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DAILY NEWS DIARY

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FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
- To have a bank of mains questions.
- And interesting to read.
- Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

Enjoy reading.

THE HINDU - TH
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ESSAY PAPER

Editorial

Q) “New form of ‘Gandhian’ democratic socialism, powered by cooperative economic enterprises, is required in the 21st century.” Comment.

Context:

Inequalities of wealth have increased around the world and India is becoming one of the world’s most unequal countries.

Impact of globalization and privatization on economic distress:

Economic despair is feeding the rise of authoritarianism, nationalism, and identity politics. Opening national borders to free trade became an ideology in economics in the last 30 years. Taxes of incomes and wealth at the top were also reduced. The ideological justification was that the animal spirits of ‘wealth creators’ must not be dampened. With higher taxes until the 1970s, the U.S. and many countries in Europe had built up their public health and education infrastructure and strengthened social security systems. The rich are now being taxed much less than they were. The pie has grown larger but the richest few have been eating, and hoarding, most of it themselves.

‘Privatisation’ of everything became another ideological imperative in economics by the turn of the century. Selling off public enterprises raises resources for funds-starved governments. Another justification is efficiency in delivery of services, setting aside ethical questions of equity. When ‘public’ is converted to ‘private’, rich people can buy what they need. The gaps between the haves and the have-nots become larger.

Role of liberal economic policies in creating illiberal societies:

- Liberal economists, promoting free markets, free trade, and privatisation, are worried by nationalism and authoritarian governments.
- They rail against “populist” policies of governments that subsidise the poor and adopt industrial strategies for self-reliance and jobs for their citizens.
- Liberals must re-examine their ideas of economics, to understand their own culpability in creating authoritarian and identitarian politics.

Failure of capitalism and communism:

While communism had lifted living standards, and the health and education of masses of poorer people faster than capitalism could, communism’s solution to the “property” question — that there should be no private property — was a failure. It deprived people of personal liberties.

Capitalism's solution to the property problem — replacing all publicly owned enterprises with privately owned ones (and reducing taxes on wealth and high incomes) has not worked either. It has denied many of their basic human needs of health, education and social security, and equal opportunities for their children. The private property solution has also harmed the natural environment.

Way forward

Climate change and political rumblings around the world are both warnings that capitalism needs reform. Economic policies must be based on new ideas. Policymakers in India must lead the world out of the rut of ideas in which it seems to be trapped. Principles of human rights must not be overpowered by property rights. A new form of "Gandhian" democratic socialism, powered by cooperative economic enterprises, is required in the 21st century, to create wealth at the bottom, not only at the top, and save humanity and the planet.

SNIPPETS

GS-2

❖ POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Q) WHAT IS NEAT 3.0?

Context:

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has announced a new National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT 3.0) to use technology for better learning outcomes in Higher Education.

Key Points

- **Model of NEAT Scheme:** It is based on a Public-Private Partnership model between the Government and the Education Technology (Ed-Tech) companies of India.
- **Objective:** The objectives of NEAT are to bring the best technological solutions in education pedagogy on a single platform for the convenience of Economically and Socially weaker sections of society.
- **Target Areas:** Technology solutions using Artificial Intelligence for customized learning or e-content in niche areas having highly employable skills are being identified for showcasing on the portal.
- **Modus Operandi:** Under this, the government plans to distribute free coupons for an array of courses offered by ed-tech companies.
- **Implementing Agency:** All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

❖ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Q) Explain the significance of the currency swap between India and Sri Lanka.

Context:

India has confirmed a \$400 million currency swap with Sri Lanka while deferring another \$500 million due for settlement to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU).

Sri Lanka is facing a severe dollar crunch that economist say might lead to a default on external debt and create a food shortage in the imports-reliant island nation. In this regard, the Reserve Bank of India has extended currency swap facilities of \$900 million to Sri Lanka.

