

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

14 JULY 2024

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Imminent showers: Monsoon clouds hover over the rocky terrain at the [World Heritage Site in Hampi, Karnataka](#). K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

World Heritage Sites

- There are places considered to be of outstanding value to humanity, recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- They are inscribed on the World Heritage List, a prestigious designation that aims to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage worldwide.

Key Features of World Heritage Sites:

- **Outstanding Universal Value:** Sites must possess exceptional cultural or natural significance that transcends national borders and has importance for all humanity.
- **Diversity:** World Heritage Sites encompass a wide range of properties, including:
 - **Cultural heritage:** Historical monuments, archaeological sites, buildings, city centers, and cultural landscapes.
 - **Natural heritage:** Forests, mountains, lakes, coastlines, deserts, and geological formations.
 - **Mixed heritage:** Sites with both cultural and natural significance.
- **International Cooperation:** The concept of World Heritage Sites promotes international cooperation in protecting and preserving these invaluable places.

- **Conservation Challenges:** Many World Heritage Sites face threats from climate change, pollution, tourism, and urbanization. UNESCO and partner organizations work to address these challenges and ensure the long-term preservation of these sites.

UNESCO's Role:

- UNESCO plays a crucial role in identifying, protecting, and promoting World Heritage Sites.
- It provides technical assistance, capacity building, and financial support to countries in their efforts to conserve and manage these sites.
- By recognizing and protecting World Heritage Sites, UNESCO and its member states strive to ensure that these invaluable treasures are preserved for future generations.

Hampi

- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a captivating historical town located in the Vijayanagara district of Karnataka, India. It was once the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, one of the most powerful Hindu kingdoms in India.

Early History:

- Hampi was founded in the **14th century (1336 AD) by the Sangama dynasty**, who established the Vijayanagara Empire.
- The city grew rapidly under the rule of the **Saluva, Tuluva, and Aravidu dynasties**, becoming a major center of trade, religion, and culture.
- At its peak in the 16th century, Hampi was one of the largest and richest cities in the world, with a population estimated at over 500,000.

Decline of the Vijayanagara Empire:

- **In 1565, the Vijayanagara Empire was defeated by a coalition of Muslim sultanates in the Battle of Talikota.**
- Hampi was sacked and plundered, and its population was decimated.
- The city was abandoned and fell into ruins.

Architectural Splendor

- Hampi is a treasure trove of architectural marvels, showcasing the brilliance of Vijayanagara architecture. **Virupaksha Temple:** A dedicated Hindu temple to Lord Shiva, it remains an active place of worship.
- **Vittala Temple:** Famous for its intricate stone carvings and the mesmerizing musical pillars.
- **Lotus Mahal:** A stunning palace complex with intricate carvings and a lotus-shaped pool.
- **Hazara Rama Temple:** A royal temple complex adorned with exquisite sculptures.

Hampi Chariot:

- Among three famous stone chariots in India; the other two are in **Konark (Odisha)** and **Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu)**.
- Built in the 16th century by King Krishnadevaraya, a Vijayanagara ruler.
- Vijayanagara rulers reigned from the **14th to 17th century CE**.
- Shrine dedicated to **Garuda, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu**.

Vittala Temple:

- Built in the 15th century during the rule of Devaraya II, a Vijayanagara ruler.
- Dedicated to Vittala, also known as Vijaya Vittala Temple.
- Vittala is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
- Constructed in the Dravidian style, adorned with elaborate carvings.



Patriotic

Chance discovery of treasure pot sparks frenzy

An 18th-century vessel with gold and silver coins found by labourers digging a rainwater pit in Kannur district; police cordon off the site to keep possible fortune-seekers at bay; Archaeology Department may conduct excavations at the site

[GS Paper I: History](#)

C.P. Sajit
KANNUR

The chance discovery of a pot containing 18th-century gold and silver coins, and other period artefacts has suddenly elevated the profile of the sleepy village of Chengalai in Kannur district of Kerala.

Captivated by news of buried treasure, scores of people, possibly including fortune-seekers, are making a beeline for the leafy suburb dotted with rubber plantations.

The excitement generated by the news of the find has prompted the police to cordon off the spot for possible future excavations by the State

Archaeology Department.

A group of local women labourers engaged in digging a rainwater harvesting pit for the Parappai Government School on Friday were the first to experience the exhilaration of discovering the buried treasure.

'Strange object'

The homemakers, all beneficiaries of the rural employment guarantee scheme, said they approached the "strange object" with trepidation.

Some feared sorcery and wondered if the pot contained dark magic artefacts. Others worried the orb-shaped object could be an unexploded crude bomb, often used to settle political scores in



Hidden fortune: The 18th-century gold and silver coins found in a pot in Chengalai in Kannur district of Kerala. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kannur. Nevertheless, their fear turned into excitement when they discovered the pot held a fortune from the past.

Vijayakumar Namboodiri, a

resident, said ancestral houses in the locality buried valuables in pots in ancient temple groves. He noted that local myths about 'moola bhandari' or secreted assets were

passed down generations and were integral to local folklore.

K. Krishna Raj, the officer in-charge of the Pazhassi Raja Archaeological Museum in Kozhikode, said the locality rarely yielded historical collections and the riches could be some individual or family's fortune.

Mr. Raja noted that the coins bore the hallmarks of late 18th century, with some displaying Indo-French and Kannur Ali Raja markings.

The bead necklaces appeared to be from the same era. He stressed that only a comprehensive study could unveil the historical context of the remarkable find.

Patriotic

More migrant workers assaulted in Meghalaya

Pressure groups demanding implementation of the ILP system are allegedly behind the attacks; labourers are refusing to work in Meghalaya after the assault, an official of NHIDCL says

GS Paper II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Members of pressure groups in Meghalaya demanding the implementation of the British-era **Inner Line Permit (ILP)** system continue to assault migrant workers, threatening to stall several development projects across the State.

Officials of National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL) said some youth wearing masks and helmets assaulted six labourers engaged in the maintenance of the Shillong-Umiam road at Mawiong near the State's capital, Shillong, on July 12.

A critically injured worker was rushed to a hospital in Guwahati for treatment, they said. "All the labourers are refusing to work in Meghalaya after the assault," an NHIDCL official involved with road projects in Meghalaya said.

