



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

NOVEMBER, 2021

Week-1

1-7 Nov, 2021

★★ Useful for ★★

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

1st NOVEMBER 2021

"World Heritage Forests: Carbon sinks under pressure" Report

- UNESCO, World Resources Institute (WRI) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) released World Heritage forests: Carbon sinks under pressure report.
- It provides the first global scientific assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and sequestration by forests in UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Key Findings:

- The overall network of 257 forests in World Heritage sites, played a vital role in mitigating climate change, by absorbing 190 million tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere every year. That's roughly half of the United Kingdom's annual CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels.
- The combined area of 69 million hectares is roughly twice the size of Germany, are biodiversity-rich ecosystems. In addition to absorbing CO₂ from the atmosphere, they also store substantial amounts of carbon.
- The majority of the World Heritage forest carbon is stored in tropical sites. Forests contribute to the global climate system by both emitting and absorbing carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere.
- Over the past 20 years, World Heritage sites lost 3.5 million hectares of forest (an area larger than Belgium) and forests in 10 World Heritage sites emitted more carbon than they absorbed.
- India's Sundarbans National Park is among five sites that have the highest blue carbon stocks globally.

10 World Heritage Natural sites:

1. Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (Indonesia)
2. Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras)
3. Yosemite National Park (US)
4. Waterton Glacier International Peace Park (Canada, US)

5. Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains (South Africa)
6. Kinabalu Park (Malaysia)
7. Uvs Nuur Basin (Russian Federation, Mongolia)
8. Grand Canyon National Park (US)
9. Greater Blue Mountains Area (Australia)
10. Morne Trois Pitons National Park (Dominica)

NOTE:

- A World Heritage site is classified as a natural or man-made area or a structure that is of international importance, and a space which requires special protection.
- These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO.

Section 124A IPC: Sedition Law

- The Uttar Pradesh government recently directed state police to file sedition charges against those celebrating Pakistan's victory over India in the recent T20 World Cup match.
- The sedition charge under IPC Section 124-A has now been added against the students and they earlier faced charges under IPC Sections 153-A (promoting enmity between groups), 505 (1) (B) (with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to any section of the public) and 66-F of the Information Technology Act.

About Sedition Law:

- The sedition law, enshrined in Section 124A of IPC, was introduced by the British government in 1870 to tackle dissent against colonial rule.
- The original draft of the IPC, which was enacted in 1860, did not consist of this law and the Section was drafted by Thomas Babington Macaulay in 1970.
- Section 124A of the IPC has its utility in combating anti-national, secessionist and terrorist elements. It protects the elected government from attempts to overthrow the government with violence and illegal means.

Pegasus Panel

- **Context:** The Supreme Court has set up a panel to investigate allegations of potential surveillance of mobile phones using the Pegasus spyware.
- Under the case, the Union Government is alleged to have used spyware for surveillance on private citizens.
- The government's inaction to file a detailed response to the allegations made by the petitioners.
- The court has set seven terms of reference for the committee, which are essential facts that need to be ascertained to decide the issue.
- These range from determining who procured Pegasus and whether the petitioners in the case were indeed targeted by the use of the software.

About Pegasus Software:

- Pegasus was developed by the Israeli firm NSO Group that was set up in 2010.
- Pegasus infect phones through what is called spear-phishing. Spear phishing is a fraudulent practices of sending emails ostensibly from a known or trusted sender
- Pegasus attack capabilities have become more advanced and can be achieved through so-called "Zero-click" attacks, which do not require any interaction from the phone's owner in order to succeed.

2nd NOVEMBER 2021

Draft National Water Policy (NWP)

- **Context:** The new National Water Policy (NWP) calls for a multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder approach to water management.
- In November 2019, the Ministry of Jal Shakti had set up a committee to draft the new National Water Policy (NWP). This was the first time that the government asked a committee of independent experts to draft the policy.

About Draft New National Water Policy (NWP)

- Draft New National Water Policy (NWP) has been submitted to the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Two Major Recommendations of the proposed NWP:
 - Shift focus from endlessly increasing the supply of water towards measures for demand management. This means diversifying our cropping pattern to include less water-intensive crops, in line with regional agroecology.
 - Shift in focus within the supply-side also because the country is running out of sites for further construction of large dams, while water tables and groundwater quality are falling in many areas.

