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Science Reporter

विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
सत्यमेव जयते



MK Yadav Sir

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THE HINDU Page 4

MANUFACTURED SAND

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy & Infrastructure)

West Bengal gets its first M sand facility through CIL's green mining initiative

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA



The M sand making facility in West Bengal. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In an attempt towards environmental sustainability and reducing over-mining of sand, Coal India Limited (CIL) has started a facility in West Bengal to produce manufactured sand, the first such initiative in the State.

The manufactured sand is being produced, an estimated 3 lakh cubic metre per year, in the Kajora area of Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL), a subsidiary of CIL, from overburden material of open cast mines. Set up through private participation, the M sand facility has started operations since September 2022.

Sand is one of the major geological resources of the country and M sand is a form of artificial sand manufactured by crushing large hard stones into fine particles. "Conversion of overburden material into sand is a step to ensure environmental sustainability. Coal India Limited is committed to the cause of green mining." B. Veera Reddy, Director (Technical) of CIL said. The M sand produced will be used fully for captive purposes of ECL.

According to sources, ECL needs 12 lakh cubic metre per year sand for stowing (sand filling mined out portions) purposes in its underground mines. M Sand will, therefore, meet 25% of the sand requirement of ECL, bringing home immediate savings of an estimated ₹6 crore per year.

Pilot project

CIL forayed into OB (overburden)-to-sand manufacturing through a small pilot project at Nagpur-based Western Coalfields (WCL), a few years ago. PSU officials said that overwhelmed by the project's success , a second facility was established in WCL in 2021. At 6.10 lakh cubic metre per year production capacity, this is the largest such facility in India.

With the West Bengal facility, the CIL's total M Sand producing capacity stands at 9.86 lakh cubic metre per year. According to the company, six more M Sand projects of a combined capacity of 19.80 lakh cubic metre per year are under implementation. Of them, the 3.05 lakh cubic metre per year facility at Amlohri under Madhya Pradesh-headquartered Northern Coalfields (NCL), is scheduled to be on stream in the fourth quarter of 2022-23.

The CIL'S decision to manufacture sand is a step towards sustainability particularly when illegal mining from riverbeds and riverbanks have adverse affect on river morphology.

Context: In an attempt towards environmental sustainability and reducing over mining of sand, Coal India Limited (CIL) has started a facility in West Bengal to produce **manufactured sand (M-Sand)**, the first such initiative in the State.

Manufactured sand (M-Sand)

- **About**: A **substitute of river sand** for concrete construction.
- **Production**: It is **produced from hard granite** stone by crushing.
  - The crushed sand is of cubical shape with rounded edges, washed and graded to as a **construction material.**
  - The size of manufactured sand (M-Sand) is **less than 4.75mm.**
- **Manufactured in a three-stage process:**
  - **Crushing**: **Quarry and Rocks stones** are crushed at jaw crushers, cone crushers, and vertical shaft impact crushers, respectively leading into the formation of angular and cubical fine aggregate particles.
  - **Screening**: Screening ensures this material is **properly graded** that's similar to river sand.
  - **Washing**: Washing **removes all the micro-fine particles.** Also, fine aggregates for concrete and plaster sand are also formed.
- **Significance**:
  - It can be **dust free, the sizes of m-sand can be controlled easily** so that it meets the required grading for the given construction.
  - It is **well graded** in the required proportion.
  - It **does not contain organic and soluble compounds** that affect the setting time and properties of cement, thus the required strength of concrete can be maintained.
  - It **does not have the presence of impurities** such as clay, dust and silt coatings.

BUSINESS STANDARD
Page 6

NON BANKING FINANCIAL COMPANIES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Non-financial companies stare at tepid Q3 earnings

But Nifty50 firms' combined earnings expected to grow 10.5% YoY

KRISHNA KANT
Mumbai, 8 January





BFSI: Banks, non-banking finance companies & insurance
Source: Capitaline, Bloomberg; Compiled by *BS* Research Bureau

Led by a sharp rise in the earnings of banks, the 50 companies comprising the Nifty are expected to report 10.5 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in their combined earnings during the October-December quarter (Q3FY23) as against just 1.7 per cent increase in the second quarter.