The NHIDCL lodged a first information report at the local police station and wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of East Khasi Hills district seeking action against the assailants, and a safe environment for the



Some groups that are for the Inner Line Permit have set up a 'Check Gate' saying the government should take measures to stop the "influx of outsiders" into Meghalaya. FACEBOOK/KSU

project workers to execute their assignments.

The police said some Khasi Students' Union (KSU) leaders were summoned to a police station in Shillong in connection with the organisation's drives to check the "work permits" of non-tribal people and migrant labourers.

Defiant note

The KSU leaders struck a defiant note, asserting that its members would continue to "do the government's job" if the ILP and the Meghalaya Residents

Safety and Security Act passed in 2020 were not implemented. The union claims these mechanisms would check the inflow of "illegal immigrants", and protect indigenous communities. Union members also set up a temporary "ILP check gate" on an arterial highway in the State's Ri-Bhoi district a few days ago to drive home their point.

The ILP is a temporary travel document currently needed for Indians to enter Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, and Naga-

land. It is based on the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873.

Members of the KSU and other organisations were earlier accused of assaulting migrant workers in the Laitumkhrah and Polo areas of Shillong. One of those assaulted in the Polo area was a technician brought from New Delhi for specialised work at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium ahead of the Durand Cup football in August.

Some non-tribal workers were also bludgeoned to death. There were at least three such cases in East Khasi Hills district between March and April.

Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, criticised by rights organisations for going "soft" on the violent pressure groups, said the government has been dealing firmly with those creating law and order problems. "There is no such thing as a work permit and nobody is authorised to check the documents of labourers except for the appropriate authorities. There is a process for the Labour Department to register the workers for their safety and to maintain records," he said.

Inner Line Permit (ILP) System

- The Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an official travel document issued by the Indian government to allow inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period.
- It's mandatory for Indian citizens from outside these states to obtain a permit for entering the protected state.

Purpose:

- To regulate movement into and within certain areas along India's borders.
- To protect the unique culture, traditions, and environment of these areas.
- To prevent illegal immigration and activities that could threaten the security of the region.

Constitutional Context:

- Indian citizens are free to live and work in any state, but some states require special permission for entry.
- An ILP grants entry to areas between the international boundary and the "Inner Line" of the country.
- There are concerns that ILP violates fundamental rights (Articles 14, 15, 19, 21) and may affect national integrity.

States Requiring ILP:

- **Arunachal Pradesh:**
 - Issued by the secretary (political) of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
 - Required at interstate borders with Assam or Nagaland.
 - Temporary ILP valid for 15 days (extendable); employment ILP valid for a year.
 - Planning to implement permit-on-arrival.
- **Mizoram:**
 - Issued by the Government of Mizoram.
 - Required at interstate borders.
 - Temporary ILP valid for 15 days (extendable to 30 days); Regular ILP valid for 6 months (renewable twice).
 - Can be obtained on arrival at Lengpui Airport in Aizawl.
- **Nagaland:**
 - Issued by the Government of Nagaland.
 - Required for anyone who is not an indigenous inhabitant of Nagaland.
- **Manipur:**
 - Issued by the Government of Manipur.
 - ILP regime extended on 11 December 2019.
 - Fourth state to implement ILP after Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram.
- **Lakshadweep:**
 - Issued by the government of Lakshadweep.
 - Mandatory for entering the island territory.
 - Difficult to obtain due to strict rules and regulations.

Key Features:

- ILP is issued by the state government concerned.
- It grants permission for a limited period, typically **15 to 30 days**, which can be extended.
- The ILP system is designed to balance the need for regulated access with the rights of residents.

Police register FIR on lewd remarks made about wife of Kirti Chakra awardee

PCS

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Five days after the National Commission for Women took cognisance of the lewd remarks made about Smriti Singh, the widow of **Kirti Chakra awardee Captain Anshuman Singh** on a social media platform, the Delhi Police's Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) cell has registered an FIR, officials said on Saturday.

The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** on Monday took *suo motu* cognisance and filed a complaint before the Delhi Police regarding the matter.

According to a senior officer, the FIR has been re-

National Commission of Women seeks fair investigation and detailed report on action taken

gistered at the IFSO unit under **Section 79 (outraging a woman's modesty) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 67 (distribution of sexually explicit matter) of the IT Act.**

"We have contacted the social media platform to provide details about the handle that allegedly passed the lewd comments about Ms. Singh," the officer said.

The NCW, on Monday, had written to the Delhi Police to take appropriate

action against the profile that posted the lewd comment.

In a letter issued on Monday, the NCW specified that the comment violated several Sections of the criminal and IT laws, including Section 79 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, which penalises acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman, and Section 67 of the IT Act, 2000, which deals with the punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form.

The commission also demanded a fair and timely investigation into the matter and requested timely and fair investigation and a detailed action taken report within three days.

Kirti Chakra: India's Second Highest Peacetime Gallantry Award

- The Kirti Chakra is a prestigious Indian military decoration bestowed upon individuals who exhibit exemplary courage, self-sacrifice, or valor in situations not involving direct combat.
- It is the second-highest peacetime gallantry award, ranking below **the Ashoka Chakra** and above **the Shaurya Chakra**.

Origin and Establishment

- The Kirti Chakra was originally established as "Ashoka Chakra, Class II" on January 4, 1952, by the then President of India Rajendra Prasad, with effect from August 15, 1947.
- It was later renamed "Kirti Chakra" on January 27, 1967.

SC seeks report on gram *nyayalayas* from States, HCs

GS Paper II:
Judiciary

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NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought a full report from the States and High Courts on the establishment and functioning of gram *nyayalayas*, meant to provide affordable and quick justice to rural India and de-clog local courts.

The top court was informed that gram *nyayalayas* were far and few between even 16 years after they were introduced through a parliamentary law.

“Gram *nyayalayas* were supposed to provide speedy and easy access to the justice system for the last citizens of the country. Every citizen has a right to affordable justice at an affor-

dable price,” Justice B.R. Gavai said during a hearing on Friday.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, who appeared for petitioner NGO National Federation of Societies for Fast Justice, informed the court that 16,000 gram *nyayalayas* were required, but only a little over 450 were set up with about 300 actually functional.

