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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 26

- BENGAL FLORICAN
- G7 DIGITAL TRADE PRINCIPLES
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SCAN TO EXPLORE





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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR PRELIMS VOL - 26

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GOVERNANCE**1) AYUSHMAN BHARAT HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE MISSION**

IN NEWS: - The Prime Minister launched the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission.

ABOUT AYUSHMAN BHARAT HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE MISSION

- It is one of the largest pan-India schemes for strengthening healthcare infrastructure across the country.
- It is in addition to the National Health Mission.
- It will provide support to 17,788 rural Health and Wellness Centres in 10 'high focus' states and establish 11,024 urban Health and Wellness Centres across the country.
- Through this, critical care services will be available in all the districts of the country with more than five lakh population through exclusive critical care hospital blocks, while the remaining districts will be covered through referral services.
- Under the scheme, a national institution for one health, four new national institutes for virology, a regional research platform for WHO (World Health Organization) South East Asia Region, nine biosafety level-III laboratories, and five new regional national centres for disease control will be set up.

Objectives

- To ensure a robust public health infrastructure in both urban and rural areas, capable of responding to public health emergencies or disease outbreaks.
- To establish an IT-enabled disease surveillance system through a network of surveillance laboratories at block, district, regional and national levels.
- All the public health labs will be connected through the Integrated Health Information Portal, which will be expanded to all states and UTs.

ECONOMY

2) G7 DIGITAL TRADE PRINCIPLES

IN NEWS: - Recently, the Group of Seven (G7) wealthy nations agreed on a joint set of principles to govern cross-border data use and digital trade.

ABOUT G7 DIGITAL TRADE PRINCIPLES

The deal is a first step in reducing trade barriers, and could lead to a common rulebook of digital trade.

G7 Digital Trade Principles:

- **Open Digital Markets:** Digital and telecommunications markets should be competitive, transparent, fair, and accessible to international trade and investment.
- **Cross Border Data Flows:** To harness the opportunities of the digital economy and support the trade of goods and services, data should be able to flow freely across borders with trust, including the trust of individuals and businesses.
- **Safeguards for Workers, Consumers, and Businesses:** Labour protections must be in place for workers who are directly engaged in or support digital trade, providing decent conditions of work.
- **Digital Trading Systems:** To cut red tape and enable more businesses to trade, governments and industry should drive forward the digitisation of trade-related documents.
- **Fair and Inclusive Global Governance:** Common rules for digital trade should be agreed and upheld at the World Trade Organization (WTO). These rules should benefit workers, consumers, and businesses in developing economies, as well as those in developed economies, while safeguarding each country's right to regulate for legitimate public policy objectives.

DIGITAL TRADE

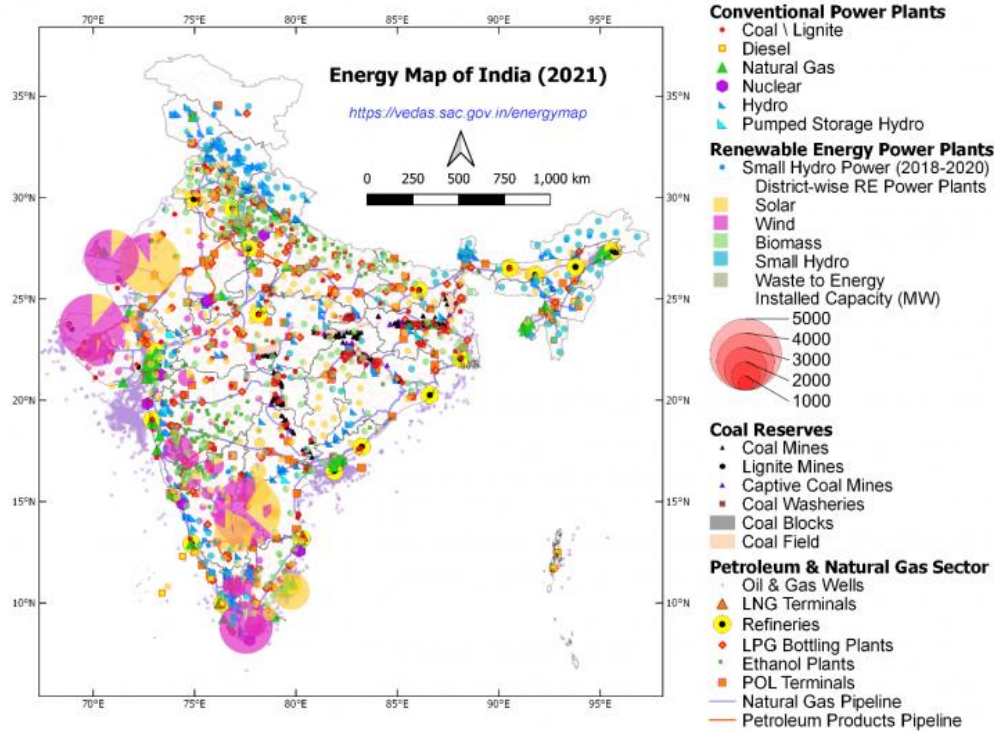
It is broadly defined as trade in goods and services that is either enabled or delivered digitally, encompassing activities from the distribution of films and TV to professional services.

