- **Tiriyani Block** of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district, **Telangana** and **Kaushambi Block** of Kaushambi District, Uttar Pradesh secured **1st and 2nd ranks respectively** in the first delta ranking.
  - Delta Ranking captures **incremental change in blocks** ranked based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) categorized into five themes.
- **About ABP**
  - Launched in January 2023 by NITI Aayog, **ABP** is built on the success of the **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP).**
  - It focuses on **improving governance** to enhance the quality of life of citizens in the **most difficult and relatively underdeveloped blocks of India.**
    - **500 blocks** from 7 states and 4 UTs are part of the programme.
  - Each block is expected to focus on **monitoring key socio-economic indicators** categorized under **major themes:**
    - Health and Nutrition,
    - Education,
    - Agriculture and Allied Services,
    - Basic Infrastructure,
    - Social Development.

  > **About ADP**
  > - ADP was **launched in 2018** and **initially covered 112** most under-developed districts **across the country.**
  > - With States as the main drivers, this program **focuses on the strength of each district, identifying low- hanging fruits for immediate improvement** and measuring progress by ranking districts.

  - **Programme strategy includes:**
    - **Convergence** (of Central and state Schemes)
    - **Collaboration** (between NITI Aayog, Central Ministries, State Departments, District and block Administration)
    - **Competition** among blocks driven by a spirit of mass Movement
  - Programme identifies **Block Officials as Leaders of Change,** who work under the guidance of their respective **state and district administrations to achieve their defined strategies and output.**

10 Years of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) or POSH Act 2013

- **Act aims to provide safe and secure work environment** to women.
  - It was enacted on the basis of **Vishakha Guidelines (1997)** of Supreme Court.
- **Key Provisions of Act:**
  - **A clear definition of sexual harassment:** Encompassing unwelcome acts or behaviour that are sexually colored, creating a hostile work environment.
  - **Applicability:** To all workplaces, including government, private, and non-governmental organizations.
  - **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC):** Act mandates **every workplace** employing more than 10 persons to constitute an ICC.
    - ICC headed by woman, must have a **minimum of four members.**
  - **Local Complaints Committee (LCC):** States to constitute LCCs in every district to receive complaints from **organisations having less than 10 workers or if the complaint is against the employers.**
  - **Timeframe: Written Complaint** should be filed within **3 months (extendable by 3 months)** of sexual harassment incident.
- **Issues in Implementation:**
  - **ICC is not formed** in all organizations as mandated.
  - **Lacunas in existing ICCs** like inadequate members or lacked mandatory external member.
  - **No centralised data** regarding cases of harassment of women at workplaces.
  - Largely **inaccessible to women workers in the informal sector.**

  > **Other Initiatives Related to Women's Safety**
  > - Sexual Harassment electronic-Box (**SHe-Box**) for registering complaints related to sexual harassment
  > - **One Stop Centres,** Universalization of Women Helplines (Both under **Nirbhaya Fund**).
  > - Ujjawala Scheme, Swadhar Greh Scheme etc.
  > - **In 1993, India ratified UN Convention** on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

- It tracks **public and private finance flows** to **Nature based Solutions (NbS)** to tackle global challenges related to **biodiversity loss, land degradation and climate change.**
  - It first time estimated **global scale of public and private nature-negative finance.**
- **Key Findings of Report**
  - **Current finance flows to NbS: Around US$200 billion** which is only one third of NbS finance needed by 2030.
  - **Nature-negative finance flows: Estimated at almost US$7 trillion per year.**
    - **Nature-negative financial flows** refer to finance flows for activities that could potentially have a negative effect on nature. **Like fossil fuel subsidies.**
  - **Future investment needs:** To meet **Rio Convention targets** finance flows to NbS must almost **triple from current levels** to reach **US$542 billion per year by 2030.**
- **Recommendations**
  - **Greening finance:** Reducing public and private **nature-negative finance flows.**
  - **Financing green:** Scaling public funding and private **investment into NbS.**
    - Like create **non-traditional revenue streams**, for example, **biodiversity and carbon credits.**
  - **Green and inclusive financial systems:** Ensuring **a just transition to a green** and inclusive financial system for **vulnerable groups, women and Indigenous Peoples.**

> **About Nature based Solutions (NbS)**
> - **NbS are actions** to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems **that address societal challenges** effectively and adaptively, simultaneously **benefiting people and nature.**
>   **Examples of NbS** are **Reforestation and Afforestation, Wetland Restoration,** Green
> - Infrastructure etc.