The court said the last time it had taken up the issue was on January 29, 2020.

The Bench directed the States and High Courts to file fresh affidavits in six weeks giving details of the establishment and functioning of gram *nyayalayas*. The court scheduled the case for hearing on September 11.

Gram Nyayalayas

- It is Village Courts, with unique feature of India's judicial system, designed to provide accessible and affordable justice at the grassroots level. These courts were established to address the challenges faced by rural populations in accessing higher courts.
- Village-level courts in rural areas for quick and easy access to justice.

- Established under the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008.
- Operate as mobile courts within their jurisdiction.
- **Nyayadhikari:** The presiding officer of a Gram Nyayalaya is called a Nyayadhikari, who is selected based on specific qualifications and experience.

Key Details:

- Passed by Parliament on December 22, 2008, and effective from October 2, 2009.
- Established by state governments in consultation with high courts.
- A total of 476 notified; 257 are operational in 10 states.

Purpose:

- Provide access to justice for rural people who face barriers in the formal judicial system.

Challenges:

- Despite the noble objectives, the implementation of Gram Nyayalayas has faced challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained personnel, and low public awareness.

Objectives:

- **Access to Justice:** Provide rural populations with justice at their doorsteps.
- **Affordable Justice:** Offer justice at a low cost, reducing the need for lawyers.
- **Speedy Disposal of Cases:** Dispose of cases within six months.
- **Promote Alternative Dispute Resolution:** Encourage mediation, conciliation, and arbitration.
- **Empower Rural Population:** Empower rural people with access to legal remedies.
- **Educate About Legal Rights:** Increase legal literacy and awareness in rural areas.



Chandipura virus: four children die in Gujarat

GS Paper III: Basic science

AHMEDABAD

Four children died and two are under treatment for suspected infection by Chandipura virus, which causes encephalitis, in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat. The two children are being treated at the civil hospital in the district.

The authorities have sent the samples of the children who are undergoing the treatment, to the National Institute of Virology for confirmation. Chandipura virus is a rare and potentially deadly pathogen that causes fever, flu-like symptoms, and acute encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

Sweet slice of Assam

Pineapple is grown widely in the northeastern States such as Assam where they ripen and gain the best taste and flavour under the right amount of sunlight and rain

GS Paper I: Geography (Agriculture)

Assam is blessed with diverse natural resources. The wide-ranging topography and congenial agro-climates offer immense potential for growing various kinds of fruit, vegetables, spices, flowers, and aromatic and medicinal crops.

Pineapple is widely grown in northeastern States, including Assam. The fruit is popular and their availability in the form of juice or slices round the year enable people to enjoy them whenever they want. **Kew and Queen** are the most popular varieties of pineapple among the growers in Assam. The Queen variety is widely grown.

Pineapple has recently gained much prominence for its health-promoting properties. Fresh pineapple is loaded with many essential vitamins and minerals.

Grown in the sunny fields of Assam, pineapples receive the right amount of sunshine and tropical rain to bring them to the peak of

their flavour. The pineapple is a humid tropical plant. It grows well, both in the plains and also at elevations. Pineapple usually flowers from February to April and the fruits are ripe to harvest from July to September.

Two years ago, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority organised a promotional event in Dubai to promote Assam's pineapples there. Processed pineapples are also popular as they can last longer in the export market. A fully ripe pineapple is considered highly perishable, and cannot be kept for more than a few days after harvesting.

The major importers of pineapples from India are Nepal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Maldives.

Recently, Meghalaya has started a scheme to promote fruit wine, including that of pineapples which have high sugar content. Pineapple wine can be processed from culled pineapple, pineapple peel, and the core.



Ready for sale: Farmers carry pineapples to be sold in a weekly market.

Patriotic

Why is militancy on the rise in Jammu?

Are acts of terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir shifting to the Rajouri-Poonch-Kathua sector after being quiet for two decades? What are the reasons for the new trend? What are the challenges of monitoring this sector? Are more troops needed? What is the situation on the ground?

GS Paper III:
Internal Security

The story so far:

On July 8, five Army soldiers were killed and five injured as two Army vehicles were ambushed by militants on a hilly tract in the Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. This was not an isolated incident. From June 9, five terror strikes have occurred in the Jammu division of the Union Territory, in which eight security personnel and 10 civilians have been killed.

Is a new pattern emerging?

The attacks follow a pattern which suggest concerted attempts to revive militancy in the Jammu region since the past three years – in the Chenab Valley comprising Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Kathua, Udhampur and Reasi districts and south of the Pir Panjal comprising Rajouri and Poonch districts. While terror incidents have been common in the Kashmir Valley, the resurgence of militant activity in the Jammu belt, that has remained free of such incidents in the past two decades, has sent alarm bells ringing among the security establishment. This region was a hotbed of militancy in the late 1990s and the early 2000s.

What does the data show?

Since 2021, the Jammu region has witnessed 31 terror incidents in which 47 security forces and 19 civilians have been killed other than 48 terrorists who were killed in various encounters. The Kashmir Valley, meanwhile, reported 263 terror incidents in which 68 security forces and 75 civilians were killed. As many as 417 alleged terrorists have also been killed in the Valley since 2021. A plain reading of numbers shows



High alert: Security personnel conduct a search operation after three suspects were seen by locals in the Akhnoor area in Jammu on July 12. ANI

After the Galwan clash, a large contingent of the Army was pulled out of Jammu and deployed along the China border

that incidents in Jammu remain far fewer than the Valley, yet it is the frequency and the nature of attacks, targeting pilgrims and security forces that is worrying.

What could be the possible reasons?

The Hindu spoke with multiple officials who offered various reasons for the recurring ambush of security forces and other incidents of violence. After the 2020 Galwan clashes in eastern Ladakh, in which 20 soldiers were killed, a large contingent of the Army was pulled out of Jammu and deployed along the China border. This led to the thinning of the security grid, making the area vulnerable, pointed out security experts. “Inimical elements in the neighbourhood want to engage and exhaust us at both the fronts – the western (Pakistan) and northern (China) borders as part of a design,” a top security official said. As there is a heightened state of alert in the Kashmir Valley and little leg room for state-sponsored terrorists, it is convenient to launch terror attacks in Jammu where the guard is relatively down.