Brokerages, however, expect a tepid quarter for non-financial companies. The combined net profits of the index companies excluding banks, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) are expected to grow just 2 per cent Y-o-Y in Q3FY23, an improvement from the 12.7 per cent Y-o-Y decline in Q2FY23 but lower than the 27.6 per cent Y-o-Y growth in Q3FY22.

According to various brokerages, the Nifty companies are expected to report combined net profits of ₹1.62 trillion in Q3FY23, up from the ₹1.47 trillion in Q3FY22 and ₹1.5 trillion in Q2FY23.

In comparison, the 39 non-BFSI companies are expected to report combined net profits of ₹1.11 trillion in Q3FY23, up from the ₹1.09 trillion in Q3FY22 and ₹95,000 crore in Q2FY23.

Brokerages, however, see a further slowdown in corporate revenue growth in the third quarter. The Nifty 50 companies' combined net sales are expected to grow 15.9 per cent Y-o-Y to ₹12.96 trillion in Q3FY23 from ₹11.18 trillion a year ago. This will be the lowest top line growth rate for the index companies in the last two years. In comparison, the combined net sales of 30 non-BFSI companies in the index are expected to grow 15.6 per cent Y-o-Y, down sharply from the 30.3 per cent in Q2FY23 and 28 per cent in Q3FY22.

The non-BFSI companies' top line growth in Q3FY23 is expected to be the lowest since the Q4FY21 quarter.

"Q3FY23 is expected to be a soft quarter (for Nifty companies) along with slight margin improvement. We will be watching for management commentary on India and global demand outlook. We are of the view that the financial sector will continue to perform while consumption space will remain under pressure," write Anjali Verma and Ravi Kumar of PhillipCapital India Research Team in their earnings estimate for Q3FY23.

According to PhillipCapital, highest earnings growth (Y-o-Y) is estimated for banks, NBFCs, automobiles and capital goods firms, and buoyant growth is expected in FMCG, IT, and infrastructure.

Turn to Page 6

FMCGs CONFIDENT OF STRONG Q3 REVENUE GROWTH P2

Context: The combined net profits of the index companies **excluding banks, financial services, and insurance (BFSI)** are expected to grow just 2 per cent Yo Y in Q3FY23, an improvement from the 12.7 percent Yoy decline in Q2FY23 but lower than the 27.6 percent YoY growth in Q3FY22.

Non banking financial companies (NBFCs)

- **About**: Also known as a non-banking financial institution, **provides financial services and products** but is not recognised as a bank with a full banking licence.
  - **NBFCs are not banks,** but their activities include lending and other activities such as providing loans and advances, credit facilities, savings and investment products, trading in the money market, managing stock portfolios, money transfers, and so on.
  - Some examples of well-known NBFCs are Kotak Mahindra Finance, SBI Factors, Sundaram Finance, and ICICI Ventures.
- **Criteria for NBFC License**: The company **must be registered in accordance with the Companies Act.**
  - The corporation should be either a Limited Company or a Private Limited Company (PLC).
  - The company's Net Owned Fund must be at least Rs. 2 crores.
- **Regulation of NBFCs:** The **RBI's Department of Non-Banking Supervision (DNBS)** is tasked with regulating and supervising NBFCs in accordance with the regulatory provisions contained in Chapters III B and C and Chapter V of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- **Exemption**: Following NBFCs are exempted from the requirement of registration with RBI:
  - Venture Capital Fund / Merchant Banking companies / Stockbroking companies registered with SEBI.
  - Insurance Company holding a valid Certificate of **Registration issued by IRDA.**
  - **Nidhi companies** as notified under Section 620A of the Companies Act, 1956.
  - **Chit companies** as defined in clause (b) of Section 2 of the Chit Funds Act, 1982.
  - **Housing Finance Companies** regulated by National Housing Bank.
  - **Stock Exchange or a Mutual Benefit company**.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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NATIONAL MONETISATION PIPELINE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Asset monetisation pace slows, may miss target in FY23 by wide margin

PRASANTA SAHU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 8

AFTER ACHIEVING the target for the first year rather comfortably, the Centre's ambitious National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) may miss the goal in FY23 by a wide margin as railways, telecom and petroleum sector slip on their goals.