About National Water Policy 2012:

- The NWP currently in force was drafted in 2012 and is the third such policy since 1987.
- Among the major policy innovations in the 2012 policy was the concept of an Integrated Water Resources Management approach that took the "river basin/sub-basin" as a unit for planning, development and management of water resources.
- It states that the land, soil, energy and water management with scientific inputs should be used to evolve different agricultural strategies and improve soil and water productivity to manage droughts.

'Time for India' Drive

- Sweden set to launch the 'Time for India' drive as a trade promotion event to boost bilateral trade.
- Under it, there shall be no requirement for vaccination for entry nor will there be a quarantine regime in place. But travellers need to take a COVID-19 test on arrival.

India-Sweden Relations

- The two nations enjoy a cordial relationship and excellent cooperation in regional and international fora. Sweden supports India's membership in the expanded United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

- Sweden participated in the First India Nordic-Baltic Conclave co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar in November 2020.
- India is Sweden's 19th largest export market and third-largest trade partner after China and Japan in Asia.
- Trade-in goods and services have increased from USD 3 billion (2016) to USD 4.5 billion (2019).
- The main Swedish exports to India are communication equipment, motor vehicles, paper & pulp products, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and engineering products.
- Sweden congratulated India on its eighth term as an elected member of the UN Security Council for 2021-2022.
- The characteristic mutations were S: A222V on the spike protein; and Y145H, which were mutations in the N terminal domain or the region of the coronavirus that doesn't bind to the human cells.

About INSACOG:

- Indian SARSCoV2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG) was established by MOHFW in Dec 2020. It is a consortium of 10 labs across the country tasked with scanning COVID19 samples from swathes of patients and flagging the presence of variants that were known to have spiked transmission internationally.
- It aims to monitor the genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 on a regular basis through a multi-laboratory network.

NOTE:

India had proposed the idea of the first nordic summit, which was held in 2018. Nordic countries include Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland.

3rd NOVEMBER 2021

Krishi UDAN 2.0

- The Minister of Civil Aviation released Krishi UDAN 2.0. to facilitate and incentivize the movement of Agri-produce by air transportation.

AY4.2 : A New Coronavirus Variant

- The latest mutation of the coronavirus variant, AY4.2 is "very infrequent" in India, according to a report by the India SARS-CoV-2 Genome Consortium (INSACOG).
- Delta (B.1.617.2) and its related sublineages (AY that numbered till 35) continues to be the main Variant of Concern (VOC) in India.

About AY4.2

- It has been linked to a rise in cases in the United Kingdom.
- It is also present in multiple other countries and is seen in travellers to the U.K. from a large number of countries.
- It is not clear where AY4.2 originated or when.
- This lineage of the coronavirus has the mutations of Delta (the dominant global variant)and AY.4(a sub-lineage).

Key Points:

- Krishi UDAN 2.0. was formulated with support from AAICLAS - a 100% subsidiary of the Airports Authority of India and Invest India, India's national Investment Promotion & Facilitation Agency, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It lays out the vision of improving value realization through better integration and optimization of Agri-harvesting and air transportation.
- It aims to contribute to Agri-value chain sustainability and resilience under different and dynamic conditions.
- E-KUSHAL (Krishi Udaan for Sustainable Holistic Agri-Logistics) platform proposed to develop that will facilitate information dissemination to all the stakeholders.

About Krishi UDAN scheme

- The Minister of Civil Aviation launched the Krishi Udan scheme to assist farmers in transporting agricultural products so that it improves their "value realisation".
- It was launched on international and national routes.
- This will immensely help improve value realisation (on agricultural products), especially in the north-east and tribal districts
- Under the scheme, financial incentives in terms of concessions from the Centre, state governments and airport operators are extended to selected airlines to encourage operations from unserved and underserved airports and keep airfares affordable.

Autosomal DNA

- A technique based on 'Autosomal DNA' has been used for the first time to identify the great-grandson and closest living relative of Sitting Bull.

Key Points:

- Autosomal DNA is a term used in genetic genealogy to describe DNA that is inherited from the autosomal chromosomes. An autosome is any of the numbered chromosomes, as opposed to the sex chromosomes.
- A person inherits half of autosomal DNA from the father and a half from the mother which means genetic matches can be checked irrespective of whether an ancestor is on the father or mother's side of the family
- The autosomal DNA technique can be used even when very limited genetic data are available.
- Autosomal DNA tests can be used to confirm relationships with a high level of accuracy for parent/child relationships and all relationships up to the second cousin level.

