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SUMMARY***

5 OCTOBER 2023

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SIKKIM: GLACIAL LAKE OUTBURST FLOOD (GLOF)

Syllabus: Geography/ Disaster Management

Context: Fourteen people have died, and 102, including 23 Army personnel, are missing in Sikkim after the burst of the South Lhonak Lake, a glacial lake in North Sikkim, due to heavy rains.

- The released water created **flash floods in four districts**, including Mangan, Gangtok, Pakyong, and Namchi, through the **Teesta River**.

6 What are **Glaciers**?

7 Glaciers are **large masses of ice that form from the accumulation and compaction** of snow over long periods. They flow slowly downhill under their weight and gravity, shaping the landscape and playing a crucial role in Earth's climate and hydrology by storing and releasing freshwater.

8 **Glaciers cover ~10% of the Earth's land surface**, but they are shrinking rapidly across most parts of the world, leading to cascading impacts on downstream systems.

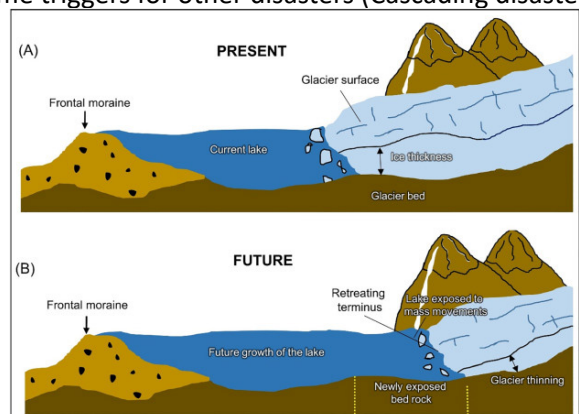
9 What is **Glacial Lake outburst flood (GLOF)**?

10 **Retreating glaciers**, like several in the Himalayas, usually result in the **formation of lakes at their tips**, called **proglacial lakes**, often bound only by sediments and boulders.

If the boundaries of these **lakes are breached**, it can lead to large amounts of water rushing down, the way by **picking up sediments, rocks, and other materials**. A majority of the glaciers in the Himalayas are known to be receding, all leading to the formation of several glacial lakes.

Why are they so dangerous?

The rapid **onset and high discharge of GLOFs** means there is often insufficient time to effectively warn downstream populations and for effective action to be taken. Also, they often become triggers for other disasters (Cascading disasters)



Recent findings about GLOF:

- **Rapid deglaciation** (primarily due to global warming) over the last 20 years has led to **the growth of many large glacial lakes**.
- There has been an increase in the population living in close proximity to **glacial lakes between 2002 and 2022**.
- According to the ICIMOD, **Himalayan glacial lakes increased** by about 9% in number, and 14% in the area.
- GLOFs are recognized in the **National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) 2019** of India as a potential climatological disaster.

A cascade of Events: What happened in Sikkim?

The incessant rain due to the cloudburst led to the **outburst of South Lhonak glacial lake**. The lake burst resulted in a **sudden rise in the water level** of the Teesta River **and a flash flood**. This further led to the breach of the **Chunghang Hydro-Dam in Sikkim**. Damage to the dam further exacerbated the situation.

E.g., the **Nanda Devi glacier outburst** (2021) triggered **landslides, avalanches, deluges, and flash floods** in the intricately linked tributaries of the Ganga River.

Reasons behind GLOF and its increased frequency:

Reasons	Description
Glacial Retreat	Melting glaciers contribute to glacial lake formation. As glaciers shrink, they release meltwater, which fills these lakes. If the lake's boundary is breached, it can lead to a GLOF.
Moraine Formation	Moraines, piles of debris carried by glaciers, can act as natural barriers . When these moraines dam glacial lakes, they become susceptible to breaching, causing GLOFs.
Landslides and Ice Avalanches	Landslides or ice avalanches can fall directly into glacial lakes , displacing water and causing it to breach natural dams, resulting in GLOFs.
Meteorological Conditions	Weather patterns, including sudden temperature changes or extreme storms , can influence the stability of glacial lakes and trigger GLOFs.
Climate Change Impact	The Himalayan-Hindukush region is a climate change hotspot. Accelerated glacier melt leads to the formation of glacial lakes. Also, Climate change increases the frequency and intensity of cloudbursts.
Geological Triggers	Earthquakes or other geological events can destabilize moraines , leading to the sudden release of water from glacial lakes.
Developmental Changes	Modern infrastructure, including dams and roads , alters the landscape. Large dam projects intensify geological stresses, weakening rocks.