3) GEOSPATIAL ENERGY MAP OF INDIA

IN NEWS: - NITI Aayog Launches Geospatial Energy Map of India.

ABOUT GEOSPATIAL ENERGY MAP OF INDIA

- Geospatial Energy Map, enables visualisation of energy installations such as conventional power plants, oil and gas wells, petroleum refineries, coal fields and coal blocks, district-wise data on renewable energy power plants and renewable energy resource potential, etc through 27 thematic layers.
- This comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) Energy Map of India has been developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- The GIS map provides a holistic picture of all energy resources of the country.
- The map attempts to identify and locate all primary and secondary sources of energy and their transportation/transmission networks to provide a comprehensive view of energy production and distribution in a country.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Consider the following statements

1. The comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) Energy Map of India has been developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with Indian Meteorological Organisation
2. The GIS map provides a holistic picture of all energy resources of the country.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - b

AGRICULTURE**4) UNITED NATIONS FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT**

IN NEWS: - The UN Food Systems Summit took place in New York. It will seek to set the stage for global food systems transformation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

ABOUT UNITED NATIONS FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT

- Originally announced on 16 October 2019 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the UN Food Systems Summit, including a Pre-Summit, was conceived following conversations with the joint leadership of the three Rome-based United Nations agencies – the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme – at the High-level Political Forum in July 2019.
- The Food Systems Summit is convened as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.
- The Summit will launch bold new actions to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems.
- Guided by five Action Tracks, the Summit will bring together key players from the worlds of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, as well as farmers.
- Five action areas to help inform the transitions needed to realise the vision of the 2030 agenda have emerged from the Summit process. These include:
 - Nourish all people.
 - Boost nature-based solutions.
 - Advance equitable livelihoods, decent work and empowered communities.
 - Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses.

- Support means of implementation.

FOOD SYSTEMS

The term “food system” refers to the constellation of activities involved in producing, processing, transporting and consuming food.

- Food systems touch every aspect of human existence.
- The health of our food systems profoundly affects the health of our bodies, as well as the health of our environment, our economies and our cultures.
- When they function well, food systems have the power to bring us together as families, communities and nations.

5) NATIONAL DIGITAL LIVESTOCK MISSION

IN NEWS: - The Union Minister of State Fisheries; Animal Husbandry & Dairying unveiled the National Digital Livestock Mission Blueprint

ABOUT NATIONAL DIGITAL LIVESTOCK MISSION

- The NDLM would be a digital platform developed by Dept. of Dairy and Animal Husbandry on the foundation of the existing Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health (INAPH).
- It aims to create a farmer-centric, technology-enabled ecosystem where the farmers are able to realize better income through livestock activities with the right information.
- The bedrock of NDLM will be the unique identification of all livestock, which will be the foundation for all the state and national level programmes including domestic and international trade.
- The farmers will be able to effortlessly access the markets, irrespective of their location or holdings through this digital platform as a wide-range of stake-holders will be connected in this ecosystem.
- This system will also include robust animal breeding systems, nutrition, disease surveillance, disease control programmes and a traceability mechanism for animals and animal products.