Post-reading down of Article 370 in J&K in August 2019, and based on indicators such as zero stone-throwing events, no strikes, and a boom in tourism, the government has claimed huge success in the Kashmir Valley in terms of the overall security scenario. “Reviving terrorism in Jammu upsets this narrative. Another possibility is that [militants are trying] to stabilise cadres in the Kashmir Valley while they rake up insecurities in Jammu,” said another official. The demography of the area is such that the attacks could flare up communal tensions too, leading to social unrest.

Is there an estimate of the number of terrorists active in the region?

According to various estimates, there are around 20-25 hardened militants who are likely to have infiltrated from Pakistan. Their activity has been noticed around 40-50 km from the border. There are likely two groups, one of them is active in the Poonch-Rajouri axis in the west, and the other in the Kathua-Doda-Basantgarh belt in the east. In the Kathua belt, they are operating in a grid of 30-40 sq km, the investigation suggests. Difficult terrain, forested tracts, poor quality of roads and patchy mobile connectivity are some of the challenges.

How is the infiltration happening?

The 192-km international border (IB) along Jammu is secured by the Border Security Force (BSF) while the 740-km Line of Control (LoC), the effective border in the Kashmir Valley and parts of Jammu, is under the operational control

of the Army. Officials said though measures are in place, tough terrain and forested areas along the LoC and vulnerable patches along the IB may have been used for fresh infiltration. An official pointed out that the attacks in the Kathua belt including the July 8 ambush falls on an old infiltration route used by militants two decades ago. “As terrorism ebbed, this route became defunct, it appears to have been revived,” said the official.

What about local support to terrorists?

On June 19, the J&K Police arrested a local, Hakam Din (45), for allegedly harbouring the terrorists who attacked the bus carrying pilgrims in Reasi on June 9. Ten pilgrims lost their lives in the attack. However, the evidence of a larger support is not conclusive. “Earlier, the security forces deployed here had direct communication with the locals which led to quick flow of information regarding any suspicious movement. A whole generation that fought the terrorists are in their 60s and 70s now. There is no such connect with the younger generation, it will take time to build that trust with the civilians,” the official said. The Village Defence Guards/Committees (VDGs) are also being revived since December 2022. The training has gathered pace after seven Hindus, including two children, were killed on January 1-2, 2023 in Dangri in a targeted attack at their homes by unidentified terrorists. Around 30,000 weapons are estimated to be with civilians in Poonch, Rajouri, Samba, Doda and Kishtwar districts. They were distributed to civilians by the local administrations in various phases since 1995 when militancy was at its peak in J&K. The VDGs had to be discontinued amid allegations of crimes such as abduction and rape committed by the members. In 2003, the Army had launched Operation Sarp Vinaash near Hilkaka in the Poonch sector. In the aerial attacks, more than 60 terrorists, who had entrenched themselves in bunkers and trenches in the forest, were killed.

What is the status of the investigation?

Not much headway seems to have been made in apprehending the terrorists involved in the recent attacks. The terrorists who ambushed Army vehicles and killed four soldiers on December 21, 2023 at Bafliaz in Poonch-Rajouri are yet to be identified or caught. The attack was claimed by the People’s Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), a proxy outfit of the Jaish-e-Mohammed that was banned by the Centre in 2023. The terrorist group posted photos of the ambush on social media. After the incident, the Army was accused of custodial torture and death of three locals, which led to a huge outcry. The PAFF also claimed the October 2021 attack after nine soldiers were killed in an ambush in the forested areas of Poonch. Officials said additional security forces were being deployed in the region and loopholes were being plugged.

Why is militancy on the rise in Jammu? (14 July)

Are acts of terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir shifting to the Rajouri-Poonch-Kathua sector after being quiet for two decades? What are the reasons for the new trend? What are the challenges of monitoring this sector? Are more troops needed? What is the situation on the ground?

- On July 8, five Army soldiers were killed and five injured in an ambush by militants in Kathua district, Jammu and Kashmir.
- This incident is part of a series of attacks; since June 9, there have been five terror strikes in the Jammu division, resulting in eight security personnel and 10 civilian deaths.
- A pattern suggests efforts to revive militancy in the Jammu region, including Chenab Valley (Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Kathua, Udampur, Reasi) and south of Pir Panjal (Rajouri, Poonch).
- The Jammu belt has been largely free of such incidents for two decades but was a hotspot of militancy in the late 1990s and early 2000s.
- Since 2021, Jammu has seen 31 terror incidents, with 47 security forces, 19 civilians, and 48 terrorists killed.
- In the same period, the Kashmir Valley reported 263 terror incidents, with 68 security forces, 75 civilians, and 417 alleged terrorists killed.
- Despite fewer incidents in Jammu compared to the Valley, the increasing frequency and nature of attacks on pilgrims and security forces are concerning.

What could be the possible reasons?

- After the 2020 Galwan clashes, many Army personnel were redeployed from Jammu to the China border, thinning the security grid and increasing vulnerability.
- Security experts suggest that adversaries want to engage India on both the western (Pakistan) and northern (China) borders.
- Increased security in the Kashmir Valley has led to more terror attacks in the relatively less guarded Jammu region.
- Post-Article 370 revocation in August 2019, the government claimed success in Kashmir with zero stone-throwing events, no strikes, and a tourism boom. Terrorism in Jammu disrupts this narrative.
- Estimates suggest around 20-25 militants have infiltrated from Pakistan, with activity observed 40-50 km from the border.
- Two militant groups are likely active: one in the Poonch-Rajouri axis and another in the Kathua-Doda-Basantgarh belt.
- Difficult terrain, forested tracts, poor roads, and patchy mobile connectivity pose challenges.
- Infiltration may be happening through tough terrain and forested areas along the Line of Control (LoC) and vulnerable patches along the International Border (IB).

- The July 8 ambush in Kathua occurred on an old infiltration route used by militants two decades ago, which appears to have been revived.

What about local support to terrorists?