Key preparedness mechanisms to reduce the risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs):

Mechanisms	Description
Sendai Framework	Operationalize the Sendai Framework in multi-hazard risk hotspots like the Eastern Himalayas.
	Research and understand the impacts of rapid urbanization and critical infrastructure development.
	Strengthen risk governance using technology , like social media platforms, drones, and surveillance.

What are Cascading disasters?

It refers to the cascading effects of extreme events in which the **vulnerabilities overlap and interact**, reaching escalation points which then create secondary effects with greater impact than the primary event.

	<p>Build resilient water-related infrastructure in mountain regions to prevent cascading disasters. E.g, using platforms like the Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)</p> <p>Enhance early warning systems with dense sensor networks and online data platforms for stakeholders.</p>
<p>NDMA: National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)-2019 on GLOFs</p>	<p>Identify and map glacial lakes using various data sources, including field observations and imagery. Use of Synthetic-Aperture Radar imagery to automatically detect changes in water bodies</p> <p>Implement structural measures to prevent sudden breaches, such as controlled drainage and tunnelling</p> <p>Develop land-use regulations for GLOF-prone areas with provisions for monitoring infrastructure.</p> <p>Emphasize the role of trained local manpower in risk-prone areas for search and rescue operations.</p>
<p>National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping (NLSM)</p>	<p>At present, India has a baseline mapping model - the NLSM - that assesses how susceptible various regions/states in the country are to landslides, dividing them into three zones- red, green, and blue.</p>
<p>Community-based Flood Early Warning System</p>	<p>Implement informal mechanisms like community-based early warning systems for flood monitoring.</p>

Conclusion

As the Sendai Framework advocates, there is a need for a **shift of approach from managing the disasters (cure) to managing the risks (prevention)**.

A robust **early warning** system; a broad framework for infrastructure development, construction, and excavation in vulnerable zones; **building the resilience** of the communities; and prioritizing disaster risk reduction as an integral part of **development planning** are the measures much in need now, to manage the risks with cascading disasters.

The usefulness of Glacial Lake:

Glacial lakes are formed due to glacier retreat and hold valuable geological information, including fossils and landmass formation. These lakes can exist for thousands of years, storing information about past environmental changes.

About [Teesta River](#):

Teesta River is a tributary of the Brahmaputra which flows through India and Bangladesh. It originates in the Himalayas near Chunthang, Sikkim and flows to the south through West Bengal before entering Bangladesh.

Insta Links:

[Tackling glacial burst](#)

Mains Links:

Q. What is Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding? Examine the vulnerabilities [of hydropower projects in the Himalayan eco-sensitive region](#) and suggest measures to overcome them.

