

**ENVIRONMENT**

➤ **A new global biodiversity framework**

➤ **CONTEXT: The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations agreement to conserve and sustainably use earth's biodiversity, got a boost at a conference held in Montreal recently, when 188 of 196 member governments agreed on a new framework to halt the sharp and steady loss of biological species.**

- These governments, supported by the U.S. and the Vatican, who are not party to the Convention, adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that sets out four goals for 2050, and 23 targets for 2030, to save existing biodiversity and ensure that 30% of degraded terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine ecosystems come under effective restoration.

➤ **Why is biodiversity important?**

- Often called the web of life, biodiversity signifies the variety of species on earth, which are all connected and sustain the balance of ecosystems, enabling humans to coexist. They interact with the environment to perform a host of functions. The CBD states that only about 1.75 million species have so far been identified, including numerous insects, while there may be some 13 million species.
- Some familiar ecosystem services rendered by diverse living forms, of which plants and animals are the most visible, include providing humans with food, fuel, fibre, shelter, building materials, air and water purification, stabilisation of climate, pollination of plants including those used in agriculture, and moderating the effects of flood, drought, extreme temperatures and wind. A disruption of these produces severe impacts such as failed agriculture, aberrant climate patterns and cascading losses of species that accelerate the degradation of earth.
- According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), a quarter of the plants and animals it assessed for the 2019 Global Biodiversity Outlook are threatened, which translates to about one million species facing extinction. Similarly, a review on the economics of biodiversity by Cambridge professor Partha Dasgupta commissioned by the U. K. government reported that the current model of economic growth would require 1.6 earths to maintain current lifestyles.

➤ **What does the Kunming-Montreal pact aim to achieve?**

- The agreement to implement the GBF was pushed through on December 18 by the Chinese conference presidency and host Canada in the face of objections from some African countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Uganda.
- It sets out targets for 2030 on
  - ✓ Protection for degraded areas
  - ✓ Resource mobilisation for conservation
  - ✓ Compensation for countries that preserve biodiversity
  - ✓ Halting human activity linked to species extinction
  - ✓ Reducing by half the spread of invasive alien species (introduced plants and animals that affect endemic biodiversity)
  - ✓ Cutting pollution to non-harmful levels and minimising climate change impact and ocean acidification, among others.

- The GBF goals and targets do not prohibit the use of biodiversity, but call for sustainable use, and a sharing of benefits from genetic resources.

- Target five specifically states that the use, harvesting and trade in wild species should be “sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimising impacts on non-target species and ecosystems and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover.

- The GBF emphasises respect for the rights of indigenous communities that traditionally protect forests and biodiversity, and their involvement in conservation efforts. It advocates similar roles for women and local communities.

- Agricultural practices also find a strong focus. Besides emphasising sustainable practices in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry, the agreement calls upon members to adopt biodiversity-supporting methods such as agroecology and sustainable intensification. This acquires significance, since growing Genetically Modified (GM) crops is not favoured by agroecologists as they could contaminate nearby wild species of the same plants.

- One target also looks at turning cities into hosts of biodiversity, by expanding the area of and improving the quality and access to urban green and blue spaces. Urban planning should also be biodiversity-inclusive, “enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature.”

- Earlier, the CBD had launched the Aichi biodiversity targets for 2020, which included safeguarding of all ecosystems that provide services for humanity's survival, and the Nagoya Protocol which went into effect in 2014 to ensure sharing of biodiversity access and benefits.

➤ **What is the roadmap to 2030 and 2050?**

- The key aspects of the four GBF goals for 2050 deal with maintaining ecosystem integrity and health to halt extinctions, measuring and valuing ecosystem services provided by biodiversity, sharing monetary and non-monetary gains from genetic resources and digital sequencing of genetic resources with indigenous people and

local communities, and raising resources for all countries to close a biodiversity finance gap of an estimated \$700 billion.

