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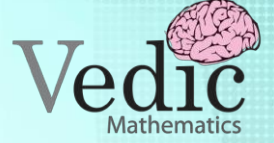
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Biodiversity & Conservation:

Rhino Conservation and DNA Analysis in India

Rhino DNA Index System (RhODIS): The Assam Forest Department, in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), has initiated the DNA analysis of 2,573 rhino horn samples. This project aims to create a forensic database, or RhODIS-India, to aid in anti-poaching efforts and wildlife crime prosecution by creating a genetic "fingerprint" for each rhino. This can help trace horns seized globally.

Significance: This initiative reinforces India's commitment to conservation, particularly for the vulnerable Indian one-horned rhinoceros, and positions the country as a leader in applying genetic science to wildlife management. It may also serve as a model for other endangered species.

New Species and Habitat Protection

New Plant Species in Assam: A new evergreen shrub species, named *Heptapleurum assamicum*, was discovered in the Dima Hasao and West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam. This highlights the rich biodiversity of Northeast India.

Wular Lake Protection: Wular Lake in Jammu & Kashmir, one of Asia's largest freshwater lakes, is a critical wetland under the Ramsar Convention. However, it faces threats from siltation, waste inflow, and encroachment. The lake is a major carbon sink and a vital habitat for migratory birds.

Human-Wildlife Conflict and Conservation

Gaja Mitra Scheme in Assam: The Assam government has launched the Gaja Mitra Scheme in eight high-risk districts to mitigate human-elephant conflict. Community-based rapid response teams will be deployed to guide elephant movement and protect crops during peak conflict months.

Great Hornbill Sighting: A rare sighting of an endangered Great Hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*) near Ezhimala in Kerala has renewed calls for conservation in semi-urban fringe areas. The sighting demonstrates that these areas can still function as important ecological buffers.

Global and National Policy

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution: The second part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5) on plastic pollution is underway in Geneva, Switzerland. The talks are focused on creating a legally binding international treaty to address plastic waste.

Indian Protected Areas: India continues to expand its conservation efforts, with 89 Ramsar sites covering 1.35 million hectares and 49 Biodiversity Heritage Sites. These actions are part of India's commitment to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), which aims to protect at least 30% of the world's terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030.





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MCQS

1. What is the primary purpose of the Rhino DNA Index System (RhODIS-India) project?

- a) To study the diet of rhinos.
- b) To create a forensic database of rhino DNA to aid in anti-poaching efforts.
- c) To track the migration patterns of rhinos.
- d) To clone rhinos for conservation purposes.

Answer: b) To create a forensic database of rhino DNA to aid in anti-poaching efforts. The text explicitly states that the project aims to create a "forensic database, or RhODIS-India, to aid in anti-poaching efforts and wildlife crime prosecution by creating a genetic 'fingerprint' for each rhino."

2. The new evergreen shrub species, *Heptapleurum assamicum*, was discovered in which part of India?

- a) Kerala
- b) Jammu & Kashmir
- c) Assam
- d) Geneva

Answer: c) Assam

The news states that the new species was discovered in the "Dima Hasao and West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam," highlighting the biodiversity of Northeast India.

3. What is the main objective of the Gaja Mitra Scheme in Assam?

- a) To promote tourism in elephant habitats.
- b) To mitigate human-elephant conflict.
- c) To increase the population of elephants.
- d) To study the social behavior of elephants.

Answer: b) To mitigate human-elephant conflict.





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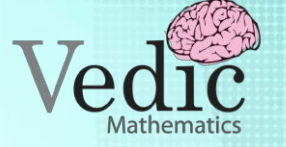
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The text clearly states that the scheme was launched to "mitigate human-elephant conflict," with rapid response teams deployed to guide elephant movement and protect crops.

4. Wular Lake is facing threats from several factors. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a threat?

- a) Siltation
- b) Waste inflow
- c) Encroachment
- d) Overfishing

Answer: d) Overfishing

The news mentions that Wular Lake faces threats from "siltation, waste inflow, and encroachment." Overfishing is not listed as a specific threat in the provided text.

5. What is India's commitment regarding protected areas as part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)?

- a) To protect 50% of the world's ecosystems.
- b) To create a legally binding international treaty on plastic pollution.
- c) To protect at least 30% of the world's terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030.
- d) To increase the number of Ramsar sites to 100.

Answer: c) To protect at least 30% of the world's terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030.

The text states that India's conservation actions are part of its commitment to the KMGBF, which "aims to protect at least 30% of the world's terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030."

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