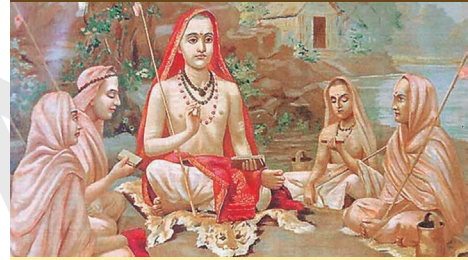


NEWS TODAY

ADI SANKARACHARYA'S BIRTHPLACE LIKELY TO BE DECLARED AS NATIONAL MONUMENT

- **Kalady in Ernakulam district (Kerala)** is the birthplace of the Advaita philosopher- Adi Sankaracharya (7th - 8th centuries A.D)
- Under the **Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**, a monument of national importance is **designated by Archaeological Survey of India**.
 - Act **authorises the central government** to "maintain, protect and promote the site", as it may be considered of significant historical importance.
- **About Adi Sankaracharya**
 - He was born in **Kaladi village on the bank of the Periyar**, the largest river in Kerala.
 - At age of 8, he left home in search of his **Guru, Guru Govindapada**.
 - He played an **important role in the revival of Hindu religion**.
 - He considered the **purity and steadiness of mind achieved in Yoga** as an aid for self-Liberation.
 - He propounded **Advaita Vedanta**, which essentially means that **individual is not different from Brahman**.
 - According to him, the **Upanishads reveal a fundamental principle of nonduality termed 'brahman'**, which is the reality of all things.
 - The fundamental thrust is that **the atman is pure non-intentional consciousness**. It is **one without a second, nondual, infinite existence**, and numerically identical with brahman.

Major contributions of Adi Sankaracharya



- **Establishing 4 ashrams in four corners of India.**
 - Govardhana Matha in Odisha.
 - Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetam in Karnataka.
 - Kalika Matha in Gujarat
 - Jyotir Matha in Uttarakhand.
- Formulating **6 sect system of worship** which brought to fore the main godheads – Vishnu, Siva, Shakti, Muruka, Ganesha and Surya.
- Composed devotional and meditative hymns like **Soundarya Lahari, Sivananda Lahari, Nirvana Shalkam, Maneesha Panchakam**
- Authored books on the fundamentals of Advaita Vedanta including **Viveka Chudamani, Atma Bodha, Vaakya Vritti, Upadesa Sahasri**.

AT WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO), CHINA A 'DEVELOPING' COUNTRY

- China's status as a 'developing country' at the WTO has become a **contentious issue** since **China is deriving benefits reserved for developing countries** under WTO norms.
 - China is an **upper middle-income country**.
 - Further, China allegedly uses **unfair trade practices** such as **preferential treatment** for state enterprises and **data restrictions**.
- Therefore, many nations have called on China to **either refrain from seeking benefits** available to developing countries or **forego its classification** as a developing country.
- **Developing countries at WTO:**
 - There are **no WTO definitions** of "developed" and "developing" countries.
 - **Members announce for themselves** whether they are "developed" or "developing" countries.
 - However, **other members can challenge the decision** of a member to make use of provisions available to developing countries.
- **Benefits of claiming Developing countries:**
 - Developing countries enjoy **special rights through 'special and differential treatment' (S&DT) provisions**.
 - WTO pacts set **more lenient target for developing nations** and grant them **more time to achieve** certain targets.
 - It allows **other countries to offer preferential treatment like** Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).
 - GSP is a non-reciprocal preferential tariff system which provides for exemption from the Most Favored Nation principle of WTO.

Least Developed Country (LDC) at WTO



- WTO recognises LDCs relying on a **classification by the UN** based on a criteria that is **reviewed every three years**.
- The identification of LDCs is currently based on three criteria: **Per capita gross national income (GNI), human assets and economic vulnerability to external shocks**.
- Recently concerns have also been raised over **LDC status assigned to Bangladesh** although it has surpassed India in terms of **GDP per capita**.

