



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

APRIL, 2022

Week-1

1-7 April, 2022

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

1st APRIL 2022

Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2022

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha has recently passed the Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill which aims to merge three municipal corporations of Delhi into a single entity.

Key highlights

- The three municipal corporations will be merged into a single, well-equipped, and integrated entity so that a robust mechanism can be implemented for ensuring optimal utilization of resources and strategic planning.
- A special officer will be appointed to discharge the elected wing of councilors' functions till the new corporation's first meeting is held.
- This amendment bill will be omitting the section related to local bodies, and directors that govern the MCDs functioning.

Background

- The MCD was Delhi's former municipal corporation and used to govern 8 of the 9 districts which have now increased to 11 districts of Delhi.
- In 2012, this corporation was later replaced by three new bodies, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), and the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC).

State of World Population Report

- **Context:** The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) recently released the State of World Population (SoWP) 2022 report.

Key highlights

- There was a lack of modern and safe methods of contraception and across the globe, around

257 million women are not using such methods of contraception to avoid pregnancies.

- Between the years 2015 to 2019, there was a rise in unintended pregnancies which numbered around 121 million across the globe annually.
- A rise in abortion has been noticed with more than 60 percent of pregnancies that are unintended, and around 30 percent of all pregnancies, ending in abortion. Across the globe, 45 percent of all abortions performed were unsafe. USD 553 million per year in treatment costs is the cost of unsafe abortion in developing countries.
- There is a rise in humanitarian emergencies with the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war due to which many women are facing sexual violence and losing access to contraception.

About United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

- UNFPA is a sexual and reproductive health agency of the United Nations. It was established in 1967.
- The UNFPA became operational in 1969 and it works as a subsidiary under the UN General Assembly. Its earlier name was United Nations Fund for Population Activities and in 1987 it was renamed as United Nations Population Fund but retained the abbreviation 'UNFPA.'

FASTER (Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records)

- **Context:** The Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records (FASTER) software has been recently launched by the Chief Justice of India NV Ramana so that court orders can be transmitted securely and swiftly via electronic mode thus ensuring that judicial orders can be communicated quickly.

Key highlights

- Through the use of this software the orders that were passed by the high courts (HC) and the Supreme Court (SC) will be transmitted safely without any third-party interference.

- 73 nodal officers have been nominated at the HC level and jail authorities have also been selected through a network of judicial communication.
- For this software a secure pathway email id has also been established.
- Bail orders will be communicated via FASTER and for authentication purposes, it will have the digital signatures of the notified nodal officers of the SC as well as the Institutional digital signatures. In this manner, without much loss of time, bail orders would be received by all the concerned parties and quick necessary actions will be taken at their end.

2nd APRIL 2022

Varuna Naval Exercise

- **Context:** The 20th edition of 'Varuna' bilateral naval exercise recently conducted between India and France in the Arabian Sea.

Key highlights

- In this exercise, various units of the two navies which include submarines, ships, fighter aircraft, maritime patrol aircraft, and helicopters were participated.
- The participating units also look to improve their inter-operability so that they can undertake various maritime security operations.
- This exercise plays the role of the significant driver for interactions at the operational level between the navies of India and France. Also, this exercise has highlighted the shared commitment of both countries to the safety, security, and freedom of the global maritime sector.

Background

- In 1993, this bilateral naval exercises between the navies of the two countries were first initiated.
- In 2001, the name of the exercise was christened 'Varuna' and it has become an important part of the bilateral strategic relationship between India and France.

Small Savings Schemes

- **Context:** The interest rates on small savings schemes, including PPF, NSC, and Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, have been kept unchanged for the first quarter of 2022-23.

