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### **1. Tamil Nadu's Authoor betel leaves get Geographical Indication (GI) certificate ( July 15, 2023 )**

Tamil-Nadu's-Authoor-betel-leaves-get-Geographical-Indication

Authoor betel leaves from Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu have been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) certificate by Tamil Nadu State Agricultural Marketing Board and NABARD Madurai Agribusiness Incubation Forum.

#### **An Overview of the News**

- The Authoor Vattara Vetrilai Vivasayigal Sangam, a body representing growers of the Authoor betel leaf, has been awarded the GI certificate.
- This recognition as a Geographical Indication opens up new opportunities for the marketing of Authoor betel leaves.
- The certification allows author betel leaves to be marketed domestically and internationally, thereby increasing their reach in different markets.
- This recognition also highlights the marketing potential of Authoor betel leaves and paves the way for increased demand and popularity.

#### **About the Authoor Betel leaves**

- It is known for its spicy and pungent taste, and is especially used during special occasions such as temple festivals, housewarmings and weddings.
- This unique paan is exclusively found in the village of Authoor, located in the Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu. The presence of the Thamirabarani river, which provides water for irrigation, contributes to its cultivation in local farms.
- Authoor betel leaves are cultivated in a vast area of about 500 acres, which includes areas like Mukkani, Athoor, Korkai, Sagunthalai, Vellakoil and other Mukkani villages. These leaves are characterised by their long petioles and are available in three different varieties: natukodi, karpoori and pachaikodi.
- The cultural importance of Authoor Betel leaves in Tamil culture is highlighted by their mention in the **13th century book 'The Travels of Marco Polo (The Venetian)'**. Furthermore, their historical value and importance can be seen in various ancient stone inscriptions.

#### **Geographical Indication (GI) Tag:**

- It is a form of intellectual property right granted to products to indicate their origin from a specific geographical area.
- This certification is awarded to products that have unique properties or a reputation closely associated with that particular area.
- To be eligible for a GI tag, a product must have a distinctive mark that indicates its origin from a specific geographical area.

- The responsibility of granting GI tag in India rests with the Geographical Indications Registry located in Chennai.

## **2. Megasiphon Thylacos, a new fossil species of tunicate discovered ( July 14, 2023 )**

Megasiphon Thylacos, a new fossil species of tunicate discovered  
Researchers recently described a new fossil species of tunicate called Megasiphon Thylacos

### **An Overview of the News**

- The Megasiphon Thylacos fossil is about 500 million years old.
- The discovery suggests that the modern tunicate body plan was established shortly after the Cambrian explosion.
- The fossil provides insight into the sedentary, filter-feeding lifestyle of ancestral tunicates and their metamorphosis from tadpole-like larvae.

### **About Tunicates**

- Tunicates, commonly known as sea squirts, are a group of marine animals.
- They spend most of their lives attached to surfaces such as docks, rocks or the bottom of a boat.
- There are about 3,000 species of tunicates in the world's oceans, mainly in shallow water habitats.
- The evolutionary history of tunicates dates back at least 500 million years.

### **Tunicate Lineage:**

- **Ascidians:** Ascidians, often called "sea wasps", are one of the main tunicate lineages.
- They begin their lives as mobile, tadpole-like larvae.
- As they mature, they undergo metamorphosis and turn into barrel-shaped adults with two siphons.
- Ascidians spend their adult lives attached to the ocean floor.
- **Appendicularians:** The Appendicularias represent another Antrakha dynasty.
- They retain their tadpole-like appearance even when they become adults.
- They float freely in the upper water.
- They appear to be more distantly related to vertebrates than to ascidians.

### **Physical Characteristics and Feeding Mechanism:**

- The body of adult tunicates is usually barrel-shaped.

- They have two siphons coming out of their body.
- A siphon draws water along with the food particles using suction.
- The other siphons the filtered water back out.

### **3. Justice Sheo Kumar Singh becomes NGT acting chairman ( July 7, 2023 )**

National Green Tribunal (NGT)

The Central Government has authorized **Justice Sheo Kumar Singh-I**, Judicial Member of the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**, to act as the Chairperson of the Tribunal till a new Chairperson is appointed.

#### **An Overview of the news:**

- Justice **Adarsh Kumar Goel** who was appointed as the Chairman in July 2018; Retired on 6 July 2023.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a notification on 6 July 2023 authorizing Justice Sheo Kumar Singh-I to act as the Chairperson.
- He was appointed as a judicial member of NGT in 2020. He is currently working as Judicial Member in the Central Zone Bench of Bhopal.