GS3

2023 NOBEL PRIZE IN CHEMISTRY: QUANTUM DOTS

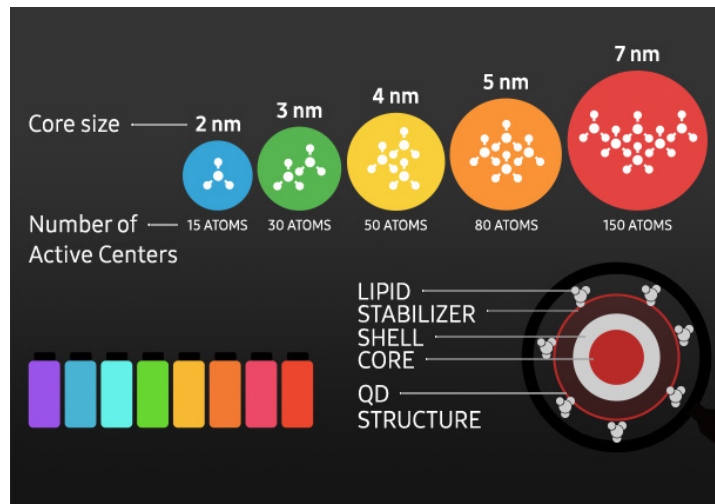
Syllabus: Science and Technology

Context: The 2023 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded for the **discovery and synthesis of quantum dots, tiny particles** with unique optical properties due to their small size.

What are [Quantum Dots](#)?

Quantum dots are **tiny particles, just a few nanometers in size**, with unique optical properties due to their small size. While their atomic structure is the same as bulk materials, **quantum dots' properties can be altered** by adjusting their size.

At the nanoscale, these particles **exhibit size-dependent characteristics** influenced by quantum forces, which differ from **macroscopic physics governed by gravity**.



Physicists in the 1970s discovered that adding elements like gold, silver, cadmium, sulphur, or selenium could modify the optical properties of glass, but the synthesis of [quantum dots](#) had not yet been achieved.

Contributions of the scientists:

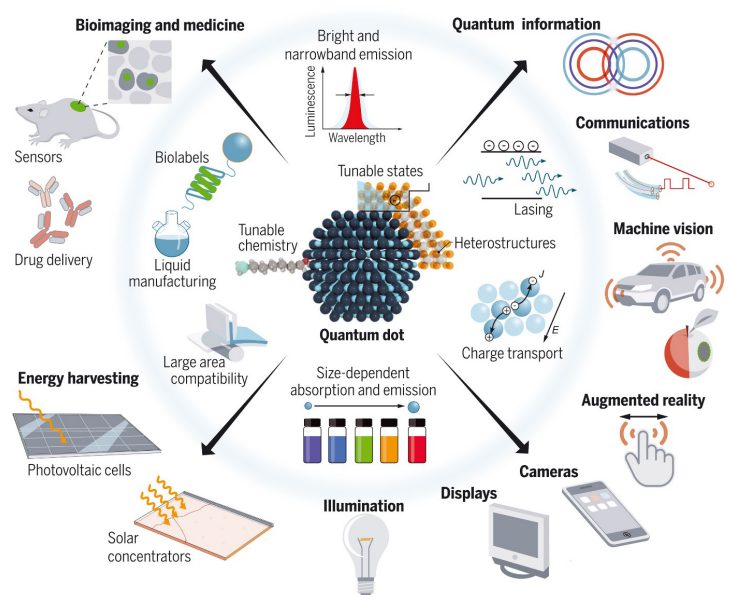
Scientist	Contribution to Quantum Dots
Dr Alexei I Ekimov	In the early 1980s, Dr Ekimov pioneered the creation of size-dependent quantum effects in coloured glass. He conducted research on glasses tinted with copper chloride , which, when heated and cooled under different conditions, resulted in glass with varying light-absorbing properties due to the formation of differently sized copper chloride crystals.
Dr Louis E Brus	In 1983, Dr. Brus and his colleagues took a significant step by producing similar crystals in a liquid solution instead of glass . This innovation allowed for more precise manipulation and study of the crystals
Dr Mounji G Bawendi	Dr. Bawendi and his team, in 1993, developed a technique to create well-defined quantum dots with high optical quality . Their process involved injecting a substance into a heated solvent and adjusting the temperature to control the size of nanocrystals . The resulting quantum dots had a smooth exterior surface , making them suitable for a wide range of applications

Applications of [Quantum dots](#):

