

Current Affairs

UPSC Prelims 2024

LECTURE-05

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Topic

- **Uniform Civil Code**
- **Blue Economy 2.0**
- **Indigenous CAR-T cell therapy**
- **Five Wetlands Added in Ramsar Sites**
- **Species in News: Dusted Apollo**
- **Paytm Payment Bank**
- **Humboldt's Enigma**
- **Kaladan Multi-Modal Project**

Consider the following:

1. Income Tax
2. Corporation Tax
3. Union Excise duty ✓

What is the correct ascending order of income for the government of India from the above sources?

- a. 1-2-3
- b. 2-3-1
- c. 3-2-1 ✓
- d. 1-3-2

Consider the following

1. Increase in yield of crops ✓
2. The productivity of Indian crops will be the highest in the world
3. Import bill will reduce ✓
4. Reduction in subsidy burden

How many of the above can be the possible consequences of the use of Nano DAP in India?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. Only three
- d. All four

Consider the following statements:

1. The Great One-horned Rhinoceros are endemic to India only.
2. The Snow leopard is found only in India
3. Jammu and Kashmir has the highest number of Snow leopards in India

How many statements given above is/are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None

Uniform Civil Code

What is the Uniform Civil Code?

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) aims to enforce a uniform legal framework to all citizens, irrespective of their religion.

Right now, matters including marriage, divorce and succession are governed by religion-based personal laws.

UCC is part of Part IV of the Constitution which includes the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP).

Article 44 in DPSP states that "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India"

Uniform Civil Code

Constituent Assembly Debates:

Mohammad Ismail Khan suggested an addition to the Present day article 44: Provided that any group, section, or community of people shall not be obliged to give up its own personal law in case it has such a law."

Why he said so?

A secular state should not interfere with long-standing religious practices as it could breed discontent and subvert harmony in the country.

B Pocker Sahib Bahadur also spoke in favour of the amendment forwarded by Ismail, saying, "If such a body as this (Constituent Assembly) interferes with the religious rights and practices, it will be tyrannous."

Uniform Civil Code

Naziruddin Ahmad:

Provided that the personal law of any community which has been guaranteed by the statute shall not be changed except with the previous approval of the community ascertained in such manner as the Union Legislature may determine by law."

He claimed that the UCC would "undo" the freedom of religion by giving the state the room to "break the guarantees given in article 19". (25)

He, however, stressed that any interference with personal laws should be "gradual and must progress with the advance of time" and must be done "with the consent of the people concerned"

Uniform Civil Code

Arguments in Support of UCC

K M Munshi:

He opposed the view that the UCC was tyrannical. He said that while the state must endeavour not to interfere in religious practice, certain matters should be governed by secular legislation, not religion.

He pointed out that if matters like inheritance and succession were accepted under the umbrella of personal religious laws, then women would never be treated equally despite the fundamental right against discrimination. "Therefore, there is no reason why there should not be a civil code throughout the territory of India

Uniform Civil Code

Other Arguments:

Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer: He spoke against the notion that the UCC would cause discontent and disharmony. Instead, he said, the aim of the UCC was to achieve unity and amity by removing factors that contributed to differences between communities.

Dr B R Ambedkar:

He underlined the fact that uniform laws were in place for "almost every aspect of human relationship", barring the "little corner" of personal laws relating to marriage and succession, which the UCC is meant to address.

He also said it was too late to argue whether the UCC should be implemented or not as, to a large extent, it had already been implemented.

Uniform Civil Code

Arguments in Favour in the present times:

- A common civil code will help the cause of national integration. (Allahabad High Court, 2021)
- **Supreme Court in Shah Bano Case:** Parliament should outline the contours of a common civil code as it is an instrument that facilitates national harmony and equality before law."
- **ABC vs State of Delhi case 2015:** Uniform Civil Code "remains an unaddressed constitutional expectation".
- Various personal laws are in contradiction to the Fundamental rights as well as the criminal law.
- Eg- Hindu marriage act recognises and makes the marriage of a 16 yr old girl valid,
- Muslim Law in India recognises marriage of minor who has attained puberty as valid.

Uniform Civil Code

Arguments Against

Cultural diversity cannot be compromised to the extent that our urge for uniformity itself becomes a reason for a threat to the territorial integrity of the nation. (21st Law Commission)

The main argument against the UCC is that it violates the constitutional freedom to practice the religion of choice, which allows religious communities to follow their respective personal laws. For example, Article 25 gives every religious group the right to manage its own affairs, and Article 29 gives them the right to conserve their distinct culture.

Uniform Civil Code

Way Forward:

The best way forward may be to preserve the diversity of personal laws but at the same time ensure that personal laws do not contradict fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India.

