

CROCIDURA NARCONDAMICA

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-III (ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY)

CONTEXT: Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered a new species of insectivorous mammal, a white-toothed shrew, from Narcondam Island of the Andaman and Nicobar group of islands.

ABOUT CORCIDURA NARCONDAMICA

- It is an insectivorous mammal, found in the volcanic and uninhabited island.
- Shrews are small and mouse-like mammals, and they live in sub-leaf stratum in the forests.
- This is the first discovery of a shrew from this volcanic island (Narcondam Island) and it increases the number of White-toothed shrew (genus Crocidura) species in India from 11 to 12.
- The new species is of medium size (head and body lengths) and has a distinct external morphology with darker grey dense fur with a thick, darker tail compared to other species of the genus.
- Craniodental characters of the species such as braincase were rounded and elevated with weak lambdoidal ridges makes the species distinct in comparison to other close congeners.

ABOUT NARCONDAM ISLAND

- Narcondam Island is located about 130 km east of North Andaman, and about 446 km of the west coast of Myanmar.
- This thickly vegetated island is bordered by cliffs on the southern side and crested by three peaks is part of a volcanic arc that continues northward from Sumatra to Myanmar.

NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS)

CONTEXT: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the probe into the June 28 killing of tailor Kanhaiyya Lal (48) in Rajasthan's Udaipur over a social media post supporting suspended Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Nupur Sharma.

ABOUT NIA

- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) was constituted under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008.
- It is a central agency to investigate and prosecute offences:
 - affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, security of State, friendly relations with foreign States.
 - against atomic and nuclear facilities.
 - smuggling in High-Quality Counterfeit Indian Currency.

- It implements international treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions of the United Nations, its agencies, and other international organizations.
- Its objective is also to combat terror in India.
- It acts as the Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency.
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Branches: Hyderabad, Guwahati, Kochi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur, and Jammu.

GOALS OF NIA

- To execute in-depth professional investigation of scheduled offences using the latest scientific methods of investigation.
- Upholding the constitution of India and laws of the land.
- Prime importance to the protection of Human Rights and dignity of the individual.
- Developing a professional workforce through regular training and exposure to the best practices and procedures.
- Ensuring effective and speedy trial.
- Maintaining professional and cordial relations with the governments of States and Union Territories and other law enforcement agencies in compliance with the legal provisions of the NIA Act.
- Study and analyze laws relating to terrorism in other countries and regularly evaluate the adequacy of existing laws in India and propose changes as and when necessary.

PARTNERSHIP FOR GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE & INVESTMENT (PGII)

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (GLOBAL GROUPINGS)

CONTEXT: The US President, along with the heads of other G7 member states has launched in Germany the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) Initiative.

ABOUT PGII

- At the 2021, G7 Summit, G7 leaders had announced their intent to develop a value-driven, high impact, and transparent infrastructure partnership.
- It was to meet the enormous infrastructure needs of low-income and middle-income countries as well as support the US and its allies' economic and national security interests.
- Under this, G7 leaders pledged to raise \$600 billion in private and public funds over 5 years to finance needed infrastructure in the developing countries.

AIM

- To deliver quality, sustainable infrastructure that makes a difference in people's lives around the world.
- To build infrastructure that strengthens and diversifies supply chains, creates new

opportunities, and advances national security of member countries.

FOUR PRIORITY PILLARS

- Climate and energy security: Tackling the climate crisis and bolstering global energy security through investments in climate resilient infrastructure & transformational energy technologies.
- Digital connectivity: Developing, expanding, and deploying secure ICT networks and infrastructure to power economic growth and facilitate open digital societies.
- Gender equality and equity: Advancing gender equality and equity by investing in-
- Care infrastructure that increases opportunities for economic participation by women.
- Improved water and sanitation infrastructure that addresses gender gaps in unpaid work and time use.
- Health and health security: Developing and upgrading the health infrastructure systems and contributing to global health security.

