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KHALISTAN MOVEMENT

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the Topic details "Khalistan Movement". This Topic has relevance in the Security section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

*About the Khalistan Movement?
Anandpur Sahib Resolution?*

For Mains:

*GS 3: Security
Khalistan and Canada?
History of demand for Khalistan?*

Why in the news:

India has refuted the Canadian claim that a well-known pro-Khalistan activist was assassinated by Indian agents "on Canadian territory."

The Khalistan Movement:

- The Khalistan movement represents a longstanding struggle for the **establishment of a separate and sovereign Sikh state in the region of Punjab, encompassing parts of both India and Pakistan.**
- The movement faced severe repression in India, mainly through military operations like **Operation Blue Star in 1984** and subsequent operations known as **Operation Black Thunder in 1986 and 1988.**
- Operation Blue Star was initiated on June 1, 1984, with the primary objectives of flushing out militants from the Golden Temple and neutralizing **Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale**, a prominent leader associated with the Khalistan movement.
- In India, the Khalistan movement and its affiliated groups have been outlawed, with government authorities regarding them as a significant national security threat.
- Despite its suppression in India, the Khalistan movement retains a degree of support, particularly in North India and among the Sikh diaspora living in countries like Canada and the United Kingdom.

Khalistan and Canada

- Canada hosts a substantial Sikh population, making Sikhs the fastest-growing religious group, accounting for 2.1 percent of the country's population as per the 2021 Canadian census. Canada boasts the world's second-largest Sikh population, following India.
- In 2002, a Toronto-based Punjabi-language publication, Sanjh Savera, marked Indira Gandhi's death anniversary with a cover illustration depicting her assassination. The magazine received government advertisements and has since become a prominent daily in Canada.
- Furthermore, in Brampton, which is home to Canada's largest Sikh population, a pro-Khalistan organization known as Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) conducted what they termed a "referendum" on Khalistan in recent years.

The Khalistan Movement: Origins and Causes

- The Khalistan movement traces its roots back to the period surrounding India's independence and the subsequent Partition in 1947, which resulted in the division of the Punjab province between India and Pakistan. This division brought about some of the most severe communal violence in history and created millions of refugees.

Partition's Impact on Sikhs

- Lahore, the historical capital of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's vast Sikh Empire, became a part of Pakistan during the Partition. Additionally, several holy Sikh sites, including Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak (the founder of Sikhism), also fell within Pakistan's borders. This left a significant portion of Sikhs in India, but they constituted only a small minority, making up approximately 2 percent of India's population.

Struggle for Autonomy and States Reorganisation

- The political struggle for greater autonomy for Sikhs began in the post-independence period, with the emergence of the Punjabi Suba Movement, which advocated for the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state. However, the 1955 report of the States Reorganisation Commission rejected this demand.
- Years of persistent protests finally led to a significant development in 1966, as the state of Punjab was reorganized to accommodate the Punjabi Suba demand. The erstwhile Punjab state was divided into three parts: **Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, which were Hindi-speaking and Hindu-majority states, and the Punjabi-speaking, Sikh-majority Punjab.** This move aimed to address the linguistic and cultural aspirations of the people of Punjab, particularly the Sikhs, who sought greater autonomy and recognition. However, it also laid the foundation for ongoing demands for an independent Sikh state, Khalistan.

The Anandpur Sahib Resolution: A Catalyst for the Khalistan Movement

- In 1973, leaders of the Akali Dal convened in Anandpur Sahib, a sacred town and the birthplace of the Khalsa, and unveiled a significant document known as the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. This resolution outlined a series of demands that would shape the political trajectory of the Akali Dal, a Sikh political party.

Key Demands of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution:

- **Autonomy for Punjab:** It sought greater political autonomy for the state of Punjab.
- **Identification of Regions:** The resolution identified specific regions that would form part of a potential separate Sikh state.

- **Right to Frame Constitution:** It aimed to secure the right for Punjab to frame its internal constitution.