- On June 19, J&K Police arrested Hakam Din for allegedly harboring terrorists involved in the June 9 attack on a bus carrying pilgrims in Reasi, where 10 pilgrims died.
- Evidence of larger support for the terrorists is inconclusive.
- There is a generational gap in trust between security forces and locals, making it harder to gather information on suspicious activities.
- Village Defence Guards/Committees (VDGs) are being revived since December 2022 after the January 2023 attack in Dangri where seven Hindus were killed.
- About 30,000 weapons are estimated to be with civilians in Poonch, Rajouri, Samba, Doda, and Kishtwar districts, distributed since 1995.
- VDGs were discontinued due to allegations of crimes committed by members.
- In 2003, Operation Sarp Vinaash by the Army killed over 60 terrorists in Poonch sector.
- No significant progress has been made in apprehending terrorists involved in recent attacks.
- The December 21, 2023, attack on Army vehicles in Poonch-Rajouri, claimed by the People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), remains unresolved.
- The PAFF also claimed the October 2021 attack that killed nine soldiers.
- Additional security forces are being deployed, and security loopholes are being addressed.

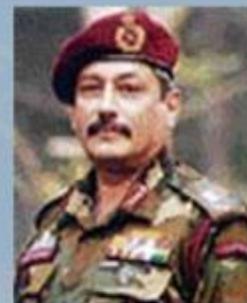
Operation Sarp Vinash (Snake Destroyer)

- It was a large-scale military operation conducted by the Indian Army in 2003 to flush out militants from hideouts in the Poonch-Surankot area of the Pir Panjal Range in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Operation Name:** Sarp Vinash (Snake Destroyer)
- **Location:** Hilkaka Poonch-Surankot area of the Pir Panjal range, Jammu and Kashmir
- **Duration:** April–May 2003
- **Forces Involved:** Indian Army, including special forces like the Parachute Regiment
- **Objective:** Flush out terrorists from their bases in the region
- **Outcome:** 64 terrorists from groups like LeT, Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami, al-Badr, and JeM were killed.
- **Significance:** Discovered the largest system of hideouts used by terrorists in the history of insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, spanning 150 square kilometers in the Pir Panjal region.

Hill Kaka, Poonch, JK, India

A Counter Insurgency operation - Sarp Vinash (Snake Destroyer) by Romeo Force across the LoC to eliminate terrorist training camps in the Hill Kaka bowl, frequented by Gujjar herdsmen

Led by Maj Gen Hardev Singh 'Harry' Lidder GOC, C1FR



Phase 1 - 29 Jan (preparation)

Phase 4 - 03 May (action)

Killed over 60 Terrorists
 Destroyed several Bunkers
 Seized Arms and Ammunition
 and 7 tons of Rations



Patriotic IAS TO THE FORGED

How is India's hunt for critical minerals going?

Why are lithium, copper, cobalt, graphite and others essential for the economy's green transition? In which States have reserves been found? Why have there been hiccups in the auction process? What lies ahead? Which country dominates global supplies?

GS Paper III:
Resources

The story so far:

In late June, the Centre declared the winning bidders for mining rights in six blocks of critical minerals, including graphite, phosphorite and lithium, for which India largely relies on imports. These are the first private players awarded such rights under the revamped Mines and Minerals law.

Why are critical minerals important?

Minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt are known as critical minerals, as they along with some rare earth elements, are essential for the world's ongoing efforts to switch to greener and cleaner energy. As per the International Energy Agency (IEA), lithium demand rose by 30% in 2023, followed by nickel, cobalt, graphite and rare earth elements which saw an 8% to 15% growth, with the aggregate value of such minerals pegged at \$325 billion. In its Global Critical Minerals Outlook 2024 report, the agency has flagged that the world's goal to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius in the net zero emissions scenario, would translate into very rapid growth in demand for these minerals. By 2040, the demand for copper is expected to rise 50%, double for nickel, cobalt and rare earth elements, quadruple for graphite and

India has natural reserves of some of these minerals, but they haven't been explored or tapped fully

eightfold for lithium, which is crucial for batteries. The development of sustainable supply chains for such minerals is, therefore, an unavoidable task. In India, the lack of ready reserves of critical minerals has resulted in 100% import dependence for minerals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel. Late last month, Union Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy highlighted that 95% of India's copper requirements are met through imports. China is a key supplier or processor of many of these items.

What is being done to spur production?

While India has natural reserves of some of these minerals, they haven't been explored or tapped fully. For instance, India holds 11% of the world's deposits of ilmenite, the main source of titanium dioxide used in many applications, but still imports a billion dollars of titanium dioxide a year, former Mines Secretary Vivek Bharadwaj once pointed out. Then there is the "lucky" discovery of lithium reserves in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) while the Geological Survey of India (GSI) was exploring the State's terrain for limestone, which triggered hope of some self-sufficiency in the mineral. Announced as the first discovery of lithium in the country last February, these reserves were pegged at 5.9 million tonnes, enthralling the government to expedite its tapping.

Acknowledging that reliance on a few nations for the ores and processing of these minerals could pose significant vulnerabilities for Indian supply chains, the central government amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 in August 2023 to enable it to grant mining concessions for 24 critical and strategic minerals. By November, the first auctions of 20 critical mineral blocks, with the lithium block identified in J&K's Reasi district on the list, were launched, followed by two more tranches with 18 more blocks offered this February and March. However, investor interest has been tepid – the auction of most of the first 20 blocks was scrapped for lack of adequate bidders. After a delayed process, the Mines Ministry on June 24, announced six winners from the maiden auction tranche for three blocks in Odisha, and one each in Tamil Nadu,

U.P. and Chhattisgarh. The outcomes of the second and third round of auctions are still awaited, while the Ministry has initiated a fourth tranche, which includes 10 blocks that are being offered for the second time.

Why are some blocks not finding takers?

Among the first attempt blocks offered in the latest auction, two phosphorite blocks along with a glauconite block are in Chhattisgarh, while two blocks each are up for grabs in U.P. (phosphorite and rare earth elements), Karnataka (phosphate and nickel), and Rajasthan (potash and halite). A graphite block is being auctioned in Jharkhand and Arunachal Pradesh, with five additional blocks of graphite, tungsten and vanadium offered in the northeastern State for the second time. The 'second attempt' blocks also include a tungsten reserve in Tamil Nadu's Madurai district, a cobalt and manganese block in Karnataka's Shimoga, and a chromium and nickel block in Sindhudurg, Maharashtra.