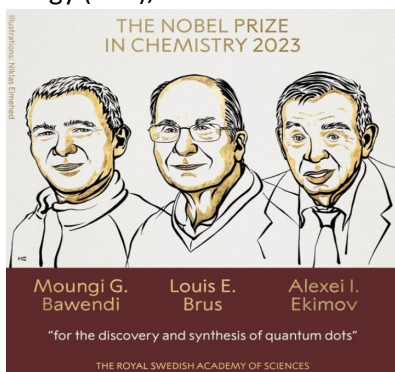
Application	Description	Examples
Display Technology	Enhance display quality in QLED screens.	Samsung QLED TVs
Lighting	Adjust the colour temperature in LED lamps.	Nanoco LED lighting solutions
Biomedical Imaging	Map cells and organs for research and diagnostics.	Quantum dots for cancer imaging
Drug Delivery	Targeted drug delivery for therapy.	Quantum dots for drug delivery
Photovoltaics	Improve solar cell efficiency.	Quantum dot solar cells
Sensing and Detection	Detect and measure specific substances.	Quantum dot sensors
Quantum Computing	Quantum bits (qubits) in quantum computing.	Quantum dot-based qubits
Security Marking	Anti-counterfeit markers on currency and documents.	Security applications

Who are the three scientists?

- **Alexei Ekimov:** Born in 1945 in the former USSR, he obtained his PhD in 1974 from Ioffe Physical-Technical Institute, Saint Petersburg, Russia. He served as the Chief Scientist at Nanocrystals Technology Inc., New York, USA.
- **Louis Brus:** Born in 1943 in Cleveland, USA, he earned his PhD in 1969 from Columbia University, New York, where he is a professor.
- **Mounji Bawendi:** Born in 1961 in Paris, he grew up in France, Tunisia, and the US. He currently holds a professorship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA.



About [Quantum Computing](#):





Quantum Computing



Context: Union Cabinet has approved the National Quantum Mission (NQM)



Quantum computing uses quantum bits (qubits) that can be both 0 and 1 at the same time, allowing for multiple calculations to be performed simultaneously, making quantum computing exponentially faster than traditional computing for certain types of problems.

About National Quantum Mission

	Description
Objective	Develop and promote Quantum Technology in India
Timeframe	2023 – 2031 (8 years)
Major themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantum Computing: Develop physical qubit computers with a capacity ranging from 50-1000 qubits (to be completed within 3-8 years) Quantum Communication: Develop secure satellite-based communication with a range of 3000 km and communication lines using Quantum Key Distribution over 2000 km (to be completed within 3-8 years) Quantum Sensing and Metrology: Develop quantum sensors (magnetometers with high sensitivity in atomic clock systems) for Navigation, healthcare and diagnostics, defence, and energy sectors (to be completed within 8 years) Quantum Material and Devices: Develop devices and materials (superconductors, novel semiconductor structures, and topological materials) for quantum technology (to be completed within 3-8 years)
Key Agencies Involved	Department of Science & Technology, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Telecommunications, DRDO, ISRO
Other Aim	The Mission also aims to establish four thematic hubs (T-Hubs) at research institutes and R&D centres (based on above themes)
Significance	India will be among the top six leading nations (US, Canada, France, Finland, China and Austria.) involved in the research and development in quantum technologies.
Other programmes	National Mission for Quantum Technologies and Applications (NM-QTA); Quantum-Enabled Science & Technology (QuEST); C-DOT's Quantum Communication Lab and Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) solution.

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Insta links:

- [Quantum Mission](#)
- [The promise in India's National Quantum Mission](#)

Prelims Links:

Q. Which one of the following is the context in which the term "qubit" is mentioned? (USPC 2022)

- (a) Cloud Services
- (b) Quantum Computing
- (c) Visible Light Communication Technologies
- (d) Wireless Communication Technologies

Content for Mains Enrichment

USING AI FOR AUDIT TECHNIQUES

Recently, **CAG, Girish Chandra Murmu**, emphasized utilizing AI for auditing. However, it must be done ethically and accurately.

Challenges in AI auditing:

It includes ensuring **ethical AI use**, addressing data integrity and bias issues, regulating and standardizing AI, creating in-

ternational audit frameworks, adapting existing frameworks, managing complex data, and involving specialists in AI audit assignments.