As against the FY23 NMP target to generate Rs 1.62 trillion in revenues and investments, officials indicted that the shortfall could be about Rs 50,000 crore.

Railways, which is the biggest component of the Rs 6 trillion NMP in the four years through FY25, telecom and petroleum sectors are seen the worst performer while mining would be doing the heavy lifting for the second consecutive year.

"With the end-of-the-year position not looking good, the railways' target has been reduced to about Rs 30,000 crore for FY23 from Rs 57,222 crore while the target for "coal and other mining" have been increased to about Rs 37,500 crore from Rs 6,060 crore," an official told FE.

Coal and other mining had yielded upfront revenues and capex to the tune of Rs 58,000 crore in FY22 against the target of Rs 3,394 crore. In FY23 also, the actual achievement of the coal and other mines monetisation by way of revenues in upfront premium, annual royalties and investment by private players are expected to be higher than the revised target.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has asked officers to find out from different ministries how much they would achieve and whether the shortfalls would covered next year or not and the reasons for not meeting targets.

Last year, a sum of about Rs 1 trillion was raised through the monetisation route as against the target of Rs 88,200 crore thanks to mining sector. **FE**

Context: After achieving the target for the first year rather comfortably, the Centre's ambitious **National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)** may miss the goal in FY23 by a wide margin as railways, telecom and petroleum sector slip on their goals.

National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)

- **About**: It envisages an **aggregate monetisation potential** of ₹6-lakh crore through the **leasing of core assets of the Central government** in sectors such as roads, railways, power, oil and gas pipelines, telecom, civil aviation etc, over a four-year period (FY 2022-25).
- **Origin**: Launched in August 2021, It is designed to unlock the value of investments in such **brownfield public sector assets** by tapping institutional and long-term capital.
    - The projects which are **modified or upgraded are called brownfield projects**. The term is used for purchasing or leasing existing production facilities to launch a new production activity.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Minister for **Finance and Corporate Affairs.**
- **Developed by**: The pipeline has been **developed by NITI Aayog,** in consultation with infrastructure line ministries, based on the mandate for 'Asset Monetisation' under Union Budget 2021-22.
- **Framework**: The pipeline has been **prepared based on inputs and consultations from respective line ministries and departments**, along with the assessment of total asset base available therein.
    - Monetization through disinvestment and monetization of non-core assets have not been included in the NMP.
- **Framework for monetisation of core asset monetisation has three key imperatives:**
    - Monetization of **'Rights' not 'Ownership'**, Assets handed back to the government at the end of transaction life
    - **Brownfield de-risked assets**, stable revenue streams
    - **Structured partnerships** under defined contractual frameworks with strict KPIs & performance standards.
        - This **includes selection of de-risked and brownfield assets** with stable revenue generation profile with the overall transaction structured around revenue rights.
        - The **primary ownership of the assets under these structures**, hence, continues to be with the Government with the framework envisaging hand back of assets to the public authority at the end of transaction life.

LIVEMINT Page 9

BEE STAR LABEL
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

BEE norms to make ceiling fans costly

Ceiling fans would get costlier by 8 -20% as the category came under the ambit of mandatory star labelling from 1 January, as per the revised Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) norms. Star labelling denotes energy savings of minimum 30% for 1-star rated fans to over 50% for 5-star rated fans.

Though leading manufacturers such as Havells, Orient Electric and Usha International have welcomed the move, they also believe it would lead to cost increase of 5 -20% as high energy efficient 5-star rated fans will require new imported motors and electronic components.

Under the new mandate, now manufacturers would have to display star ratings between 1 to 5 stars on their fans. The star rating is dependent on service value (air delivery in cubic metres per minute divided by energy consumption in wattage). PTI

Context: Ceiling fans would get costlier by 8% to 20% as the category has come under the **ambit of mandatory star labelling** from January 1, as per the revised Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) norms.