NATIONAL LIVESTOCK MISSION

- National Livestock Mission is an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- The mission, which commenced from 2014-15, has the objective of sustainable development of the livestock sector.
- NABARD is the subsidy channelising agency for following schemes, under Entrepreneurship Development & Employment Generation (EDEG) component of National Livestock Mission.
 - Poultry Venture Capital Fund (PVCF)
 - Integrated Development of Small Ruminants and Rabbit (IDSRR)
 - Pig Development (PD)
 - Salvaging and Rearing of Male Buffalo Calves (SRMBC)
 - Effective Animal Waste Management
 - Construction of Storage Facility for Feed and Fodder

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. National Livestock Mission is an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
2. The mission, which commenced from 2014-15, has the objective of sustainable development of the livestock sector.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - c

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**6) BHORAMDEO TIGER RESERVE**

IN NEWS: - The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) approved the Chhattisgarh government's proposal to declare the combined areas of the Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve.

ABOUT BHORAMDEO TIGER RESERVE

- The new Reserve is located in the northern part of Chattisgarh bordering Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- This will be the fourth Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh, after the Udanti-Sitanadi, Achanakmar, and Indravati Reserves.
- The proposal was considered under Section 38V(1) of The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- This section says that the State Government shall, on the recommendation of the Tiger Conservation Authority, notify an area as a tiger reserve.
- The Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary was identified as part of the Sarguja Jashpur Elephant Reserve in 2011.
- The Guru Ghasidas National Park used to be part of the Sanjay National Park in undivided Madhya Pradesh.
- Both were identified as reserve forests, and had been in line to be notified as Tiger Reserve since 2011.
- The constituent units of the new Tiger Reserve, Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary, are spread over 1,44,000 hectares (1,440 sq km) and 60,850 hectares (608.5 sq km) respectively.
- Guru Ghasidas National Park is in Koriya district; Tamor Pingla is in Surajpur district in the northwestern corner of Chhattisgarh.

7) DHOLE OR ASIATIC WILD DOG

IN NEWS: - A recent study has identified some priority talukas/tehsils where habitats can be consolidated to enhance population connectivity for the dhole or Asiatic Wild Dog (*Cuon alpinus*).

ABOUT DHOLE OR ASIATIC WILD DOG

- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule II (Absolute protection – offences under these are prescribed the highest penalties.)
- IUCN status: Endangered
- The dhole is a canid native to Central, South, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.
- India perhaps supports the largest number of dholes, with key populations found in three landscapes — Western Ghats, Central India and Northeast India.
- It is a highly social animal, living in large clans without rigid dominance hierarchies and containing multiple breeding females.
- Dholes play an important role as apex predators in forest ecosystems.
- Factors contributing to this decline include habitat loss, loss of prey, competition with other species, persecution due to livestock predation and disease transfer from domestic dogs.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The dhole is a canid native to Africa
2. Its IUCN status is Least Concern

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - d

8) KUNMING DECLARATION

IN NEWS: - The Kunming Declaration was adopted by over 100 countries at the first part of the ongoing virtual 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

ABOUT KUNMING DECLARATION

- It calls upon the parties to “mainstream” biodiversity protection in decision-making and recognise the importance of conservation in protecting human health.
- The theme of the declaration is Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth.
- By adopting this, the nations have committed themselves to support the development, adoption and implementation of an effective post-2020 implementation plan for the Cartagena Protocol on biosafety.
- Signatory nations will ensure that the post-pandemic recovery policies, programs and plans contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

- The CBD known informally as the Biodiversity Convention is a multilateral treaty.
- The convention has three main goals:
 - the conservation of biodiversity
 - the sustainable use of its components
 - the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources

- Its objective is to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and it is often seen as the key document regarding sustainable development.
- It has two supplementary agreements, the Cartagena Protocol and Nagoya Protocol.
 - Cartagena Protocol:- It is an international treaty governing the movements of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology from one country to another.
 - Nagoya Protocol:- It deals with Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS).

9) BENGAL FLORICAN

IN NEWS:-Environmentalists have recently written to the Assam government on the urgent need to prevent land-use changes at Kokilabari Seed Farm in the state to protect Bengal floricans and other species.

