



11 October 2024

National and International News

<p>National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Union Cabinet has recently approved the development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat. <p>About NMHC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sagarmala Programme: The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways is developing the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat, as part of this initiative. Purpose: The NMHC is designed to become an international tourist destination, showcasing India's maritime heritage from ancient to modern times using an edutainment approach and modern technology. Governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A separate society will be formed under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, to manage future phases of the project. The society will be governed by a Governing Council headed by the Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.
<p>Caracal</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gujarat government has announced the establishment of a Caracal (Henotaro) Breeding and Conservation Center in the Chadva Rakhhal region of Kutch. <p>About Caracal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Species: Caracal (Elusive, primarily nocturnal animal) Unique Traits: Valued for litheness and ability to catch birds in flight Dens: Use abandoned porcupine burrows, rock crevices, and dense vegetation for maternal dens Habitat: Woodlands, savannahs, scrub forests Distribution in India: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh Key regions: Kutch, Malwa Plateau, Aravalli hill range, Bundelkhand region



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- **Global Distribution:** Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia
- **Threats:** Large-scale hunting, illegal trading, loss of natural habitats
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN:** Least Concern
 - **The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I

Rice Fortification

WHAT IS FORTIFIED RICE?

Fortification is the practice of deliberately increasing the content of an essential micronutrient, i.e. vitamins and minerals (including trace elements) in food to improve its nutritional quality and provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health



- ▶ The fortification factor does not last for more than 45 days, so it isn't advisable to store fortified rice for long
- ▶ According to National Family Health Survey, 78.7% children and 75% in the district are anaemic and suffer from malnutrition
- ▶ In the first phase, fortified rice will be distributed in Badangi, Bobbili, Ramabhadrapuram and Terlam mandals

Why in the news?

- The **Union Cabinet** has **extended the universal supply of fortified rice in all central government schemes** providing free food grain under the **National Food Security Act, 2021**.
- This extension will remain in effect until **December 2028**.

About Rice Fortification:

- **Fortification Process:**
 - Involves adding **Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK)** containing micronutrients to regular rice.
 - **Micronutrients** include **Iron, Folic Acid, and Vitamin B12**, as prescribed by **FSSAI**.
 - The **ratio for mixing is 1:100** (1 kg FRK with 100 kg regular rice).
- **Purpose:**
 - Aims to **address micronutrient deficiencies**.
 - It is cost-effective and culturally appropriate for countries with high rice consumption.
- **FSSAI Norms for 1 kg of Fortified Rice:**
 - **Iron:** 28 mg to 42.5 mg.
 - **Folic Acid:** 75 to 125 micrograms.
 - **Vitamin B12:** 0.75 to 1.25 micrograms.

Forex reserves

Why in the news?

- **India's foreign exchange reserves** crossed **\$700 billion** for the first time on record.
- **India becomes the fourth economy globally** to cross \$700 billion in reserves, after **China, Japan, and Switzerland**.

About Forex reserves:

- The reserves increased for seven consecutive weeks due to valuation gains and the central bank's dollar purchases.
- **Forex reserves stood at \$704.89 billion** as of September 27, 2023.
- **India's forex reserves have been steadily increasing since 2013**, when foreign investors withdrew due to weak macroeconomic fundamentals.



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- **Foreign exchange reserves (forex reserves)** are assets held by a country's central bank in foreign currencies.
- **Purpose:**
 - **Currency Stability:** Reserves help stabilize the country's currency by managing the exchange rate fluctuations.
 - **Foreign Trade:** They ensure that a country can meet its international payment obligations, such as imports and external debt.
 - **Crisis Buffer:** Act as a buffer in times of economic crises or balance of payment deficits.
- **Components of Forex reserves:**
 - **Foreign Currency Assets (FCA):** The largest component of the reserves, which includes major currencies like USD, Euro, Pound Sterling, and Yen.
 - **Gold Reserves:** India's gold holdings form part of the reserves, providing stability.
 - **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs):** Allocations from the IMF.
 - **Reserve Tranche Position (RTP):** India's quota in the IMF.

Humsafar Policy

Why in the news?

- **Minister of Road Transport and Highways** launches '**Humsafar Policy**' to **Improve National Highway Travel** and **Boost Wayside Amenities**.

About Humsafar Policy:

- The Humsafar Policy is a **comprehensive initiative** designed to **transform India's highway network** by offering a range of essential services and facilities.
- **Key objective: To make road travel more comfortable, convenient, and inclusive**, ensuring that facilities are available to meet the needs of travellers across all regions.
 - Hygienic Toilets
 - Baby Care Facilities
 - Accessibility
 - EV Charging Stations
 - Parking Facilities
 - Increased Fuel Station
 - Food Courts and Restaurants
 - Dormitories for Rest



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