Building on the Punjabi Suba Movement

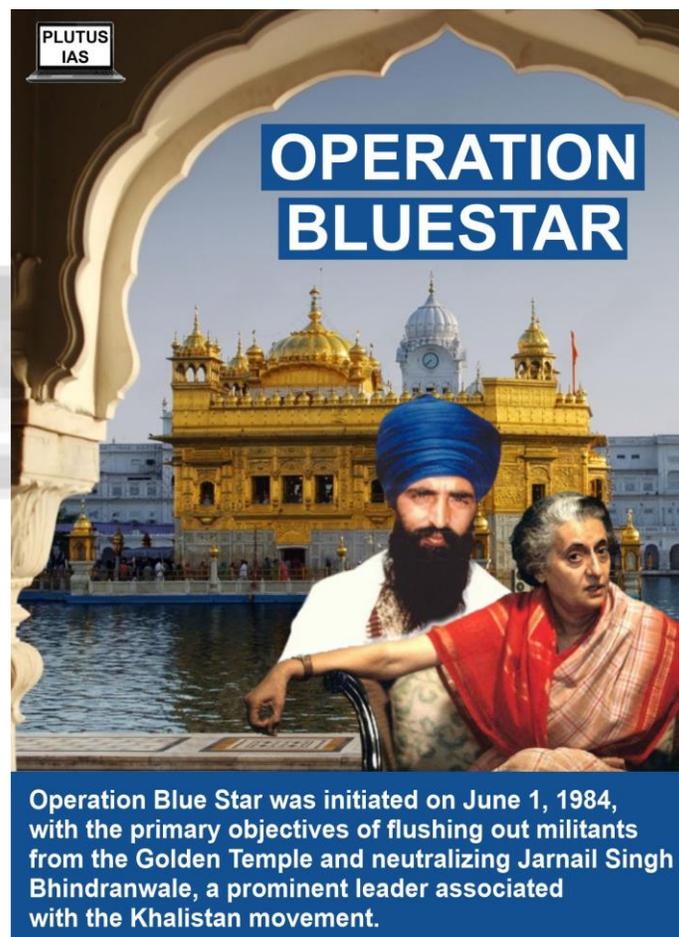
- The Akali Dal, through the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, aimed to capitalize on the growing demand for autonomy that had been brewing alongside the Punjabi Suba movement. This demand for autonomy had gained international attention by 1971 when an advertisement appeared in The New York Times declaring the birth of Khalistan.

The Emergence of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale

- Within Punjab, the quest for autonomy evolved into something more profound. One influential figure in this transformation was Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a charismatic preacher who positioned himself as the authentic voice of the Sikh community. Bhindranwale garnered a substantial following, particularly among the youth, including those from marginalized backgrounds.

Shift to Radical Action

- By 1982, Bhindranwale had taken up residence inside the Golden Temple and began orchestrating demonstrations and clashes with the police. The movement aligned itself with the objectives outlined in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. However, amidst growing religious polarization, sectarian violence, and Bhindranwale's inflammatory rhetoric against Hindus, the Indian government deemed the movement tantamount to secession.



Aftermath of Operation Blue Star

- The culmination of this tension was Operation Blue Star in 1984, which aimed to flush out militants from the Golden Temple and neutralize Bhindranwale. This operation not only wounded the Sikh community worldwide but also intensified the demand for Khalistan.
- Following Operation Blue Star, Punjab became the epicenter of a protracted insurgency that lasted until 1995, characterized by violence, political turmoil, and the enduring struggle for Khalistan.

Source:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-rejects-canadian-prime-minister-justin-trudeaus-allegations-on-killing-of-pro-khalistan-activist-hardeep-singh-nijjar/article67321510.ece>

Q.1 Operation Black Thunder is related to:

- (a) Khalistan Movement
- (b) Maoist Movement
- (c) Naga Movement
- (d) Bodoland Movement

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding the Demands of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution:

1. The resolution identified specific regions that would form part of a potential separate Sikh nation, Khalistan.
2. It aimed to secure the right of Punjab to frame its internal constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: B

Q.3 Separatist movements are a result of lopsided federalism. comment

Rishabh

PROJECT CHEETAH

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Project Cheetah". This topic has relevance in the "Environment and Ecology" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is Project Cheetah?