In order to achieve this, it is desirable that all personal laws relating to matters of family must first be codified to the greatest extent possible, and the inequalities that have crept into codified law should be remedied by amendment

Blue Economy 2.0

Context: Government said: For promoting climate resilient activities for blue economy 2.0, a scheme for restoration and adaptation measures, and coastal aquaculture and mariculture with integrated and multi-sectoral approach will be launched.

What is Blue Economy?

European Commission: All economic activities related to oceans, seas and coasts. It covers a wide range of interlinked established and emerging sectors.

World Bank: Blue economy is the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem."

Blue Economy 2.0

Blue Economy Potential of India

India has a vast coastline of 7500km, and its exclusive economic zones (EEZ) extend over 2.2 million square km.

The country has 13 major ports and 187 non-major ports, handling about 1400 million tons of cargo every year, as 95 per cent of India's trade by volume transits by sea.

The coastal economy supports over 4 million fisher folk and coastal communities.

The Government of India's Vision of New India by 2030 enunciated in February 2019 highlighted the Blue Economy as one of the ten core dimensions of growth.

(1)

Strategic Importance

(i)

Net Security Provider

ONCLAS

(ii)

Indo-Pacific - Centrality of

(iii)

Extraction of Polymetallic ^{Indic} nodules. →

(ISA)

Blue Economy 2.0

Recent Steps:

Deep Ocean Mission: Launched in 2021, this initiative aims to explore the deep sea for mining and biodiversity conservation. It also aims to develop technologies like underwater robotics and manned submersibles to harness the resources of the deep ocean.

Draft Blue Economy policy framework: This framework aims to use all sectors of the maritime domain for the sustainable development of coastal areas.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana: This scheme aims for the sustainable development of fisheries in India.

Indigenous CAR-T cell therapy

The Indigenous CAR-T cell therapy has been administered to 15 patients in India. **Three of them have successfully achieved cancer remission.**

NexCAR19, the indigenously developed therapy is a treatment for B-cell cancers (types of cancers that form in the immune system's cells) such as leukaemia and lymphoma.

It has been developed collaboratively by ImmunoACT, a company incubated at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB), IIT-B and Tata Memorial Hospital.

The commercial use of this therapy was approved by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) in October 2023.



Indigenous CAR-T cell therapy

Currently, NexCAR19 is available in over 30 hospitals in more than 10 cities in India.

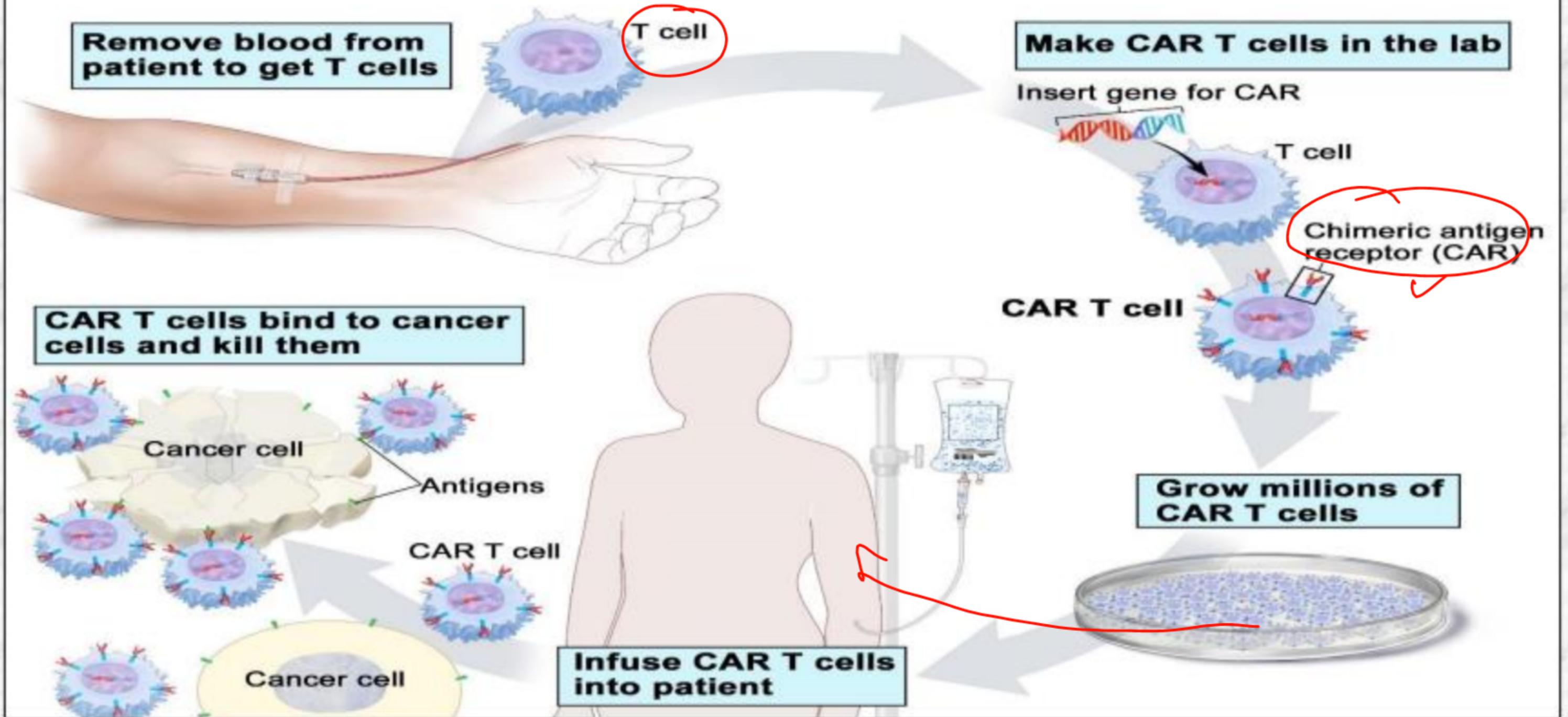
Patients over the age of 15 years who suffer from B-cell cancers are eligible for this one-time therapy at these centres.