Regulation of AI:

Regulatory Actions	Description
Global Level Regulatory Action	
EU AI Act	European Parliament approved the act. It introduces new rules and scrutiny for AI tools, including ChatGPT . Requires developers to have their AI systems reviewed and approved for commercial use. Restricts real-time biometric surveillance and "social scoring" systems.
UK's AI Safety Regulation Intent	UK wants to be a hub for AI safety regulation. It has indicated a move towards detailed AI regulatory practices.
AI Auditing Frameworks	Various global frameworks for AI auditing exist, including COBIT and COSO ERM Frameworks . UK's Information Commissioner's Office published draft guidance on an AI auditing framework.
Indian-Level Regulatory Actions	
Digitalization of Audit Process	The CAG in India will implement " One Indian Audit and Accounts Department One System ," a web-enabled IT application, to digitalize the audit process.

India recognizes the need to establish AI regulation, influenced by global initiatives like the EU. However, specific Indian regulatory actions for AI are yet to be detailed.

Usage: The examples can be used in questions related to E-Governance

Facts for Prelims (FFP)

UDANGUDI PANANGARUPATTI

Context: Udangudi Panangkarupatti, a type of palm jaggery or gur from Tamil Nadu, has received a **Geographical Indication (GI)** tag.

- The uniqueness of Udangudi Panangkarupatti lies in its **traditional preparation method**, which **does not involve the use of modern strategies or chemical additives like triple superphosphate and phosphoric acid**, which are commonly used in other areas for jaggery production.
- This palm jaggery is distinct due to the presence of

red sand dune soil found in the Udangudi region. This soil has **low groundwater retention and results in a dry climate with lower moisture content in the atmosphere**. These conditions lead to a **high sucrose content in the palm sap, enhancing its taste**.

Udangudi jaggery has gained popularity not only locally but also internationally, being exported to countries such as Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Singapore.



Office of Profit	Holding an “ <i>office of profit</i> ” under the Government of India or any State government leads to disqualification.
Holding an Office that Parliament Allows	Some offices, as determined by Parliament, do not disqualify MPs if held.
Joining a Political Party After Election	Being elected as an independent candidate and later joining a political party can result in disqualification.

ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE

Context: The Supreme Court of India has ruled that the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** must provide the grounds for arrest in writing to the accused at the time of arrest.

- The decision emphasizes that the ED should not engage in vindictive conduct and should act fairly and transparently.
- The ruling came in response to a plea by Pankaj Bansal and Basant Bansal, Directors of the M3M real estate group, who challenged their arrest by the ED under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The Punjab and Haryana High Court had refused to set aside their arrest.
- The court criticized the ED’s style of functioning and declared the arrest as illegal. It clarified that reading out the reasons for arrest to the accused does not fulfil the legal requirements.

DISQUALIFICATION FROM LOK SABHA

Context: Lakshadweep Member of Parliament (MP) Mohammed Faizal has been **disqualified from the Lok Sabha for the second time this year**.

- This decision follows the Kerala High Court’s refusal to suspend his conviction in a murder case where he was sentenced to a decade of rigorous imprisonment for attempting to murder.
- A Member of Parliament (MP) can be disqualified from the Lok Sabha for a number of reasons, including:

Disqualification Reason	Description
Conviction	An MP loses their membership if convicted of a crime and sentenced to at least two years in prison. They are also disqualified for six years after the conviction unless the conviction order is suspended.
Defection	If an MP elected as a representative of one political party joins another political party after the election, they are disqualified.



Enforcement Directorate (ED)



Context: The question of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) chief’s tenure is back in the Supreme Court of India.