BEE Star Label

- **About**: A program run by the Indian government's **Bureau of Energy Efficiency** under Ministry of Power that promotes energy efficiency.
- **Origin**: The program for **rating electrical appliances** started in May, 2006.
- **Objective**: The program **provides information on the energy consumption of products** and devices using different standardized methods.
- **Legal Aspects:** The Star Labeling Programme has been formulated by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, under the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- **Coverage**: The labeling program now **covers a wide range of electrical appliances** like Air Conditioner, Ceiling Fan, Colour Television, Computer, Refrigerator & Freezers, Distribution Transformer, Domestic Gas Stove, Industrial Motor, Pump, Water Heater, Washing Machine, Ballast, Solid State Inverter, Office Automation Products, Diesel Generator Set, LED Lamps, Microwave Oven and Air Compressors.
- **Methodology**: The process for determining star ratings **differs between various categories.**
    - For instance, the BEE had announced in 2016 that it would be switching to **ISEER (Indian Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio)** to calculate star ratings for air conditioners. This is an evolution of the SEER method used in the US.
    - ISEER allows manufacturers to make more efficient air conditioners for the Indian climate conditions.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency

- **About**: The Government of India set up Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) on 1st March 2002 under the provisions of the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- **Functions**: **Assist in developing policies and strategies** with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles, within the overall framework of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 with the primary objective of reducing energy intensity of the Indian economy.
    - BEE **coordinates with designated consumers, designated agencies** and other organizations and recognize, identify and utilize the existing resources and infrastructure, in performing the functions assigned to it under the Energy Conservation Act.

ECONOMIC TIMES
Page 13

INR TRADE
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

REGULATORY GO-AHEAD RECEIVED

Indian Bank to Hold Special Rupee Vostro A/cs of Lanka Banks

Accounts of three banks to be activated in a week

Sugata Ghosh & Atmadip Ray

Mumbai: Indian Bank, which has had a long presence in Sri Lanka, has received the regulatory go-ahead to hold special rupee vostro accounts of three ba nks from the South Asian island nation which is struggling to tide over a serious foreign exchange crunch.

The Chennai-headquartered public sector bank is expected to activate the special accounts in about a week.

A vostro account in local currency would enable Lanka to import from India without dipping into its dwindling dollar supply. The INR vostro facility is part of a special trade settlement mechanism finalised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in July 2022. The arrangement allows Indian importers to deposit rupees in vostro accounts that overseas banks open with banks in India and clearing of dues to Indian exporters from the surplus balances in the vostro accounts.

"RBI has given permission for three vostros. The accounts are expected to be functional any day now," a person aware of the clearance told **ET**.

The INR vostro account – a product of war and economic turbulence – is considered as a tool to either overcome restrictions in the wake of US sanctions on Russian banks or continue cross-border trades amid a hard currency crisis.

"The vostro accounts would also help Lanka to utilise the rupee lines extended by India. It would contribute towards stabilising the Lankan economy," said a banker.

Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremesinghe recently said 2023 would be a "critical year" for the troubled country. Last year's balance of payments crisis had boiled over into a political turmoil in Sri Lanka.

For Sri Lankan institutions, Indian Bank, which opened its first overseas branch in Colombo in 1932, may be an obvious choice. Since a decade Indian Bankt has had operations in Jaffna as well. Till now, State of India (SBI) is the other domestic institution with which a Lankan bank has opened a vostro account.

India's annual exports to Lanka is about $5 bn with oil, pharmaceutical products, sugar, ships, iron and steel, cotton and machinery being the main cargoes.

As the currency market in Lanka ran out of dollars, early last year most banks in India virtually stopped discounting letters of credit (LC) issued by banks in Lanka. Banks feared that when payments for its imports fall due, there would not be enough dollars in Sri Lanka.

"What we hear is that the government would pursue a similar vostro mechanism with banks in Bangladesh, and it may prefer to have it in place before the Bangladesh general elections in 2024," said another banker. Bangladesh has been badly hit by a trade deficit and depleting forex reserves.

