage of the PSLV launch vehicle as an orbital platform.
- POEM has a **dedicated Navigation Guidance and Control (NGC) system** for attitude stabilization, which stands for controlling the orientation of any aerospace vehicle within permitted limits.

Key Points

- The StarBerrySense payload **developed by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA),** an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), was launched on 22 April.
- This novel low-cost sensor designed to **quickly calculate where the satellite is pointing** is being tested in space for the very first time.
- The main function of StarBerrySense is to **image the field of view, correctly identify the stars it sees, and calculate the pointing direction.**
- This payload is built around the well-known **minicomputer RaspberryPi,** and the electronics and software were designed in-house.
- The advantage of this payload is that it is **cost-effective, simple to build,** and can be deployed on a wide variety of satellites.

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