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**MADE EASY
WEEKLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WEEK-3

15th July - 21st July, 2021

TARGETED EXAMINATIONS

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

15th JULY 2021

Draft of Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

- The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat released the first official draft of a new Global Biodiversity Framework to guide actions worldwide through 2030 to preserve and protect nature and its essential services to people.
- It is one of many demands and targets that have been set through 2030 in the official draft of a new Global Biodiversity Framework.

The framework includes 21 targets for 2030 that call for, among other things:

- At least 30% of land and sea areas global (especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people) conserved through effective, equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas (and other effective area-based conservation measures)
- A 50% greater reduction in the rate of introduction of invasive alien species, and controls or eradication of such species to eliminate or reduce their impacts
- Reducing nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, and pesticides by at least two thirds, and eliminating the discharge of plastic waste
- Nature-based contributions to global climate change mitigation efforts of least 10 GtCO_{2e} per year, and that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity
- Redirecting, repurposing, reforming or eliminating incentives harmful for biodiversity, in a just and equitable way, reducing them by at least \$500 billion per year

- A \$200 billion increase in international financial flows from all sources to developing countries.

Four Goals for 2050

- Draft framework proposes four goals in order to achieve humanity "living in harmony with nature," by 2050.
- To enhance the integrity of all ecosystems by increasing 15% in area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems.
- Contributions of Nature to people have been valued, maintained or enhanced by conservation & sustainable use that supports the global development agenda to benefit all.
- Benefits from utilization of genetic resources are shared fairly and equitably by increasing monetary and non-monetary benefits shared, for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Gap between available financial and other means of implementation is closed.

About CBD:

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), a legally binding treaty to conserve biodiversity has been in force since 1993. It has 3 main objectives:
 - The conservation of biological diversity.
 - The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity.
 - The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
- Nearly all countries have ratified it (notably, the US has signed but not ratified).
- The CBD Secretariat is based in Montreal, Canada and it operates under the United Nations Environment Programme.
- The Parties under Convention of Biodiversity (CBD), meet at regular intervals and these meetings are called Conference of Parties (COP).

SCO Dushanbe meet

- During SCO meeting in Dushanbe, India called on members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to act against terrorism and terror financing during a meeting in the Tajikistan capital that was dominated by the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan.

Key Highlights:

- The worsening security situation in Afghanistan dominated the meeting.
- Representatives from nations with SCO observer status as well as SCO members attended the meeting.
- S Jaishankar, India's external affairs minister, voiced these concerns when he met with his SCO colleagues.
- Three prominent issues discussed by members were Afghanistan, public health and economic recovery

About Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- SCO, also dubbed as Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic & security alliance. Announcement for creating SCO was made on June 15, 2001 in Shanghai, China. SCO entered into force on September 19, 2003.
- Members of SCO; China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan.

Section 66A of IT Act

- Recently, The Supreme Court (SC) has expressed shock that the provision was still being used to book people, though SC held it as unconstitutional and a violation of free speech in the Shreya Singhal judgment, 2015.
- Government also directed not to register cases under repealed Section 66A.

- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) also asked states and UTs to sensitise law enforcement agencies for compliance of order issued by Supreme Court on March 24, 2015.

About Section 66A of the IT Act

- Section 66A of IT Act empowered police to make arrests over what policemen, in terms of their subjective discretion, could construe as “offensive” or “menacing” or for the purposes of causing annoyance, inconvenience, etc.
- It prescribed the punishment for sending messages through a computer or any other communication device like a mobile phone or a tablet, and a conviction could fetch a maximum of three years in jail.
- SC had struck down section 66A on March 24, 2015 after noting it as “vague and arbitrary”.

16th JULY 2021

Gaganyaan: ISRO successfully test fired liquid fuel engine

- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully conducted the third long-duration hot test of the liquid propellant Vikas Engine for the Gaganyaan Mission.

Key Highlights

- The test of the liquid propellant Vikas engine was done for the core L110 liquid stage of the human rated GSLV Mk-III vehicle, as part of the engine qualification requirements for the Gaganyaan programme.
- The Vikas engine will be used in the second stage of the rocket.
- ISRO's GSLV Mk III, which successfully carried the Chandrayaan-2 mission to space in its first operational flight, has three stages – the two solid S200 boosters fired at the launch, the core L110 liquid stage, and the upper C-25 cryogenic stage.

About Gaganyaan Mission

- Gaganyaan Mission is planned by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Under the mission three flights will be sent into orbit.
- It will comprise two unmanned flights and one human spaceflight. Gaganyaan system module called Orbital Module will carry three Indian astronauts, including a woman.
- Spaceflight will move around the Earth for 5 to 7 days at low-earth-orbit at an altitude of 300-400 km from Earth.