As per industry experts, the reasons for low interest among miners for some of these blocks include the lack of adequate data on the potential reserves buried within them. Technology challenges also affect outcomes. For instance, the lithium block in J&K has clay deposits, and the technology for the mineral's extraction from clay remains untested globally, pointed out Girishkumar Kadam, senior vice-president and group head for corporate sector ratings at ICRA.

When is domestic production likely to begin?

Given the preliminary stage of exploration for most of the domestic blocks being auctioned, their commercialisation and associated benefits are unlikely to fully accrue in the current decade ending 2030, ICRA said. "India's manufacturing is thus likely to remain exposed to potential future supply shocks of these minerals till then," it concluded. Apart from spurring exploration and attracting more miners, the Centre is looking to acquire overseas assets from key resource-rich regions as a parallel measure to bolster mineral security. The first such mine, for lithium brine, was acquired in Argentina this year by Khanij Bidesh India Limited, a joint venture of NALCO, Hindustan Copper, and Mineral Exploration Company. While it scouts for more assets, India has also joined the U.S.-led Mineral Security Partnership, a block consisting of large buyers and sellers of critical minerals.



Big discovery: The lithium stones found in Reasi, Jammu in 2023. PTI

How is India's hunt for critical minerals going? (14 July)

Why are lithium, copper, cobalt, graphite and others essential for the economy's green transition? In which States have reserves been found? Why have there been hiccups in the auction process? What lies ahead? Which country dominates global supplies?

- In late June, the Centre announced winning bidders for mining rights in six blocks of critical minerals, including graphite, phosphorite, and lithium.
- These are the first private players awarded such rights under the revamped Mines and Minerals law.
- Critical minerals like copper, lithium, nickel, and cobalt are essential for the global shift to greener and cleaner energy.
- The International Energy Agency (IEA) reported a 30% rise in lithium demand in 2023, with significant growth in demand for nickel, cobalt, graphite, and rare earth elements.
- The aggregate value of these minerals is estimated at \$325 billion.
- The IEA's Global Critical Minerals Outlook 2024 report indicates that meeting global warming limits will significantly increase demand for these minerals by 2040.
- Demand for copper is expected to rise by 50%, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements to double, graphite to quadruple, and lithium to increase eightfold.
- Developing sustainable supply chains for these minerals is essential.
- India currently relies 100% on imports for minerals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel.
- 95% of India's copper requirements are met through imports, with China being a key supplier or processor.

What is being done to spur production?

- India has natural reserves of some critical minerals but they haven't been fully explored or tapped.
- India holds 11% of the world's ilmenite deposits but imports a billion dollars of titanium dioxide annually.
- Lithium reserves were discovered in Jammu and Kashmir, estimated at 5.9 million tonnes.
- The central government amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 in August 2023 to grant mining concessions for 24 critical and strategic minerals.
- The first auctions for 20 critical mineral blocks were launched in November, with tepid investor interest.
- The Mines Ministry announced six winners from the first auction tranche for blocks in Odisha, Tamil Nadu, U.P., and Chhattisgarh.
- Outcomes of the second and third rounds of auctions are awaited, while a fourth tranche has been initiated.
- Reasons for low interest among miners include lack of adequate data on potential reserves and technology challenges.
- Extraction technology for lithium from clay, such as in J&K, remains untested globally.
- Domestic production of these minerals is unlikely to fully accrue benefits before 2030.
- The Centre is also acquiring overseas assets to bolster mineral security, with the first lithium brine mine acquired in Argentina.

- India has joined the U.S.-led Mineral Security Partnership.

Mineral Security Partnership

- The MSP is a collaboration of 14 countries and the EU to catalyze public and private investment in responsible critical minerals supply chains globally.
- As of September 2023 the MSP included Australia, Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.
- India joined the MSP in June 2023 during PM Modi's visit to the US.

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The SC ruling on portrayal of disability in films

Are the laws governing rights of differently abled persons being implemented properly?

GS Paper II:
Vulnerable Section
of Society

The story so far:

In July 8, while hearing a plea to ban the film *Aaankh Micholi* for derogatory portrayal of people with disabilities, the Supreme Court in a landmark ruling laid down comprehensive guidelines to prevent stereotyping and discrimination of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in visual media, including films and documentaries.

What is the framework?

The Supreme Court's framework focuses on the prevention of stigmatisation and discrimination, recognising their profound impact on the dignity and identity of persons with disabilities. Among the guidelines is a call to avoid words that cultivate institutional discrimination, such as "cripple" and "spastic," as they contribute to negative self-image and perpetuate discriminatory attitudes. A Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said stereotyping differently abled persons in visual media and films must end, asking creators to provide an accurate representation of disabilities rather than mocking them. Language that individualises the impairment and overlooks disabling social barriers, for example, words like "afflicted," "suffering" and "victim", should be avoided, it said. The court also asked creators to practice the principle of "nothing about us, without us," and involve persons with disabilities in the creation and assessment of visual media content.

What are laws which grant disability rights?

The law which comprehensively deals with disability rights is the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act which came into force from April 19, 2017. It replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. The National Trust Act (1999), Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992), Mental Health Care Act (2017) are the other laws that govern disability rights.

According to Shashank Pandey, a lawyer based out of Delhi and a founder of the Politics and Disability Forum, there are broadly two models under which disability rights are looked at, namely medical and social models. The human rights model, which is a recent one, is an evolution of the social model which says that people with disability are a part of society and have the same rights as everyone else. The Supreme Court's emphasis on the government and private parties obliged to facilitate full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society. The advantage is that it places individuals in a sphere where all human rights principles which are applicable to anyone can be claimed by the disabled populace. The disadvantage is that it is an abstract idea and difficult to implement, says Mr. Pandey. The framework is also limited, as it is only for visual media, he adds, pointing out that the guidelines could have been sent by the SC to all departments for sensitisation.