ABOUT BENGAL FLORICAN

- The Bengal florican, also called Bengal bustard, is a bustard species native to the Indian subcontinent, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
- Fewer than 1,000 individuals were estimated to be alive as of 2017.
- It has two disjunct populations, one in the Indian subcontinent, another in Southeast Asia.
- The former occurs from Uttar Pradesh (India) through the Terai of Nepal to Assam (where it is called ulu mora) and Arunachal Pradesh in India, and historically to Bangladesh.
- It has a very small, rapidly declining population largely as a result of the widespread loss of its grassland habitat.
- Conservation status
 - IUCN Red List Status: Critically Endangered

- CITES: Appendix I
- Wildlife Protection Act of India, 1972: Schedule I

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The Bengal florican, also called Bengal bustard, is a bustard species native to the Indian subcontinent, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
2. It is protected under schedule I of Wildlife Protection act 1972

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - c

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, DEFENSE AND SECURITY

10) YUDH ABHYAS 2021

IN NEWS:- The 17th edition of the India-U.S. bilateral exercise, Yudh Abhyas 2021, got underway in mountainous terrain and cold climate conditions of Alaska, US.

ABOUT YUDH ABHYAS 2021

- Exercise Yudh Abhyas is the largest running joint military training and defence cooperation endeavour between India and USA.
- The exercise aims at enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the two armies.
- Interestingly, this is the only India-U.S. service exercise continuing in bilateral format.
- The India-U.S. Malabar naval exercise became trilateral with the addition of Japan in 2015 and further brought in all the Quad partners together with the inclusion of Australia in 2020.

- Similarly, Japan joined the India-U.S. bilateral air exercise, Cope India, as an Observer in 2018 and the plan is to make it trilateral in phases.
- Other than Malabar, Japan had sent observers for the first time during Cope India as an Observer in 2018.

SOCIAL ISSUES

11) GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

IN NEWS: - India has slipped to 101st position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th.

ABOUT GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

- Annual Report jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.
- It was first produced in 2006. It is published every October. The 2021 edition marks the 16th edition of the GHI.
- Aim is to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels.
- It is calculated on the basis of four indicators:
 - Undernourishment: Share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.
 - Child Wasting: Share of children under age five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition.
 - Child Stunting: Share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.
 - Child Mortality: The mortality rate of children under the age of five.
- Based on the values of the four indicators, the GHI determines hunger on a 100-point scale where 0 is the best possible score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst.

- Each country's GHI score is classified by severity, from low to extremely alarming.
- Undernourishment data are provided by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and child mortality data are sourced from the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME).
- Child wasting and stunting data are drawn from the joint database of UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank, among others.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Global Hunger Index is jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.
2. It is published biennially

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - a

ART AND CULTURE

12) LANGA MANGANIYAR FOLK MUSIC

IN NEWS: - Considered the repository of the Thar region's rich history and traditional knowledge, the ballads, folklore and songs of the Langa-Manganiyar artistes are being preserved through an initiative for documentation and digitisation.

ABOUT LANGA MANGANIYAR FOLK MUSIC

- The Langas and Manganiyars are hereditary communities of Muslim musicians residing mostly in western Rajasthan's Jaisalmer and Barmer districts and in Pakistan's Tharparkar and Sanghar districts in Sindh.
- The music of the two marginalised communities, who were supported by wealthy landlords and merchants before Independence, forms a vital part of Thar desert's cultural landscape.
- The performances are in multiple languages and dialects including Marwari, Sindhi, Saraiki, Dhatti and Thareli.
- The romantic tales revolving around legendary lovers such as Umar-Marvi, Heer-Ranjha, Sohni-Mahiwal, Moomal-Rana and Sorath-Rao Khangar have traditionally captivated audiences.
- The Langa's main traditional instrument is the sindhi sarangi; Manganiyar's is the kamaicha.
- Both are bowed stringed instruments with skin membrane sounding boards and many sympathetic strings.
- Both Langas and Manganiyars sing and play the dholak (double-headed barrel drum), the kartal(wooden clappers), the morchan (jaws harp), and the ubiquitous

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

13) MOSQUIRIX VACCINE

IN NEWS: - The World Health Organisation (WHO) endorsed the world's first Malaria Vaccine in the hope that it will spur stalled efforts to curb the spread of the parasitic disease

ABOUT MOSQUIRIX VACCINE

- RTS,S/ASO1 (RTS.S), trade name Mosquirix, acts against *P. falciparum*, the most deadly malaria parasite globally, and the most prevalent in Africa.