Draft Drone Rules, 2021

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has released 'The Drone Rules, 2021' for public consultation. The Drone Rules, 2021 will replace the UAS Rules 2021.

Key Highlights:

- As per new rules, there will be minimal human interface on the digital sky platform and most permissions will be self-generated.
- It will also notify safety features such as 'No Permission – No Take-off' (NPNT), real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing etc. in future.
- Under the rules, import of drones & drone components will be regulated by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.
- All drone training and testing will be carried out by an authorised drone school.
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation will prescribe training requirements, look after drone schools and provide pilot licences online.

Three zones in airspace map

- The entire airspace of India has been segregated into three zones for drone operations and are published in the digital sky platform. The three different zones include:

- **Green zone:** This zone means the airspace from the ground up to a vertical distance of 400 feet (120 metre) above ground level (AGL) that has not been designated as a red zone or yellow zone in the airspace map for drone operations.
- **Yellow zone:** It is the controlled airspace where drone operations are restricted and shall require permission from the concerned air traffic control authority.
- **Red zone:** It is the airspace where drone operations shall be permitted only under exceptional circumstances by the Central Government.

Vivad se Vishwas scheme

- Over 1.32 lakh declarations entailing disputed tax of Rs 99,765 crore have been filed under the 'Vivad se Vishwas' dispute resolution scheme.

Key Points

- The declarations received under the 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme cover approximately 28.73 percent of the country's total ongoing direct tax issues.
- The overall number of pending tax disputes was 5,10,491 as of the date of qualifying.
- The government has settled a large number of direct tax disputes with taxpayers via the Vivad se Vishwas initiative.
- Taxpayers can also make payments until October 31st, but they will be charged an extra amount of interest.

About Vivad se Vishwas scheme

- On 17th March, 2020, the Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Act, 2020 was enacted with the primary aim to settle all the various direct tax disputes which are currently locked up in numerous appellate forums across the country.

- This scheme provides for the settlement of disputed interest, disputed tax, disputed fees or disputed penalty on payment of 25% of the disputed penalty, fee or interest and 100% of the disputed tax or interest or fee.
- This scheme provided cover to all Food & Oilseeds crops and annual commercial or horticultural crops for which past yield data is available.
- It covers those crops as well for which a requisite number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) are being conducted under the General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES).

17th JULY 2021

PM Fasal Bima Yojana

- The Central government extended the cut-off date for enrolment of farmers under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana from July 15 to July 23 for the Kharif season 2021.

Key Points:

- Maharashtra government had requested to extend the deadline of the Crop Insurance scheme, PMFBY till July 23.
- State Government has requested to extend the cut-off for Kharif 2021 in the aftermath of challenges faced due to COVID-19 pandemic.

About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana on February 18, 2016, as a yield insurance program for farmers.
- It was introduced in accordance with the One Nation–One Scheme principle by combining the finest characteristics of the previous two schemes, the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and the Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS), and eliminating their inherent flaws.
- Its goal is to lower the cost of premiums for farmers and to ensure that crop assurance claims are paid in full as soon as possible.

NOTE:

PMFBY is implemented by empanelled general insurance companies. Selection of Implementing Agency (IA) is done by concerned State Government by bidding. It is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture.

COVIHOME: COVID-19 testing kit

- Recently, a team led by Prof Shiv Govind Singh of the Department of Electrical Engineering at IIT Hyderabad has developed 'COVIHOME'. This test can be performed at an affordable cost at home.

About COVIHOME test kit:

- Test kit can produce results within 30 minutes for symptomatic as well as asymptomatic patients.
- This test does not require RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) test.
- A patent for this kit has been filed and researchers are waiting for industry partners for Transfer of Technology (ToT) to produce kits at mass level.
- CSIR-Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB) performed validation of a rapid RNA electronic diagnostic device to detect SARS-Cov-2 virus in swab samples with in-house samples and hospital samples following the advice of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- This test kit was developed with the objective of breaking transmission chains by providing affordable and fast testing.

“COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van, Dhan aur Uddyam” Campaign

- The Minister of Tribal Affairs launched the nationwide campaign “COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van, Dhan aur Uddyam” to accelerate the pace of COVID vaccination among tribals in India.

About the campaign:

- It is a nationwide campaign to accelerate the pace of COVID vaccination among tribals in India.
- It has been launched by TRIFED under the Ministry of Tribals for 10.5 crore tribal community people across the country.
- It is being launched in partnership with UNICEF and WHO.
- Its objective is that the tribal communities should not only remain safe and healthy during the pandemic but should also be able to continue their livelihood activities.
- **Three key J's of campaign:**
 - **Jeevan (Life):** Every life and livelihood is precious and vaccination is key to life.
 - **Jeevika (Livelihood):** Vaccination will help in continuing Van Dhan Vikas Kendra and livelihood activities without any fear of contracting the disease. It will also save hospitalization and other opportunity costs.
 - **Jaagrookta (Awareness):** Simplification of registration process for vaccination, place, accessibility to different people and age groups, including women & elderly population.