NOTE:

Sitting Bull is a prominent 19th-century Native American leader. He is most famous for his victory over US General George Armstrong Custer in the Battle of the Little Bighorn River in 1876.

Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)

- NITI Aayog suggests extending Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) coverage to 'missing middle'.
- The report has recommended three models for increasing the health insurance coverage in the country.

Key Highlights:

- The AB-PMJAY and State Government extension schemes provide comprehensive hospitalization cover to the bottom 50% population (70 crore individuals).
- The report has recommended three models for increasing the health insurance coverage in the country.
 - The first model focuses on increasing consumer awareness of health insurance.
 - The second model is about developing a modified, standardized health insurance product like 'Arogya Sanjeevani'
 - The third model expands government-subsidized health insurance through the PMJAY scheme to a wider set of beneficiaries. This model can be utilized for segments that remain uncovered Due to limited ability to pay for the voluntary contributory models.

About AB-PMJAY

- Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) offers a sum insured of Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care as well as tertiary care.
- Cashless and paperless access to services is provided to the beneficiaries at the point of service.
- The Health Benefits Packages covers surgery, medical and daycare treatments, the cost of medicines and diagnostics.
- Beneficiaries will be identified by the latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data.
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- The Nodal Agency National Health Authority (NHA).

4th NOVEMBER 2021

Personal Data Protection (PDP) Law

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has asked for exemption from the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Law.
- The UIDAI demanded that it should get a blanket exemption from the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Law.

Key Features of Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill 2019:

- **Categorisation of Data:** Constitute 3 types of user data: Sensitive, Critical and General.
- **Concept of Data Principle:** Gives data principle right over his/her personal data & how it can be utilised.
- **Right to Forgotten:** This allows an individual to remove consent for data collection and disclosure.
- **Exemptions:** Government is qualified to obtain the data for research or on national security concerns.
- **The setting of Independent Regulator:** Data protection Authority (DPA) to safeguard the interest and check misuse of data.
- **Data Protection Officer (DPO):** Each company will have a DPO in which to work in liaison with the Data Protection Authority (DPA).
- **User Verification Mechanism:** Social media companies need to develop UVM based on the severity of data.
- **Data Localisation Norms:** Non-personal data can be stored and processed outside but personal data within the Indian territory.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has issued the notification for draft amendments to Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016, and invited feedback.

Key Highlights of the Amendment Bill, 2021

- **Empowerment of District Magistrate :** It authorises District Magistrate including Additional District Magistrate to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act, in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.
- **Child Welfare Committees (CWCs):** The eligibility parameters for the appointment of CWC members have been redefined. The Act provides that states must constitute one or more CWCs for each district for dealing with children in need of care and protection.
- **Adoption:** Under the Act, once prospective adoptive parents accept a child, an adoption agency files an application in a civil court to obtain the adoption order.
- **Serious offences:** The Act provides that the Juvenile Justice Board will inquire about a child who is accused of a serious offence. Serious offences are those for which the punishment is imprisonment between three to seven years.
- **Designated Court:** The Act provides that offences against children that are punishable with imprisonment of more than seven years will be tried in the Children's Court (equivalent to a Sessions Court).
- **Appeals:** The Bill provides that any person aggrieved by an adoption order passed by the district magistrate may file an appeal before the Divisional Commissioner, within 30 days of such order.
- **Offences against children:** The Act provides that an offence under the Act, which is punishable with imprisonment between three to seven years, will be cognizable (where the arrest is allowed without a warrant) and non-bailable.

Movement against Biological Invasion (MABI)

- A biologist from the Agharkar Research Institute (Pune) has started an initiative called MABI (Movement against Biological Invasion).

- MABI is a green movement aimed at systematically charting and rooting out Invasive Alien Species (IAS). It aims to promote the conservation of native flora in the face of this mushrooming challenge.

About Invasive Alien Species

- An alien species is a species introduced outside its natural past or present distribution; if this species becomes problematic, it is termed an invasive alien species.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines invasive alien species as “an alien species whose introduction and spread threaten ecosystems, habitats, or species with socio-cultural, economic and environmental harm and harm to human health”.
- Invasive alien species are such a problem that Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 and one clause of UN Sustainable Development Goal 15 – Life on Land specifically address the issue.

5th NOVEMBER 2021

"Dairy Sahakar" Scheme

- Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation launched the "Dairy Sahakar" scheme at Anand, Gujarat, during the function organised by Amul for the celebration of the 75th Foundation Year of Amul.