- Recognising the challenging nature of the goals and targets, the GBF has specific provisions on implementing and monitoring. Member nations need to submit a revised and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan in the conference to be held in 2024. Further, the parties to the CBD should submit national reports in 2026 and 2029 to help prepare global reviews. High level discussions on the progress reviews should be held in 2024 and 2026.
- Countries would have to review existing laws relating to not just the environment, but areas such as industry, agriculture and land use, to ensure that the national strategy and action plan adequately protects biodiversity. For instance, business and industry, including transnational corporations would have to assess, monitor and report the risks and impacts of their operations and portfolios. They must provide information for sustainable consumption and comply with the rules on benefit-sharing. Perverse incentives that affect biodiversity should be eliminated.
- Indigenous people, local communities, sub-national governments, cities and local authorities, intergovernmental organisations, multilateral environmental agreements, non-governmental organisations, women, youth, research organisations and the business and finance community have been invited to voluntarily participate in national biodiversity protection plans. There are specific indicators for countries to report their progress, as part of a transparency and reporting arrangement.
- **What funding arrangements are planned?**
  - By 2030, the GBF hopes to see at least \$200 billion raised per year from all sources( domestic, international, public and private ) towards implementation of the national action plans. In terms of international funding, developing countries should get at least \$20 billion a year by 2025 and at least \$30 billion by 2030 through contributions from developed countries.
  - The Global Environment Facility (GEF), a multilateral body that partners countries and agencies, has been asked to establish in 2023, and until 2030, a Special Trust Fund to support the implementation of the GBF.
  - Complementing this, the GBF envisages that there will be access to justice and information related to biodiversity for indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women, children and youth, and persons with disabilities, and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.
  - The GBF is aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals, three of which directly deal with the environment and thus with biodiversity: Goal 13 on climate action, Goal 14 on life below water and Goal 15 on life on land.
- **What are the challenges to protecting biodiversity?**
  - The major challenge to protecting and expanding biodiversity conservation, is the use of GDP as the chief determinant of development.
  - The economist says GDP is based on a faulty application of economics that excludes “depreciation of assets” like nature which is degraded by relentless extraction of resources. Experts calls for appreciation of nature, and measuring “inclusive wealth”, which captures not just financial and produced capital but also human, social and natural capital.
  - The UN’s effort to measure wealth more broadly through its “Inclusive Wealth” (IW) report showed in 2018 that although 135 countries did better on inclusive wealth in 2014 compared to 1990, the global GDP growth rate considerably outpaced IW: an average of 1.8% per year for IW compared to 3.4% for GDP per year during the period.

## PRELIMS

1. **Social Progress Index (SPI)**
  - **CONTEXT: Social Progress Index (SPI) for States and Districts made by the Institute for Competitiveness and Social Progress Imperative was submitted to Economic Advisory Council- Prime Minister and released recently**
  - SPI is a comprehensive tool that can serve as a holistic measure of a country's social progress at the national and sub-national levels.
  - The index assesses states and districts based on 12 components across three critical dimensions of social progress - Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity. The index uses an extensive framework comprising 89 indicators at the state level and 49 at the district level.
    - ✓ **Basic Human Needs** assess the performance of states and districts in terms of Nutrition and Basic Medical Care, Water and Sanitation, Personal Safety and Shelter.
    - ✓ **Foundations of Wellbeing** evaluates the progress made by the country across the components of Access to Basic Knowledge, Access to Information and Communication, Health and Wellness, and Environmental Quality.
    - ✓ **Opportunity** focuses on Personal Rights, Personal Freedom and Choice, Inclusiveness, and Access to Advanced Education.
  - Based on the SPI scores, states and districts have been ranked under six tiers of social progress and the tiers are
    - ✓ Tier 1: Very High Social Progress
    - ✓ Tier 2: High Social Progress

- ✓ Tier 3: Upper Middle Social Progress
- ✓ Tier 4: Lower Middle Social Progress
- ✓ Tier 5: Low Social Progress
- ✓ Tier 6: Very Low Social Progress.
- Puducherry has the highest SPI score of 65.99 in the country, attributable to its remarkable performance across components like Personal Freedom and Choice, Shelter, and Water and Sanitation.
- Lakshadweep and Goa closely follow it with scores of 65.89 and 65.53, respectively. Jharkhand and Bihar scored the lowest, 43.95 and 44.47, respectively.
- For the dimension of Basic Human Needs, Goa, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, and Chandigarh are the top four states with the best performance in Water and Sanitation and Shelter as compared to the other states and union territories.
- In addition, Goa has the highest component score for Water and Sanitation, followed by Kerala, scoring the highest across the Nutrition and Basic Medical Care component.
- For Shelter and Personal Safety, Chandigarh and Nagaland have emerged as the front-runners, respectively.
- Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, and Goa have emerged as the best-performing states for the Foundations of Wellbeing.
- Within the dimension for the Access to Basic Knowledge component, Punjab has the highest component score of 62.92,
- Delhi has topped the list for Access to Information and Communication with a score of 71.30.
- For Health and Wellness, Rajasthan has the highest component score of 73.74.
- Environmental Quality, the top three states belong to the northeast region, namely, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Meghalaya.
- Tamil Nadu has achieved the highest component score of 72.00 for the Opportunity dimension. Within this dimension, Andaman and Nicobar Islands have the highest component score for Personal Rights, while Sikkim has topped the list for Inclusiveness.
- It is commendable to witness Puducherry attaining the highest scores across two components in this dimension, i.e., Personal Freedom and Choice and Access to Advanced Education.

