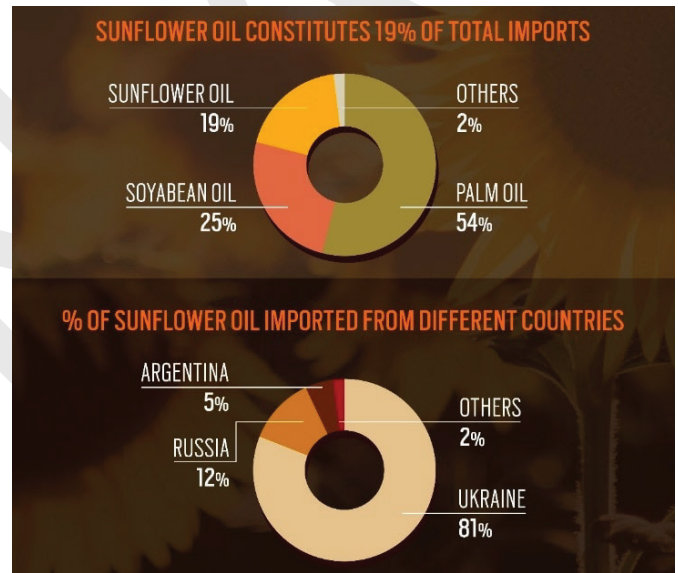


NEWS TODAY

GOVERNMENT MULLS EDIBLE OIL IMPORT OPTIONS

- Government is talking to countries in South America and South East Asia amid concerns of a **short supply of sunflower oil from Ukraine**.
 - India **imports majority of its sunflower oil from the Ukraine-Russia region** and these supplies have been disturbed due to the on-going war.
- **Edible oil import in India**
 - Domestic production of edible oil **meets a little over 30 per cent of the total demand for edible oils, necessitating its import.**
 - In 2019, India **imported edible oils approximately 40 per cent** of the agricultural imports bill.
- **Suggestions**
 - Look for alternate sunflower oil import from Argentina.
 - Farmers need to be made **aware about newer varieties and provided with access to good quality seeds.**
 - Promote **alternatives such as rice bran oil, cotton seed oil.**
- **Government initiatives for domestic production of edible oils**
 - **National Mission on Edible Oils** – oil palm in 2021
 - **Customs duty** on edible oils.
 - The government **has reduced the Agri-cess for Crude Palm Oil (CPO)** from 7.5% to 5% in a move to boost the domestic edible oil industry.



NATIONAL WETLAND DECADAL CHANGE ATLAS TITLED NATIONAL WETLAND INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT-2006-07 AND 2017-18

- It was **prepared by the Space Applications Centre (SAC) of ISRO**, highlighting the **changes which have happened in Wetlands across the country in the past decade.**
 - The **original Atlas was released by SAC in 2011** and has over the years been used extensively by all the State Governments also in their planning processes.
- **Key highlights**
 - At the national level, the total wetland area has been estimated at 15.98 Mha, which is around **4.86 per cent of country's total geographic area.**
 - Among the wetland types, **more than one-third of the total wetland area is covered by rivers** (35.2 per cent), another around 43 per cent wetland area is covered combining reservoirs (17.1 per cent).
 - A majority of the increase in wetland area in last decade has been found in **inland man-made (81.5 per cent) and coastal artificial (17.0 per cent) categories.**
 - There is a **decrease in coastal natural wetlands**, mostly converted to coastal man-made categories.
 - There is an **increase in the mangroves area, coral reefs area.**

○ About Wetlands

- **Ramsar convention defines wetlands** as areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.
- **India has come up with Wetlands (Conservation and Management Rules) 2017** for protection, management of wetlands in India.