Key highlights

- This decision has been taken by the government keeping in mind the elevated level of inflation.
- The annual interest rate for Public Provident Fund (PPF) is 7.1 percent. The annual interest rate for National Savings Certificate (NSC) remains 6.8 percent in the first quarter.
- The interest for the one-year term deposit scheme will continue to remain at 5.5 percent.
- The interest rate in the girl child savings scheme named Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana account will remain at 7.6 percent.
- The interest rate remains at 7.4 percent for the five-year senior citizens' savings scheme. For the senior citizens' scheme, the interest is paid on a quarterly basis.
- 4 percent per annum is the interest rate on savings deposits and it will continue to remain so in the first quarter of the financial year.
- A range between 5.5 to 6.7 percent remains the interest rate for term deposits of one to five years and it will be paid quarterly.
- 5.8 percent is the interest rate that will be earned on five-year recurring deposits.

Manthan

- **Context:** Madhabi Puri Buch, the Chairperson of SEBI, has launched the ideathon 'Manthan' to promote innovations.

Key highlights

- India is currently well-positioned to develop and use technology in the securities market sector so as to deliver customized solutions at minimal cost to every individual across the nation.

- The ideathon was launched as financial technology's (FinTech) adoption in India's securities market presents a huge opportunity for the stakeholders.

About Manthan

- Manthan will be organized for a period of six-week. It is being organized by SEBI in collaboration with NSE, BSE, CDSL, NSDL, CAMS, KFinTech, MCX, and LinkedInTime.
- This event will help in the creation of various innovative solutions as well as ideas that will revolve around the country's securities market. The various workable ideas that will come out from Manthan might be upgraded into various prototypes and possibilities through a hackathon.
- From 30th March to 14th May the interested persons can register for this ideathon on the website 'https://manthan.devfolio.co'. Cash prizes worth Rs 5,00,000 will be handed out to the ideathon's top ten winners.
- In this ideathon there will be interactive knowledge-sharing sessions for all the registered participants. It will be organized through webinars so that submission of innovative ideas can be done easily.

3rd APRIL 2022

WWF Report on Online Wildlife Trade

- **Context:** The World Wildlife Fund has released a report stating that in Myanmar illegal purchases of wildlife online are increasing which is causing a threat to both endangered species and public health.

Key highlights

- Out of 173 species traded, 54 are facing global extinction.
- 639 Facebook accounts have been identified that belong to wildlife traders.
- The largest online wildlife trading group consists of over 19,000 members and every week dozens of posts are made.
- The illegally traded species are also being kept close

to each other, sometimes they are even being put in the same cage.

- Some of the animals that were traded included bears, elephants, gibbons, critically endangered pangolins, Tibetan antelope, and an Asian giant tortoise. Various species of monkeys were the most popular traded species online.
- The rise in the online trade of wildlife is concerning as it is causing interactions between humans and wild species due to which there are risks of the spread of new and possibly vaccine-resistant undetected mutations of diseases like COVID-19.

UN Women

- **Context:** India has contributed USD 500,000 to the UN Women, the United Nations agency for women empowerment and gender equality.

Key highlights

- The contribution was made by India to reaffirm the country's valued partnership of gender parity and development that are women-led.
- India will be working with the UN Women to further boost their relationships.
- This amount has been contributed towards the core budget of the UN Women.

About UN Women

- The UN Women or also known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women is an entity working under the United Nations for women's empowerment and gender equality.
- This organization works for the rights of girls, women, and LGBTIQ+. It also focuses on issues related to violence against women and LGBTIQ+ people.
- UN Women became operational in 2011 with the merger of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other entities.
- This organization is also a member of the United Nations Development Group.
- Executive Director: Dr. Sima Bahous

4th APRIL 2022

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- **Context:** CBD recently released a draft recommendation on health and biodiversity.

About CBD

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a multilateral treaty and has three goals which are biological diversity conservation; the components are being used sustainably; and the equitable and fair sharing of benefits that arise from the genetic resources.
- The CBD's objective is the development of strategies so that biological diversity can be conserved and sustainably used. CBD is generally seen as sustainable development's key document.
- The CBD has two supplementary agreements, the Nagoya Protocol and the Cartagena Protocol.