While the Ukraine war and sanctions on Russia paved the way for special vostro accounts, the mechanism can be used to settle trade in rupees with any country. For instance, several banks in Belarus, a close ally of Russia, are keen to enter into a similar deal with India. "A meeting between Indian and Belarusian banks is scheduled this month. The volume of trade with Belarus is much smaller compared to Russia though the country is an import supplier of fertilizer. We can sense the interest of Indian banks after the meeting," said an industry official.

Trade Boost

Special vostro accounts can settle cross-border trade in INR

They can be used to overcome US sanctions, $ crunch

Russian banks have opened accounts; accounts of 3 Lankan banks will be operational soon

Similar deals may be struck with banks in Belarus & Bangladesh

India's annual exports to Lanka stand at about $5 b with oil, pharma goods, sugar, ships, steel being the main cargoes

Context: Indian Bank, which has had a long presence in Sri Lanka, has received the regulatory goahead to hold **special rupee vostro accounts** of three banks from the South Asian island nation which is struggling to tide over a serious foreign exchange crunch.

- The **INR vostro facility** is part of a special trade settlement mechanism finalised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in July 2022.

Trade settlements in rupees (INR Trade)

- **About**: To settle trade transactions with any country, banks in India will **open Vostro accounts of correspondent bank/s** of the partner country for trading.
  - Indian importers **can pay for their imports** in rupees into these accounts.
  - Earnings from imports can then be u**sed to pay Indian exporters in Indian rupee.**
- **Previous system:** Previously, if a company exported or imported, **transactions were always in a foreign currency** (excluding countries like Nepal and Bhutan).
  - So in the case of imports, the I**ndian company has to pay in a foreign currency** (mainly dollars and could also include currencies like pounds, euros, yen, etc.).
  - The **Indian company gets paid in foreign currency** in case of exports and the company converts that foreign currency to rupee since it needs the rupee for its needs, in most cases.
- **Current status**: India currently allows **payment in rupees to countries like Russia, Nepal, and Bhutan.**

Vostro and Nostro Accounts

- **Vostro accounts**: A Vostro account is an account that **a correspondent bank holds on behalf of another bank** - for example, an HSBC Vostro account is held by SBI in India.
  - Vostro is a Latin word that translates to **"your," as in "your account."**
- **Nostro accounts**: From the perspective of domestic banks, the **funds deposited at correspondent banks** are referred to as Nostro accounts.
  - Nostro accounts are **denominated in the foreign currency** of the correspondent bank.
- **Agent or intermediary**: A Vostro account is established to enable a foreign **correspondent bank to act as an agent** or provide services as an intermediary for a domestic bank.
- **Services**: Vostro account services include executing wire **transfers, performing foreign exchange transactions, enabling deposits and withdrawals**, and expediting international trade.

TIMES OF INDIA

Page 1

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy & Infrastructure)

Govt to disband telecom body DCC, finmin's DoE to step in

New Delhi: In an important decision that has a bearing on policy making in the communications sector, the Centre has decided to disband the Digital Communication Commission (DCC) — a multi-ministry apex decision-making body overseeing all critical telecom matters — and hand over crucial and large-budget decisions to the finance ministry's department of expenditure (DoE).

The matter will be taken up by the Union Cabinet very soon, top sources told **TOI**, adding DCC was being seen as an "unnecessary layer" leading to delays in decision making on key matters, **reports Pankaj Doval.**

▶Cut duplication, P 19

Context:The Centre has decided to disband the **Digital Communication Commission (DCC)** and hand over crucial and large-budget decisions to the finance ministry's department of expenditure (DoE).