Key Points:

- The Dairy Sahakar with a total investment of Rs 5000 crore will be implemented by NCDC under the Ministry of Cooperation to realize the vision, “from cooperation to prosperity”.
- Under the scheme, financial support will be extended by NCDC to eligible cooperatives for activities such as Bovine development, Milk procurement, Processing, Quality assurance, Value addition, Branding, Packaging, Marketing, Transportation and storage of milk and milk products.
- Exports of dairy products within the overall objectives of "Doubling the farmer's income" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

- There will also be a convergence with various schemes of Government of India and/or of State Government/UT Administration/ Development agencies/ bilateral/multilateral assistance/ CSR mechanism is encouraged
- The scheme will supplement the existing efforts for strengthening the dairy sector in the country.

G20 Summit 2021

- World leaders participated in the recently held G20 Summit in Rome, Italy. During the summit, the leaders adopted the Rome Declaration and emphasised Covid-19 immunisation across the globe.

Key Highlights:

- The 2021 G20 Rome summit was the sixteenth meeting of the Group of Twenty (G20).
- The world leaders had elaborate deliberations on issues of global importance like fighting the pandemic, improving health infrastructure, boosting economic cooperation and furthering innovation.
- **Adopted the 'Rome Declaration':** The Rome Declaration consists of 16 mutually agreed principles, which aims to guide joint action for preventing future health crises and to build a safer, equitable and sustainable world.
- The countries agreed that the COVID-19 immunisation is a global public good. Agreement on strengthening the World Health Organisation to fast-track the process for emergency use authorisation for Covid-19 vaccines.
- G-20 countries committed to ending international financing for all new coal plants by the end of 2021.

About G-20 Group:

- The G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- The members of the G20 are USA, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, EU, Germany, France, UK, Italy, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Turkey; India, Indonesia, Australia, Russia, China, South Korea and Japan.

- It does not have any permanent secretariat or headquarters.
- The G20 Summit is formally known as the “Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy”.

Khasi Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021

- A district autonomous council in Meghalaya announced that it would introduce the ‘Khasi Inheritance of Property Bill, 2021. It aimed at “equitable distribution” of parental property among siblings in the Khasi community.

Key Provisions

- Firstly, the Equitable distribution of parental property among siblings both male and female. It aims at “economic empowerment based on the principle of equitable distribution of property”
- Secondly, the provision would let parents decide their will.
- Thirdly, the bill would prevent a sibling from getting parental property, if they marry a non-Khasi and accept the spouse’s customs and culture.
- If implemented, the proposed Bill would modify an age-old customary practice of inheritance of the matrilineal Khasi tribe.
- The Bill is yet to be introduced in the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC), and its provisions have not been made public.

About Sixth Schedule:

- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution deals with the administration of the tribal areas in the four northeastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- The Governor is empowered to increase or decrease the areas or change the names of the autonomous districts.
- While executive powers of the Union extend in Scheduled areas with respect to their administration in Vth schedule, the VIth schedule areas remain within the executive authority of the state.

6th NOVEMBER 2021

UNFCCC COP 26

- **Context:** The COP 26 of United Nations Framework for Climate Change Conference was recently hosted in Glasgow. Here, India pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070.
- India is the third-largest emitter of carbon emissions annually but the sixth-largest when historical emissions are considered, and when accounting for the size of its population it is among the lowest per capita emitters.
- India will reach net-zero carbon emission by 2070. In contrast to India's run-up to the COP where it had strongly resisted demands by developed countries to take on net-zero targets.

About Conference of Parties (COP)

- The COP is the apex decision making authority that comes under the UNFCCC which was formed in 1994. The UNFCCC has the aim of stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- The UNFCCC has 198 parties. The Presidency of the COP normally rotates among the five United Nations regional groups.

NOTE:

Net zero emissions refer to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions removed from the atmosphere, through natural means or by using the still nascent carbon capture technology.

MGNREGA

- **Context:** The Centre has decided to scrap the system of caste-based wage payments in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme after complaints from State Governments.

Key Highlights:

- The Finance Ministry directed the Ministry of Rural Development to revert to the previous system of generating single muster, single Fund Transfer Order (FTO) and transferring money into a single National Electronic Fund Management System account.
- Now a newly revised accounting procedure will be implemented for the expenditure to be captured under three Minor Heads for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and others, through a single FTO.