Topic	Information
What is ED?	It is a multi-disciplinary organization mandated with investigation of offences of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws
Functioning	It is an agency under the Department of Revenue of the Ministry of Finance ; it is not a statutory body .
Genesis	Formed on 1st May, 1956 as Enforcement Unit; renamed as Enforcement Directorate in 1957; administrative control transferred to Department of Revenue in 1960
Structure	Headquartered in Delhi ; headed by the Director of Enforcement ; 5 regional offices at Mumbai, Chennai, Chandigarh, Kolkata, and Delhi ; 10 zonal offices, each headed by a Deputy Director; 11 sub-zonal offices, each headed by an Assistant Director
Recruitment	Done directly and by drawing officers from other investigation agencies; comprises officers of IRS, IPS, and IAS
Tenure	Two years; Directors’ tenure can be extended from 2 years to up to 5 years
Statutory Functions	Enforcement of Acts including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA)- empowered to sponsor cases of preventive detention • Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) • Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) • Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA)
PMLA Functions	Carries out search and seizure under Section 16 and 17 of PMLA ; decides on arrest under Section 19 of PMLA; can directly carry out search and seizure under Section 50 of PMLA
Jurisdiction of ED	FEMA and PMLA apply to all of India , allowing ED to take action against any person. FEMA cases are in civil courts , while PMLA cases are in criminal courts . ED cannot act on its own , and a complaint to another agency or the police is required for investigation.

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CIRCULAR MIGRATION

Context: Circular migration involves people moving to and from a destination country based on employment availability, rather than migrating permanently or temporarily.

- Circular migration gained popularity in the 1960s and 1970s due to globalization, improved transportation, and social networks.

To be considered a circular migrant, certain criteria must be met, including temporary residence in the destination, multiple entries into the destination country, freedom of movement, legal right to stay, protection of migrants' rights, and demand for temporary labour.

This type of migration is now viewed as a balanced approach that benefits both sending and receiving countries.

- For sending countries, it can boost the domestic economy through remittances, foreign capital, and improved infrastructure. However, it can also lead to brain drain as talented individuals may seek opportunities elsewhere.
- For receiving countries, circular migration can help fill low-income, low-skill job gaps and mitigate concerns related to population growth. It promotes brain circulation, where individuals contribute to both countries' development.

In India, **internal migration** has often been circular, particularly from rural to urban areas, driven by industrialization and job opportunities in the manufacturing, construction, and services sectors. Inter-state migration is prevalent, with states like West Bengal, Odisha, and Bihar experiencing high out-migration rates. Circular migrants benefit from better-paying jobs, remittances, and improved household welfare. However, they may face challenges, such as exploitation, language barriers, and seasonal job insecurity.

TURMERIC BOARD

Context: The Indian government has officially established the National Turmeric Board, responding to a longstanding demand from turmeric farmers across the country.

- The board, under the Union Commerce Ministry, will be dedicated to the development and growth of turmeric and turmeric-related products in India.
- India is a leading producer and exporter of turmeric in the world.
- The largest producing states of Turmeric are Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. India has more than 62% share of world trade in turmeric

Turmeric is a spice that comes from the root of the Curcuma

longa plant. It's a relative of ginger and has been used in cooking for hundreds of years.

Turmeric is a deep, golden-orange colour and has a warm, bitter taste. It's often used to flavour or colour: Curry powders, Mustards, Butters, Cheeses.

Turmeric contains a chemical called curcumin, which might reduce swelling. Curcumin also gives turmeric its yellow colour.

PALM OIL

Context: The Indian government aims to triple **palm oil production** by 2030 as part of the national oil palm mission.

- This initiative is in response to the projected increase in domestic edible oil consumption from 24 million tonnes to 30 million tonnes by 2030.
- Despite these efforts, India's import dependence on edible oils is expected to continue due to rising consumption.
- Currently, India imports around 14 million tonnes of edible oil, which is likely to reach a record 17 million tonnes in the current oil year due to falling global prices.

Major oil palm-growing states in India include Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala, which account for 98% of total production.

Palm oil is an **edible vegetable oil** that comes from the fruit of the oil palm tree. It's the most widely used vegetable oil in the world and is found in about 60% of all packaged products in supermarkets.

- Palm oil is used in Food manufacturing, Beauty products, Biofuel, and Cookies.
- There are two types of palm oil:
- **Crude palm oil:** Comes from squeezing the fleshy fruit
- **Palm kernel oil:** Comes from crushing the kernel, or the stone in the middle of the fruit

CORAL REEF BREAKTHROUGH

Context: The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), in collaboration with the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) and the High-Level Climate Champions (HLCC), has launched the Coral Reef Breakthrough.

