NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC

Food Wastage and its Impact

According to the report "Reducing Food Loss and Waste" by the World Resources Institute (WRI), uneaten food is impacting the economy and the environment negatively.

Key Findings

Defined Food Loss and Wastage:

- Food loss refers to food that spills, spoils, incurs an abnormal reduction in quality such as bruising or wilting, or otherwise gets lost before it reaches the consumer. It is the unintended result of an agricultural process or technical limitation in storage, infrastructure, packaging, or marketing.
- Food waste refers to food that is of good quality and fit for human consumption but that does not get consumed because it is discarded—either before or after it spoils. It is the result of negligence or a conscious decision to throw food away.

Impact of Uneaten Food:

- Nearly one-third of the food that is produced each year goes uneaten, costing the global economy over $940 billion.
- Uneaten food is responsible for emitting about 8% of planet-warming greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Place of Food Loss and Wastage:

- Most of the food loss happens "near the farm" predominantly in lower-income countries.
- Most of the food waste happens "near the plate" predominantly in higher-income countries.
- Share of Food Group Lost or Wasted:
- Roots and tubers are the food group that face the maximum wastage. Fruits and vegetables follow.
- By weight, fruits and vegetables make up the largest share of total annual food loss and waste.

Solution:

- Developing national strategies for food loss and waste reduction.
- Creating national public-private partnerships to deal with food losses and wastage.
- Tackling food loss and waste across the entire supply chain.
- Shifting consumer social norms so that wasting food is seen as unacceptable.

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY

Terracotta Grinder

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has launched the first-ever 'Terracotta Grinder' at Varanasi.

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has also started manufacturing of plastic-mixed handmade paper.
- It is being manufactured under KVIC's project REPLAN (REducing PLAstic in Nature).
- In this project, the waste plastic is collected, cleaned, chopped, beaten and treated for softness.
- Later it is mixed with the paper raw material in a ratio of 80 % (pulp) and 20% (plastic waste).

Terracotta Grinder

- It will grind the wasted and broken pottery items for re-using in pottery-making.
- It will reduce the cost of production, and will also help to solve the problem of shortage of clays for pottery making.

Project REPLAN

- The initiative is launched by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- REPLAN stands for REducing PLastic in Nature.
- It aims to make carry bags by mixing processed and treated plastic waste with cotton fibre rags in the ratio 20:80.

1

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- The made paper is found to have good strength and durability
- It can be used to make paper bags, fine tissues and other paper-based items.

Terracotta

- Terracotta is a type of ceramic pottery.
- Terracotta is made by baking terracotta clay.
- In fact, the word "terracotta" comes from the Italian words for "baked earth."
- It is often used for making pipes, bricks, and sculptures.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.

PAN-Aadhaar Link

The Income Tax Department has come up with a new arrangement to link the PAN and Aadhaar wherein the Permanent Account Number (PAN) will be automatically issued to a taxpayer using Aadhaar number for filing returns.

- The department will obtain demographic information of an individual from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for allotment of PAN. The taxpayer will not be required to apply or submit any more documents.
- While UIDAI issues Aadhaar to a resident, PAN is a 10-digit alphanumeric number allotted by the tax department to an individual, company or entity.
  - PAN enables the department to link all transactions of the "person" with the department. These transactions include tax payments, TDS/TCS credits, returns of income, specified transactions, correspondence, and so on. PAN, thus, acts as an identifier for the "person" with the tax department.
- Aadhaar contains all the vital information of an individual such as name, date of birth, gender, photo and address, as well as biometrics. The same set of information is required to get a PAN.
  - Recently, the Finance Minister in her Budget speech announced that PAN and Aadhaar are being made interchangeable as the government will allow those who do not have PAN to file I-T returns by simply quoting their Aadhaar number and use it wherever they are required to quote PAN. The move is aimed at improving tax compliance and to make the life of the taxpayer simpler.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

South-Asian Speaker's Summit

Recently, the 4th South-Asian Speaker's Summit on achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concluded in Male, Maldives.

- India had a heated discussion during the summit over the Kashmir issue with Pakistan, where India rejected the politicization of the forum by raising internal issues of a particular country.
- The joint statement released by the leaders in Male unanimously supported India's bid regarding Kashmir, & claimed it to be an internal matter of India, overlooking Pakistan's claims.
- In the summit, the Indian delegation was led by the Speaker of Lok Sabha.
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) also participated in the summit in order to achieve SDGs 2 & 3 targets: Nutrition and food security as drivers of maternal, child and adolescent health in the Asia-Pacific region.