About MGNREGA:

- **Mandate:** The mandate of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- **Objectives:** Providing not less than one hundred days of unskilled manual work as guaranteed employment in a financial year to every household in rural areas as per demand.
- It is implemented in all rural districts of the country.
- Gram Sabha determines the order of priority of works in the meetings of the Gram Sabha keeping in view the potential of the local area, its needs, and local resources.
- The Act provides a legal right to employment for adult members of rural households.

One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG)

- **Context:** Recently, an initiative was announced by India and the United Kingdom to tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders. They call for 'One Sun, One World, One Grid' to improve the viability of solar power.

Key Points:

- It was announced on the second day of the COP26. The focus is to improve the viability of solar power.
- This brings together the International Solar Alliance and the UK's green grid initiative and complements India's focus on harnessing the sun's energy.
- The grid will be set up over the next few years by the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

About One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) Initiative:

- The concept of a single global grid for solar was first outlined at the First Assembly of the ISA in late 2018.
- It envisions building and scaling inter-regional energy grids to share solar energy across the globe, leveraging the differences of time zones, seasons, resources, and prices between countries and regions.
- It includes a group of governments called the Green Grids Initiative — One Sun One World One Grid group — and was announced at COP26 by summit host United Kingdom's Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Green Grids Initiative Working Groups: It has been made up of national and international agencies that have already been established for Africa and for the Asia-Pacific region. Their membership includes most major multilateral development banks, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

7th NOVEMBER 2021

Whistleblower Portal

- Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has launched a 'Whistle-blower Portal', as a part of 'Vigilance Awareness Week 2021'.

Key Points:

- IREDA is a PSU under the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE). The latest issue of Vigilance journal 'Pahal' was also released by IREDA.

- Through this portal, IREDA employees can raise concerns related to fraud, corruption, abuse of The whistle-blower portal is a part of IREDA's "zero tolerance" of corruption. IREDA has a Good and Clean Governance policy that stresses the importance of transparency and procedural fairness.

About Whistleblowing:

- According to the Companies Act, whistleblowing is an action aimed at drawing the attention of stakeholders to instances of unethical practices in an organization.
- The Law Commission of India in 2001, recommended that, In order to eliminate corruption, a law to protect whistleblowers was necessary. It had drafted a bill as well to address this issue.
- In simple words, A whistleblower can be anyone who chooses to expose wrong practices and has evidence to support the allegations.
- The RTI Act, 2005 is a 'twin sister' of whistleblowing. The Act can expose illegal activities.

Oromo Rebels

- **Context:** Ethiopia rebels 'join forces' against govt. The two largest rebel groups fighting Ethiopia's government have "linked up" on a front line about 230 miles north of the capital.
- Ethiopia is now at crossroads with two forces, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) waging an endless war with the federal government led by Abiy Ahmed.
- The war has escalated especially out of the Tigray region and is now becoming a national concern.
- Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was formed as a guerrilla army to fight against Ethiopia's former communist regime. Both the TPLF and OLA were designated terrorist organizations by the government soon after the war began.

About Oromo people

- The Oromo people are an ethnic group who predominantly inhabit Oromia and Ethiopia, along

with communities in neighboring Kenya and Somalia. They are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa.

- The Oromo remained independent until the last decade of the 19th century, when they were colonised by Abyssinia.

Adi Shankaracharya

- **Context:** The Prime Minister unveiled a 12-foot statue of Adi Shankaracharya at Kedarnath, where the acharya is believed to have attained samadhi at the age of 32 in the ninth century.
- Adi Shankaracharya is called as a reincarnation of Lord Shiva. He is a remarkable saga of travel and adventure, philosophical inquiry, conflicts in faith, exegesis, the establishment of lineage, organisation and mobilisation, etc.

About Adi Shankaracharya

- Adi Shankaracharya was born in 788 AD. Adi Shankara is said to have been born in Kaladi village on the bank of the Periyar, the largest river in Kerala.
- He left home very early in search of learning and to become a sanyasi.
- In a lifespan of just 32 years, he is said to have visited all the important spiritual centres of the time — from Kanchi (Kancheepuram) to Kamrup (Assam), and Kashmir and the Kedar and Badri dhams, as well as Sringeri, Ujjain, Kashi, Puri, and Joshimath.
- He is believed to have established the ritual practices at the Badri and Kedar dhams, and to have debated with tantrics in Srinagar.