40 years since India became Permanent Resident of Antarctica

- In 1983, **first Indian permanent research station** was established in Antarctica.
  - Named **Dakshin Gangotri,** it was abandoned in 1990.
  - India has set up **three research stations** up till now in Antarctica, of which **Maitri** (operational since 1988), **Bharati** (in 2012) are operational.
  - Indian Antarctic expedition commenced in 1981.
- **Why research in Antarctica is significant?**
  - Refining understanding of **Indian subcontinent's geological history** (India and Antarctica were once part of **supercontinent Pangaea,** called **Gondwanaland**).
  - **Biological Research** to understand the molecular basis of cold adaptation.
  - Understanding **impact of climate change** such as contribution towards global sea level, **ozone depletion**, variability in sea ice cover and **phenomenon like Antarctic haze** etc**.**

- **Other initiatives of India with respect to Antarctica**
  - **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa**-an autonomous institute under **Ministry of Earth Sciences**- manages the **entire Indian Antarctic program.**
  - India has successfully launched **over 40 Scientific Expedition to Antarctica.**
  - India is **party to Antarctic Treaty,** which seeks it shall be used for peaceful purposes only.
  - **Indian Antarctic Act, 2022,** provides measures for protecting Antarctic environment and associated ecosystems etc.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) celebrates its 75th anniversary

- **Motivated by past world wars**, UDHR was approved by the **U.N. General Assembly** (UNGA) on **Dec. 10, 1948.**
- **Key features**
  - It recognises that 'the **inherent dignity of all members of the human family** is the **foundation** of **freedom, justice and peace** in the world'.
  - It declares that **human rights are universal** – to be enjoyed by all people, no matter who they are or where they live.
  - **UDHR**, together with the following **International Covenants** make up **International Bill of Human Rights:**
    - **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**
      - **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**
    - It outlines **30 fundamental rights** encompassing:
      - Civil and political rights, such as the **rights to life, liberty and privacy.**
    - Economic, social and cultural rights, such as the **rights to social security, health** and **adequate housing.**
  - While **not a legally binding treaty itself,** its principles are part of **legally binding international agreements.**
- **India and UDHR: Hansa Mehta,** a member of India's Constituent Assembly, is credited with altering "**All men** are born **free and equal**" to "**All human** beings are born free and equal" in Article 1 of the UDHR.

- The report is released by the **conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS).**
- **Key findings**
  - ⊕ **Ecosystem services:** Migratory species provide **essential ecosystem services to society**. For example,
    - ♦ **Antelopes** can **reduce the risk** of **wildfires** through their grazing patterns.
    - ♦ Migratory species also help in pollination, seed dispersal, nutrient cycling, and pest and disease control in an ecosystem.
  - ⊕ **Climate change threats to migratory species:** Threats includes **loss of suitable habitat, wide- scale changes in ecosystem functioning, etc.**
    - ♦ Major visible direct effects include **poleward range shifts, changes in the timing of migration,** and **reduced breeding success** and survival.
- **Recommendation:**
  - ⊕ Include **conservation needs of migratory species in nature-based climate change mitigation/adaptation strategies.**
  - ⊕ **Establish effective networks of protected areas** for migratory species, including a coherent and interconnected network of passage and safe stopover sites.
  - ⊕ **Foster international cooperation in the conservation** of migratory species to help the conservation and restoration of shared resources.
  - ⊕ Making use of new technologies for conservation, such as those that can **track species movements in real-time or model future scenarios.**

Also in News

Cloud Facility for the Financial Sector

- **RBI proposed to establish cloud facility** for financial sector data in India.
- **About Cloud Facility**
  - ⊕ **Aims** to enhance **security, integrity and privacy** of financial sector data.
  - ⊕ **Initially** to be operated by **Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS)**, a subsidiary of RBI.
  - ⊕ **Later to be transferred** to a separate entity owned by financial sector participants.
- **Significance**
  - ⊕ **Banks and financial entities** are maintaining **large volume of data.**
  - ⊕ **Cloud technology** is known to **enhance privacy** through its centralised security, and guard against **cybercrimes**.