The Supreme Court's framework focuses on the prevention of stigmatisation and discrimination, recognising their profound impact on the dignity of persons with disabilities

V. Muralidharan of the National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled welcomed the ruling, adding that the framework has stressed on the guidelines which were in place in the 2016 legislation. He rues the fact that the law is not being implemented properly. "However, we cannot lose sight of the conditions prevailing in the country. Disabled people are still considered objects of charity. Even the government's coinage of 'Divyang' looks at disability through the lens of charity. It is regressive and reinforces a patronising mindset. Also, the usage of words like 'pappu' and 'balak budhi' by the ruling party to paint its opponents in a poor light only shows how big the battle is," he points out.

What about creative freedom?

Cinematic expression doesn't have absolute power when it operates in the context of marginalised communities. It has to be looked at from the overall context of the expression and intent behind the expression. The Supreme Court said "the creative freedom of the filmmaker cannot include the freedom to lampoon, stereotype, misrepresent or disparage those already marginalised". In determining these aspects, the "intention" and "overall message" of the film have to be considered.

The SC ruling on portrayal of disability in films (14 July)

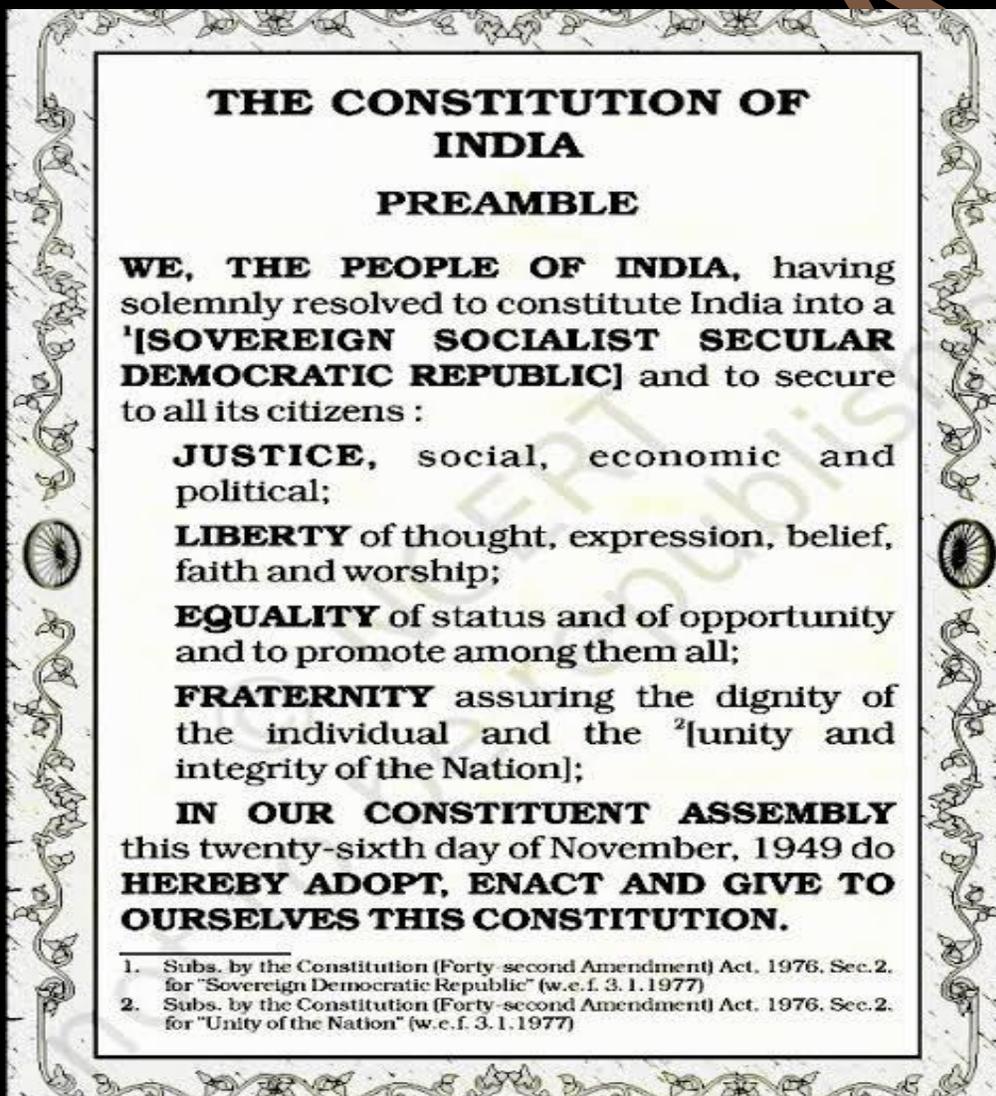
Are the laws governing rights of differently abled persons being implemented properly?

- On July 8, the Supreme Court ruled on a plea to ban the film *Aaankh Micholi* for derogatory portrayal of people with disabilities (PwDs).
- The Supreme Court laid down comprehensive guidelines to prevent stereotyping and discrimination of PwDs in visual media, including films and documentaries.
- The framework focuses on preventing stigmatisation and discrimination, recognising their impact on the dignity and identity of PwDs.
- Guidelines include avoiding words like "cripple" and "spastic" that contribute to negative self-image and perpetuate discriminatory attitudes.
- The court called for an end to stereotyping differently-abled persons in visual media and films, asking for accurate representation of disabilities instead of mocking them.
- Language that individualises impairment and overlooks disabling social barriers, such as "afflicted," "suffering," and "victim," should be avoided.
- Creators should practice the principle of "nothing about us, without us" and involve persons with disabilities in the creation and assessment of visual media content.

What are laws which grant disability rights?

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2017, replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.
- Other laws governing disability rights include the National Trust Act (1999), Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992), and Mental Health Care Act (2017).
- Shashank Pandey, a Delhi-based lawyer, explains that there are two main models for disability rights: medical and social.
- The human rights model is an evolution of the social model and emphasizes that people with disabilities are part of society and have the same rights as everyone else.
- The Supreme Court's emphasis on the human rights model makes it obligatory for the government and private parties to facilitate the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities.
- The human rights model allows disabled individuals to claim all human rights principles applicable to everyone but is abstract and difficult to implement.
- The Supreme Court's framework focuses only on visual media and could have been extended to all departments for better sensitisation.
- V. Muralidharan from the National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled supports the ruling but notes that the 2016 legislation is not properly implemented.

