

AAKAR TODAY

1. Rhino Horns are Shrinking

Why in News?

According to a recent study, the horns of Rhinoceroses may have become smaller over time due to selective pressure of hunting.

The study used an interesting research approach—analyzing artwork and photographs of the animal spanning more than five centuries.

The study relied on a repository of images maintained by the Netherlands-based Rhino Research Center (RRC).

Key Details

What are the Findings?

- The five surviving rhino species (White and Black Rhinos in Africa, and the Greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran rhino species in Asia) are still threatened by habitat loss and hunting.
- The rate of decline in horn length was highest in the critically-endangered Sumatran rhino and lowest in the white rhino of Africa, which is the most commonly found species both in the wild and in captivity.
- This observation follows patterns seen in other animals, such as tusk size in elephants and horn length in wild sheep, which have been driven down by directional selection due to trophy hunting
- During the age of European imperialism (between the 16th and 20th centuries), rhinos were commonly portrayed as hunting trophies, but since the mid-20th century, they have been increasingly portrayed in a conservation context, reflecting a change in emphasis from a more to less consumptive relationship between humans and rhinos.

What are the Key Facts about Rhino?

- **About:**
 - There are five species of rhino – white and black rhinos in Africa, and the greater one-horned, Javan, and Sumatran rhino species in Asia.
- **IUCN Red List Status:**
 - **Black Rhino:** Critically endangered. Smaller of the two African species.
 - **White Rhino:** Near Threatened. Researchers have created an embryo of the northern white rhino by using In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) process.
 - **One-Horned Rhino:** Vulnerable
 - **Javan:** Critically Endangered
 - **Sumatran Rhino:** Critically Endangered. It has gone extinct in Malaysia.

- **Indian Rhino:**

- **About:**

- Only the Great One-Horned Rhino is found in India.
- Also known as Indian rhino, it is the largest of the rhino species.
- It is identified by a single black horn and a grey-brown hide with skin folds.
- They primarily graze, with a diet consisting almost entirely of grasses as well as leaves, branches of shrubs and trees, fruit, and aquatic plants.

- **Habitat:**

- The species is restricted to small habitats in Indo-Nepal terai and northern West Bengal and Assam.
- In India, rhinos are mainly found in Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.
- Assam has an estimated 2,640 rhinos in four protected areas, i.e. Pabitora Wildlife Reserve, Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, Kaziranga National Park, and Manas National Park.
- About 2,400 of them are in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR).

- **Protection Status:**

- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable.
- CITES: Appendix I.
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I.

- **Threats:**

- Poaching for the horns
- Habitat loss
- Population density
- Decreasing Genetic diversity.

What are the Conservation Efforts in India?

- The five rhino range nations (India, Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia) have signed a declaration 'The New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019' for the conservation and protection of the species.
- In 2019, the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has begun a project to create DNA profiles of all rhinos in the country.
- National Rhino Conservation Strategy: It was launched in 2019 to conserve the greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- Indian Rhino Vision 2020: Launched in 2005, it was an ambitious effort to attain a wild population of at least 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos spread over seven protected areas in the Indian state of Assam by the year 2020.

2. India's First Floating Financial Literacy Camp

Why in News?

Recently, India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) conducted India's First Floating Financial Literacy Camp with an initiative called 'Niveshak Didi' to promote Financial Literacy 'By the women, for the women', in Srinagar, J&K.

Key Details

What is the Niveshak Didi Initiative?

- **About:**
 - It is based on the ideology of women for women, as rural area women feel more comfortable to share their queries with a female herself.
- **Implementing Agency:**
 - It is launched by IPPB, in collaboration with Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) under the aegis of Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).
- **Floating Financial Literacy Camp:**
 - The session covered topics ranging from banking and financial products, importance of joining the mainstream financial services offered by regulated entities & protection against various types of risks involved with investments and measures of fraud prevention.

What are India's other Initiatives for Financial Literacy?

- **Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana:**
 - Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is the National Mission for Financial Inclusion.
 - It ensures access to financial services, namely, Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner.
 - PMJDY has been the foundation stone for people-centric economic initiatives. Whether it is Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), Covid-19 financial assistance, PM-KISAN, increased wages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), life and health insurance cover, the first step of all these initiatives is to provide every adult with a bank account, which PMJDY has nearly completed.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana:**
 - Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana provide for life insurance and accident insurance respectively to the migrants and labourers.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana:**
 - PMKMDY was started to provide social security to all landholding Small and Marginal Farmers (farmers whose land holdings are less than two hectares of land in the country).

- It is a voluntary and contribution-based pension scheme.
- Pension will be paid to the farmers from a Pension Fund managed by the Life Insurance Corporation of India.
- Farmers will have to contribute an amount between Rs.55 to Rs.200 per month in the Pension Fund till they reach the retirement date i.e., the age of 60 years.

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana:**

- The PMMY is a scheme launched in 2015 for providing loans up to 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.
- These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY.
- These loans are given by Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks, Cooperative Banks, MFIs and NBFCs.

What is India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)?

- **About:**
 - It has been established under the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communication with 100% equity owned by the Government of India.
- **Objective:**
 - The bank has been set up with the vision to build the most accessible, affordable and trusted bank for the common man in India.
 - The fundamental mandate of IPPB is to remove barriers for the unbanked and under-banked and reach the last mile leveraging a network comprising 160,000 post offices (145,000 in rural areas) and 400,000 postal employees.
 - IPPB's reach and its operating model is built on the key pillars of India Stack - enabling Paperless, Cashless and Presence-less banking in a simple and secure manner at the customers' doorstep, through a CBS-integrated smartphone and biometric device.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Prelims

- Q. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana is aimed at
- (a) Bringing the small entrepreneurs into formal financial system
 - (b) Providing loans to poor farmers for cultivating particular crops
 - (c) Providing pensions to old and destitute persons
 - (d) Funding the voluntary organizations involved in the promotion of skill development and employment generation

Mains

- Q. Is inclusive growth possible under market economy? State the significance of financial inclusion in achieving economic growth in India.

(200 words)