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Daily News Analysis

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1. Vital Statistics of India

- Prelims - Vital Statistics of India
- Mains - GS 2 - Social Justice

Why in the news?

- Registrar-General of India (RGI) published Vital Statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System (CRS) and the report did not include Sikkim.

Vital Statistics of India

- **National Statistics:**
 - India registered 2.52 crore births in 2023, which is about 2.32 lakh fewer than in 2022 (2.54 crore).
 - Deaths registered stood at 86.6 lakh in 2023, a marginal rise from 86.5 lakh in 2022.
 - Overall birth registration coverage was 98.4%, showing near-universal coverage.
 - Institutional births accounted for 74.7% of total registered births, indicating the strengthening of maternal and child health systems.
- **Death Trends (2020–2023):**
 - In 2020, India recorded 81.2 lakh deaths.
 - In 2021, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, deaths rose sharply to 102.2 lakh, indicating an excess of about 21 lakh deaths compared to 2020.
 - In 2022 and 2023, the number of deaths stabilized, with no major spike, despite the official COVID-19 toll reported by the Health Ministry as 5.33 lakh deaths (as of May 2025).
 - The data suggests that mortality patterns normalized after the pandemic shock of 2021.
- **Sex Ratio at Birth:**
 - The lowest sex ratios at birth were recorded in Jharkhand (899), Bihar (900), Telangana (906), Maharashtra (909), Gujarat (910), Haryana (911), and Mizoram (911).
 - Bihar has continued to record the lowest sex ratio since 2020.



- The highest sex ratios were seen in Arunachal Pradesh (1,085), Nagaland (1,007), Goa (973), Ladakh and Tripura (972 each), and Kerala (967).
- The data reveals significant regional disparities and highlights the north-south divide in gender balance at birth.
- **Timely Registration (within 21 days):**
 - States/UTs with over 90% timely registration: Gujarat, Puducherry, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, and Punjab.
 - States with 80–90% timely registration: Odisha, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh.
 - States with 50–80% timely registration: Assam, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Meghalaya, and Uttar Pradesh.



2. Maitri II Research Station in Antarctica

- **Prelims** - Maitri II Research Station in Antarctica
- **Mains** - GS 2 - Science and Technology

Why in the news?

- The Ministry of Finance has given in-principle approval for setting up Maitri II, India's new research station in east Antarctica.

Maitri II Research Station in Antarctica

- **What is it?:** Maitri II is India's upcoming and fourth research station in Antarctica, scheduled to be completed by January 2029. It strengthens India's long-term scientific presence under the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS, 1959).
- **Purpose & Need:** It is being built to replace the old Maitri station (1989), which has surpassed its original design life of 10 years and has issues like flawed waste management.
- **Nodal Agency:** The project is led by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) in Goa, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- **Features:**
 - **Larger and Greener:** Designed as a modern "green research base", significantly larger than its predecessor to accommodate advanced research teams.
 - **Renewable Energy Integration:** Will use solar power during the Antarctic summer and wind turbines to harness powerful polar winds, reducing reliance on diesel.
 - **Advanced Technology:** Equipped with automated instruments capable of recording and relaying real-time data to mainland India even when unmanned.
 - **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Focuses on eco-friendly waste management, efficient insulation, and improved living facilities such as upgraded sanitation and modular accommodation units.
- **Significance:**
 - **Scientific Advancement:** Supports multidisciplinary research in climate change, glaciology, atmospheric sciences, microbial life, and polar geology.



- **Environmental Importance:** Antarctica contains ~75% of Earth's freshwater, making it critical for studying ice-sheet dynamics and sea-level rise.
- **Resource Exploration:** Facilitates long-term observation of marine biodiversity and potential mineral and hydrocarbon reserves, though exploitation remains restricted under ATS protocols.
- **Strategic & Diplomatic Role:** Reinforces India's active participation in polar governance and enhances its voice in global climate negotiations.
- **Technological Showcase:** Demonstrates India's capacity for sustainable engineering in extreme environments.



3. Armenia

- Prelims - Location of Armenia
- Mains - GS 1 - Geography

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Armenia

Why in the news? - Armenia has become the newest state member of the IUCN, the announcement, made during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi.