Koya Tribe

In recent time, **Koya Tribe** has made an exemplary transition by **shedding the use of bison horns** to make their traditional **Permakore flute.**

- **About Koya Tribe**
  - ⊕ **Geographical distribution:** Hilly and forested regions of Andhra pradesh , Odisha and Chhattisgarh.
  - ⊕ **Language:** Mother tongue is **Gondi (Dravidian language)**, also speak Odia and Telugu languages.
  - ⊕ **Livelihood:** Traditionally they are **pastoralists and shifting cultivators.**
  - ⊕ **Culture:**
    - ♦ Practices **Kommu Koya dance.**
    - ♦ **Pendul** is commonly practiced form of **marriage.**

Banni Grassland (Gujarat)

- Central government has approved setting up a **cheetah breeding and conservation centre in Banni Grassland.**
- **About Banni Grassland**
  - **Geography:** Arid grassland located in **Kutch district with an area of over 2500 sq.km.**
  - **Biodiversity:** Consisting of **two ecosystems** in juxtaposition, viz., **wetlands and grasslands.**
  - **Flora: Over 190 species** of plants like **invasive Prosopis juliflora tree.**
  - **Fauna:** Mangrove dwelling Kharai camel (swimming camel); domesticated animals like **Banni buffalo, Kankrej cow** etc.
    - Livestock breeders of Banni are called **Maldharis.**

Unabated Fossil Fuel

- The **COP28 Climate talks in Dubai** call for phasing out of "**Unabated fossil fuels**".
- **Unabated Fossil fuel** is believed to refer to **burning fossil fuels** and letting the **emissions be released** into the atmosphere.
  - **Abated fossil fuel** is believed to refer to the burning of fossil fuels and simultaneously **neutralising the carbon dioxide emissions**
  - It can be done **either by using them or securely storing** the gas **underground forever.**
- However, **precise definitions** of "abated" and "unabated" **remain unresolved.**

Pashupatinath Temple, Nepal

- **Meat, alcohol prohibited around Pashupatinath Temple** due to Bala Chaturdashi festival.
- **About Pashupatinath Temple**
  - Situated on **banks of River Bagmati, on outskirts of Kathmandu.**
  - Devoted to **lord Shiva.**
  - **Earliest evidence** of the temple's existence dates back to **400 A.D. Current main temple complex** was built by **end of 17th century.**
  - **Pashupatinah Temple** is part of Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site, inscribed by **UNESCO.**
  - **Guhyeshwari,** one of famous **Shakti Peeths in Nepal**, is located near Temple.

Impatiens karuppusamy

- This new plant species was recently discovered by the Botanical Survey of India in **Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu.**
  - Species is **named after Dr. S Karuppusamy** (Madhura College, Tamil Nadu) for his significant **contributions to the taxonomy of south Indian angiosperms.**
- **Morphology:** The species, resembling Impatiens Bicornis, distinguishes itself with **small leaves, six to eight-flowered, short scape, and small flowers.**
- **Distribution:** Although widely distributed in **tropical Africa, Madagascar, India, Sri Lanka, and China**, Impatiens are restricted to certain areas and **can become extinct due to climate change.**

Mission-Operation Storm Makers II

- It is the **first Interpol operation** specifically **targeting human trafficking-fuelled fraud.**
  - International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) **helps police work together to make the world a safer place.**
- It **mobilized law enforcement** in 27 countries to **target human trafficking and migrant smuggling.**
- The operation has revealed that Victims are often **lured through fake job ads and forced to commit online fraud** on an industrial scale while enduring abject physical abuse.
  - The **Telangana police registered one of the first cases in India** of human trafficking committed to **force victims to commit cyber fraud.**

Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA)

- **Odisha invoked ESMA** to ban strikes by Health Department staff
- The Act **empowers the Government to designate any activity or service as 'essential'**, whose disruption would **impact the normal life of people** (e.g., Hospital, Railways, Post, banking etc).
  - **Maintenance of supplies and services essential** to the community is **placed under** the **Concurrent list** of the **Schedule VII** of the Constitution.
  - It **empowers the states to choose** the essential services on which to enforce ESMA.
- It can be **imposed for a maximum period of 6 months** and can be extended.
- Violators can be **arrested without a warrant** under the act

Personality in News — Bhai Parmanand (1876-1947)

- He was **freedom fighter,** member of **Arya Samaj**, leader of **Hindu Mahasabha.**

Contributions :
  - **In 1905**, went to South Africa and **met Mahatma Gandhi.**
  - **In 1911, met Lala Har Dayal** and persuaded him to go to **America** for propagation of ancient culture of Aryan people.
  - Founder member of **Ghadar Party.**
  - Was arrested in **Lahore conspiracy case.**
    - **Sentenced to death** in 1915, which was commuted to life imprisonment.
  - **Books written:** Tarikh-i-Hind (in Urdu).
- **Values:** Patriotism, Courage, Selflessness.

**Bhai Parmanand
(1876-1947)**