Digital Communication Commission (DCC)

- **About**: A multi-ministry apex decision making body **overseeing all critical telecom matters.**
- **Origin**: The Telecom Commission was set up by the Government of India via a resolution in 1989 with administrative and financial powers of the Government of India **to deal with various aspects of Telecommunications.**
  - The Government, re-designated the **'Telecom Commission' as the 'Digital Communications Commission'** in 2018.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Department of Telecommunications under **Ministry of Communication.**
- **Members**: Consists of a **Chairman, four full time members,** who are ex-officio Secretaries to the Government of India in the Department of Telecommunications and four part time members who are the Secretaries to the Government of India in the concerned Departments.
  - The **Secretary** to the Government of India in the Department of Telecommunications is the **ex-officio Chairman** of the Digital Communications Commission.
- **Functions**:
  - **Formulating the policy** of Department of Telecommunications for approval of the Government.
  - **Preparing the budget** for the Department of Telecommunications for each financial year and getting it approved by the Government.
  - **Implementation of Government's policy** in all matters concerning telecommunication.

PIB

JAN 9

GANGA VILAS RIVER CRUISE

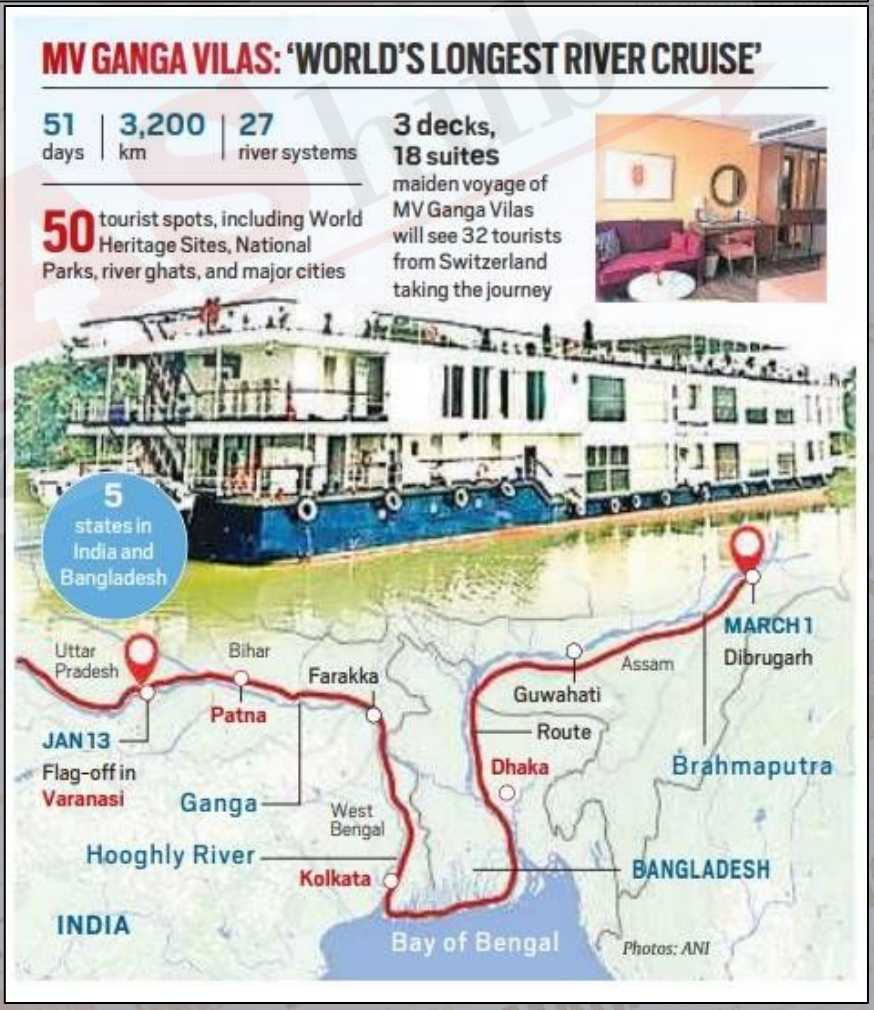
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy & Infrastructure)

World's longest river cruise 'Ganga Vilas' to unlock River Cruise tourism in India: Shri Sarbananda Sonowal

Context: On January 13, Prime Minister is set to flag off the world's longest river cruise, **"Ganga Vilas," from Varanasi to Dibrugarh via Bangladesh.**