- Disabled people are still viewed as objects of charity, and terms like 'Divyang' reinforce a patronising mindset.
- The Supreme Court stated that creative freedom in films must not include lampooning, stereotyping, misrepresenting, or disparaging marginalised communities.
- The court stressed the importance of considering the intention and overall message of the film.
- Collaboration with disability advocacy groups is essential for respectful and accurate portrayals.
- Training programmes for writers, directors, producers, and actors are necessary to emphasise the impact of portrayals on public perceptions and the lived experiences of persons with disabilities.



Nipah monoclonal antibody trials may begin in India in 2025

GS Paper III: Basic Science

R. Prasad

If the Indian drug regulator greenlights it, a human clinical trial to test the safety and efficacy of a novel Nipah monoclonal antibody MBPIF5, which might offer immediate protection to people at risk of infection against the deadly disease, might begin next year. A similar trial will be carried out in Bangladesh as well. Though trials on many vaccines are currently under way, there is no approved vaccine against the Nipah virus anywhere in the world. The Nipah virus has a 40% to 75% mortality rate in people who are infected.

India and Bangladesh have been chosen for the trial as Nipah virus outbreaks have been reported in these two countries in recent years. Nipah outbreaks have occurred in Kerala in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023. In the case of

Bangladesh, Nipah outbreaks have been occurring since 2001; the virus has been reported from 34 of 64 districts in Bangladesh with 341 cases detected so far and 242 deaths.

The novel Nipah monoclonal antibody is currently undergoing a phase-1 clinical trial in the U.S., which is carried out by the U.S. Department of Defence.

A spokesperson of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), which is funding the human trials, told *The Hindu* that the trial led by ServareGMP (a non-profit biotechnology organisation based in California) and supported by Mapp Biopharmaceutical, which is also located in California, will work with local clinical research networks to carry out the trial in India and Bangladesh.

The trial in India and Bangladesh will begin



Fruit bats are natural reservoirs of Nipah virus. VELANKANNI RAJ B

“upon completion of the U.S. Department of Defence Phase-1 trial in the U.S”. “ServareGMP, Mapp and CEPI have already initiated discussions with public health and regulatory authorities in India and Bangladesh about the desire to conduct this trial,” he says.

According to the CEPI spokesperson, the trial in India is planned to begin in 2025, pending regulatory review. The assessment made by the Indian drug

regulator will determine “whether the Phase-1 trial data carried out by the U.S. Department of Defence will be sufficient to continue onwards with Phase-2 trials in India, or whether Phase-1 data should also be collected from the Indian population”.

The number of participants who will be recruited for the clinical trial will depend on whether the clinical trial begins as a phase-1 or phase-2 trial in India. “But the intention is to re-

cruit at least 200 participants,” says the spokesperson.

While the trial will be conducted in multiple sites in both countries, the decision on the location and number of sites appropriate to generate data that demonstrate the safety and tolerability of the monoclonal antibody will be taken based upon consultation with public health and regulatory authorities, he says.

“Preclinical studies for pre-exposure prophylaxis have been completed. In these studies, conducted in animal models, the monoclonal antibody has demonstrated high potency against the Nipah virus, proving it effective at preventing the virus from entering the host cell and causing Nipah virus disease. In preclinical studies, this Nipah monoclonal antibody has been shown to be safe at all dose levels

tested,” he says.

The monoclonal antibody is designed to bind to the Nipah virus F protein, preventing the virus from entering a host cell and causing infection in people. “This mechanism will offer protection against both known strains of Nipah virus (Bangladesh and Malaysia) and its closely related viral cousin, Hendra virus, for at least six months – enough time for vaccine immunity to build,” says a CEPI release.

In response to a question about equitable access to monoclonal antibodies, once the trial results are positive, he says: “Alongside ensuring pricing commitments for Global South countries, a reserve of monoclonal antibody doses will be stored in a Nipah-affected country, helping to enable rapid availability in the event of an outbreak and accessibility for those most in need.”

- Nipah virus (NiV) is a zoonotic virus (it is transmitted from animals to humans) and can also be transmitted through contaminated food or directly between people.
- Nipah virus infection in humans causes a range of clinical presentations, from asymptomatic infection (subclinical) to acute respiratory infection and fatal encephalitis.
- The case fatality rate is estimated at 40% to 75%. This rate can vary by outbreak depending on local capabilities for epidemiological surveillance and clinical management.
- Nipah virus can be transmitted to humans from animals (such as bats or pigs), or contaminated foods and can also be transmitted directly from human-to-human.
- Fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family are the natural host of Nipah virus.
- There is **no treatment or vaccine available** for either people or animals. The primary treatment for humans is supportive care.
- The 2018 annual review of the WHO R&D Blueprint list of priority diseases indicates that there is an urgent need for accelerated research and development for the Nipah virus.

Overview:

- In infected people, it causes a range of illnesses from asymptomatic (subclinical) infection to acute respiratory illness and fatal encephalitis.
- The virus can also cause severe disease in animals such as pigs, resulting in significant economic losses for farmers.

- Although Nipah virus has caused only a few known outbreaks in Asia, it infects a wide range of animals and causes severe disease and death in people, making it a public health concern.

Question Corner

GS Paper III: Basic
Science

Heart rate

What is the maximum heart rate of male noctule bats?

To record the heart rate of male common noctule bats during flight, the scientists attached heart rate transmitters weighing less than one gram to the animals, which they then accompanied in an airplane while the bats flew, sometimes for more than an hour, in search of food. The researchers found that the heart rate of bats reaches around 900 beats per minute within only a few minutes during flight. Using the unique recordings of heart beats, the scientists discovered fascinating strategies that bats use to budget their

energy consumption in different seasons. They found that male common noctule bats consume up to 42% more energy in summer compared to spring. This is mainly due to the fact that the bats in spring go into a kind of short daytime hibernation known as “torpor”—an energy-saving state in which heart rate can be reduced to six beats per minute. Male bats did not use torpor in summer at all. In summer, food is plentiful and so males stay awake during the day to invest energy in sperm production.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in