

NEWS TODAY

OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLES STAY AWAY FROM RUSHIKULYA IN ODISHA THIS YEAR

- Experts say that Olive Ridley turtle staying away from Rushikulya rookery in Odisha's Ganjam is a natural phenomenon.

➤ **Rushikulya river mouth is considered the second-biggest rookery in India after Gahirmatha.**

- **About Olive Ridley Turtles**

➤ It is smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles, **inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.**

➤ These turtles, along with their cousin, Kemps Ridley turtle, are best known for their unique **mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females lay eggs on the same beach.

➤ **IUCN status:** Vulnerable

➤ **Threats:** Accidental killing through entanglement in trawl nets; extensively poached for their meat, shell and leather; warmer sea surface temperatures etc.

- **Government Initiatives**

➤ Olive Ridley is placed under Schedule-I of Wild Life Protection Act, 1972.

➤ Odisha government has made it mandatory for trawls to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs), a net specially designed with an exit cover which allows the turtles to escape while retaining the catch.

➤ Coast Guard has launched the '**Operation Oliva**' exercise to ensure the safe mid-sea sojourn of breeding Olive Ridley sea turtles.



SUPREME COURT ISSUES NOTICE TO CENTRE ON PLEA CHALLENGING SEDITION LAW

- The petitioners in SC said that they were charged with sedition for questioning state governments and Centre, and for comments and cartoons shared on social media platforms.

➤ They contended that the provision infringes upon the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression, guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a).

- Sedition law under Indian Penal Code (IPC)

➤ As per section 124A of IPC, Sedition is an act that brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law in India by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise.

➤ It provides for punishment of imprisonment for life or imprisonment up to three years with fine.

- Views on sedition law

➤ Various verdicts in Romesh Thappar case, Kedar Nath Singh case, Kanhaiya Kumar case re-defined a seditious act only if it had essential ingredients as

➤ Disruption of public order

➤ Attempt to violently overthrow a lawful government

➤ Threatening the security of State or of public.

POSITRON EXCESS FROM COSMIC RAY INTERACTIONS IN GALACTIC MOLECULAR CLOUDS

- Researchers from Raman Research Institute (RRI), Bengaluru, an autonomous institution of Department of Science and Technology have resolved mystery of 'positron excess' phenomenon.

➤ Positron is the anti-particle of the electron.

➤ Also known as anti-electron, it has the same properties as the electron with the exception of electric charge.

➤ Electron has a negative charge while the positron has a positive charge.

- Over the years, astronomers have observed an excess of positrons having energy of more than 10 giga-electronvolts, or 10 GeV. Positrons with energy more than 300 GeV, however, are lower in comparison to what astronomers expect.

➤ This behaviour of positrons between 10 and 300 GeV is what astronomers call the 'positron excess'.

➤ Their study proposed that cosmic rays while propagating through the Milky Way galaxy interact with matter producing other cosmic rays, primarily electrons and positrons.

➤ Cosmic rays are high energy particles that move through space at nearly the speed of light. They provide one of our few direct samples of matter from outside the solar system.

➤ These new cosmic rays are the origin of the 'positron excess' phenomenon.

DEMAND FOR MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT SCHEME (MGNREGS) WORK SPIKES

- A total of 344 crore person days employment has been generated till Feb, 2021, which is the highest ever.

➤ Out of total person days generated in 2020-21, about 52% were women days.

➤ This indicates the extent of reverse migration from the lockdown States to their native States and reflects the extent of under employment in the labour market.

- About MGNREGS

➤ The scheme's mandate under the MGNREG Act 2005 is to provide at least 100 days of 'wage employment' in a financial year to every rural household whose adult member volunteers to do unskilled manual work.

➤ Employment must be provided with 15 days of being demanded failing which an 'unemployment allowance' must be given.

➤ Funding is shared between the centre and the states. The central government bears 100% of the cost of unskilled labour, 75% of the cost of semi-skilled and skilled labour, 75% of the cost of materials and 6% of the administrative costs.

➤ Social Audit of MGNREGA works is mandatory, which lends to accountability and transparency.

UTTAR PRADESH, M.P. AND RAJASTHAN GET MAXIMUM GRANTS UNDER NHM IN LAST THREE YEARS

- These states have received 5-6 per cent of the total grant allocation.
 - > Most of the North-East States have got less than 1 per cent of NHM grants.
- National Health Mission (NHM) was launched by the government of India in 2013 **subsuming the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) (focused on rural areas) and the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) (focussed on urban areas)**.
- **Objectives:**
 - > Reduction of infant mortality and maternal mortality.
 - > **Universal access to public health services** such as women's health, child health, drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and universal immunization.
 - > **Population stabilization, gender & demographic balance.**
 - > **Access to integrated comprehensive primary health care.**
- The main programmatic components include **Health System Strengthening, Reproductive-Maternal- Neonatal-Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A), and Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases.**
- Centre-state funding pattern will be 75:25 for all the States except North-Eastern states including Sikkim and other special category states, funding pattern will be 90:10.

ALSO IN NEWS

| | |
|---|---|
| Cantonment Boards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cantonment board is established for administration for civilian population in the cantonment area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cantonment Board is set up under Cantonment Act 2006. > It works under administrative control of defence ministry of Central government. |
| Operation Samudra Setu-II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is launched by Indian Navy to augment ongoing national mission to meet the country's oxygen requirements. • Warships have been deployed to carry liquid oxygen-filled cryogenic containers and associated medical equipment to India amid its worsening COVID-19 pandemic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > All such containers carried on aircraft around country are empty because oxygen-filled tanks cannot be transported by air. |
| Scheme of Financial Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to state governments in the form of 50-year interest free loan. • The Government has decided to continue the scheme in the year 2021-22. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Funds provided to the states will be used for new and ongoing capital projects. The funds can also be used for settling pending bills in ongoing capital projects. • Capital expenditure creates employment, enhances the future productive capacity of the economy, and results in a higher rate of economic growth. |
| Alternate Investment Fund (AIF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour ministry has notified that Employees Provident Fund Organisation can invest up to 5% in AIF to support infra push. • AIF means any fund established or incorporated in India which is a privately pooled investment vehicle which collects funds from sophisticated investors, whether Indian or foreign, for investing it in accordance with a defined investment policy for the benefit of its investors. • SEBI categorises AIF into <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Category I AIF like Venture Capital Funds. > Category II AIF like Private Equity (PE) Funds. > Category III AIF like Hedge Funds. |
| Network for Greening the Financial System | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has joined the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) as a Member. • About NGFS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The NGFS is a group of Central banks and supervisors willing to share the best practices and contribute to the development of the environment and climate risk management in the financial sector. > The System was launched at the Paris One Planet Summit in December 2017. |
| Places in news | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A stampede at the religious festival (Lag B'Omer) attended by thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews in northern Israel killed dozens of people and injured many others. • Albania <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) recently launched the joint military exercises in Albania called the DEFENDER-Europe 21. • Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A cease-fire on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan held recently after intense clashes in a conflict over water supply between the two ex-Soviet Central Asian neighbours.   |