RENEWABLE ENERGY CERTIFICATE (REC) SCHEME SHOWS LAGGARD GROWTH

- **REC is a market based instrument** introduced in 2010 to **facilitate compliance of renewable purchase obligations (RPO)** and promote Renewable Energy (RE).
 - It is aimed at addressing the mismatch between availability of RE resources in state and the requirement of the obligated entities to meet RPO.
 - As per Indian Electricity Act 2003, RPO mandates that all electricity distribution licensees should purchase or produce a minimum specified quantity of their requirements from RE Sources.
 - 1 REC is **equivalent to 1 MWh (megawatt hour)** generated from a renewable energy resource.
 - 2 categories of RECs: **Solar RECs and Non-solar RECs.**
- **Current status of REC Scheme**
 - Only 4% of the installed RE capacity stands registered as on December, 2021.
 - Wind and solar power account for 58% and 21% share, respectively, of the total registered capacity.
 - States with attractive renewable resources such as **Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat** account for 73% share of total registered capacity.
- **Reasons behind slow uptake under the scheme include:**
 - **Low RPO targets in some states, lax enforcement by regulators** and virtually **non-existent voluntary market.**
 - Concentration of RE potential in a few states, hence **expensive cross-border procurement.**

Plausible steps for REC



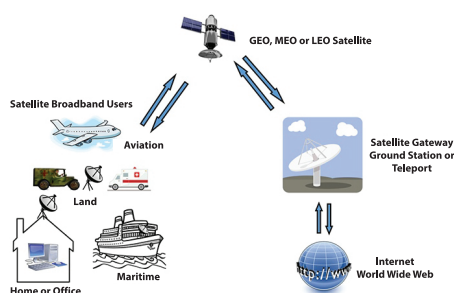
- Government needs to **lay out a clear RPO trajectory until 2030** and seek consistency between national and state RPO targets.
- State government should ensure **no waiver or carry forward of RPO targets** are provided to discoms.
- **Merge solar, non-solar and hydro power RPO targets into one consolidated target** and **allow more technologies** including solar-wind hybrid, rooftop solar, and green hydrogen to participate in the scheme.

TELECOM PLAYER OPPOSES SATELLITE PLAYERS' DEMAND FOR SEPARATE EARTH STATION LICENSES

- Telecoms has opposed satellite players' demand for **delinking license of satellite earth stations from service licenses.**
 - **Earth stations are essentially a telecommunications port on the ground** to connect the satellite communication network in space with the terrestrial network on earth.

- At present, service providers hold the license to set up **earth stations under the unified licensing framework.**

How Satellite Broadband Works Virtually Anywhere



- **About Satellite based connectivity**

- They operate by **sending and receiving broadband signal to a satellite in space** rather than using an underground copper/fibre network,
- Satellite-based low-bit-rate connectivity is possible using **Geo Stationary, Medium and Low Earth orbit Satellites.**

- **Models for satellite-based connectivity include:**

- **Hybrid (LPWAN + Satellite) or Indirect Model:** In this, each sensor and actuator in a network may communicate with the satellite through an intermediate sink node, i.e., Low Power Wide-Area Network (LPWAN) gateway.
- **Direct to Satellite Model:** Allows devices to directly communicate with the satellite without the need of any intermediate ground gateway.

- **Advantages:** Easier to deploy and wide coverage, stronger bandwidth capabilities, boosting internet coverage in rural areas, Enabler for **Internet of Things (IoT)** etc.

ANTI-CYBER BULLYING LAWS IN INDIA

- Recent case of **Bulli bai app** where photographs of Muslim women had been posted for fake auctions has brought the issue of online bullying of **women in limelight.**
- Indian Penal Code (IPC), **neither defines bullying nor punishes it as an offence.** However, various provisions of the IPC and the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act) can be used to fight cyber bullies.
- **Cyber or online bullying** can be done in number of ways: **Hacking personal accounts** again and again; **Flaming**, which is the use **vulgar or insensitive language** to attack someone; **Sharing someone's private messages or picture** or threatening/blackmailing to do so; **Stalking someone** and sending targeted messages etc.
- **Legal provisions against such cybercrimes:**
 - **Sections 354A** (sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment) and **354C** (voyeurism), **Section 354D** (Cyber stalking) of IPC.
 - **Section 66E** of the IT Act prescribes punishment for violation of privacy.
 - **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.**
 - **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:** Its provision include "Due diligence by intermediaries and grievance redressal mechanism" which requires them to inform their users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any illegal information.