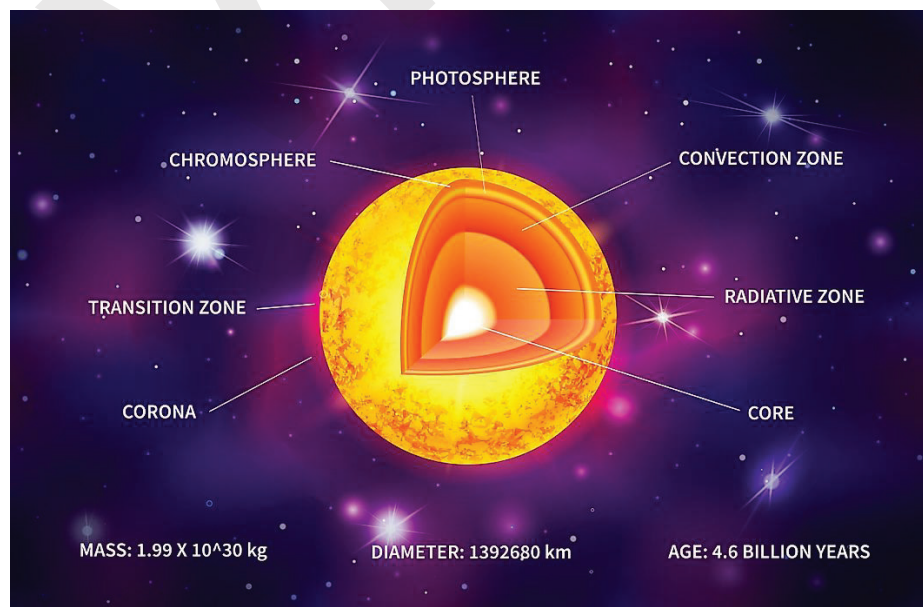
HOW MANY TIGERS ARE TOO MANY

- Preliminary findings of a study by Wildlife Institute of India (WII) suggest that the **density of tigers in the Sunderbans may have reached the carrying capacity of the mangrove forests**.
 - **All-India Tiger report (2018)** put the carrying capacity in the Sunderbans “at around 4 tigers” per 100 sq km while the ongoing WII study indicates a density of 3-5 tigers.
- Carrying capacity can be **defined as a species’ average population size in a particular habitat**. The **species population size is limited by environmental factors** like adequate food, shelter, water, and mates.
 - It is also an important basis for the measurement and management of human sustainable development.
- Steps required**
 - **New perimeter of defining the peak density of forest should be revised**, amidst the increase in human interference for livelihood due to CoVID -19.
 - **Sustainable land uses to minimize damage** and adequate incentives to promote acceptance of wildlife.
 - **Functional connections between reserves** so that tigers can have healthy intermixing of populations.
 - New management strategies of wildlife should be decentralized at the local level.
- About Sunderban:**
 - It is the **world’s largest mangrove delta** which is home to Royal Bengal Tigers is spread across 10,000 sq km.
 - More than 4,000 sq km is in West Bengal and the rest in Bangladesh.
 - It is a **biosphere reserve, national park and tiger reserve**
 - Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1987



SCIENCE BEHIND JETS OF PLASMA OCCURRING ALL OVER SUN’S CHROMOSPHERE UNRAVELLED

- The **jets of plasma - the fourth state of matter consisting of electrically charged particles** occur just about everywhere in the sun’s chromosphere.
 - These jets, or spicules, **appear as thin grass-like plasma structures** that constantly shoot up from the surface and are then brought down by gravity.
 - Scientists have **explained the origin of ‘spicules’ on the Sun**, using laboratory experiments as an analogy.
- Based on experiment, Scientists elaborated the following:**
 - The **plasma right below the visible solar surface (photosphere) is perpetually in a state of convection**.
 - This is ultimately **powered by the nuclear energy** released in the hot-dense core. The convection serves **almost periodic but strong kicks to the plasma in the solar chromosphere**.
 - These **strong kicks from the bottom**, shoot the chromosphere plasma outward at ultrasonic speeds in the form of thin columns or spicules.
 - Spicules come in **all sizes and speeds**.
- However, the processes by which **plasma is supplied to the solar wind**, and the solar atmosphere is heated to a million degrees Celsius, still remain a puzzle.



EQUALISATION LEVY IMPOSED BY INDIA ON SUPPLY OF SERVICES BY MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES A ‘SOVEREIGN RIGHT’: FINANCE MINISTER (FM)

- FM has **justified the 2% equalisation levy (EL) imposed by India** on the supply of services by multinational enterprises (MNEs), saying it is a **sovereign right to tax revenues earned from operations in the country**.
 - Tech giants and e-commerce firms have been asking India to withdraw the 2% EL on non-resident companies.
- Equalisation Levy was **conceptualized in 2015, as an interim measure**, as one of the **three measures to tackle the emerging issue** from digital transactions proposed by the OECD in Pillar 1 action plan of **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project**.
- Subsequently OECD/G20 inclusive framework on BEPS** provides a solution for global tax consists of two pillars:
 - **Pillar One:** Applied to about **100 biggest and most profitable MNEs** (global turnover above 20 billion euros and profitability above 10%), it reallocates part of their profits to places **where they sell products or provide services**.
 - **Pillar Two:** Applied to larger MNEs, i.e., companies with over EUR 750 million of annual revenue, it subjects them to the **global minimum corporate tax of 15% from 2023**.

- BEPS refers to tax planning strategies** used by multinational enterprises that exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to avoid paying tax.