- The vaccine was able to prevent approximately 4 in 10 cases of malaria over a 4-year period in Africa.
- This is the first malaria vaccine that has completed the clinical development process.
- It is also the first malaria vaccine to be introduced by three national ministries of health through their childhood immunization programs — more than 800,000 children in Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi.
- WHO's recommendation is based on the advice of its two global advisory bodies, one for immunization and the other for malaria.
- WHO has recommended that in the context of comprehensive malaria control, the RTS,S/AS01 malaria vaccine be used for the prevention of *P. falciparum* malaria in children living in regions with moderate to high transmission as defined by it.
- The malaria vaccine should be provided in a schedule of 4 doses in children from 5 months of age for the reduction of malaria disease and burden.

MALARIA

- Malaria is caused by the bite of the female *Anopheles* mosquito if the mosquito itself is infected with a malarial parasite.
- There are five kinds of malarial parasites — *Plasmodium falciparum*, *Plasmodium vivax* (the commonest ones), *Plasmodium malariae*, *Plasmodium ovale* and *Plasmodium knowlesi*.
- Therefore, to say that someone has contracted the *Plasmodium ovale* type of malaria means that the person has been infected by that particular parasite.
- Malaria is treated with prescription drugs to kill the parasite. Chloroquine is the preferred treatment for any parasite that is sensitive to the drug.

14) MISSION SAMUDRAYAN

IN NEWS: - Union Minister of Earth Sciences has launched India's First Manned Ocean Mission Samudrayan at Chennai.

ABOUT MISSION SAMUDRAYAN

- The Samudrayan project has been undertaken by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT).
- It will be a part of the Rs 6,000 crore Deep Ocean Mission.
- It is designed to carry 3 persons in 2.1meter diameter Titanium Alloy Personnel Sphere with an operational endurance of 12hrs and systems to support emergency endurance up to 96hrs.
- It could work at a depth between 1000 and 5500 meters.
- Samudrayan shall facilitate carrying out deep ocean exploration of the non-living resources such as polymetallic manganese nodules, gas hydrates, hydro-thermal sulphides and cobalt crusts.
- The mission would carry out subsea activities such as high-resolution bathymetry, biodiversity assessment, geo-scientific observation, search activities, salvage operation and engineering support.
- Focus areas of the Project
 - Ocean climate change advisory services
 - Underwater vehicles
 - Underwater robotics-related technologies
 - Deep-sea mining: Exploitation of polymetallic nodules
- Components of the mission:- Some of the critical subsystems of the manned submersibles are: Development of Titanium Alloy Personnel Sphere, Human support and safety system in enclosed space, low density buoyancy modules, Ballast and Trim System, Pressure compensated batteries and propulsion system, control and communication systems and Launching and Recovery System.

- The preliminary design of the manned submersible MATSYA 6000 is completed.
- Sea trials of 500 metre rated shallow water version of the manned submersible are expected to take place in the last quarter of 2022 and the MATSYA 6000.
- The deep-water manned submersible will be ready for trials by the second quarter of 2024.
- With Samudrayan, India joins the elite club of nations such as the USA, Russia, Japan, France and China to have such underwater vehicles for carrying out subsea activities.

INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

- The ISA, an autonomous international organization established under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, allots the 'area' for deep-sea mining.
- India was the first country to receive the status of a 'Pioneer Investor' in 1987 and was given an area of about 1.5 lakh sqkm in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) for nodule exploration.
- In 2002, India signed a contract with the ISA, and after a complete resource analysis of the seabed, India surrendered 50%, and the country retained an area of 75,000 sqkm.
- Further studies have helped narrow the mining area to 18,000 sqkm, the 'First Generation Mine-site'.



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