RED SANDERS (RED SANDALWOOD) FALLS BACK IN IUCN'S 'ENDANGERED' CATEGORY

- Red Sanders has fallen **back into the 'endangered' category** in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List.

➤ In 2018, it was classified as '**near threatened**' from the earlier 'endangered' (classified so in 1997).

- About Red sanders (Botanical name: Pterocarpus santalinus)**

➤ It is a **non-fragrant variety of sandalwood** that mostly grows in **rocky, hilly regions**.

➤ It is locally known as Yerra Chandanam, Rakta Chandanam

➤ It is a **native tree species endemic to India** and can only be found in the **southern parts of the Eastern Ghats**.

➤ **Geographic condition required:**

➤ **Soil:** Lateritic and gravelly soil and cannot tolerate water logging.

➤ **Climate:** Hot and dry.

➤ **Rainfall:** 500-800mm.

➤ **Significance:**

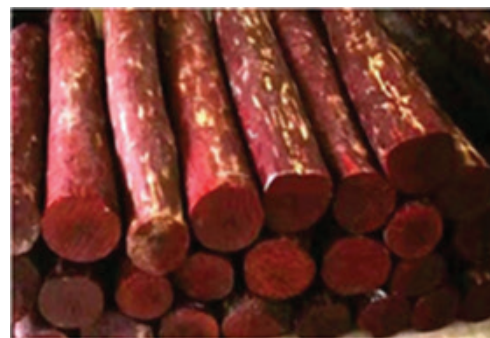
➤ **Medicinal benefits** (wood gives cooling effect when applied externally for inflammations head-ache, skin diseases etc);

➤ **Good raw material** for music instruments and luxury furniture;

➤ Yields **Santaline dye**, which finds use in colouring foodstuff.

- Threats:** High occurrence of forest fire, illegal trade/falling, invasive species, continued harvesting leaves no time for the species to recover naturally.

- Protection:** Listed in **Appendix II of CITES**.



ALSO IN NEWS



Manipur issues 'disturbed area' notification

- Manipur government has declared **entire State excluding Imphal Municipal areas as "disturbed" with retrospective effect from December 31, 2021 for a period of one year.**

➤ It means that **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), 1958 will be in force** allowing for armed forces to be conferred with 'special powers'.

- Disturbed area **is declared under Section 3 of Act** when a part or whole state/UT is in **such a condition that the use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary.**

➤ '**Disturbed area**' is declared by **Centre or the Governor of a state or Administrator of a Union Territory**



Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas

- It is **half-indigenous, single engine, multi-role fighter jet** designed by Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

- It was **conceptualised in the year 1984.**

- Its **reach is up to 400-km** and will be mainly used for close air-to-ground operations.

- It is pegged as the **world's smallest and lightest supersonic fighter aircraft** in its class.

- It is equipped with state-of-the-art Satellite aided Inertial Navigation System

- Variety of LCA larger aircraft LCA MK-2 **to roll out by year end or early 2023.**



High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for nature and people

- India recently urged countries to join the 'HAC for nature and people'.

- India had joined the Coalition** in the run up to the COP15.

- HAC is an **intergovernmental group championing a global deal for nature and people that can halt the accelerating loss of species**, and protect vital ecosystems that are the source of our economic security.

- It aims to push for a **global goal to protect at least 30% of the planet by 2030 - called 30x30 target** - under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).



Asiatic Lions

- As per recent academic paper, Asiatic lions ranged across the **western, central and northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent**, including the present-day state of Haryana.

➤ This finding also **confirms cohabitation of lion and tiger.**

- Asiatic Lion**

➤ It is **found only in India**, in five protected areas in Gujarat – **Gir National Park, Gir Sanctuary, Pania Sanctuary, Mitiyala Sanctuary and Girnar Sanctuary.**

➤ It is **one of five big cats inhabiting India**, along with the Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, snow leopard and clouded leopard

➤ **IUCN status:** Endangered.