INDIA AND PGII

- US announced several flagship projects under the PGII which will boost India's infrastructural initiatives as well.
- The US International Finance Development Corporation will be investing up to \$30 billion in Omnivore Agritech and Climate Sustainability Fund.
- This is an impact venture capital fund that invests in entrepreneurs building the future of agriculture, food systems, climate, and the rural economy in India.
- The fund seeks to invest in companies that increase food security and promotes climate resilience as well as climate adaptation in India.
- It is aimed at countering China's multitrillion-dollar Belt and Road initiative.

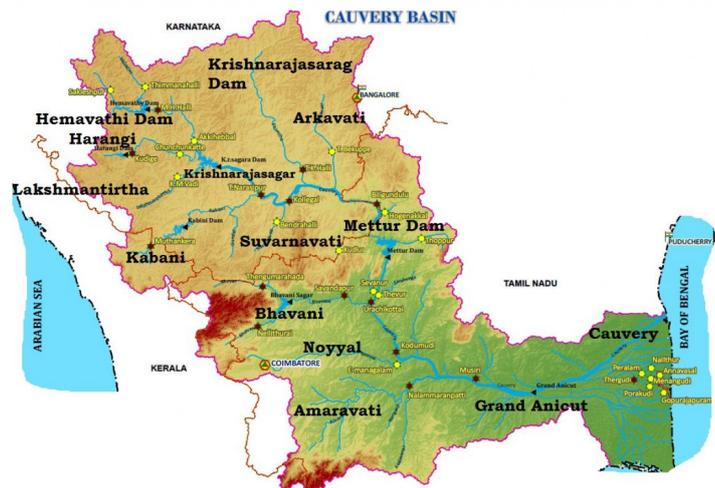
PRELIMS FACTS

KAI CHUTNEY

- The Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar, recently sought a geographical indication tag for the red weaver ant kai chutney in the Simlipal Tiger Reserve and its adjacent forests in Mayurbhanj district, for its medicinal qualities.
- Red weaver ants are indigenous to Mayurbhanj.
- The sour, pungent red weaver ant chutney, locally known as 'kai pimpudi,' is thought to have unique characteristics.
- Red weaver ants live in colonies consisting of multiple nests on trees. Each nest is made of leaves stitched together using the silk produced by their larvae, and can withstand intense winds and can be water-tight.

HARANGI DAM

- The Harangi dam is in the Kodagu district of Karnataka.
- This reservoir is formed by a masonry dam across the river Harangi which happens to be a tributary of river Kaveri.



CHENKURINJI

- The Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary derives its name from *Gluta travancorica*, a species endemic to the Agasthya Mala Biosphere Reserve which is locally known as 'Chenkurinji.'
- Chenkurinji belongs to the Anacardiaceae family.
- *Gluta travancorica* was once abundant in the hills on the southern parts of the Aryankavu Pass in Kerala's Kollam district, but its presence has depleted as it is very susceptible to climate change.
- The tree was widely seen in places such as Pandimala, Vilakkumaram and Rosemala.
- The tree is also seen inside the shola forests near Ponmudi, but effective pollination hardly takes place in this shola habitat.
- The tree is said to have medicinal properties and is used to treat high blood pressure and arthritis.
- The heartwood is sturdy with a deep red colour, and trees were fell for wood earlier.

KONARK SUN TEMPLE

- Built by the king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga dynasty in the years around 1250, this 13th century temple is dedicated to the Hindu deity "Surya" (Sun).
- It is situated on the coast of Odisha and about 35 kilometers northeast of Puri.
- The sun temple at Konark was called "Black Pagoda" by the European sailors because it appeared as a giant black tiered tower from the Bay of Bengal.
- Similarly, the Jagannath Temple at Puri is mentioned as "White Pagoda" in the accounts of the early European sailors during the 16th – 17th century.
- In 1984, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Konark together with Puri and with Bhubaneshwar completes the Golden Triangle of Odisha, which is a major pilgrimage route for the Hindus in the state of Odisha.
- The face of the temple faces East so that the early rays of the sun fall on the main entrance of the temple.
- It is built using Khondalite rocks which are a sub-type of Metamorphic rocks.
- The temple has 12 wheels in two rows each totaling 24 around the temple, which represents sundials and could be used to determine the time precisely to minute.