INDIA LOOKING TO ADVANCE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (CEPA) WITH BANGLADESH: COMMERCE MINISTRY

- India, Bangladesh already have a goods agreement under aegis of **2006 agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA)** which govern the tariff regimes for trade.
 - Under SAFTA, India has granted **duty-free quota-free access to Bangladesh** on all items except alcohol and tobacco.
- Significance of CEPA**
 - Bangladesh is **India's biggest trade partner in South Asia**, with bilateral trade growing steadily over the last decade.
 - In 2021, trade with Bangladesh accounted for about 3.3 per cent of exports at \$9.7 billion and 0.3 per cent of imports at \$1.3 billion.
 - Exports of Bangladesh to India have **tripled over the last decade**.
 - Top exports from India to Bangladesh include cotton, cereals, fuel, vehicle parts and machinery, and mechanical appliances.
- Minister of Commerce and Industry listed **four focus areas for strengthening India-Bangladesh relationship**:
 - Uninterrupted Supply chain.**
 - Need to give more impetus to **Joint Production of Defence Equipment**.
 - Explore **potential areas of investments**, like Textiles, Jute products, Leather & Footwear, Medical Equipment etc.
 - Both can become **'Pharmacy of the world' with joint manufacturing of vaccines and other medicines**.

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>ECI hosts International Election Visitors Programme (IEVP) 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India has been hosting IEVP since 2012 elections where international delegates are invited to visit Polling stations and see the electoral processes in practice for themselves in person.
 <p>Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> War in Ukraine may delay negotiations for a free trade agreement between India-EAEU. EAEU is an international organization for regional economic integration established by Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAEU ensures freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor, and also the conduct of a coordinated, coordinated or unified policy in the sectors of the economy. Member states: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia.
 <p>Start Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Institute of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship) signed a MoU with Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) to develop a sustainable model for promoting entrepreneurship at the grass roots by initiating SVEP. SVEP is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) of MoRD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It aims to support entrepreneurs in rural areas to set-up enterprises at the village-level in non-agricultural sectors.
 <p>National Career Services (NCS) e-Book launch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Labour and Employment launched an e-Book touching upon the journey of NCS, highlighting its key achievements. Ministry of Labour and Employment is implementing the NCS Project as a Mission Mode Project for the transformation of the National Employment Service to provide a variety of employment-related services like job matching, career counselling, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the services available in the portal are free of cost for all stakeholders.
 <p>SLINEX (Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 9th edition of the India-Sri Lanka bilateral maritime exercise SLINEX is underway at Visakhapatnam.

 <p>Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women – “SAMARTH”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched by Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, it aims to provide women an opportunity to be self-reliant and independent by undertaking self-employment opportunities. Under Samarth, following benefits will be available to women entrepreneurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 20% Seats in free Skill Development Programs will be allocated for Women. > Special Drive for registration of women-owned MSMEs under Udyam Registration. > 20% of MSME Business Delegations sent to exhibitions under schemes for Marketing Assistance will be dedicated to women owned MSMEs.
 <p>Nari Shakti Puraskar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This award is conferred on International Women's Day. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development to acknowledge the exceptional contribution made by individuals and institutions, to celebrate women as game changers and catalyst of positive change in the society. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Award is open to all individuals & institutions.
 <p>Janaushadhi Diwas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan Aushadhi Diwas is celebrated every year to educate the general public about the benefits of the Jan Aushadhi Pariyojan. Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendras known as Jana-aushadhi Kendra. Pharmaceuticals and Medical Device Bureau of India (PMBI) is the implementation agency for PMBJP.
 <p>Donate a pension scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Labour and Employment launched the “donate a pension” scheme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The scheme allows any citizen to pay the premium amount on behalf of an unorganised worker (domestic workers, drivers, helpers, care givers) under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Scheme. > The donor can pay the contribution for a minimum of one year, with the amount ranging from ₹660 to ₹2,400 a year depending on the age of the beneficiary.
 <p>Personalities in News</p>	<p>Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They stand out as an extraordinary couple in the social and educational history of India. Their contributions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Started a school for girls, Shudras and Ati-Shudras in Poona (1848) > Opened a care centre for pregnant widows (1853) to have safe deliveries and to end the practice of infanticide owing to social norms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha was started in their own house in Pune. > Established Satyashodhak Samaj (The Truth-Seeker's Society) in 1873, that advocated for social changes that went against prevalent traditions like inter-caste marriages, eradication of child marriages, and widow remarriage etc. Values: Worked towards female education and empowerment, and ending caste- and gender-based discrimination.



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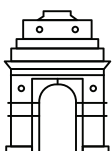
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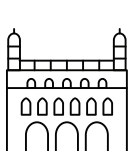
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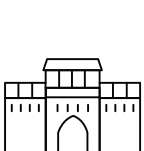
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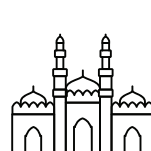
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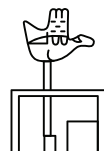
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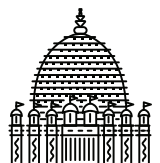
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