As part of the therapy, the patient's T-cells (types of immune cells) are collected and genetically modified into potent cancer fighters known as CAR-T cells so that they express chimeric antigen receptors (CARs) specific to cancer cells.

The modified CAR-T cells are then expanded in the laboratory before being infused back into the patient.

Once in the body, these engineered cells recognise and attack cancer cells, with a focus on B-cell cancers, thus offering a targeted and potent immunotherapy.

CAR T-cell Therapy



Five Wetlands Added in Ramsar Sites

Five more Indian wetlands have been added to the global list of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, taking the total number of such highly recognised waterlogged ecosystems in the country to 80

Of the five wetlands added to the Ramsar list, Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve, Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, and Aghanashini Estuary are in Karnataka and Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and Longwood Shola Reserve Forest are in Tamil Nadu.



Five Wetlands Added in Ramsar Sites

What are wetlands?

Ramsar Convention Defines wetlands as:

areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters"

Five Wetlands Added in Ramsar Sites

Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change define wetlands as

“area of marsh, fen, peatland or water; whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters,

but does not include river channels, paddy fields, human-made water bodies/ tanks specifically constructed for drinking water purposes and structures specifically constructed for aquaculture, salt production, recreation and irrigation purposes.”

Five Wetlands Added in Ramsar Sites

Ramsar Convention

The Ramsar Convention, signed on February 2, 1971 at the small town of Ramsar, is one of the oldest **inter-governmental accords** signed to preserve the ecological character of wetlands of international importance in the signatory countries.

171 Member countries including India

It is not a regulatory regime, rather it suggests policy measures

India has **80 Ramsar sites** as of Feb 2024

Which country has largest number of Ramsar Site in Asia as of 10 Feb 2024?

1971
China - 82
India - 80

Species in News: Dusted Apollo

Context: Dusted Apollo (*Parnassius stenosemus*), a rare high-altitude butterfly has been sighted and photographed for the first time in Himachal Pradesh, indicating the flourishing diversity of Apollo butterflies in the region

The distribution range of Dusted Apollo extends from Ladakh to West Nepal and it flies between 3,500 to 4,800 meters in the inner Himalayas.

Dusted Apollo is extremely rare and has never been photographed before in Himachal Pradesh.

Apollos are considered commercially important butterflies and they fetch high prices in the poaching industry.

There are 11 Apollo species recorded from Himachal Pradesh and five of them are declared as Scheduled species.

Most of the Apollo butterflies are now endangered and need immediate attention for their conservation and protection



Paytm Payment Bank

Context: The RBI last week ordered Paytm Payments Bank Ltd to not take any further deposits or conduct credit transactions or carry out top-ups on any customers accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, cards for paying road tolls after February 29.

Why did it say so?

The RBI cited persistent non-compliance on PPBL's part and supervisory concerns. PPBL, which processes transactions for Paytm, must stop its banking activities after February 29



Paytm Payment Bank

What are payment Banks?

Based on the recommendations of the **Nachiket Mor Committee**, Payments Bank was set up to operate on a smaller scale with minimal credit risk.

The main objective is to advance financial inclusion by offering banking and financial services to the unbanked and underbanked areas, helping the migrant labour force, low-income households, small entrepreneurs etc.

India currently has 6 Payment Banks namely, Airtel Payment Bank, India Post Payment Bank, Fino, Paytm Payment Bank, NSDL Payment Bank and Jio Payment Bank.