- This initiative aims to safeguard at least 125,000 square kilometres of shallow-water tropical coral reefs by 2030 through investments of at least US\$12 billion.

The Coral Reef Breakthrough will focus on four action

points:

- **Mitigating local drivers of loss**, including land-based pollution, coastal development, and overfishing.
- **Doubling the area of coral reefs** under effective protection by aligning with global coastal protection targets.
- **Accelerating restoration efforts** to impact 30% of degraded reefs by 2030.
- **Securing investments of at least USD 12 billion by 2030** from public and private sources to conserve and restore coral ecosystems.

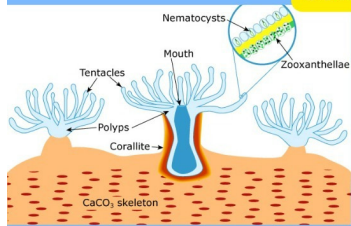
Coral reefs are underwater ecosystems made up of colonies of tiny corals called **polyps**. These marine invertebrates have hard exoskeletons made of **calcium carbonate**. They are sessile, meaning they are **permanently fixed in one place**.

Coral reefs are massive **structures made of limestone deposited by coral polyps**. They are sometimes called the **“rainforests of the sea”** because they support **approximately 25 per cent of all known marine species**.

The **Amazon River dolphin** (*Inia geoffrensis*) is a **species of toothed whale that lives in the rainforest rivers of South America**. They are also known as the **boto, bufeo, or pink river dolphin**. Known for their **striking pink colour**, are a **unique freshwater species in South America and face vulnerability due to slow reproductive cycles**.

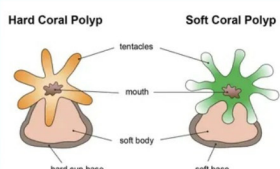


CORALS




Base of the coral is attached to a rock or some other sturdy surface.
Tentacles: Top end is a mouth surrounded by tentacles (help in gathering food).
Nematocysts: They are stinging structures that paralyze prey.

Hard Corals extract calcium carbonate from seawater to build hard, white coral exoskeletons
Soft Corals attach themselves to hard skeletons and older skeletons built by their ancestors



Types of Corals



Great Barrier Reef has seen the highest level of coral cover in the past 36 years

OLIVE RIDLEY

Context: Two **Olive Ridley** turtles, fitted with satellite transmitters, have embarked on remarkable journeys in search of food after laying eggs on Sindhudurg district beaches in Maharashtra.

- One has covered an impressive **5,000 kilometres from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal**. And the fellow turtle with a transmitter, is **currently north of the Malabar coast**.

Olive ridley turtles are one of the **smallest sea turtle species**. They are named for the **olive green colour of their heart-shaped shells**. They are found primarily in the **tropical regions of the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans**.

- **Protection Status:**
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule 1
- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
- **CITES:** Appendix I

AMAZON RIVER DOLPHINS

Context: The deaths of **120 river dolphins** in a tributary of the **Amazon River** are believed to be **linked to a severe drought and high temperatures**.

- **Low river levels during the drought** have led to **water temperatures that are harmful to the dolphins**.



ARMENIA

Context: Armenia's Parliament voted to join the [International Criminal Court \(ICC\)](#), a move that has strained its relationship with Russia.

The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin related to events in Ukraine, leading Moscow to view Armenia's ICC membership as unfriendly.

Armenian move was prompted by [Azerbaijan's capture of the Nagorno-Karabakh region](#) and the subsequent exodus of people of Armenian descent from the region.

About [Armenia](#):

Armenia is a **landlocked country** in the mountainous Caucasus region between Asia and Europe. **Yerevan** is the capital. Armenia was the first state to **adopt Christianity** as its official religion. It underwent the [Armenian genocide](#) during World War I. After periods of independence and **Soviet rule**, it became independent in 1991.

