

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

25 JANUARY 2024

1 - China Prohibits Rare Earth Technology Exports:

GS II

International Issues:

- **Context:**
- China recently revised its list of technologies deemed essential to national security, banning the export of equipment used to mine and isolate rare earth metals.
- Additionally, it outlawed the export of technologies used in the preparation of some rare earth magnets as well as in the fabrication of rare earth metals and alloy materials.
- The action is being taken as the US and Europe race to wean themselves off of China's rare earths, which supply 90% of the world's refined output.
- **Rare earth metals: what are they?**
- There are seventeen metallic elements in total. These include the fifteen lanthanides found in the periodic table, as well as yttrium and scandium, which have chemical and physical characteristics that are comparable to those of the lanthanides.
- Cerium (Ce), dysprosium (Dy), erbium (Er), europium (Eu), gadolinium (Gd), holmium (Ho), lanthanum (La), lutetium (Lu), neodymium (Nd), praseodymium (Pr), promethium (Pm), samarium (Sm), scandium (Sc), terbium (Tb), thulium (Tm), ytterbium (Yb), and yttrium (Yc) are the 17 Rare Earths.
- Due to their distinctive magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical qualities, these minerals are utilised in a wide range of contemporary technologies, including as communications, consumer electronics, computers and networks, healthcare, sustainable energy technologies, and national defence.
- Future technologies also require these REEs.
- For instance, safe hydrogen storage and transportation for a post-hydrocarbon economy, high-temperature superconductivity, etc.
- Because it was previously difficult to extract them technologically from their oxide forms, they are known as "rare earth."
- Although they can be found in a variety of minerals, they are usually found in insufficient amounts to be economically processed.
- **What Effects Would a Ban on the Export of Rare Earth Technology Have on the World?**
- **Disruption of Global Supply Chains:**

- China is the top rare earth processor in the world. China is the world's leading producer and processor of rare earth elements, therefore the prohibition may cause supply chains for a number of businesses that depend on these resources to break down globally.
- Significantly reliant on Chinese shipments of rare earth elements, nations and sectors may experience shortages or increased prices.
- **Dependency on Strategy:**
 - It highlights the vulnerability of nations that mostly depend on China for essential resources.
 - Reliance on a single source for these basic materials creates questions about supply security and encourages countries to look into domestic production or alternate sources.
- **Possibilities for Originality:**
 - The prohibition may encourage research and development as well as investments in non-Chinese suppliers and alternative technology.
 - Countries may try to lessen their reliance on a single market by diversifying their rare earth supply chains.
- **What potential effects might it have on India?**
- **Diversity in the Supply Chain:**
 - Like many other nations, India is dependent on Chinese shipments of rare earth materials. India now has a chance to reconsider its reliance and investigate diversification tactics in light of the embargo.
 - To ensure its supply, India can concentrate on building up its own resources for the extraction and processing of rare earth elements or look to form alliances with other countries.
- **Effect on Industry:**
 - Possible supply shortages could initially cause difficulties for Indian industries that depend on rare earth commodities.
 - To reduce risks, this could, however, lead to investments in domestic manufacturing or joint ventures with different suppliers.
 - India is thought to have the world's fifth-largest rare earth (RE) resources.
- **Way Ahead:**
 - China's export embargo on rare earth technologies emphasises how important it is to diversify global supply chains and how countries, including India, must plan strategically in order to secure the resources necessary for their industries and technological growth.

Source → *The Hindu*

2 – Namdapha Flying Squirrel:

GS III

Environmental Conservation:

- **Context:**

- After staying missing for 42 years, a Namdapha flying squirrel (*Biswamoyopterus biswasi*) has just surfaced in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Namdapha flying squirrel was last documented in 1981, based on the discovery of a single specimen in the Changlang area of Arunachal Pradesh's Namdapha Tiger Reserve.

- **Namdapha Flying Squirrel: What is it?**

- **About:**

- In the Namdapha Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh, India, there exists a unique species of flying squirrel that is nocturnal.
- Its noticeable tuft of hair on its ears sets it apart from another species in the same ecology, the red giant flying squirrel (*Petaurista petaurista*).
- Due to its rare distribution, there were worries that this species may have been confused for the red giant flying squirrel or, worse, that it might go extinct.

- **Hazards:**

- The Namdapha flying squirrel is currently under threat from habitat degradation and loss brought on by altering agricultural practices, clear-cutting for human settlements, and the extraction of non-timber forest products, especially the leaves of the rattan palm *Zalacca secunda*, which is used as roofing material.

- **Status of Protection:**

- Red List of the IUCN: Critically Endangered
- Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022

- **What Makes Namdapha Tiger Reserve Important?**

- **About:**

- In 1983, Namdapha Tiger Reserve was designated as the nation's fifteenth Tiger Project.
- In 1972, the area was designated as a Wildlife Sanctuary. A National Park was created in 1983, and the same year, it became a Tiger Reserve as part of the Project Tiger initiative.
- The river known as Namdapha actually rises from Daphabum (Dapha is the name of a hill, and Bum is the pinnacle of a hill) and joins the Noa-Dehing river. The Namdapha name comes from the river that flows directly across the National Park in a north-south route.
- The location of it is in Arunachal Pradesh. The Patkai range and the Dapha bum range of the Mishmi Hills are on either side of the park.