18th JULY 2021

New name for Jammu and Kashmir High Court

- The “long-winding and cumbersome” nomenclature ‘Common High Court of UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh’ has been changed to ‘High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh’.
- President Ram Nath Kovind signed “Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties)

Order, 2021” to make this change.

- This nomenclature might be substituted as “High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh” for sake of convenience in consonance with name pattern followed in “Punjab and Haryana High Court” which has jurisdiction over states of Punjab, Haryana and Union Territory of Chandigarh.

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019

- This act comprises provisions of reconstituting the State of Jammu & Kashmir, including the part of a Kashmir which has been a subject of dispute between India, Pakistan, and China since 1947, into two union territories called Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
- This act was enacted on October 31, 2019. Bill for the act was introduced and passed on August 5, 2019 by Minister of Home Affairs, Amit Shah.
- On August 6, 2019 it was passed by the Lok Sabha and received President’s assent on 9 August 2019. Introduction of this bill was preceded by presidential order under Article 370 revoking the special status of Jammu & Kashmir.

MH-60R multi role helicopters

- The Indian Navy has received two MH-60R multi-role helicopters from the U.S., in a boost to its combat capabilities.

Key Points:

- Indian Navy is procuring 24 of MH-60R helicopters manufactured by Lockheed Martin.
- Helicopters are being procured under foreign military sales from the US at an estimated cost of USD 2.4 billion.
- MH-60R helicopters manufactured by Lockheed Martin Corporation is an all-weather helicopter designed to support multiple missions with state of the art avionics and sensors.

- India is procuring 24 of these helicopters from the U.S. government under the framework of foreign military sales.
- The helicopters would also be modified with several India-unique equipment and weapons.

Significance :

- Induction of MH-60R helicopters would enhance the three-dimensional capabilities of Indian Army. Helicopters would be modified with several unique equipment and weapons.

19th JULY 2021

UNDP Equator Prize 2021

- Two Indian organisations have won Equator Prize 2021, for their exceptional achievement in showcasing innovative, local, nature-based solutions for tackling biodiversity loss and climate change and achieving their local development goals.

Key Points:

- 2021 Equator Prize awarded to 10 Indigenous and local solutions for people and planet.
- Two communities from India bagged this year's prestigious UNDP Equator Prize, for their exceptional achievement in showcasing local, innovative, nature-based solutions for tackling biodiversity loss and climate change and achieving their local development goals.

The two winning organizations:

- **Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited:** This 1,700-member cooperative, managed and run entirely by Indigenous people from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in Southern India, has improved livelihoods across 147 villages by processing and

marketing a diverse range of forest produce and crops.

- **Snehakunja Trust:** Snehakunja Trust has protected sensitive wetland and coastal ecosystems in the Western Ghats and the Karnataka coast for 45 years. Restoring 375 hectares of mangroves, Snehakunja Trust is currently piloting the first blue carbon project in India.

Pegasus spyware

- Telephone numbers of some noted Indian journalists were successfully snooped upon by an unidentified agency using Pegasus software.
- Phone numbers of around 40 Indian journalists were found in a leaked list of potential targets for surveillance. Forensic tests done on the list have confirmed that an unidentified agency has successfully snooped some of them using the Pegasus software.

About Pegasus Spyware:

- Pegasus was developed in 2010 by the Israeli firm, the NSO Group.
- Pegasus spyware was first discovered in an iOS version in 2016 and then a slightly different version was found on Android.
- Pegasus spyware is able to read the victim's SMS messages and emails, listen to calls, take screenshots, record keystrokes, and access contacts and browser history.
- Hackers can hijack the phone's microphone and camera, turning it into a real-time surveillance device.
- Pegasus can send back to the hacker the target's private data, including contact lists, calendar events, passwords, text messages, and live voice calls from popular mobile messaging apps".

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program

- A federal court in Texas has caused a stir in the United States by finding that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme, which was launched by former President Barack Obama in 2012, is unlawful since it was never formally recognised by Congress.

About DACA:

- The DACA programme is a US immigration policy that provides more rights to immigrants who were brought into the country illegally as youngsters. They can apply for a two-year deferred action from deportation under this programme, which is renewable.
- DACA recipients are also eligible for work permits in the United States.
- The DACA program doesn't provide a pathway to citizenship. Instead, it is a way of fending off the fear of deportation for those who entered illegally as minors.
- Texas Judge Hansen has not ruled for those currently on DACA lists to lose their status but he has been able to prevent new applications from being processed.