About Summit

- The Summit is intended for Speakers of the Parliaments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.
- Parliaments play a key role in ensuring a sustainable future for current and future generations- given their legislative oversight, & representative and budgetary functions.
- This forum allows Speakers of various Parliaments to continue to develop dialogue and parliamentary cooperation on achieving the SDGs.

2

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WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia

Recently, India has hosted the 72nd Session of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Committee for South-East Asia. India's disease burden is shifting from communicable to non-communicable diseases, i.e. diet-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity, are rising rapidly.

Some recent steps that were taken by the government in health care:

- The government is observing the entire month of September as "Poshan Maah" (Nutrition Month) to sensitize the public towards healthy eating, It intends to address the twin issues of malnutrition and problem of obesity in some sections of the population, and intensifying the campaign towards a 'Malnutrition-Free India'.
- Since, the unsafe food and poor diet create a vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition (particularly affecting infants, young children, elderly and sick).
- To curb this, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has adopted a "Food Systems approach" to ensure our citizens have access to safe and healthy food.
- Food Systems approach judiciously combines the regulatory and capacity-building measures with consumer empowerment initiatives.
- Citizens are being sensitized through a people's movement called 'Eat Right India' which has a tagline: Sahi Bhojan. Behtar Jeevan' – 'Right diet leads to better quality life'.
- Recently, the Prime Minister of India launched the 'Fit India Movement'. on the occasion of National Sports day,
- This, along with Eat Right India campaign, will help India to fight lifestyle diseases like hypertension, obesity and diabetes effectively,
- Ayushman Bharat is India's road to Universal Health Care.
- India also plans to increase full immunization coverage to 90% people through intensification of campaigns under Mission Indradhanush.
- These initiatives depict India's commitment to preventive and promotive healthcare as an important pillar of its health policy, i.e. Universal Health for all.

India will get Swiss bank details of Indians from today

Recently, Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) Regime between India and Switzerland has started from September 1,2019.

- In 2016,India and Switzerland had signed an information-sharing deal on bank accounts which was to come into effect from September 2019.
- Automatic exchange of information involves the systematic and periodic transmission of taxpayer information by the source country to the residence country concerning various categories of income.
- This automatic exchange of information(AEOI) is to be carried out under the Common Reporting Standard (CRS).
- CRS is the global reporting standard for such exchange of information, which takes care of aspects such as confidentiality rules and data safeguards.The CRS has been developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development(OECD).
- However, under the agreement, India will not receive information on bank accounts of Indians in Switzerland prior to 2018.
- AEOI is needed as tax payers operate cross border whereas tax administration is limited to national borders.This has helped tax evasion by shifting money to other countries by citizens.Hence,there is a need for tax cooperation and tax information exchanges between countries.
- This step is likely to shed more light on the wealth Indians have stashed away in Swiss bank accounts.In 2018,data from Zurich-based Swiss National Bank (SNB) had shown that after declining for three years, money parked by Indians in Swiss Banks has risen by 50%.

China lodges case at WTO against US import duties

- China has lodged a case against the United States with the World Trade Organization(WTO) over U.S. import duties.

3

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- The move was taken after the United States began imposing 15% tariffs on a variety of Chinese goods, including footwear, smart watches, and flat-panel televisions.
- China has said that the latest tariff actions by US has violated the consensus reached by the leaders of China and the United States in a meeting in Osaka,Japan.
- However,the United States has said that it has adopted tariff measures to try to obtain the elimination of China's unfair and disruptive technology transfer policies.
- The US has also said that its actions were exempt from WTO rules because they were measures necessary to protect public morals which is a clause used in the past to argue for trade restrictions over gambling, animal rights and public broadcasting.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC

India's Tallest ATC Tower

Recently, the Minister Civil Aviation inaugurated the Delhi Air Traffic Service Complex, which is the tallest Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower in the country.