For Mains:

GS3: Environment and Ecology

Why in the news?

India's cheetah introduction program has completed its first year. The program officially started with the arrival of eight cheetahs from Namibia on September 17, 2022, as part of Project Cheetah.

About Cheetahs in India

- The cheetah population in India was widespread, found in various regions nationwide. However, the Indian government officially declared the cheetah extinct in 1952.
- Over-hunting, loss of prey species, and habitat degradation contributed to the extinction of cheetahs in India. The country's focus on agriculture and land-use changes further reduced their habitat.
- Earlier attempts to reintroduce cheetahs in India were unsuccessful for various reasons, including the need to upgrade potential release sites and political instability in Iran, which had the preferred cheetah population for relocation.
- In 2020, the Supreme Court of India approved efforts to relocate cheetahs, and the African cheetahs were chosen for introduction.
- The cheetah introduction project aims to establish a viable cheetah population in India that can function as a top predator and expand within its historical range, contributing to global conservation efforts.

The status of the project Cheetah

- **Imported Cheetahs:** 20 adult African cheetahs have been imported for the project. The initial batch of eight cheetahs arrived in September 2022, followed by another group of 12 from South Africa in February 2023. In March 2023, one female cheetah in India gave birth to four cubs, marking a significant development.
- **Mortalities:** Tragically, six cheetahs, four in captivity and two in the wild have died. Four adult cheetahs are yet to experience free-ranging life, and three out of four cubs have also perished, with the sole surviving cub under human care due to maternal rejection.
- **Current Captivity:** After the deaths of three cheetahs in July-August, the remaining ten free cheetahs were captured for observation, removal of radio collars, and treatment. Currently, all surviving 14 adult cheetahs and one cub are in captivity. The project authorities are considering radio-collaring them again and planning for their release in the upcoming winter.
- **Future Plans:** Additional sites, such as Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary and Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary, are being prepared for potential releases, with Gandhi Sagar expected to be ready by year-end and Nauradehi by 2024. Importing more cheetahs from Africa is also under consideration for the coming year.

Understanding the Causes of Cheetah Deaths

Recently, the deaths of six adult cheetahs and three cubs have raised concerns and questions regarding the factors contributing to their demise. Contrary to speculation, radio collars are not the primary cause of these fatalities.

- **The Renal Condition:** The first cheetah's demise was attributed to chronic kidney disease, prompting questions about the decision to transport a sick animal and introduce it to a new environment.
- **Failed Mating Attempts:** One female cheetah died during mating attempts, casting doubt on the urgency of captive breeding.
- **Heatwave:** Three cubs, born in March 2023, succumbed to heatwave conditions, raising concerns about their breeding and captivity.

- **Unresolved Cardio-Pulmonary Failure:** Another male cheetah's death due to cardio-pulmonary failure leaves questions about the ultimate cause unanswered.
- **Monsoon Deaths:** The last three deaths occurred during the monsoon, with conflicting reports about their causes but no definitive answers provided.

Lessons for the Future

- **Prioritise Habitat:** To ensure cheetah conservation success, emphasis should be placed on establishing high-quality habitats covering at least 5,000 square kilometres before importing more cheetahs from Africa.
- **Transparency and Consultation:** There is a need for greater transparency and broader consultation in conservation projects to improve decision-making and accountability.

Sources:

[Project Cheetah, a year on – The Hindu](#)

Q1. With reference to Project Cheetah, consider the following statements:

1. The cheetah introduction program in India began with the arrival of eight cheetahs from Namibia in 2020 as part of Project Cheetah.
2. The primary goal of the cheetah introduction project in India is to establish a viable cheetah population that can function as a top predator.
3. The cheetahs were introduced in the Kuno National Park in MP.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following pairs:

1. Kuno National Park – Madhya Pradesh
2. Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary – Gujarat
3. Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary – Chhattisgarh

How many of the abovementioned pairs are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (a)

Q3. Discuss the significance of the Cheetah reintroduction project in India, its objectives, and the challenges faced in its first year. Also, evaluate its potential impact on the conservation of endangered species in India.

Gaurav Nikumbh