Armenia

- **Location:** Armenia is a landlocked country in West Asia.
- **Capital:** Yerevan
- **Borders**
 - West - Turkey
 - North - Georgia
 - East - Azerbaijan
 - South - Iran and the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan

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4. Spratly Islands

- **Prelims** - Location of Spratly Island
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Geography

Why in the news?

- The Spratly Islands witness conflict between vessels of China and Philippines.

Spratly Islands

- **Location:**
 - South China Sea
 - Between Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and China.
- **Composition:**
 - Around 100+ small islands, reefs, atolls, and shoals.
 - Many are submerged at high tide; few are habitable.
- **Claimants:** China, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan (all have overlapping claims).





5. Blue Flag Certification

- Prelims - Blue Flag Certification
- Mains - GS 3 - Environment

Why in the news?

- Five beaches in Maharashtra have received the international Blue Flag certification which includes Shrivardhan and Nagaon beaches in Raigad district, Parnaka in Palghar, and Guhagar and Ladghar beaches in Ratnagiri district.

Blue Flag Certification

- The Blue Flag Certification is an internationally acclaimed eco-label awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE).
- It is granted to beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating operators meeting high environmental and safety standards.
- **Criteria for Certification:**

→ Environmental Standards:

- ★ Maintenance of high-quality seawater.
- ★ Implementation of waste management practices.

→ Educational Awareness:

- ★ Provision of environmental education activities for visitors.
- ★ Installation of informative signboards on flora, fauna, and conservation measures.

→ Safety and Accessibility:

- ★ Availability of lifeguards and first-aid stations.
- ★ Unhindered access for differently-abled individuals.

- **Indian Context:**

→ India has 12 Blue Flag-certified beaches, including:

- ★ Golden Beach, Odisha
- ★ Radhanagar Beach, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- ★ Shivrajpur Beach, Gujarat

→ Certifications were achieved under India's BEAMS (Beach Environment and Aesthetic Management Services) initiative.

- **Significance:**

- Promotes sustainable coastal tourism.
- Encourages local community participation in beach conservation.
- Improves India's international reputation in environmental conservation.



Blue Flag Beaches of India





6. Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025

- **Prelims** - Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025
- **Mains** - GS 2 - International Relations

Why in the news?

- Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025 begins at Perth, Australia.

Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025

- **What is it?:** It is a joint military exercise held between India and Australia.
- **Period:** It is an annual event conducted alternatively in India and Australia.
- **Focus:**
 - The exercise focuses on counter-terrorism operations in urban and semi-urban terrain, reflecting the evolving nature of modern conflict.
 - The exercise will also feature scenarios inspired by United Nations peacekeeping operations, offering realistic simulations that demand close coordination, adaptability, and swift decision-making in complex multi-national settings.
- **Features:** As the exercise unfolds, participating troops will undertake a series of tactical manoeuvres, joint mission planning sessions, and field training exercises designed to validate and refine operational synergy.
- **Significance:**
 - These interactions are expected to deepen mutual understanding and strengthen professional bonds between the two forces, the Indian Army added.
 - AUSTRAHIND-2025 reaffirms the shared commitment of India and Australia to regional peace, security, and stability, while reinforcing the growing defence partnership and strategic trust between the two nations.



7. Kaziranga National Park

- Prelims - Kaziranga National Park
- Mains - GS 3 - Environment

Kaziranga National Park



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Why in the news?

- The Director of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve has received the Kenton R. Miller Award, constituted by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).



Kaziranga National Park

- **Location:** Assam
- **Formation:** It was created in the year of 1904.
- **Protection Status**
 - 1974: National Park
 - 1985: UNESCO World Heritage Site
 - 2007: Tiger Reserve
- **Recognition:** The park has been identified as an Important Bird Area by the Birdlife International Society
- **Associated River:** River Brahmaputra, Diphlu River
- **Big Four Species:** Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger, and Asiatic water buffalo.
- **Vegetation:** It is a mix of eastern wet alluvial grasslands, semi evergreen forests and tropical moist deciduous forests.
- **Fauna:** One Horned Rhino, Fishing Cat, Royal Bengal tiger, Barking deer, Hog deer, western hoolock gibbon.

National Parks in Assam



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