About Currency Swaps:

- ✦ A currency swap, also known as a cross-currency swap, is an off-balance sheet transaction in which two parties exchange principal and interest in different currencies.
- ✦ Currency swaps are used to obtain foreign currency loans at a better interest rate than could be got by borrowing directly in a foreign market.
- ✦ In a swap arrangement, RBI would provide dollars to a Lankan central bank, which, at the same time, provides the equivalent funds in its currency to the RBI, based on the market exchange rate at the time of the transaction.
- ✦ The parties agree to swap back these quantities of their two currencies at a specified date in the future, which could be the next day or even three months later, using the same exchange rate as in the first transaction.
- ✦ These swap operations carry no exchange rate or other market risks, as transaction terms are set in advance.

Advantages of Currency Swaps:

- The absence of an exchange rate risk is the major benefit of such a facility.
- This facility provides the flexibility to use these reserves at any time in order to maintain an appropriate level of balance of payments or short-term liquidity.
- Swaps agreements between governments also have supplementary objectives like the promotion of bilateral trade, maintaining the value of foreign exchange reserves with the central bank and ensuring financial stability (protecting the health of the banking system).

GS-3

❖ ENVIRONMENT

Q.1) Assess the major findings of the India State of Forest Report, 2021.

Context:

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) released the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021. The report showed a continuing increase in forest cover across the country, but experts flagged some of its other aspects as causes for concern, such as a decline in forest cover in the Northeast, and a degradation of natural forests.

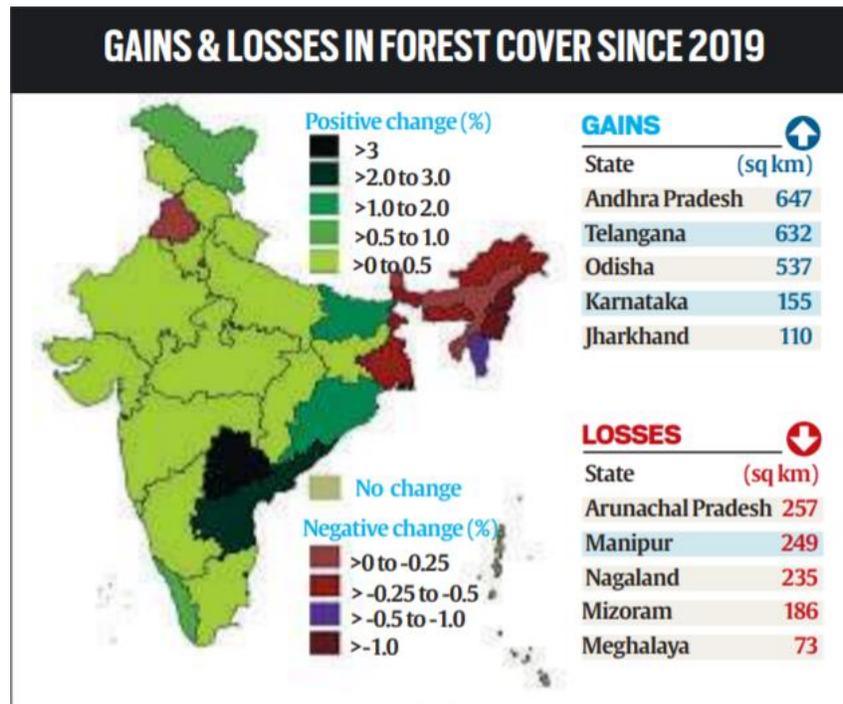
Significance of the ISFR: ISFR is an assessment of India's forest and tree cover, published every two years by the Forest Survey of India under the MoEFCC.

- The first survey was published in 1987, and ISFR 2021 is the 17th.
- It compiles data computed through wall-to-wall mapping of India's forest cover through remote sensing techniques.
- It is used in planning and formulation of policies in forest management as well as forestry and agroforestry sectors.