Key Points

- The luxury vessel, which can accommodate 80 passengers, will take 50 days to complete its journey, **covering 3200 km and passing through 27 river systems in India and Bangladesh.**
- Tourists on the "Ganga Vilas" will have the **opportunity to visit over 50 architecturally significant places,** including world heritage sites, during the course of the trip.
- These **landmarks range from Varanasi** – one of the oldest cities in the world and a holy site for Hindus – to the abandoned Buddhist monastery Vikramshila.
- In Bangladesh, travelers can **experience the beauty of the ghost city of Sonargaon** and the ornate 1400s-era Sixty Dome Mosque, among other culturally and historically important locations.
- In addition to visiting these iconic sites, the cruise will also pass through national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, including the **Sundarbans Delta and Kaziranga National Park.**
- To ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for all passengers, the "Ganga Vilas" will **offer a range of amenities**, such as a gym, a spa, an open-air observation deck, personal butler service, and cultural programs and music.



DTE

JAN 9

MELTING GLACIERS

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)



Half of glaciers will disappear by 2100 even if world sticks to 1.5°C goal: Study

Melting glaciers raise sea levels dramatically, jeopardising up to two billion people's access to water and increasing the risk of natural disasters

NEXT NEWS >

By Arya Rohini
Published: Friday 06 January 2023

Glacier

- Glaciers are a **bulk of ice moving under its weight.**
- It forms in areas where the **amassing of snow goes beyond its ablation** over many years.
- They are sensitive **indicators of changing climate.**
- They are generally **seen in the snow-fields.**
- This largest freshwater basin covers around 10 percent of the land surface of the Earth.
- Out of total water on Earth, **2.1% is in glaciers** while 97.2% is in the oceans and inland seas.
- **Condition of glacier formation:**
  - **Mean annual temperatures** are close to the freezing point.
  - **Winter precipitation** produces significant accumulations of snow.
  - **Temperatures** throughout the rest of the year do not result in the complete loss of the previous winter's snow accumulation.

Context: Glaciers are receding at unprecedented rates due to climate change and rising temperatures.

- **Half the Earth's glaciers are destined to vanish by 2100,** even if we adhere to the Paris Climate Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, a new study has warned.

Key Points

- Glaciers, which **hold 70 per cent of the Earth's freshwater**, currently encompass around 10 percent of the planet's land area.
- **Melting glaciers raise sea levels dramatically,** jeopardising up to two billion people's access to water and increasing the risk of natural disasters and extreme weather events like floods.
- The **amount of ice lost by glaciers between 1994 and 2017** was around 30 trillion tonnes and they are now melting at a pace of 1.2 trillion tonnes each year.
- The glaciers in the **Alps, Iceland and Alaska** are some of those that are melting at the quickest rates. **Global sea level rose by 21 per cent** between 2000 and 2019. This was solely due to meltwater from melting glaciers and ice sheets.
- The **United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's sixth assessment report** released in 2022 also warned that we are running out of time to attain the 1.5°C target.
- A UN research published late last year said that the **globe is already on course to warm over 2°C** and warned that the threshold may be crossed as early as 2030.

DTE

JAN 9

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

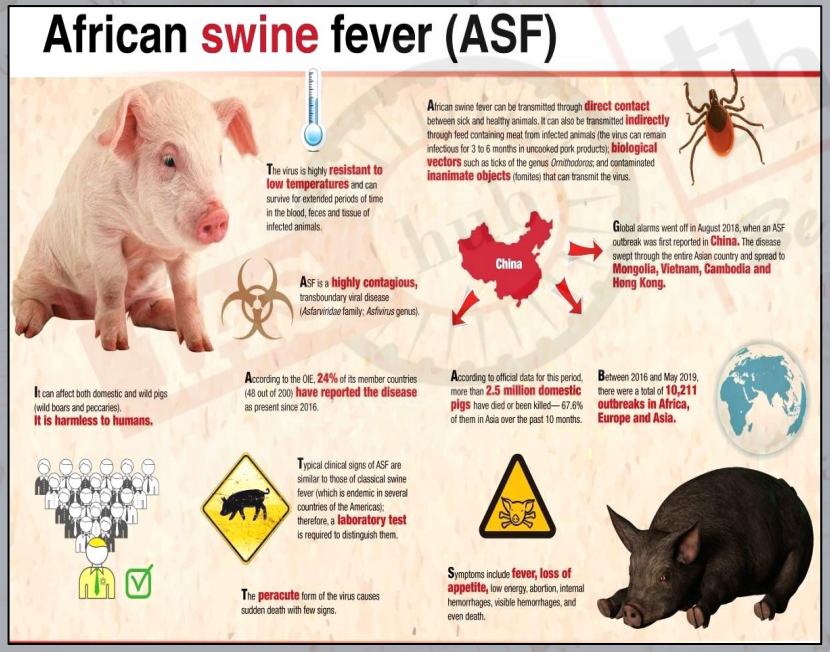
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci & Tech)