#### **Career of Justice Sheo Kumar Singh-I:**

- Shri Singh-I graduated from Allahabad University in 1975.
- Passed out as a Law graduate from Allahabad University in the year 1978.
- Joined judicial service in 1984 and worked as District Judge, Registrar (Judicial) in various districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- He was appointed Supervisor of Ram Janmabhoomi, Ayodhya, Faizabad.
- He was elevated as a judge in Allahabad and served there till January 2018.

#### **National Green Tribunal (NGT):**

- India is the third (first developing) country in the world after Australia and New Zealand to set up a Special Environment Tribunal.
- **Establishment:** On 18th October, 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.
- **Objective:** To speed up disposal of environmental issues.
- **Headquarters:** Delhi (Four Regional Offices - Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai).
- **Settlement of issues:** Settlement of environmental issues within 6 months.
- **Composition:** Consists of Chairperson, Judicial Members and Expert Members.
- **Appointment of Chairperson:** By the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.
- **Tenure:** Term of three years or till the age of sixty five years and not eligible for reappointment.

### **4. United Nations adopt first-ever treaty to protect marine life in high seas ( June 20, 2023 )**

United Nations adopt first-ever treaty to protect marine life in high seas

The **United Nations** on 19 June adopted the **first-ever treaty to protect marine life** in the high seas, setting a significant milestone in **ocean conservation**.

### **An overview of the news**

- UN Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** praised the historic agreement and stressed its importance in providing a fighting chance against the many threats to the ocean.
- Delegates representing all **193 member states** expressed their happiness in accepting the treaty.
- Addressing the delegates, Secretary-General Guterres stressed that the adoption of the treaty comes at a critical time when the oceans are facing many challenges.
- He urged all countries to spare no effort to **sign and ratify the treaty immediately**.
- The treaty aims to protect biodiversity in the high seas, which cover about half of the Earth's surface and lie beyond national boundaries.
- Negotiations on this treaty had been going on for 20 years, facing many obstacles and delays in reaching an agreement.

### **Signing of Treaty**

- On 20 September, during the annual meeting of **world leaders at the General Assembly**, the treaty will be open for signature, signaling countries' commitment to its principles.
- The treaty will come into force after **60 countries** have ratified it, indicating their willingness to abide by its provisions and actively contribute to marine conservation efforts.

### **Need of Oceans Protection**

- The ocean plays a critical role in **supporting the livelihoods of three billion people worldwide** and serves as a vital ecosystem that sustains human life and economic well-being.
- The ocean is a fundamental source of **food and economic security** for millions of people.
- Its ecosystems, including **fisheries and aquaculture**, provide sustenance and income for communities globally.
- It has **absorbed approximately 93% of the heat** generated by greenhouse gases, helping to mitigate the impacts of global warming.
- It serves as a source of resources such as **energy, minerals, and materials** that are crucial for various industries and economic sectors.

**5. Tiger Safari in Ramgarh Reserve is expected to be open in July ( June 15, 2023 )**

Tiger Safari in Ramgarh Reserve is expected to be open in July. The Forest Department is making preparations to launch a **wildlife safari** within the **buffer zone** of the recently established **Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve (RVTR)** in **Rajasthan's Bundi district**.

### **An overview of the news**

- By setting up wildlife safaris within the **buffer zone of the tiger reserve**, the forest department aims to **promote eco-tourism** and raise awareness about wildlife conservation.
- It will provide visitors a chance to see tigers and other wildlife in their natural habitat.
- This will ensure the protection of wildlife and reduce the distress caused to the animals.

### **About Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve (RVTR)**

- Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary was designated as a **tiger reserve on July 5, 2021**, after receiving in-principle approval from the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**.
- It is situated in the **Bundi district of southeastern Rajasthan**.
- It was initially established as a **Wildlife Sanctuary in 1982** under the **Rajasthan Wild Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1951**.
- The sanctuary comprises a **core area of 481.9 sq. km** and a **buffer area of 1019.98 sq. km**, providing ample space for wildlife conservation.
- **Mez River**, a tributary of the Chambal River, flows through the sanctuary, enhancing the ecological significance of the reserve.

### **Flora**

- The habitat of Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary is predominantly characterized by **Dhok trees (Anogeissus pendula)**, which play a significant role in shaping the landscape.
- Alongside Dhok, the sanctuary features a diverse range of important flora, including **Khair, Ronj, Amaltas, Gurjan, Saler among others**.

### **Fauna**

- Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary is also home to a **diverse range of wildlife**, including **Jungle cats, Golden jackals, Hyenas, Crested porcupines, Indian hedgehogs, Rhesus macaques, Hanuman langurs**.
- The sanctuary provides a natural habitat for the **Indian Star tortoise** (*Geochelone elegans*), contributing to its conservation efforts.