Major findings of the ISFR 2021:

- ISFR 2021 has found that the forest and tree cover in the country continues to increase with an additional cover of 1,540 square kilometres over the past two years.
- India's forest cover is now 7,13,789 square kilometres, 21.71% of the country's geographical area, an increase from 21.67% in 2019. Tree cover has increased by 721 sq km.
- Bamboo forests have grown from 13,882 million culms (stems) in 2019 to 53,336 million culms in 2021.
- The states that have shown the highest increase in forest cover are Telangana (3.07%), Andhra Pradesh (2.22%) and Odisha (1.04%).
- Mangroves have shown an increase of 17 sq km. India's total mangrove cover is now 4,992 sq km.
- The Northeast states account for 7.98% of total geographical area but 23.75% of total forest cover.
- The total carbon stock in country's forests is estimated at 7,204 million tonnes, an increase of 79.4 million tonnes since 2019.

- Five states in the Northeast – Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland have all shown loss in forest cover.



Raising concerns in Northeastern Region:

1. The report has attributed the decline in the NE states to a spate of natural calamities, particularly landslides and heavy rains, in the region as well as to anthropogenic activities.
2. Experts say that this loss is of great concern as the Northeastern states are repositories of great biodiversity. While natural calamities may have led to much of the loss, the declining forests will in turn increase the impact of landslides.
3. It will also impact water catchment in the region, which is already seeing degradation of its water resources.
4. Unlike other states, where forests are clearly managed by the forest department and state governments, the Northeastern states follow a different ownership pattern – community ownership and protected tribal land—which makes conservation activities challenging.

New Features of ISFR 2021:

- ✓ ISFR 2021 has some new features. It has for the first time assessed forest cover in tiger reserves, tiger corridors and the Gir forest which houses the Asiatic lion.
- ✓ The forest cover in tiger corridors has increased by 37.15 sq km (0.32%) between 2011-2021 but decreased by 22.6 sq km (0.04%) in tiger reserves.
- ✓ Buxa, Anamalai and Indravati reserves have shown an increase in forest cover while the highest losses have been found in Kawal, Bhadra and the Sunderbans reserves.
- ✓ Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh has the highest forest cover, at nearly 97%.

Impact of Climate change and Forest fires:

- ✦ The report estimates that by 2030, 45-64% of forests in India will experience the effects of climate change and rising temperatures, and forests in all states will be highly vulnerable climate hot spots. Ladakh (forest cover 0.1-0.2%) is likely to be the most affected.
- ✦ India's forests are already showing shifting trends of vegetation types, such as Sikkim, which has shown a shift in its vegetation pattern for 124 endemic species.
- ✦ The survey has found that 35.46 % of the forest cover is prone to forest fires. Out of this, 2.81% is extremely prone, 7.85% is very highly prone and 11.51 % is highly prone.
- ✦ The highest numbers of fires were detected in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Conclusion:

- Experts say the survey results could be misleading as it includes plantations – such as coffee, coconuts or mango and other orchards – under forest cover. These plantations are distinctly different from natural forests where one hectare would be home to hundreds of species of trees, plants and fauna, whereas such plantations house only one species of tree. The forest survey is carried out as an assessment of India's biodiversity, but such an overarching survey does not meet that objective.

**Q) Consider the following statements:**

- A. ISRO Headquarters are located at Antariksh Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- B. The first Indian satellite, Aryabhata, was built by the ISRO and launched with the help of the US in 1975.
- C. ISRO was formed in 1962 with a vision to develop and harness space technology in national development, while pursuing planetary exploration and space science research.
- D. ISRO replaced its predecessor, INCOSPAR (Indian National Committee for Space Research).

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) B and D
- b) A and C
- c) A, B and C
- d) B, C and D



Q) Which of the following operates on “Fire and Forget” principle?

- a) INS Vishakapatnam
- b) BrahMos
- c) Dhanush
- d) Prithvi-III

Answer: b

Explanation:

- BrahMos is a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation of India (DRDO) and the NPOM of Russia.
- BrahMos is named on the rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva.
- It is a two-stage (solid propellant engine in the first stage and liquid ramjet in second) missile.
- It is a multiplatform missile i.e it can be launched from land, air, and sea and multi capability missile with pinpoint accuracy that works in both day and night irrespective of the weather conditions.
- It operates on the "Fire and Forgets" principle i.e it does not require further guidance after launch.
- Brahmos is one of the fastest cruise missile currently operationally deployed with speed of Mach 2.8, which is nearly 3 times more than the speed of sound.

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