

**PRELIMS EDGE 2025****30-07-2025**

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

Context: ICJ's latest rule on climate change has been grabbing global attention lately.



About International Court of Justice (ICJ):

- The ICJ, also known as the **World Court**, is the **principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN)**.
- It was established in **June 1945** by the Charter of the UN and began work in April 1946.
- The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in **The Hague (Netherlands)**.
- Of the six principal organs of the UN, it is the **only one not located in New York, United States**.
- The **hearings of the ICJ are always public**.
- **Official Languages:** French and English
- **Powers and Functions:** The Court may entertain two types of cases:

- First, it can act as a dispute settlement body between two member States in what are called "contentious cases." Such disputes may concern, in particular, land frontiers, maritime boundaries, territorial sovereignty, the non-use of force, violation of international humanitarian law, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and diplomatic relations.
- Second, it can accept requests to issue an advisory opinion on a legal question referred to it by a UN body or specialized agency. These opinions can clarify the ways in which such organizations may lawfully function or strengthen their authority in relation to their member States.

Features

- The court's judgments in contentious cases are final and binding on the parties to a case, and without appeal.
- Unlike the Court's judgments, advisory opinions are not binding.
- The ICJ decides disputes in accordance with international law as reflected in international conventions, international custom, general

principles of law recognized by civilized nations, judicial decisions, and the writings of the most highly qualified experts on international law.

Composition:

- It consists of 15 judges, all from different countries, who are elected for nine-year terms by majority votes in the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.
- The judges, one-third of whom are elected every three years, are eligible for reelection.
- Once elected, a member of the Court is a delegate neither of the government of his own country nor of any other State.
- In addition, the ICJ Statute allows a state party to a case before it which does not have a judge of its nationality on the bench to appoint a person to sit as judge ad hoc in that specific case.
- The Court is assisted by a Registry, its permanent administrative secretariat, which is independent of the United Nations Secretariat.

Hindu : What did the ICJ opinion state on climate obligations? | Explained (The Hindu)

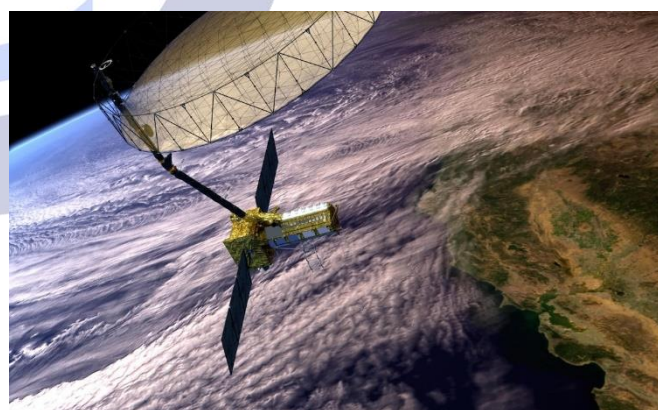
NASA-ISRO SYNTHETIC APERTURE RADAR (NISAR)

Context: The NISAR Mission is set to be launched today

About NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR):

- NISAR is a **Low Earth Orbit (LEO) observatory jointly developed by NASA and ISRO** and weighing 2,800 kilograms.

- It consists of **both L-band and S-band synthetic aperture radar (SAR)** instruments, which makes it a dual-frequency imaging radar satellite.
- It will be the **first satellite mission to use two different radar frequencies** (L-band and S-band) to measure changes in Earth's surface.
- It is capable of **penetrating clouds and collect data day and night** regardless of weather conditions.
- NASA has provided the L-band radar, GPS, a high-capacity solid-state recorder to store data, and a payload data subsystem. **ISRO has provided the S-band radar, the GSLV launch system, and spacecraft.**
- It also consists of a **large 39-foot stationary antenna reflector** made of a gold-plated wire mesh which will be used to focus the radar signals emitted and received.



Mission Objectives:

- **Measure ecosystems, dynamic surfaces & ice masses** to provide info about biomass, natural hazards, sea level rise, and groundwater.

- NISAR will **observe Earth's land and ice-covered surfaces globally in a 12-day period.**
- It will **operate for a minimum of 3 years.**

Significance of NISAR Mission:

- **Earth observation:** It will offer detailed observations of Earth's surface, tracking changes in ice sheets, land deformation, and ecosystems. This will improve our understanding of Earth's processes and help in tackling environmental challenges.
- **Disaster Management:** The mission offers vital data for managing natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions to enhance response time and risk assessments.
- **Agriculture:** NISAR data will enhance agriculture management and food security by offering insights into crop growth, soil moisture, and land-use changes.
- **Climate Change:** It will help monitor and understand climate change's impacts on Earth's land surface, including glacier melting, sea-level rise, and carbon storage changes.

Source : Countdown begins for NISAR satellite launch on July 30 (The Hindu)

PLACES IN NEWS

Kaziranga National Park

- **Location:** It is situated in the north-eastern part of India in the state of **Assam.**
- It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.

- In 1985, the park was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.
- **Terrain:** It is of sheer forest, tall elephant grass, rugged reeds, marshes, and shallow pools.
- **Rivers:** The River Diphalu, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, flows through the National Park while another tributary, Moradifalu, flows along its southern boundary.



Flora and Fauna

- **Flora:** It is primarily famous for its dense and tall elephant grasses intermixed with small swamplands.
 - It also includes an abundant cover of water lilies, water hyacinths and lotus.
- **Fauna:** Many endangered and threatened species like **Rhino, Tiger, Eastern swamp deer, Elephant, Buffalo, Hoolock gibbon, Capped langur, and Gangetic River dolphin** are commonly found in the habitat.
 - It is inhabited by the world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceroses, as well as many mammals.

