

1. Vantara

About Vantara

Vantara is a large-scale animal rescue centre, care, conservation and rehabilitation centre established by Reliance Industries with Reliance Foundation. It is located within the Reliance Jamnagar Refinery Complex in Jamnagar, Gujarat, India. This over 3,500-acre sanctuary focuses on animal welfare and conservation. It was initiated by Anant Ambani, director on the boards of Reliance Industries and Reliance Foundation. Vantara was officially inaugurated by Indian prime minister Narendra Modi on 4th March 2025.



Controversy

Vantara claims to have since "rescued over 200 elephants, and thousands of other animals, reptiles and birds from unsafe situations, including rhinos, leopards and crocodiles". Despite the program's endeavors in conservation, i.e., protecting threatened and exploited species and animals, some animal rights groups in India have expressed skepticism over the privatization of the animals, along with the remote, over-developed, polluted and unsuitable nature of the reservation's location, as Jamnagar is located in a hot, arid climate and the Jamnagar Refinery, the largest oil refinery in the world, is owned by the same company and is

located only a short distance away.

Management

Vantara is managed under the direction of Anant Ambani. The facility is equipped with modern veterinary technology, including ICU, MRI, CT scan, X-ray, ultrasound, and endoscopy units.

Notable achievements

Vantara received the 'Prani Mitra' National Award in the corporate category from the Animal Welfare Board of India. This award is presented by the Government of India to recognize contributions in the field of animal welfare.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

Source: The Hindu

2. Could Europe's Eutelsat help to replace Starlink in Ukraine?

Introduction

Suggestions that Ukraine could lose access to Elon Musk's Starlink satellite Internet system, which has been vital in maintaining its military communications, have focused investor interest on Starlink's smaller European rival Eutelsat.

The stock price of Eutelsat, a Franco-British company, has more than quadrupled since the February 28 public showdown between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and US President Donald Trump.

EU eyes Eutelsat's OneWeb as Starlink replacement in Ukraine

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Reports from various media indicate that the Franco-British satellite services firm, Eutelsat, is in talks with the European Union to potentially replace Starlink in Ukraine with its OneWeb satellites. This development, reported by Reuters on Tuesday, March 4, points to the growing strategic alternatives considered in the region.

How crucial is Starlink to Ukraine?

Starlink users access the Internet for data or voice communication by using a small satellite dish to bounce signals off a constellation of satellites overhead.

Ukraine's fixed-line and mobile networks have been badly damaged by bombing since Russia invaded in February 2022, and Starlink has helped Kyiv fill the void by sending tens of thousands of its dishes with terminals.

How does Eutelsat compare with Starlink?

Eutelsat already supports government and institutional communications in Ukraine, and can provide an alternative for certain government and defence applications, according to the company.

Since its merger in 2023 with Britain's OneWeb, Eutelsat controls the only operational global-coverage constellation, besides Starlink, of satellites in low earth orbit (LEO).

Starlink's more than 7,000 LEO satellites, suited to real-time communication, allow it to reach more users around the world and offer higher data speeds.

But Eutelsat says that even with only 630 or so LEO satellites, backed up by 35 linked satellites in higher, geostationary orbit, it offers the same capabilities as Starlink in Europe.

Starlink promises broadband at up to 200 megabits per second, Eutelsat 150.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

3. Pashu Aushadhi Kendras

Introduction

The government will open "Pashu Aushadhi" stores across the country to provide affordable generic veterinary medicines to people engaged in animal husbandry and dairying.



Based on Janaushadhi Kendras

The Pashu Aushadhi initiative has been conceptualised on the lines of the existing Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJK), which provide "quality generic medicines at affordable prices" to people in order to "bring down the healthcare budget of every citizen of India".

While the PMBJKs provide medicines for humans, Pashu Aushadhi Kendras will provide generic medicines for animals.

More than 10,300 PMBJKs are currently functional across the country. India has begun celebrating Janaushadhi Diwas on March 7 since 2025.

Generic Medicines

"Generic medicines" are basically non-branded drugs, which are marketed under a non-proprietary or approved name rather than a proprietary or brand name.

Why Pashu Aushadhi matters

As per the 20th Livestock Census, India's Livestock population stood at 535.78 million in 2019. This included a total bovine population (including cattle, buffalo, mithun and yak) of 302.79 million.

According to the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, the "productivity of livestock is impacted adversely due to diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF), Lumpy Skin Disease, etc."

While measures such as vaccination drives have been taken proactively, a lot remains to be done. A significant portion of the out-of-pocket expenditure of farmers goes into buying medicines to treat their cattle and other animals for illnesses.

Will be run by co-op societies

The Pashu Aushadhi stores will be run by cooperative societies and Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samriddhi Kendras (PMKSK). The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying will soon release guidelines for the functioning of these stores.

Will also sell traditional medicines

The Pashu Aushadhi Kendras will also sell ethnoveterinary medicines, based on traditional beliefs and indigenous knowledge and practices, to treat animal diseases.

The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has compiled a list of ethnoveterinary formulations for important ailments in bovines. These include formulations for the treatment of mastitis, FMD mouth lesions, FMD foot lesions/ wounds, fever, diarrhoea, bloating and indigestion, and worm.

The formulation to treat animal fever includes items such as coriander, garlic, bay leaves, pepper, cumin, turmeric powder, chirata, betel, tulsi, neem, sweet basil, jaggery, and shallots/ onions.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express

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