20th JULY 2021

US, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan to form QUAD group

- The US, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan have agreed in principle to establish a new quadrilateral diplomatic platform focused on enhancing regional connectivity.
- The parties consider long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan critical to regional connectivity and agree that peace and regional connectivity are mutually reinforcing.
- This QUAD group was announced by the administration of Biden.

Key Points:

- All four nations- the US, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan intend to cooperate to expand trade, build transit links and strengthen business-to-business ties, recognising the historic opportunity to open flourishing interregional trade routes.
- The representatives from the four nations will be meeting in the coming months to determine the modalities of the cooperation with mutual consensus.
- The new diplomatic platform will work to expand trade, build transit links and strengthen business-to-business ties.

NOTE:

The four nations have agreed to meet in the coming few months to chalk out the various modalities of this QUAD cooperation with mutual consensus.

New PM of Nepal: Sher Bahadur Deuba

- Nepal's new Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba sprang a surprise on Sunday by seeking a vote of confidence in the reinstated lower House of Representatives and comfortably won it, averting a general election in the Himalayan nation amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Points

- Sher Bahadur Deuba has previously held the office four times and has won 165 votes (136 votes required) with 83 votes going against him.
- In the month of July, the Supreme Court ordered Deuba to replace K.P. Sharma Oli.
- Deuba faces the immediate task of controlling the spread of COVID-19 and procuring vaccines for the citizens of Nepal.

FSSAI proposed conditional licensing for proprietary foods

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has floated a consultation paper proposing to bring in a conditional licensing framework for proprietary food products.
- In its consultation paper, the FSSAI said that it has come across instances where food manufacturers apply for licenses for proprietary food products which “closely mimic” products for which standards have been prescribed.

Key Points:

- According to FSSAI, lack of explicit law or guidelines for proprietary food has led to “loose compliance requirements” for the manufacturers.
- Proprietary food products are those products for which no identity standards have been set under the existing regulations but are manufactured using permitted ingredients and additives.
- These are usually products with unique formulations that enable companies to offer differentiated products to consumers. In the past few years, the regulator has also been adding new standards in various categories such as beverages products such as carbonated fruit beverages and energy drinks — which were earlier considered proprietary food.
- Nutraceuticals, health supplements, foods for special medical purposes, functional foods or novel foods do not come under the purview of proprietary foods category.

About FSSAI

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was formed in the year 2011 and it is a statutory body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.

- FSSAI is responsible for promoting and protecting public health through its supervision and regulation activities.
- The current Chairperson of FSSAI is Rita Teatota.

21st JULY 2021

Tripura to promote commercial cultivation of agar

- Tripura has initiated steps to promote commercial cultivation of Agar. Agar is used in perfumes and other industries.
- The government of Tripura has taken initiatives to promote commercial cultivation of Agar trees and has set a target of achieving Rs 2,000 crore business from this sector in the coming three years.

Key Points:

- Tripura expects to export 75,000 kg of Agar chips and 1,500 kg of Agar oil in the current financial year. The state has over 50 lakh trees available in the state.
- Tripura government has come up with Tripura AgarWood Policy 2021', which proposes to double agarwood plantation by 2025. The state had a potential agar trade of Rs 2000 crore.
- The Chief Minister of Tripura had also requested PM Modi for fixing a quota on Agarwood exportation and its products.

NOTE:

Agar (*Aquilaria malaccensis*) is an evergreen tree that grows in abundance in the state of Tripura. The state's forest department has said that this species has a huge potential of creating an economic revolution in the state after bamboo, rubber and other major forestry crops.

India's first monk fruit

- The 'monk fruit' from China, which is known for its properties as a non-caloric natural sweetener, was introduced for field trials in Himachal Pradesh.
- It is conducted by the Palampur-based Council of Scientific Research and Industrial Technology-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT) in Kullu.



Key Points

- Monk fruit is known for its properties as a non-caloric natural sweetener.
- Field trials have begun three years after CSIR-IHBT imported its seeds from China and grew it in house.
- Flowering pattern, pollination behaviour and fruit setting time were also documented in order to draw complete life-cycles of monk fruit in agro-climatic conditions of the region.
- Monk fruit is “a perennial crop”. It has a lifespan of four to five years. It prefers mountainous areas having an annual mean temperature of 16–20°C and humid conditions.



- Monk fruit (*siraitia grosvenorii*), is known for its intensely sweet taste. It is used as a non-caloric natural sweetener.
- The sweet taste of monk fruit is because of the content of a group of cucurbitane-type triterpene glycosides called mogrosides.