## **6. PM Modi launches Amrit Dharohar and MISHTI schemes for wetland, mangrove conservation ( June 7, 2023 )**

-Modi-launches-Amrit-Dharohar

On the occasion of **World Environment Day (5 June)**, PM **Narendra Modi** launched **two schemes--Amrit Dharohar and MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes)**--aimed at reviving the country's wetlands and mangroves.

An overview of the news

- PM said in the **last nine years**, the number of **wetlands and Ramsar sites** in India has increased **almost three times** as compared to earlier
- India currently has **75 Ramsar sites** which are wetlands of international importance and have been designated under the norms of the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**.
- India also has about **3% of South Asia's mangrove population**.
- Apart from Sundarbans in **West Bengal, Andaman region, Kutch and Jamnagar regions** in Gujarat have substantial mangrove cover.

### **Amrit Dharohar Yojana**

- The scheme was first announced by the Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the **2023-24 Union budget**.
- The scheme will be implemented over the next three years to encourage optimum use of wetlands and enhance **biodiversity, carbon stock, ecotourism opportunities and income generation for local communities**.
- It will emphasise on the importance of **lakes and their conservation**.
- Amrit Dharohar aims to achieve **sustainable ecosystem development** over the next three years with the help of local communities.

### **MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes)**

- The scheme was first announced by the Union finance minister **Nirmala Sitharaman in the 2023-24 Union budget**.
- This will facilitate **mangrove plantation on salt lands** along the sea coast of India.
- The scheme will operate through “**convergence between MGNREGS, Campa Fund and other sources**”.
- It aims at intensive afforestation of coastal mangrove forests.
- There are such forests on both the **east and west coasts of India**, with the **Sundarbans in Bengal** being one of the largest mangrove forests.
- Initially the mangrove cover will be restored in **nine states across the country**.

- The scheme envisages the development of mangroves covering nearly **540 sq km**, spreading **across 11 states and two union territories** over five years, starting from FY2023-24.
- The **Centre will cover 80%** of the project cost, while **state governments** will contribute the **remaining 20%**.

## **7. UAE to Host World's Largest IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 ( June 5, 2023 )**

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The next **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress** will be held from **9 to 15 October 2025 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**.

### **An overview of the news**

- The United Arab Emirates was selected as the host country based on a **rigorous evaluation process** of its candidature.
- The United Arab Emirates has a long-standing collaboration with IUCN, with seven IUCN Member organizations and the National Committee based there.
- The country is home to **50 scientific and policy experts** who are members of IUCN Commissions.
- The selection of the **Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center (ADNEC)** as the venue was supported by a broad range of governmental authorities and civil society organizations.

### **About IUCN World Conservation Congress**

- The IUCN Congress is the **world's largest conservation event**, held **every four years**.
- The Congress brings together leaders from government, civil society, Indigenous peoples' organizations, business, and academia.
- Its purpose is to determine the **world's most pressing environmental and development challenges** and develop actions to address them.
- The Congress will focus on delivering the **Global Biodiversity Framework** adopted by over **190 countries** in December.
- The Framework includes targets to enhance the **conservation of ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity**.

### **Previous IUCN World Conservation Congress**

- The previous IUCN World Conservation Congress was held in **2021 in Marseille, France**.

- It had almost 6,000 people attending on-site and over 3,500 participants online.
- During the congress, **148 resolutions and recommendations were adopted**, including calls to protect 80% of the Amazon by 2025 and halt deep-sea mining across the oceans.
- The global community was urged to adopt an ambitious **One Health approach**.
- The **IUCN Climate Crisis Commission** was established during the congress.

### **About International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

- It is an **international organization** that works towards the **conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural resources**.
- It was **established in 1948** and is the world's largest and most diverse environmental network.
- It brings together governments, non-governmental organizations, scientists, and experts from around the world.
- The primary mission of the IUCN is **to encourage, and assist societies** throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature.
- It strives to promote the sustainable use of natural resources and support actions that tackle pressing environmental challenges.

### **8. Meri LiFE, Mera Swachh Shahar' mega campaign launched by Union Minister Hardeep S Puri ( May 22, 2023 )**

Meri-LiFE,-Mera-Swachh-Shahar

Union Minister **Hardeep S Puri** launched the campaign '**Meri LiFE, Mera Swachh Shahar**' in New Delhi.