About Nagoya Protocol

- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources is a supplementary agreement of the CBD. Under this protocol, a transparent legal framework has been set for the implementation of one of CBD's three objectives which is the equitable and fair sharing of benefits that arise from genetic resources.
- In 2010, in Nagoya, Japan, this protocol was adopted and in 2014 it came into force.

About Cartagena Protocol

- The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity governs the movements from one country to another of all the living modified organisms (LMOs) that result from modern biotechnology.
- In 2000, this protocol was adopted as CBD's supplementary agreement and in 2003 it came into force.

Genome-edited Plants

- **Context:** The Government of India has issued an order for the first time exempting certain types of crops that are genome-edited from the stringent regulations that are applicable in the country on genetically modified or GM crops.

Key highlights

- The SDN1 and SDN2 genome-edited plants have been exempted by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change from Rules 7-11 of the Environment Protection Act (EPA) for the purpose of manufacturing, importing, or usage or exporting and storage of microorganisms that are hazardous or organisms or cells that are genetically engineered rules-1989.
- This order would help the government to notify and approve the guidelines related to genome-edited plants that are pending since 2020.
- The order will also incentivize the researchers and breeders to utilize the power of genome editing so that the farming community is developed further.

Note: Genome editing was discovered in 2012.

5th APRIL 2022

Vinay Mohan Kwatra

- **Context:** The Union Government has appointed Vinay Mohan Kwatra as India's next Foreign Secretary. He will be taking charge after incumbent Harsh Vardhan Shringla retires on 30th April.



Key facts about him

- Vinay Mohan Kwatra is an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer and has 32 years of experience working in a range of assignments.
- He is presently India's ambassador to Nepal.
- From 2015 to 2017, he has worked in the Prime Minister's office and then went to France as the ambassador of India.

Stand-Up India

- **Context:** On 5th April 2022, Stand-up India scheme completed its six years.

Key facts

- Stand-Up India scheme was launched by the Union government with the aim of encouraging entrepreneurship from the grass-root level so that job creation and economic empowerment can be fostered especially among the ST, SC, and women entrepreneurs of the country.
- Under this scheme over 1.33 lakh new job-creators and entrepreneurs have been facilitated.
- Over 1 lakh women entrepreneurs have been benefited under this scheme in the last six years.
- Under this scheme, Rs. 30,160 crores have been sanctioned by the government to a total of 1,33,995 accounts up to 21st March 2022.
- To 1,08,250 women entrepreneurs who held accounts, Rs. 24809.89 crore has been sanctioned.
- A few positive changes were introduced for this scheme in the Union Budget 2022 which include the margin money extent that is to be brought by the borrower has been reduced from 25 percent to 15 percent of the project cost though, the borrower has to keep on contributing a minimum of 10 percent of the cost of the project as their own contribution.
- Under this scheme, loans for allied agriculture activities like rearing, beekeeping, dairy, poultry, grading, fishery, pisciculture, aggregation agro-industries, rearing, livestock, sorting, grading, agribusiness centers, agriclinic, food & agro-processing, etc. and the services supporting these, will be covered.

Grammy Awards 2022

- **Context:** At the 64th Annual Grammy Awards, two Indian musicians were among the winners.

Key facts about Indian-origin winners

- Falu, an Indian-American singer-songwriter won her maiden Grammy in the category of Best Children's Music Album.
- Composer Ricky Kej also won his second Grammy as he and Stewart Copeland won the award in the category of Best New Age Album.

About Grammy Awards 2022

- The 2022 Grammy Awards were held recently at the MGM Grand Garden Arena located in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Jon Batiste won the Best Album of The Year award.
- The award for the Best New Artist as well as for Best Pop Vocal Album was won by Olivia Rodrigo and Doja Cat won the award for Best Pop Duo/ Group.

6th APRIL 2022

Mission Integrated Bio-refineries

- **Context:** The Union Government has launched a clean energy initiative named Mission Integrated Bio-refineries.