- **Weather:**

- Appreciates the subtropical weather. The low-lying plains and valleys have a tropical climate, whereas the hilly area has a climate more like to that of a mountain.

Source → The Hindu



3 – Gelephu Smart City Project:

GS II

LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

International Issues:

- **Context:**

- The King of Bhutan has declared his intention to develop a vast "international city" spanning more than 1,000 square miles. km. on the Assamese border. The Gelephu initiative is the name given to this initiative.

- **Which aspects of the Gelephu Smart City Project stand out the most?**

- An "economic corridor connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia via India's northeastern States" is what the project is supposed to become.
- The city will seek to draw "quality investment" from "specially screened" foreign enterprises, adhering to environmental norms and sustainability as a goal.
- The project is anticipated to feature infrastructure firms, "zero emission" industries, and a "mindfulness city" that capitalises on Bhutan's tourism and wellness strengths.
- It is anticipated that the project will create a "Special Administrative Region" with distinct legal regulations in order to attract more foreign investment.

- It is anticipated that the project will mark a "transformation" and "point of inflection" for South Asia and Bhutan.
- The Indian government consents to building the first railway line between India and Bhutan, reaching Gelephu.
- The railway will eventually give Bhutan access to Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Singapore by connecting with roads and border trading hubs into Assam and West Bengal.

- **Which are the most important facts about Bhutan?**

- **About:**

- Bhutan is tucked away between Tibet, an autonomous territory of China, and India.
- It is a nation without land.
- The capital city of Butan is Thimphu.
- 2008 saw the holding of Bhutan's first democratic elections, which marked the country's transition to democracy. The Head of State is the King of Bhutan.

- **Rivers:**

- From west to east, the Torsa (Amo), Wong (Raidak), Sankosh (Mo), and Manas are the principal rivers. From the Great Himalayas, all of the rivers travel southward to reach the Brahmaputra River in India.
- The Manas River is Bhutan's longest river.
- In the foothills of the Himalayas, the Manas River forms a transboundary between southern Bhutan and India.

- **Administration:**

- monarchy based on a constitution.

Source → The Hindu

4 - Supreme Court's Unexpected Case Disposition Increase in 2023:

GS II

Judiciary related issues:

- **Context:**
- The Supreme Court (SC) of India has revealed a significant rise in case disposition in 2023, exceeding the total number of cases filed in the same year. This is a noteworthy trend.
- **What are the contributing factors to the high case disposal rate?**
- In contrast to the 49,191 instances that were registered over the same period, the SC resolved 52,191 cases between January 1 and December 15, 2023.
- The achievement of the highest disposal numbers was made possible in large part by the 2017 implementation of the Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS).
- Instead of the prior 10-day threshold, the Chief Justice of India expedited the filing-to-listing timetable, guaranteeing cases were listed in five days.
- Prioritising the right to liberty, cases pertaining to bail, habeas corpus, demolition, and anticipatory bail were processed in a day and listed in court.
- Special Benches, notably those pertaining to capital punishment, were established.
- **What is an Information System for Integrated Case Management (ICMIS)?**
- The SC has chosen ICMIS, a next-generation hybrid database. It incorporates data from multiple sources about cases, including the status of the cases, orders, judgements, appeals, etc.
- Through an intuitive interface, ICMIS allows litigants to access and retrieve information online. Additionally, it offers real-time reports on how cases are progressing.
- Case filing and disposal delays and manipulation are lessened with the aid of ICMIS. Through e-filing portals, it also makes it easier for cases and papers to be filed online.
- **What Other Initiatives Are There to Lower Case Pendency?**
- **Online courts:**
- In an effort to improve access to justice through technology, the Indian government launched the e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project, which will computerise district and lower courts.
- It was introduced in 2007 as a component of the National e-Governance Plan and works in tandem with the Department of Justice and the e-Committee Supreme Court of India.
- The project was carried out in two stages: Phase I, which ran from 2011 to 2015, and Phase II, which began in 2015 and concentrated on computerising the District and Subordinate courts.

- **FTSCs, or Fast Track Special Courts:**

- FTSCs were created in response to delays in conventional courts to speed trials for sexual offences, particularly those covered by the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act).
- In 2018, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act was passed, bringing it under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Law & Justice's Department of Justice.
- The Supreme Court Portal for Court Efficiency Assistance (SUPACE):
- Judges can use SUPACE, a technology that serves as a framework for gathering pertinent facts and laws to aid in decision-making. Although it doesn't make decisions on its own, it processes information for judges who want to weigh in on the matter.

Source → The Hindu

5 - National Day for Consumer Rights:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions:

- Every year on December 24, India observes National Consumer Rights Day to promote awareness of the rights and obligations of consumers.
- The day honours December 24, 1986, the day the President signed the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.
- The purpose of the Act is to shield customers against unfair business tactics, careless services, and faulty products.
- The right to safety, the freedom to choice, the right to information, the right to be heard, the right to seek remedy, and the right to consumer education are the six essential rights outlined in the Consumer Protection Act.
- The Parliament passed the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 to take the role of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- The date of the World Consumer Rights Day is March 15.

Source → The Hindu