



Current Affairs of the Day

GS III

- Six elephants die in Odisha in two weeks
- Fossils of 'Dickinsonia' found at Bhimbetka
- Farm income mission off-target
- UAE's Hope Probe sends home first image of Mars



Six elephants die in Odisha in two weeks

Highlights:

1. Odisha has lost six elephants in two weeks following the death of one more jumbo in the Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary in Kalahandi district.
2. The Forest Department detected the body of another female elephant in Karlapat forest. It took the total elephant deaths to six including a juvenile.
3. Investigation results show it was a case of Haemorrhage Septicaemia.

Fossils of 'Dickinsonia' found at Bhimbetka

News: Researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal — the 550-million-year-old 'Dickinsonia' — on the roof of the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters, about 40 km from Bhopal.

Highlights:

1. One can identify the fossils from the white leaf-like patches with a central vertebra (central midrib) and connecting veins. While one fossil is 17 inches long, the other two are much smaller.
2. The new discoveries, published in a journal, Gondwana Research, can be seen right at the beginning of the 'Auditorium Cave', the first of such caves at Bhimbetka, a UNESCO heritage site, located about 3.5 metres above the ground.
3. Geological Survey of India's told that they were the only such fossils available in the country, and were similar to those seen in South Australia.
4. "This is further proof of the similar paleoenvironments and confirms assembly of Gondwanaland by the 550 Ma (mega annum), but not reconstructions adjusted for a true polar wander," the article says.

Farm income mission off-target

News: In the last year of its mission to double farmers income, the Centre admits that no actual assessment of farm income has been carried out since 2013.

Highlights:

1. Ashok Dalwai, head of the committee on doubling farmers income, told The Hindu that only the implementation of strategies was being monitored, rather than actual outcomes. He cautioned that the impact of the pandemic could have a dampening effect on reaching the income target.



2. In response to multiple pointed queries on the topic in Parliament this week, the government did not provide any details on what the base year for this goal is or what the targeted income to be achieved by the 2022 deadline was.
3. In response to a request for State-wise, year-wise income data, and the annual growth percentage required to achieve the 2022 targets, the Ministry responded that the National Sample Survey Office's last survey on agricultural households was conducted in 2013. "There has been no further assessment of the farmer's income thereafter," it said.
4. Seven strategies had been identified by Dalwai committee: improvement in crop and livestock productivity, savings in production cost through efficient use of resources, higher cropping intensity and diversification towards high-value crops, better price realisation and a shift to non-farm jobs.
5. His committee had used the NSSO's 2013 income data and extrapolated it for 2015-16, chosen as the base year. The base income in that year was estimated at more than ₹97,000 per annum. The committee estimated that the target income should be about ₹2 lakh per annum, from both farm and non-farm income, by 2022.
6. He was cautiously optimistic about reaching the target, though he warned that COVID-19 could have an impact.

UAE's Hope Probe sends home first image of Mars

Highlights:

1. The UAE's Hope Probe sent back its first image of Mars, the national space agency said Sunday, days after the spacecraft successfully entered the Red Planet's orbit.
2. The picture "captured the largest volcano in the solar system, Olympus Mons, emerging into the early morning sunlight", it said in a statement.
3. The mission is designed to reveal the secrets of Martian weather, but the UAE also wants it to serve as an inspiration for the region's youth.
4. Hope became the first of three spacecraft to arrive at the Red Planet this month after China and the U.S. also launched missions in July, taking advantage of a period when the Earth and Mars are nearest.
5. The UAE's venture is also timed to mark the 50th anniversary of the unification of the nation's seven emirates. Hope will orbit the Red Planet for at least one Martian year, or 687 days.

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