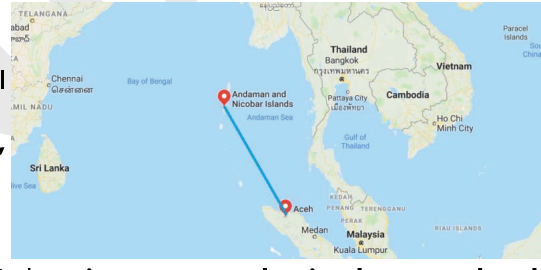

Dementia

- As per a Lancet report, number of dementia cases in India is **expected to almost double by 2050.**

➤ The study attributes the increase of dementia cases to three risk factors: **High body-mass index, high fasting plasma glucose, and smoking.**

- Dementia is a general term for **loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities** that are severe enough to interfere with daily life.

➤ **Alzheimer's disease** is the most common type of dementia.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WHO has brought a Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia 2017-2025 that aims to improve the lives of people with dementia.
 <p>Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data (GISAID)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A research team that found a new strain of Covid-19 Deltacron (that combines Delta and Omicron) in Cyprus has shared findings with GISAID. About GISAID: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched in 2008, Initiative promotes the rapid sharing of data from all influenza viruses and the coronavirus causing COVID-19. Data includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic sequence and related clinical and epidemiological data associated with human viruses, and Geographical as well as species-specific data associated with avian and other animal viruses. Sharing of data help researchers understand how viruses evolve and spread during epidemics and pandemics.
 <p>Digital embossing technology (DET)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This technology is being used for high-speed production of the maps and to produce Braille maps that can be used for a longer period. About DET <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a digital printing technology that eliminates the need for printing plates, moulds, chemicals, and solvents, besides releasing no pollutants or waste and reducing overall energy usage. This technology is designed and implemented for the first time in India by the National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO) under Department of Science & Technology.
 <p>Jallikattu</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jallikattu is a bull-taming sport of Tamil Nadu that has traditionally been part of the festival of Pongal. The festival is a celebration of nature, and thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, of which cattle-worship is part. There are references to Jallikattu in Sangam literature too. Also, a reference to bull taming is found in a seal discovered at Mohenjodaro, which is dated between 2,500 BC and 1,800 BC. Other states will similar sports include – Kambala (Andhra Pradesh), Bullock Kart races (Maharashtra), Cock Fight (Andhra and other states), Camel Race (Rajasthan).
 <p>Andaman Nicobar-Aceh Connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The shipping lane connectivity was envisioned in 2018 to unleash the economic potentials of both areas (India-Indonesia). Geostrategic Importance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sabang port in Aceh, Indonesia is 90 nautical miles from Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It sits at the entrance of Strait of Malacca, considered to be key global choke point. However concerns have emerged because of- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of Rohingyas near Aceh, Nicobar Islands and Aceh have been identified as important nodes in the contraband smuggling route in Southeast Asia. Thus, it is important to improve surveillance and monitoring of maritime traffic and movement of other smaller vessels in this region. 
 <p>Darvaza gas crater</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turkmenistan President has ordered experts to find a way to extinguish a fire in a huge natural gas crater, the Darvaza gas crater or 'Gateway to Hell'. The decision has been taken as it negatively affects both the environment and the health of the people living nearby. About Darvaza gas crater: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located in Turkmenistan in Karakum desert, the crater has been burning for the last 50 years. It was created in 1971 when a Soviet drilling rig accidentally punched into a massive underground natural gas cavern, causing the ground to collapse.



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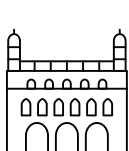
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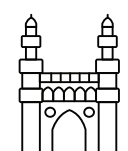
DELHI



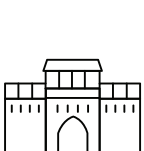
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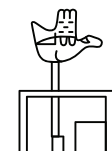
HYDERABAD



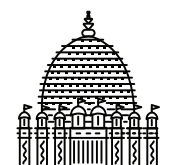
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