By evaluating change in the performance of some key indicators since 2015-16, the report presents a broad picture of the social progress in India. In addition, the report highlights progress made by the 112 aspirational districts in the country, helping them track their social progress journey and understand the areas that require more attention.

## 2. **Amrit Sarovar Mission**

➤ **CONTEXT: Union Minister of State for Rural Development, Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti in a written reply in Lok Sabha gave information about the implementation of the mission**

### ➤ **About**

- Mission Amrit Sarovar has been launched on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022 with an objective to harvest and conserve water for future generation.
- The Mission Amrit Sarovar had initially planned a target to construct or rejuvenate 50,000 Amrit Sarovar ponds across India till 15th August 2023. Now, additional 50,000 Amrit Sarovar ponds will be constructed by 15th August 2023.
- The State Governments have identified sites for constructing Amrit Sarovar in the country.
- As of Dec 2022, the construction work has been started on 53,050 sites. The sites on which construction will start soon are 38,503.
- The Government has created a portal to capture all the activities taking place under the Mission.
- Every Amrit Sarovar will have a pondage area of 1 acre with a water holding capacity of about 10,000 cubic metre.
- There is no separate financial allocation for Mission Amrit Sarovar. The Mission Amrit Sarovar works through the States and Districts with convergence from various ongoing schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS), 15th Finance Commission Grants, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sishayi Yojna sub schemes such as Watershed Development Component, Har Khet ko Pani, besides States' own scheme. Public contribution like crowd funding and Corporate Social Responsibility is also allowed for the work.
- The number of States/ Union Territories covered under the mission including States of Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu are 34.
- **The salient features of the Mission**
- Mission Amrit Sarovar is based on "Whole of Government" approach with the participation from the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and technical organizations.
- Under the Mission every district of the country will construct or rejuvenate at least 75 Amrit Sarovars.
- Every Amrit Sarovar will have a pondage area of at least 1 acre with a water holding capacity of about 10,000 cubic metre.
- Every Amrit Sarovar will be surrounded by trees like Neem, Peepal and Banyan etc.

- Every Amrit Sarovar will be a source of generation of livelihoods by using the water for different purposes like irrigation, fisheries, duckery, cultivation of water chestnut, water tourism and other activities. The Amrit Sarovar will also act as a social gathering point in that locality.
- Mission Amrit Sarovar is a visible manifestation of the action during Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- Every Amrit Sarovar site is a place for flag hoisting on every Independence Day. In Mission Amrit Sarovar, freedom fighters or their family members, martyrs' family members, Padma awardees are associated.
- The Mission Amrit Sarovar works through the States and Districts with convergence from various schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS), 15th Finance Commission Grants, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sichayi Yojna sub schemes such as Watershed Development Component, Har Khet ko Pani, besides States' own scheme. Public contribution like crowd funding and Corporate Social Responsibility is also allowed for the work.
- The Mission Amrit Sarovar focuses on water conservation, people's participation and proper utilization of soil excavated from the water bodies to boost infrastructural projects.
- Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and other public agencies engaged for infrastructure project development are also engaged in the Mission for the purpose of use of soil/silt excavated out of the Amrit Sarovar.

### 3. Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana

➤ **CONTEXT: Ministry of Rural Development organises CSR Conclave on PPP mode of development of Lighthouse Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) Gram Panchayat**

#### ➤ **About**

- Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) is a village development venture under which every Member of Parliament (MP) is responsible to build up the physical and socio-economic infrastructure in three villages each by 2019. The plan expects to create a total of eight 'Adarsh Villages' or 'Model Villages' by 2024.

#### ➤ **Objectives**

- To work and chart progress which leads to the comprehensive development of the recognized Gram Panchayats.
- Improving the way of life and personal growth of all areas of the populace by improving the fundamental infrastructure, upgrading the human standard of living, making higher efficiency, giving better jobs, lessening differences and advancing social capital.
- Producing models of development at the local level
- To create good governance in Villages.
- To motivate nearby Village Panchayats to focus on their development.

