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### Environment

#### Operation Oliva

##### Why in News?

Recently, the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** restarted its **Operation Oliva** project to protect **Olive Ridley turtles**.

##### About Operation Oliva:

- Every year, the ICG's Operation Olivia, helps protect Olive Ridley turtles as they congregate along the **Odisha coast** for



breeding and nesting.

- It also keeps an eye on **unlawful trawling** activities.

##### About Olive Ridley Turtles:

- These are the **smallest** and **most abundant** of all sea turtles in the world.
- They are **carnivores**.
- They migrate thousands of kilometers between their feeding and mating grounds in one year.
- They are also known for their **unique mass nesting** called **Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach and lay eggs.

##### Habitat:

- They are found in **warm waters** throughout the world in the **Pacific, Atlantic** and **Indian** oceans.
- The Odisha's **Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary** is the world's largest rookery of sea turtles.

##### Protection Status:

- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
- CITES: Appendix I
- WPA, 1972: Schedule I

##### Threats:

- Poached for meat, shell, leather, and their eggs.
- However, the most severe threat is the **accidental** killing through entanglement in trawl nets due to uncontrolled fishing during their **mating** season around nesting beaches.
- Also, increasing debris of **plastics**, fishing **nets**, discarded nets, polythene and other garbage dumped by tourists is also a threat.

#### Snow Leopard

##### Why in News?

In Uttarakhand Snow Leopard was spotted about 7000ft below its natural habitat. The reason being

given is reduced human activities due to COVID induced lockdowns.

**About Snow Leopard:**

- Snow leopards are known to act as an indicator of the health of the mountain ecosystem in which they live, due to their position as the top predator in the food web.

**Natural Habitat:**

- Mountainous regions of central and southern Asia.
- In India, their geographical range encompasses both:
  - **Western Himalayas:** Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh.
  - **Eastern Himalayas:** Uttarakhand and Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Hemis National park, Ladakh is known as the **Snow Leopard capital** of the world.

**Conservation Status:**

IUCN Red List	Vulnerable
CITES	Appendix I
WPA, 1972	Schedule I

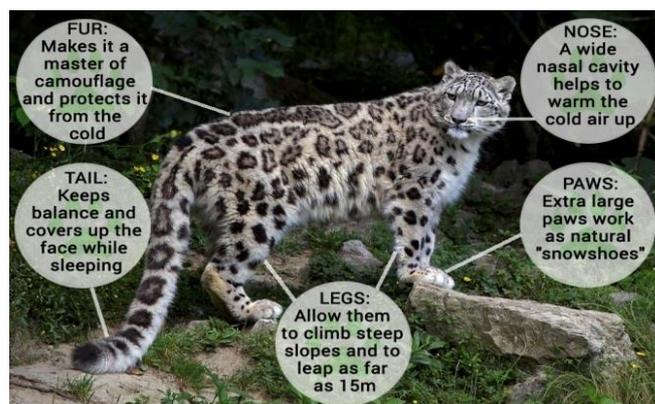
**Conservation Efforts** by India:

- The Gol has identified snow leopard as a flagship species for the high altitude Himalayas.
- India is party to the **Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP)** Programme since 2013.
- **HimalSanrakshak** launched in October 2020 is a community volunteer programme, to protect snow leopards.
- **SECURE Himalaya:** A joint programme by
  - Global Environment Facility (GEF)
  - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

for conservation of high-altitude biodiversity and reducing the

dependency of local communities on the natural ecosystem.

- **Project Snow Leopard**, launched in 2009 to conserve snow leopards and their habitat.
- Snow Leopard is put on the list of **21 critically endangered species** for the recovery programme of the **Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change, Gol.**



## Science and Technology

### National AI Portal

#### Why in News?

‘National AI Portal’, recently celebrated its first anniversary on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

#### About National AI Portal:

- It is a joint initiative by the
  - National e-Governance Division (NeGD), under Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), and
  - NASSCOM.
- NeGD is an Independent Business Division under the Digital India Corporation (a not-for-profit company set up by MeitY).
- NASSCOM: A **not-for-profit** industry association, which is the apex body for IT and IT enabled products and services sector in India.

- It serves as a central hub for AI related news, learning, articles, events, and activities etc., in India and abroad.

### About Artificial Intelligence (AI):

- It is the action of machines accomplishing tasks which have historically required human intelligence.
- Technologies like **machine learning**, pattern recognition, big data, neural networks, self-algorithms, etc are included.
- AI is being used and tested across different industries including finance and healthcare.

### Monoclonal Antibody treatment:

#### Why in News?

Monoclonal antibody treatment is presently being considered as a relatively effective and safer alternative in treating COVID-19 patients.

#### About Monoclonal antibodies

- These are identical copies of an antibody which targets one specific antigen.
- Scientists can make **monoclonal antibodies** in labs by exposing **white blood cells** to a **particular antigen**.
- Each monoclonal antibody is specific to only its matching antigen.

#### Monoclonal antibody treatment:

- Monoclonal antibodies are produced in a lab setting and then infused into the blood. These antibodies fight disease by helping natural immune system functions.
- The Monoclonal antibodies help in reducing the symptoms and disease progression to a large extent.
- Monoclonal antibodies have previously been used to treat viral infections like HIVA and Ebola.

## Places in News

### Andaman And Nicobar Islands:

- A&N Islands are situated in the Bay of Bengal.
- The main islands under the A&N Islands are:
  - North Andaman
  - Middle Andaman
  - South Andaman
  - Little Andaman
  - Car Nicobar
  - Little Nicobar
  - Great Nicobar
- Andaman group of Islands are separated from Nicobar group of islands by **10-degree channel** (due to presence of 10-degree latitude).
- South Andaman Island and Little Andaman Island are separated by Duncan Passage.
- There is **The Grand Channel** present between the Great Nicobar Islands and the Sumatra islands of Indonesia.
- The **Coco Strait** lies between the North Andaman Islands and the Coco Islands of Myanmar.
- Port Blair, in South Andaman Island is the administrative capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The southernmost point of India, 'The Indira Point', the located on southern tip of the Great Nicobar Islands.
- Geographically, the A&N Islands are a part of the fold mountains protruding out of the sea.
- These mountains form a link with Arakan Yoma mountains of South east Asia and Sumatra.
- The highest peak of A&N Islands is Saddle Peak, located in the **North Andaman**.
- The Islands are famous for the largest and rarest species of crab, the **Giant Robber Crab**. It is distinct since it can climb the

coconut trees and break the hard shell of the fruit.

- **Barren Island**, located in the east of Middle Andaman Island is India's only active volcano.
- The Narcondam Island, located in the north-east of North Andaman Island is also geographically a volcanic island.