Key highlights

- The mission has been launched keeping in mind India's commitment to a low-carbon future that can be achieved through innovation and technological advancement.
- It will be achieved through the usage of zero waste bio-refinery for the cost-effective production of biofuels that are sustainable and bio-based materials and chemicals.

About Mission Integrated Bio-refineries

- This mission will be uniting a result-oriented and dynamic partnership of international organizations, countries, academic institutions, the corporate sector, and civil society so that the innovation for chemicals, renewable fuels, and materials for achieving a low-carbon future can be accelerated.

- This mission will be looking to facilitate green energy in the country.
- This mission has been launched with the aim of enhancing and accelerating clean energy solutions across the country through various Public -Private Alliances.

Temple 360 Portal

- **Context:** The Temple 360 portal has recently been launched by the Union Ministry of Culture.

Key highlights

- It is a unique portal through which devotees from across the country can get online darshan of temples or prominent pilgrimage sites at any time and from anywhere they feel like.
- The portal has been made keeping in line with the government's Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Through this website, an individual can get temple darshans 24x7 through various live camera feeds across the temples of the country.
- Currently, through this portal, live streaming of rituals can be viewed from four famous temples that are Kashi Vishwanath (UP), Somnath (Gujarat), Ghrihsheshwar, and Trimbakeshwar (both in Maharashtra).
- In upcoming months, the devotees will be able to get darshan through live streaming of rituals on this portal from four Dhams namely Badrinath (Uttarakhand), Dwarka (Gujarat), Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu), and Puri (Odisha) along with 12 Jyotirlinga.

7th APRIL 2022

The Indian Antarctic Bill

- **Context:** The Union Government has introduced the Indian Antarctic Bill 2022, around 40 years after the country had first signed the Antarctic Treaty.

Key highlights of the Bill

- The bill has been introduced to monitor and regulate activities at its research stations that are located in Antarctica.
- It aims to regulate activities and visits to Antarctica as well as all potential disputes that can arise among those nations that are present on the continent.
- Under this Bill, the jurisdiction of Indian courts has been extended to Antarctica and it has been allowed to investigate and trial crimes that are committed on the continent.
- Under this bill, an Indian expedition to Antarctica or conducting certain activities on the continent is prohibited without a permit from the committee that will be set up by the government. Also, the committee can cancel the permits.
- As every country has an allotted quota of fishing in this region, this Bill has provided guidelines for commercial fishing in this region by India. However, strict guidelines have been placed in accordance with the related international law.
- The Bill has enabled the Indian tour operators to conduct tourism in the region under strict regulations.
- This bill provides for the constitution of an inspection team that will have the right to carry out inspections in Antarctica.
- Under this bill, dredging, drilling, collection of mineral resources, and excavation have been prohibited in the region except for scientific research purposes that too with a permit.
- No animals or birds of this region can be killed, injured or captured. No non-native birds, animals, microscopic organisms, and plants can be introduced to this region.
- This Bill will be applicable to Indians, corporations, foreign citizens, joint ventures, and firms that are functioning in India, and any aircraft or vessel that is either a part of an Indian expedition or Indian.

AUKUS

- **Context:** Australia, the UK, and the US will begin collaborating on increasing defence capacity and hypersonic missile strikes keeping in mind that their rivals China and Russia are advancing rapidly in cutting-edge defence technology.

Key facts

- Australia, the UK, and the US announced their collaboration on hypersonic missiles as an expansion of the recent defence alliance of AUKUS.
- Under this defence alliance, Australia will also be equipped with nuclear-powered submarines so that they can counter the growing military clout of China.

About Hypersonic Missile

- A hypersonic missile is a type of weapon system that flies at the speed of Mach 5 and can be manoeuvred.
- The manoeuvrability capability of this missile is what separates it from a ballistic missile. A ballistic missile follows a set trajectory while hypersonic missiles can be manoeuvred to hit an intended target.
- This manoeuvrability capability of this missile makes it difficult to intercept and they can carry nuclear as well as conventional warheads.