#### ➤ **Salient Features**

- This yojana was launched by the Prime Minister of India on 11th October, 2014 on the birth anniversary of Jai Prakash Narayan.
- Under this Yojana, Members of Parliament (MPs) have the duty to build the economic and social infrastructure of three villages each by 2019, and a total of eight villages by 2024.
- One primary Adarsh Gram (Model Village) was to be created by 2016, and two more by 2019.
- From 2019 to 2024, five more Adarsh Grams would be created by every MP, one every year. This infers that a sum of 6,433 Adarsh Grams, of the 2,65,000 gram panchayats, will be made by 2024.

#### • Stakeholders:-

- ✓ Gram Panchayat is the basic unit for advancement.
- ✓ Lok Sabha MP picks a Gram Panchayat from inside his/her constituency.
- ✓ Rajya Sabha MP picks Gram Panchayat from the rural area of the state from which he is elected.
- ✓ Nominated MPs can pick a Gram Panchayat from any district in the nation.
- The MPs draw in with the network, encourage the Village Development Plan and mobilise necessary resources, especially from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and philanthropies.
- The District Collector does the planning processes.
- Funds from Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADs) reserves are used to fill up the critical gaps.

### 4. Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY)

➤ **CONTEXT: The Scheme of Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY) has been merged with two other schemes of the Department and provision for construction/repairs of hostels for Scheduled Caste (SC) students is one of the components of the merged scheme, namely Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyudaya Yojana (PM-AJAY). Funds are provisioned under the single budget head of PM-AJAY, for all its components, including for Hostels.**

#### ➤ **About**

- This scheme for construction of hostels for Scheduled Caste (SC) students is one of the means to enable and encourage children/students belonging to these Castes (SC) to attain quality education.
- Such hostels are immensely beneficial to the students hailing from rural and remote areas of the country.

- While the scheme of construction of hostels for SC girls is in operation from the Third Five Year Plan (1961-66), the same for boys was started with effect from the year 1989-90.
- **The primary objective** of the scheme is to attract implementing agencies for undertaking construction of hostels, especially for SC girls, towards the broader vision of containment and reduction of their dropout rate.
- The other objectives are:
  - ✓ having a girls hostel with a capacity of 100 seats, in every block headquarters of low literacy districts not having one as of now, by way of priority,
  - ✓ repairing and proper maintenance of hostels
  - ✓ having an effective mechanism for monitoring, review, etc.
- **Implementation:** The scheme is implemented through the State Governments, Union Territory Administrations and the Central & State Universities/ Institutions.
- **Funding Pattern: For Girls Hostels:** 100% Central Assistance is provided to the State Governments/ UT Administrations and Central & State Universities/ Institutions, as per the cost norms prescribed in the Scheme.
- **For Boys Hostels:** 50% central assistance is provided to State Governments on matching share basis.
  - ✓ 100% central assistance to UT Administrations.
  - ✓ 90% central assistance to Central Universities/Institutions. The remaining 10% cost is to be borne by the Central University/ Institution concerned.
  - ✓ For State Universities/ Institutions, the central assistance is 45%. The remaining 55% cost is to be borne by the State University/Institution and the State Government/UT Administration concerned in the ratio of 10:45.

**ANSWER WRITING**

**Q. The increase in life expectancy in the country has led to newer health challenges in the community. What are those challenges and what steps need to be taken to meet them?**

Life expectancy is the estimate of the number of years an individual is expected to live. Life expectancy at birth is the most common measure of life expectancy.

India has witnessed a steady increase in life expectancy due to factors such as enhancement of public health coverage, improvement in sanitation and hygiene, etc. It currently stands at around 70 years in India.

The increase in life expectancy has led to newer challenges in the community.

- Extra burden on the already stressed public healthcare system.
- Vulnerability to diseases and other health-related issues due to several factors such as exposure to air pollution, recurring viruses and pandemics, etc.
- India has not witnessed an increase in “healthy life expectancy” with people now living longer with illness and disability due to the rising instances of non-communicable diseases.
- Increased financial burden on the families and the state due to the increased healthcare requirements of an ageing population (health insurance coverage, medical treatments, etc.).
- Accelerated utilisation of resources leading to issues in their distribution and management.

Nevertheless, steps can be taken to address these challenges.