- At a height of 102 meters, the tower enables air traffic controllers to have better visibility of all the three runways of Indira Gandhi International airport (India's busiest airport).
- The tower is expected to enhance the safety and the efficiency of air transport management services.
- The new facility opens the possibility for independent parallel approach.
  - This allows for simultaneous landings from the same direction on parallel runways which will further increase the capacity of the airport.
- Apart from the height of the tower, it is also equipped with sophisticated radar and other state-of-the-art communication systems.
- Air Traffic Control is the ground-based personnel and equipment concerned with controlling and monitoring air traffic within a particular area.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT

Nuakhai Goes Global As Odia Diaspora Celebrates Festival With Gaiety

- Global Odias for Odisha's Development (GOOD), an expatriate group comprising of Odia Professionals living across the globe has made an ambitious attempt to globally popularize Odisha's premier agrarian festival – Nuakhai.
- To mark the occasion, the Odia diaspora celebrated Nuakhai in foreign cities like Dubai and London and countries including Japan and America today.
- With the primary objective of popularizing Odia culture and traditions on the global stage, GOOD members, living in Dubai have undertaken a unique and novel initiative.
- They approached global business leaders based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) convinced these leaders and enlisted their support in popularizing this agrarian festival across the globe.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Never give up because you never know what the tide will bring in the next day.

Chuck Noland (Tom Hanks)

4

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DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Buddhism constitutes a bridge between India and South-East Asia. Comment.

Answer :

The Buddhist faith, due to its emphasis on peaceful co-existence and its wide pan-Asian presence, lends itself well to India's soft-power diplomacy, through which India can establish strong relationship with South-Asian nations.

Factors that make Buddhism bridge between ASEAN and South-East Asia

- India's historical link with Buddhism: Buddhism originated in India and spread to South East Asia and other Asian countries. Spirituality, art, culture and faith that found their way across other regions, earned India a considerable amount of soft power.

- Mutual cultural experience: The Buddhist aspect of soft power relies not on the export of a cultural product, but on promoting certain shared religious and cultural associations, thereby creating a mutually erected platform upon which further relations are based.

- Large Buddhist population: Today, 97 percent of the world's Buddhist population lives in the Asian continent. It is within this context that one can understand the efforts of the Indian government at incorporating Buddhist heritage in order to form a basis for further diplomatic, economic, cultural, and strategic associations within its foreign policy and building bridges with ASEAN

- Buddhist sites: India has numerous sites of importance to the Buddhist faith, such as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Nalanda which provides cultural bonds with Buddhist communities in South-Eat Asia.

- Protection to Tibetan Buddhist community: India has nurtured an image of being a protector of the persecuted because of the presence of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan parliament-in-exile in the city of Dharamshala following their failed insurrection against China.

Conclusion

Buddhism is gaining a strategic dimension and, India needs initiatives like reviving Nalanda University, promoting spiritual tourism across Buddhist circuit, initiating spiritual activities in partnership with South- Asian nations, to further strengthen its soft power diplomacy..

5

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQ

1. Consider the following statements:

   1. Food loss refers to the unintended result of an agricultural process or technical limitation in storage, infrastructure, packaging, or marketing.

   2. Food waste is the result of negligence or a conscious decision to throw food away.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

   (a) 1 only

   (b) 2 only

   (c) Both 1 and 2

   (d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. World Resources Institute, often in news, is

   (a) An intergovernmental agency sponsored by the European Union.

   (b) A specialised agency of the United Nations.

   (c) A global research non-profit organization.

   (d) A division of the World Trade Organisation.

3. With reference to Project REPLAN (REducing PLAstic in Nature), consider the following statements:

   1. This initiative is launched by the Ministry of Rural Development.

   2. The objective of REPLAN is to use recycled plastic in road construction.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

   (a) 1 only

   (b) 2 only

   (c) Both 1 and 2

   (d) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Recently, the 4th South-Asian Speaker's Summit concluded in Male, Maldives. Consider the following statements regarding the summit:

   1. India was represented by the Speaker of Lok Sabha in the summit.

   2. This summit gives a platform to Speakers of various Parliaments to develop dialogue and parliamentary cooperation on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

   Which of the above mentioned statements is/are CORRECT?

   (a) 1 only

   (b) 2 only

   (c) Both 1 and 2

   (d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. India's Highest ATC Tower was inaugurated in which of the following Airports?

   (a) IGI Airport, Delhi

   (b) RGI Airport, Hyderabad

   (c) Damdam Airport, Kolkata

   (d) KGI Airport, Bengaluru