African Swine Fever scare: 700 pigs culled in Damoh, Madhya Pradesh

The infection has spread like wildfire in the area, according to local veterinarian doctors

By DTE Staff
Published: Thursday 05 January 2023





Context: The district administration of Damoh in Madhya Pradesh has killed 700 pigs in the last two days amid fear of **African Swine Fever** in the area.

African Swine Fever in India

- In 2021, the northeastern states of **Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur** were swept by the disease.
- In December 2022, cases were confirmed in **Kerala, Assam and Manipur.**
- **Pork meat sale was banned** in parts of Kerala around New Year's Eve last year amid Swine Fever scare in Kottayam and Ernakulam districts.
- This year on January 5, the virus was also isolated from the bodies of two dead wild boars at **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in Theppakadu village, Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu**, and two more were found dead in the area on January 4, 2023.

African Swine Fever

- **About**: A **viral disease** that attacks pigs and boars and has a high mortality rate.
  - ASF is a disease listed in the **World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)'s Terrestrial Animal Health Code.**
- **Origin**: It was first **detected in Africa** in the 1920s.
  - It is **endemic to sub-Saharan Africa** but has spread to many other regions of the world, including Asia and Europe.
- **Spread/Transmission:** ASF is not a threat to human beings since it o**nly spreads from animals to other animals.**
  - **Direct contact** with infected pigs, faeces or body fluids.
  - **Indirect contact** via fomites such as equipment, vehicles or people who work with pigs between pig farms with ineffective biosecurity.
  - **Pigs eating** infected pig meat or meat products.
  - **Biological vectors -** ticks of the species Ornithodoros.
- **Treatment**: There is **no cure or precaution available** for the infection yet.

PIB

JAN 9

PARSHURAM KUND

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Art & Culture)

PM shares glimpses of Parshuram Kund Festival in Arunachal Pradesh

Context: The Prime Minister has shared glimpses of **Parshuram Kund Festival in Arunachal Pradesh.**

Parshuram Kund

- **About**: A **Hindu pilgrimage sites** situated on the **Brahmaputra plateau** in the lower reaches of the **Lohit River** and 21 km north of Tezu in Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh, India.
- **Religious importance**: Dedicated to **sage Parshuram**, the popular site attracts pilgrims from Nepal, from across India, and from nearby states of Manipur and Assam.
    - Devotees and sadhus take **a holy dip in its water** each year on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, in the month of January.
- **History**: The site of the Parashuram Kund as **established by the sadhu was in existence until the 1950 Assam earthquake** that shook the whole of the North-East and the kund was completely covered.
    - A very strong current is now flowing over the original site of the kund but massive boulders have in a mysterious way embedded themselves in a circular formation in the river bed thus forming another kund in place of the old.
- **Key Developments:** The project "**Development of Parasuram Kund, Lohit District Arunachal Pradesh**" was approved by the Ministry of Tourism in January 2021.
    - The project is sanctioned under the P**ilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive' (PRASHAD)** Scheme of Ministry of Tourism.
    - The components sanctioned include Interventions near the Parking area, Tourist Information Centre, Rain Shelters, Kiosks, interventions near Mela ground, View Points, Souvenir Shops, Water Supply line, Approach Road, Food Court/ Prasadam Centre etc.

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