

1. Ambubachi Mela

Why in News:

- Recently, the annual Ambubachi Mela in Assam will not be organised this year, in the wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

About Ambubachi Mela:

- It marks the annual menstruation of the presiding Goddess in the Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati, Assam.
- It is one of 51 shakti peethas or holy sites for the followers of the Shakti cult, each representing a body part of the Sati, Lord Shiva's companion.
- It's sanctum sanctorum houses the yoni (female genital) symbolised by a rock. It is situated on the Nilachal Hills, whose northern face slopes down to the Brahmaputra river.
- The legends says it was built by the demon king Narakasura but records are available only from 1565 when Koch king Naranarayana rebuilt the temple.
- The attainment of womanhood of girls in Assam is celebrated with a ritual called Tuloni Biya, meaning small wedding.
- The ritualistic fair celebrates the Goddess' period due to which taboo associated with menstruation is less in Assam compared to other parts of India. It is also an occasion to Promote Menstrual Hygiene among the visitors through the use of Sanitary Pads.

2. Devanahalli Pomelo Trees

Context:

- Recently, The Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) will plant 500 Devanahalli Pomelo trees as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The plantation drive is also part of the 50th anniversary of **World Earth Day**.

About Devanahalli Pomelo Trees:

- It is a citrus variety, is almost on the brink of extinction.
- It has a unique, Sweet Taste, unlike other local varieties which have a bitter taste.
- It is a parent of the grapefruit and is also known by its scientific name Citrus Maxima. The fruit is rich in Vitamin C.
- It has a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. It is grown in Devanahalli taluk, Bangalore (Karnataka) and is popularly known as chakota.

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- It grows 24 inches per season, it can live from 50-150 years and reach a height of 25 feet.
 - It annually yields an average of 300 to 400 fruit. Each fruit, typically, weighs 2 to 2.5 kg and is identified by distinctive pink or red juicy carpels.

3. World Losing 9% of its Insect Population Every Decade

Why in News?

- Scientists have warned that global insect populations are facing a rapidly accumulating decline in the most extensive analysis to date.
- Researchers sifted through more than 166 long-term surveys carried out across 1,676 sites between 1925 and 2018. They found the number of insects is falling on average 0.92 percent every year, or about 9 percent every decade.

Highlights:

- While the global pattern is one of decline, the rate at which this is happening isn't heterogeneous. It fluctuates over time and geography.
- In some spaces, the study's authors even noticed positive trends, meaning numbers of insects were going up not down.
- Specifically, the results suggest the number of midges, mayflies and other freshwater insects have been increasing on average around 1.08 percent each year.
- The authors cautiously attributed this result to effective water protection policies. The authors found that populations of insects living in tree canopies appear to have remained relatively stable, while flying insects and ground-dwelling insects have experienced some of the sharpest declines.
- The study suggests there can be stark differences between regions, and even between areas that are geographically close to one another. The researchers found that protected sites and those less affected by human activity had lower levels of decline than those most affected by urbanization.
- In general, the steepest declines were recorded in the western and mid-western U.S. states and Europe, where a 2017 study found numbers of flying insects had dropped more than 75 percent in less than 30 years.
- The phrase 'insect Armageddon' has captured the collective attention and shined a spotlight on one of the most numerous and diverse groups of organisms on the planet. Yet, insects are critically understudied.

- The authors call for more comprehensive testing of human pressure and more data from underrepresented parts of the world to address these limitations and gain a broader understanding of trends in global ecosystems.

4. NBWL Nod for Coal Mining in Assam Elephant Reserve

Why in News?

- Amid the countrywide lockdown, the National Board for Wild Life (NBWL) has recommended coal mining in a part of an elephant reserve in Assam.

Highlights:

- The NBWL's Standing Committee discussed a proposal for use of land from the Saleki proposed reserve forest land for a coal mining project by North-Easter Coal Field (NECF), a unit of Coal India Limited.
- Saleki is a part of the Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve.

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary:

- It is located in the Dibrugarh and Tinsukia Districts of Assam.
- It belongs to Assam's wet tropical evergreen forest category.
- It includes the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary (declared in 2004) and several reserve forests in Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts
- It has **Three Parts:** Dirok Rainforest, Upper Dihing River, and Jeypore.
- It is a Deciduous Rainforest Interspersed with Semi-evergreen and lush green flora, the only patch of virgin rainforest in Assam.
- Part of Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary falls under another elephant reserve named

Dibru-Deomali.

- Some of the mammals found here are pig-tailed macaque, hoolock gibbon, capped langur, Asiatic elephant, black panther, tiger, black bear, leopard, clouded leopard, squirrel, and gaur to name only a few.