6 PAYMENT BANKS OF INDIA

Airtel Payments Bank

India Post Payments Bank
Aapka bank, aapke dwaar

Fino

Paytm Payments Bank

NSDL Payments Bank

Jio Payments Bank
INDIA KA NAYA BANK

Paytm Payment Bank

Activities That Can Be Performed by Payment Banks

Payment banks can take deposits up to Rs. 2,00,000. It can accept demand deposits in the form of savings and current accounts.

The money received as deposits can be invested in secure government securities only in the form of **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)**. This must amount to **75% of the demand deposit balance**.

The remaining 25% is to be placed as time deposits with other scheduled commercial banks.

Payments banks will be permitted to make personal payments and receive cross border remittances on the current accounts.

It can issue debit cards.

Timeline: Paytm Payments Bank and its RBI run-ins

Vijay Shekhar Sharma emerges as one of the 11 recipients of payments bank licences from RBI.

2016



2017

Paytm Payments Bank starts operation in May, with Sharma owning 51% and Paytm parent with 49%.

In June, RBI bans Paytm Payments Bank from onboarding new users for accounts and its wallet.

2018



Reasons include lapses in KYC of new users, net worth of the bank, and end of the day deposit limit.



2019

Six months after the ban, RBI allowed Paytm to start adding new customers for its bank and wallet.

In March, RBI again stops Paytm Payments Bank from adding new customers, mandates an IT audit.

2022



Paytm Payment Bank

Activities That Cannot Be Undertaken By Payment Banks

Payment banks receive a 'differentiated' bank license from the RBI and hence cannot lend.

Payment banks cannot issue credit cards.

It cannot accept time deposits or NRI deposits.

It cannot issue loans.

It cannot set up subsidiaries to undertake non-banking financial activities.

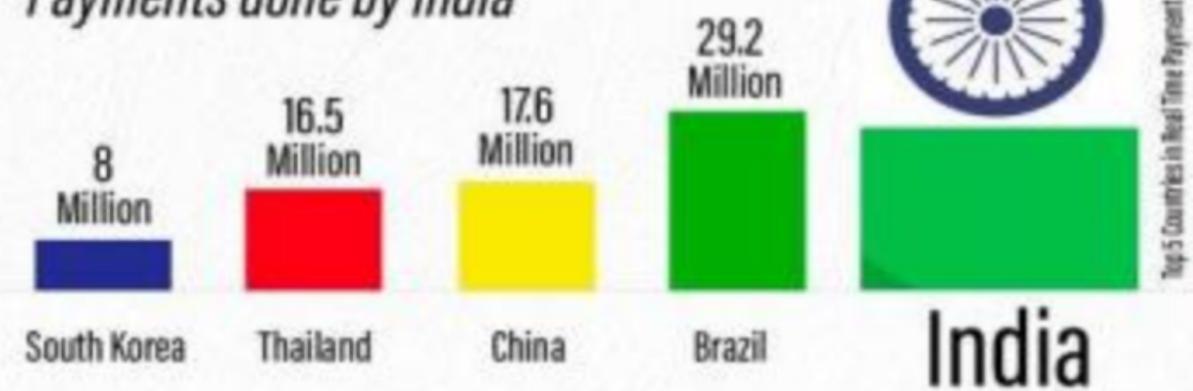


India Continues to Top The Digital Payments Charts!



46%

of Global Real-Time Payments done by India



India's payments more than the next 4 leading countries combined

Humboldt's Enigma

Humboldt's Enigma is a concept proposed by Alexander von Humboldt that explores the relationship between temperature, altitude, humidity, and biodiversity

Humboldt's Enigma suggests that biodiversity isn't limited to the Earth's tropical regions.

It proposes that other regions, such as mountainous areas, also have significant biodiversity.

Humboldt's Enigma is based on observations that disprove the common belief that biodiversity is highest in the tropics.

Instead, it suggests that higher diversities are found in mountain regions

Mountains contribute disproportionately to the terrestrial biodiversity of Earth, especially in the tropics, where they host hotspots of extraordinary and puzzling richness.

With about 25% of all land area, mountain regions are home to more than 85% of the world's species of amphibians, birds, and mammals, many entirely restricted to mountains.

Humboldt's Enigma

Why do Mountains have higher Biodiversity?

First: geological processes, like uplifts, result in new habitats where new species arise, so the habitats are 'cradles'.

Second: species on some climatologically stable mountains persist there for a long time, so these spots are 'museums' that accumulate many such species over time

Another critical force in biodiversity formation is geology. The foundations on which mountains are erected often differ from those on which low-elevation regions rest. Scientists have found that the more heterogeneous the geological composition of mountains is, the more biodiverse they are.

Kaladan Multi-Modal Project

Context: The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) has "almost died" after the rebel Arakan Army (AA) captured the Paletwa township near Mizoram border in January





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