

India-Iran Contract on Chabahar Port

- **India signed a 10-year contract** for the development of the **Shahid Beheshti Port Terminal at Chabahar Port in Iran**.
 - The development aims to enhance **regional connectivity** and facilitate trade and investment opportunities between **India, Iran, and Afghanistan**.
- **Key Highlights Of The News:**
- **Location and Significance:** Chabahar Port is located in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan province on the Makran coast, offering direct ocean access outside the Strait of Hormuz. It is the only deep-sea port in Iran.
- **Terminal Infrastructure:** Chabahar Port comprises two terminals: Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari.
- **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):** Chabahar Port is a crucial component of the proposed INSTC, a multi-mode transport project connecting the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and northern Europe via Russia.
- **Strategic Importance for India:** Chabahar Port serves to counterbalance Pakistan's Gwadar Port and China's Belt and Road Initiative, providing India with access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- **Proximity to Indian West Coast:** Chabahar Port offers easy access from India's west coast, particularly Kandla Port in Gujarat, which is only 550 nautical miles away.
- **Trade Potential:** The shorter route from Chabahar Port to European countries unlocks India's trade potential with Europe.

World Wildlife Crime Report 2024

- **Launched** by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, Austria**
- **Key Findings Of The Report:**
- **Most Impacted Species:**
 - During the period from **2015 to 2021**, rhinoceroses were the most impacted animal species, while cedars were the most impacted plant species.
- **Largest Numbers of Seizures:**
 - The largest numbers of seizures reported between **2015 and 2021** were of corals, followed by crocodylians and elephants.
- **Trends in Animal Species Seizures:**
 - There was a gradual increase in seizures of animal species from 2015 to 2019, followed by a decline in 2020 and 2021.
- **Trends in Plant Species Seizures:**
 - Seizures of plant species showed a sharp increase in 2020 and 2021, contrasting with the previous years.
- **Steps taken to combat Wildlife Crime:**
- **Global:**
 - UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) established its Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime in 2014.
 - UNODC was established in **1997 in Vienna, Austria**, with the primary goal of combating illicit drugs and organized crime.
 - UNODC launched the **Wildlife Crime Initiative** to address the global poaching crisis.
 - This initiative operates as a strategic partnership between **TRAFFIC**, a wildlife trade monitoring network, and the **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)**.
- **India:**
 - The **Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972** includes provisions for the forfeiture of equipment, vehicles, or weapons used in committing wildlife offenses.
 - The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau was established under the **Ministry of Environment and Forests** in India to combat organized wildlife crime.

Smart Cities Mission

- **The Smart Cities Mission (SCM)**, a flagship program, has receded in prominence in this year's roster of electoral pledges and accomplishments.
- **About Mission:**
 - **Launched Year** - 25 June, 2015
 - **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**
 - **Nodal Ministry** - Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry
 - **Objective** - of the Mission is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment and give a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of 'smart solutions'.
 - **Fund management**- Central Government proposes to give financial support to the Mission to the extent of **Rs. 48,000 crores** over five years i.e. on an average **Rs. 100 crore per city per year**
- There is no standard definition or template of a smart city. In the context of our country, the six fundamental principles on which the concept of Smart Cities is based are:



India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX)

- **State Bank of India** has made history by becoming the inaugural **trading-cum-clearing member** at IIBX.
- **About IIBX:**
 - Established in **2022** at GIFT International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
 - Regulated by the **IFSC Authority (IFSCA)**.
 - Supported by prominent Indian market infrastructure institutions such as the **National Stock Exchange and Multi Commodity Exchange of India**.
- **Benefits:**
 - Serves as a gateway for importing bullion into India.
 - Offers a world-class bullion exchange ecosystem to facilitate bullion trading, investment in bullion financial products, and vaulting facilities within IFSCs.
 - Bullion refers to high-purity physical gold and silver, typically stored in the form of bars, ingots, or coins.

Keeling Curve

- The global average concentration of **carbon dioxide (CO2)** in **March 2024** was 4.7 parts per million (ppm), marking a significant increase compared to March 2023 and representing a substantial spike in the **Keeling Curve**. This surge in CO2 concentration recorded the largest leap ever, **reaching 425.22 ppm**.

About the Keeling Curve:

- It is a historical record of atmospheric **CO2 levels measured at the Mauna Loa Observatory (MLO) since 1958**.
- The MLO is a research station situated in **Hawaii on the slopes of Mauna Loa, the world's largest active volcano**.
- The station monitors various atmospheric elements contributing to climate change.
- **The Keeling Curve is named after Dr. Charles David Keeling**, who initiated and maintained the continuous monitoring of CO2 levels at the MLO

NASA-JAXA XRISM Mission Discovered Iron Fingerprints in NGC 4151

- **XRISM, a joint mission of JAXA and NASA**, detected **iron fingerprints in the active galaxy NGC 4151** using its Resolve instrument. **NGC 4151 is a spiral galaxy** with a supermassive black hole at its center, located around 43 million light-years away in the Canes Venatici constellation. The discovery provides insights into the black hole's activity as it consumes material from its surrounding disk.