- Increased awareness vis-à-vis diseases and health can improve the quality of health of the population.
- It can also lead to people living healthier lives and requiring lesser resources for their medical needs later in life.
- This can lead to a lesser economic burden on both the families and the state for looking after their medical requirements.
- Improvements in the public health system with respect to its quality and access are also required for meeting the challenges due to the increase in life expectancy

Thus, increased life expectancy has both positive and negative effects. With proper management, it can be utilised for effecting a positive outcome in the larger community and country.

**MCQs**

1. Consider the following statements regarding Mission Amrit Sarovar:
  1. It is applicable for both green field and brown field project
  2. The mission is funded by the Department of Water Resource, the Ministry of Jal Sakthi.
  3. The Mission works through the States and Districts, by refocusing on various schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.
 Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 

a) 1 and 2 only      **b) 1 and 3 only**      c) 2 and 3 only      d) 1, 2 and 3
2. Consider the following statements in context of Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY):
  1. Its ambit does not include inculcating value systems in community as this is part of Gram Swaraj Abhiyan.
  2. Under the scheme, the Village Development plan is prepared by the District planning Committee.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are incorrect?
 

a) 1 only      b) 2 only      **c) Both 1 and 2**      d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. With reference to ‘Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY)’ consider the following statement
  1. BJRCY is a centrally sponsored scheme for the construction of hostels for students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC).
  2. The scheme is being implemented by Ministry of Education

3. Recently the Scheme of Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY) has been merged with Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyudaya Yojana (PM-AJAY)  
Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?  
a) **1 and 3 only**      b) 2 and 3 only      c) 1 and 2 only      d) 3 only
4. With reference to recently released Social Progress Index (SPI) consider the following statements  
1. Goa is one of the best-performing states.  
2. Aizawl (Mizoram), Solan (Himachal Pradesh), and Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) are the top 3 best-performing districts  
3. Odisha shows a low social progress in Tier v category  
Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?  
a) 1 and 2 only      b) 2 and 3 only      c) 1 and 3 only      **d) 1,2 and 3**
5. A major international environmental conference called Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) has just concluded in Montreal, Canada, promising to take urgent action to protect and restore the world's biodiversity, with reference to this consider the following  
1. The Montreal meeting was the 15th edition of this conference, or the 15th Conference of the Parties to the CBD.  
2. Signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), a 1993 agreement, meet annually like the climate meetings to work on a global plan to halt biodiversity loss and restore natural ecosystems  
3. The CBD is not just about conservation and restoration of ecosystems, it is also about sustainable use of natural resources, and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of these resources.  
4. It was held under the presidency of China  
5. The GBF is to the 2020-30 decade what the Aichi targets were for the previous one (2010-20).  
Which of the above statement given is are correct?  
a) 1,2 and 5 only  
b) 3,4 and 5 only  
c) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only  
**d) 1,3,4 and 5 only**
6. With reference to AYURSWASTHYA Yojana consider the following?  
1. It is a Central Sector Scheme  
2. One of the objectives of the yojna to support establishment of advanced/ specialized AYUSH medical health unit in reputed AYUSH and Allopathic institutions in Government sector only.  
Which of the above statement/s is/are not correct?  
a) 1 only      **b) 2 only**      c) Both 1 and 2      d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Consider the following statements  
1. Recently Gujarat's Vadnagar town, the iconic Sun Temple at Modhera, and the rock cut sculptures of Unakoti in Mizoram have been added to the tentative list of UNCESO World Heritage Sites.  
2. ASI is responsible for identify monuments and places for the world heritage nomination  
Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?  
a) **1 only**      **b) 2 only**      c) Both 1 and 2      d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Rohini Nayar Prize often mentioned in news, which of the following statement is correct with regards to this prize  
a) The award has been instituted by NITI Ayog  
b) Rohini Nayar Prize awarded for outstanding contribution to Urban sustainable development.  
c) The annual prize was decided by a jury comprising NITI Ayog chairman and Vice chairman.  
**d) The prize is being introduced to recognize the exemplary contributions of young Indians, under the age of 40 years.**
9. Project 75 of Indian Navy is related to construction and design of which of the following?  
a) Torpedo      b) UAV      c) Anti-Ship Missile      **d) Submarine**
10. Consider the following Statement with reference to financial Institution in India  
1. Banks whose Net NPA level is 5% and above are required to take prior permission from RBI to declare dividend.  
2. Under Strategic Debt Restructuring (SDR) scheme Bank can convert loans given to stressed firms into equity.  
3. In Stressed asset fund, investors pool their money and buy bad loans from banks.  
Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?  
a) 1 and 2 only  
b) 2 and 3 only  
c) 1 and 3 only  
**d) 1,2 and 3**