#### **An Overview of the News**

- The campaign promotes the **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (RRR) concept of waste management**.
- This campaign will strengthen the resolve of the citizens under **SBM-U 2.0 and also promote the purpose of Mission Life**.
- RRR centres or one-stop collection centres were set up across the country on May 20.
- The centres will accept unused or used **plastic items, clothing, shoes, books and toys**.
- Citizens can donate used **clothes, shoes, books, toys and plastic at RRR centres**.
- The collected items will be recycled for reuse or turned into new products.
- The campaign will culminate with the resolution of LiFE on 5 June.



**Mission LiFE:**

- The mission was launched by the Prime Minister on **October 20, 2022 at Kevadia, Gujarat.**
- It aims to bring about **behaviour change in individuals through simple, actionable steps.**
- It aims to discourage mindless and wasteful consumption patterns and promote conscious and planned usage.
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal ministry** responsible for national level coordination and implementation of Mission LiFE.

**Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0)**

- It was **launched on 1 October 2021** to achieve the vision of '**Garbage Free Cities**'.
- It aims **to achieve safe sanitation in urban areas.**
- **SBM-U 2.0** focuses on making all cities '**garbage free**' and ensuring proper grey and black water management.
- The mission emphasises source segregation of solid waste, **3R principles (reduce, reuse, recycle)**, scientific processing of municipal solid waste, and remediation of heritage dumpsites.

**9. Petersberg Climate Dialogue 2023 ( May 9, 2023 )**

Petersberg Climate Dialogue 2023

The **Petersberg Dialogue on Climate Change** was held in **Berlin from May 2-3, 2023.**

**An overview of the news**

- The Petersberg Climate Dialogue (PCD) was **hosted by Germany** and the **United Arab Emirates**, which is hosting the 28th **Conference of the Parties (COP28)** to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.**
- Ministers from **40 countries attended** the conference to discuss the way forward towards COP28.
- The main topics of discussion at the event were **renewable targets, climate finance and global stocktake.**

**Key points of the summit**

- To limit **global warming to 1.5°C**, the world needs to cut its greenhouse gas emissions at a rapid pace.

- The conference agreed to focus on phasing out **fossil fuel emissions** while phasing out **viable, affordable zero-carbon alternatives**.
- It calls for tripling renewable energy capacity by **2030 and then doubling it by 2040**.
- 2023 is the year of **Global Stocktech**. The Global Stocktake is essentially a periodic review of global climate action aimed at assessing whether current efforts will enable us to reach the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement.

### **Conference of Parties(COP)**

- Every year, the United Nations organizes a climate summit where the main agenda of the parties is **to limit global temperature rise**.
- These summits are called **Conference of the Parties (COPs)**.
- Participants come from **197 countries** that have signed the **1992 United Nations Climate Accord**.
- Its purpose is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to prevent dangerous interference from human activity on the climate system.
- The agreement seeks to limit global warming to well **below 2 °C, preferably 1.5 °C**, compared to pre-industrial levels.
- It was signed in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Since 1994**, COPs have been organised every year. **Year 2023 marks the 28th summit, called the COP28 summit**.
- The **COP28** conference will be held in **Dubai** from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

### **10. India to join international climate action in civil aviation from 2027 ( May 1, 2023 )**

**India will join the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and Long-Term Aspirational Goals (LTAG) from 2027.**

#### **An Overview of the News**

- This announcement was made in the meeting of the **Consultative Committee of the Parliament of the Ministry of Civil Aviation** under the **chairmanship of Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia**.
- ICAO has adopted several key ambitious targets, including a **two percent annual fuel efficiency improvement by 2050, carbon neutral development, and net zero by 2050, all covered under CORSIA and LTAG**.
- India's Ministry of Civil Aviation stated that joining these measures from 2027 would help airlines from developing countries like India to achieve greater growth and avoid adverse **financial consequences due to CORSIA**.

- The financial impact caused by offsetting will be borne by individual airlines based on
- their international operations, and CORSIA only applies to flights originating from one country to another.

**International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO):**

- It is a **specialised agency of the United Nations** and its primary function is to **coordinate the principles and techniques of international air navigation**.
- The organisation is also responsible for promoting the **planning and development of international air transport**.
- ICAO's mission is to ensure the **safe and orderly development of the international aviation industry**.
- The organisation works with its member states to **develop and implement policies and regulations related to air navigation and air transport**.
- ICAO also provides technical assistance and training to help its member states meet international aviation standards and regulations.

Established - **7 December 1944**

Headquarters - **Montreal, Canada**

**Carbon Offsetting and Mitigation Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA):**

- It is a global plan developed by the **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** to **reduce CO2 emissions from international flights**.
- It aims to achieve **carbon-neutral growth for international flights** by offsetting any increase in emissions through the purchase of carbon credits from eligible projects.
- The plan has a phased implementation and includes all international flights, except to **least developed countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries**.