

SHORTNEWS:

1.IBAT ALLIANCE

Context: Recently, the **Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) Alliance**, a partnership of four major conservation organizations, announced that their investment in biodiversity data reached \$2.5 million in 2024, up from \$1.2 million in **2023**.

About IBAT Alliance

- The IBAT Alliance (**Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool**) is a **collaboration between four major global conservation organizations**:
 - BirdLife International
 - Conservation International
 - IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)
 - UNEP-WCMC (**UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre**)
- **Headquarters:** Cambridge, UK
- **Objective:** Helps **track progress toward global goals** like the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** and the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
- **Key Datasets Managed:** IBAT gives access to **three of the world’s most trusted biodiversity databases**:

Dataset Name	Purpose
IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Tracks extinction risk of species globally; it’s often called “Barometer of Life” due to its critical role in assessing extinction risks for animals, fungi, and plants globally.
World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)	Maps protected areas across the world
World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (WDKBA)	Identifies areas critical for global biodiversity conservation

Applications of IBAT Data

- **Environmental Risk Management:** IBAT helps in early identification of biodiversity-related risks during project planning, enabling informed decisions that minimize environmental damage.
- **Business and Environmental Impact Assessment:** Companies use IBAT to **understand how their operations affect biodiversity**, assess dependencies on natural ecosystems, and evaluate potential risks linked to resource use or habitat disruption.
- **Regulatory Compliance and Reporting:** IBAT datasets assist users in meeting **environmental regulations and disclosure requirements** by offering trusted, science-based biodiversity information for transparent decision-making.

2.SPREE Scheme

Context: The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has decided to re-launch the SPREE scheme.

About Scheme to Promote Registration of Employers/Employees (SPEE)

- It was first launched in 2016, and helped register 88,000 employers and 1.02 crore workers.
- **Nodal ministry:** Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India.
- **Relaunch of the scheme**
 - The renewed scheme will run **from 1st July to 31st December 2025**.
 - This is a one-time opportunity for businesses and workers who are still not registered under the **ESI Act to get enrolled**.
 - The re-launch focuses on voluntary registration instead of punishment.
 - This approach will help reduce legal disputes, promote formal employment registration, and improve relations between ESIC and its stakeholders.
- **Objective of relaunching:**
 - To expand **ESI coverage across India** and bring unregistered employers and employees (especially unregistered employers and left-out workers, such as contractual or temporary staff, who were previously not covered under ESI) into **the formal social security system**.

3.GOISTATS APP

Context: The National Sample Survey Office (NSO) has on the occasion of **19th Statistics Day (June 29)** launched the **GoIStats mobile application**.

- **Statistics Day is celebrated on June 29th** to honour the **birth anniversary of Professor (Late) Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis** and his contribution to the field of statistics and economic planning.

About The App

- The GoIStats app is an **all-encompassing data ecosystem for seamless access to official data**.
- **Objective:** To make official statistics **accessible and user-centric for all citizens**.
- **Features:**
 - **“Key Trend” Dashboard:** The interactive “Key Trends” dashboard showcases **important socio-economic indicators with dynamic visualizations of critical metrics** including GDP, inflation, employment data.
 - **Access to NSO Database:** A comprehensive publication section provides users with **the access to NSO reports and publications with instant download functionality**.
 - **Advanced filtering and search capabilities with comprehensive metadata**

- **A curated infographics section enhances the app's visual data storytelling capabilities** with interactive charts and graphs with contextual explanations
- **Social Sharing: To promote data literacy across communities.**

4.MADAGASCAR

Context: Minister of State for Defence led an Indian delegation to **Madagascar** to mark the country's **65th Independence Day** and the **creation of its Armed Forces**.

About Madagascar

- The **Republic of Madagascar** lies off the **east coast of Africa** in the **Indian Ocean** and is the **fourth largest island globally** (after Greenland, New Guinea, and Borneo).
- It is bordered by Mauritius and Réunion in the east and Mayotte and Comoros in the North west.
- The country is divided into **three main longitudinal geographic zones**:
 - A narrow eastern coastal strip,
 - A central high plateau,
 - Western low plateaus and plains.
- The **Tsaratana Massif** in the north is home to **Maromokotro** (2,876 m), the highest point in Madagascar.
- The **Ankaratra Massif** is another major volcanic mass with the highest peak at **2,643 m**.
- **Major Rivers:** Mananara, Mangoro, Sambirano, Mahajamba, Betsiboka, Mania, North and South Mahavavy, Mangoky, Onilahy, Ikopa
- **Major Lakes:** Alaotra, Kinkony, Ihotry
- **Major National Parks:** **Isalo** and **Masoala**, both rich in unique biodiversity including the endemic **lemur** species.
- Nearly **90% of its plant and animal species are endemic**, a result of long-term **geographic isolation** from mainland Africa.

5.INDIA ENERGY STACK

Context: The **Ministry of Power** has announced the **launch of a task force to conceive the India Energy Stack (IES)** to build the **Digital Backbone for India's Power Sector**.

India Energy Stack

- **About:** It is **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) (PYQ-2020)** that will provide a **standardised, secure, and open platform to manage, monitor, and innovate** across the electricity value chain.
- **Aim:** at creating a **unified, secure, and interoperable digital infrastructure** for India's energy sector.
- **Key Features:**
 - Unique IDs for consumers, assets, and transactions

- Real-time, consent-based data sharing
- Open APIs for seamless system integration
- Tools for consumer empowerment, market access, and innovation

6.SARISKA TIGER RESERVE

Context: A new plan to rationalise **Sariska Tiger Reserve's Critical Tiger Habitat (CTH)** may revive **over 50 marble and dolomite mines** shut by a **Supreme Court order** last year due to their proximity to the CTH.

About Sariska Tiger Reserve

- **Location:** It is situated in the **Alwar district of Rajasthan state** in India and is the **sole tiger reserve in the National Capital Region**.
- **Area:** The tiger reserve is spread over an area of **1203.33 sq. km** (881.11 sq. km core/ 322.22 sq. km buffer) **of the Aravalli hills**.
- **Nature of habitat:** The Reserve is a blend of **scrub-thorn arid forests, dry deciduous forests, grasslands, and rocky hills** and is a **part of the Aravalli Range and the Khathiar-Gir dry deciduous forests ecoregion**.
- **Present population:** Tiger population stands at **34 big cats of which 11 are male adults, 14 are female adults, and 8 cubs and sub adults**.
- **Flora:** **Dhok (Anogeissus pendula)** is the dominant tree species **covering over 90% area** of the forest. **Kathaa (Acacia catechu), Palas, Ber and Bamboo** are common in the Valleys.
 - Other noteworthy tree species are **Arjun, Gugal, Kadaya, Amla, Bahera**
- **Fauna:** Tiger, Leopard, Striped hyena, jackal, jungle cat, Desert Cat, **rare four-horned antelope or Chousingha**, large numbers of Sambar, Chital, **Peafowl, (the largest population density in India)** Grey partridge, Painted spurfowl etc.

7.HONG KONG CONVENTION

Context: On **26th June**, the **Hong Kong International Convention** for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships (HKC) came into **force**.

About Hong Kong International Convention for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships (HKC)

- **Adopted:** 2009, at a diplomatic conference in Hong Kong under the aegis of the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**.
- **Collaborators:** IMO, **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, **Basel Convention Parties**, and NGOs.
- **Purpose:** Address hazards in **ship recycling** including:
 - Toxic materials (asbestos, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, ozone-depleting substances).
 - Poor worker safety.
 - Environmental damage at scrapping yards.

- **India acceded to it in 2019.**