Jim Corbett National Park



- It is located on the foothills of the Himalayas in **Uttarakhand**.

Establishment:

- Corbett is the **first national park of India**, established in 1936. It was named Hailey National Park then.
- In 1957, the park was rechristened Corbett National Park in memory of the late Jim Corbett, a great naturalist and eminent conservationist.
- The terrain is undulating with several valleys. The rivers Ramganga, Pallaen, and Sonanadi flow through the valleys.
- By and large, the reserve is spread over the **Bhabar and lower Shivalik regions with a deep-water table**.
- The tract is porous with boulders and sand deposits.

Flora:

- In general, the vegetation comprises sal and mixed forests, interspersed with grass lands and riparian vegetation.
- The grasslands are locally known as 'Chaur', which are an outcome of abandoned settlements or past clearings.

- Evergreen Sal and its combined trees, the Sheesham, and the Kanju are found extensively on the ridges.
- One plant, (actually a weed), which is a major irritant to the reserve authorities and is widespread in the jungle, is the Lantana.
- **Fauna:** Tigers and elephants are the charismatic mammals, besides a large array of co-predators (leopards, small carnivores), ungulates (sambar, hog deer, spotted deer), birds, reptiles (gharials, crocodile), and fishes.

Bandipur Tiger Reserve

- It is situated in the Mysore and Chamarajanagar revenue districts of southern Karnataka.
- It is located at the tri-junction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- Geographically, it is an "ecological confluence" of the Western and Eastern Ghats.
- It was once a hunting ground for the rulers of the neighbouring kingdom of Mysore.
- It is part of the larger Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



The Tiger Reserve is surrounded by:

- Nagarahole Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in the North West (Kabini Reservoir separates the two).
- Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in the South.
- Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) in the South West.
- **Rivers:** It is surrounded by River Kabini in its north and River Moyar in its south.
- **Climate:** Bandipur has a typical tropical climate with distinct wet and dry seasons.

Flora:

- It comprises diverse vegetation of dry deciduous to tropical mixed deciduous.
- It includes rosewood, Indian kino tree, sandalwood, Indian laurel, clumping bamboo and giant clumping bamboo etc.

Fauna:

- It is a shelter for the largest population of wild Asian elephants in South Asia.
- It comprises other mammals such as Bengal tiger, gaur, sloth bear, golden jackal, dhole and four-horned antelope etc.

TERMS IN NEWS

Yarlung Tsangpo Project



- The Yarlung Tsangpo hydropower project is set to be **the world's largest**

hydropower project, planned at the "Great Bend" of the river in Medog county, Tibet, where it makes a U-turn before entering Arunachal Pradesh.

- The project is part of China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025).

Location and Planning Stage

- According to experts, the project's location has been strategically chosen. Recent activities, including funding allocation, construction of smaller dams, and changes in upstream land use, suggest the project is in an advanced planning phase, with visible construction expected soon.

China's Goals for the Yarlung Tsangpo Project

- China aims to use the Yarlung Tsangpo project to reduce reliance on conventional energy sources and achieve net carbon neutrality by 2060.
- The river's steep descent from the mountains provides an ideal flow rate for hydroelectricity generation, making it a prime location for such a mega project.

Environmental Concerns

- China's recent dams, including the Three Gorges Dam, highlight the massive scale of its hydropower ambitions.
- The Three Gorges Dam, for instance, has altered gravity anomaly maps due to the immense weight of stored water, caused severe ecological impacts, and even triggered earthquakes.
- Additionally, over a million people were displaced due to changes in river morphology.

- The Yarlung Tsangpo project could replicate these environmental and social risks on a larger scale, posing significant challenges for downstream regions.
- China's approval of the world's largest hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo river raises concerns for India. Learn about the potential impacts on water flow, ecology, and regional stability, and the existing coordination mechanisms between India and China.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1: Consider the following statements regarding International Court of Justice

1. The ICJ, also known as the World Court, is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN).
2. Of the six principal organs of the UN, it is the only one not located in New York, United States.
3. The hearings of the ICJ are always public.

How many of the above statements are incorrect?

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. All of the Above
- D. None of the Above

Q2: Consider the following statement regarding NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) Mission.

1. NISAR is a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) observatory jointly developed by NASA and ISRO
2. It consists of both L-band and S-band synthetic aperture radar (SAR)

instruments, which makes it a dual-frequency imaging radar satellite

3. It is capable of penetrating clouds and collect data day and night regardless of weather conditions.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. All of the Above
- D. None of the Above

Q3: It is situated in the north-eastern part of India in the state of Assam. It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain. In 1985, the park was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. It is inhabited by the world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceroses, as well as many mammals.

Identify the National Park from the given description

- A. Kaziranga National Park
- B. Manas National Park
- C. Jim Corbett National Park
- D. Khangchendzonga National Park

Q4: It is located on the foothills of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand. It is the first national park of India, established in 1936. It was named Hailey National Park then. By and large, the reserve is spread over the Bhabar and lower Shivalik regions with a deep-water table. The tract is porous with boulders and sand deposits.

Identify the National Park from the given description

- A. Hemis National Park
- B. Jim Corbett National Park

- C. Manas National Park
- D. Kanha National Park

Q5: The Yarlung Tsangpo Hydropower Project is being constructed at which of the following rivers?

- A. Ganga River
- B. Hooghly River
- C. Brahmaputra River
- D. Yamuna River

Answers

1. D
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. C

