Prelim Bits 02-03-2022 | Daily UPSC Current Affairs

Montreux Convention

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Turkey is activating the Montreux Convention on naval passage through the Black Sea Straits.

> Implementation of the Montreux convention would limit the movement of Russian warships between the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea.

- **Straits** - Also known as the Turkish Straits, the Black Sea Straits are the Bosporus and Dardanelles straits.
- These straits connect the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea via the Sea of Marmara.
- It is the only passage through which the Black Sea ports can access the Mediterranean and beyond.
- **Montreux Convention of 1936** Regarding the Regime of the Straits is an international agreement governing the Bosporus and Dardanelles Straits in Turkey.
- This pact says that Turkey has control over both the Black Sea Straits.
- In the event of a war, the pact gives Ankara the right to regulate the transit of naval warships and to block the straits to warships belonging to the countries involved in the conflict.
- **Exception** - Article 19 of the treaty contains an exception for the countries on the Black Sea that can effectively undermine Turkey's power in blocking the Russian warships entering or exiting the Black Sea.
- This Article says, "Vessels of war belonging to belligerent powers, whether they are Black Sea Powers or not, which have become separated from their bases, may return thereto."
- That means warships can return to their original bases through the passage and Turkey cannot prevent it.
- The condition also applies to Russian fleets currently in the Black Sea that belong to a base in the Mediterranean or Baltic Sea. Russia is free to take them out of the Black Sea.

Official Assignment

- The official assignment of a ship to a port determines whether it has the right to pass through the Straits or not.
- This assignment, according to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) falls under the authority of the state that owns the ships.
- Therefore, another possible way for Russia to exploit the Montreux Convention would be to reassign some of its vessels to the Black Sea.

Reference

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Rise in GST Collections

Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collections in February 2022 (for sales in January) marks the fifth consecutive month of GST collections being more than Rs 1.30 lakh crore.

- This rise in GST collections is coming on the back of **anti-evasion measures** and a **pickup in economic activity**.
- High growth during February 2022 should also be seen in the context of partial lockdowns, weekend and night curfews, and various restrictions that were in place in many states due to the Omicron wave in January.
- The rise indicates recovery in key sectors, especially automobile sales.
- If the GST collections remain at this level, the revenues may cross the revised targets set for FY22 in the Union Budget.

Reference

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2. https://www.indiatoday.in/business/story/gst-collection-february-increases-finance-ministry-1919324-2022-03-01
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4. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/govt-collects-rs-1-33-lakh-crore-gst-in-february-cess-collection-crosses-rs-10000-crore-for-first-time/articleshow/89918495.cms

Bilateral Swap Arrangement

Japan and India renews Bilateral Swap Arrangement of up to $75 billion.

- Bilateral Swap Arrangement is a two-way arrangement where both authorities can swap their local currencies in exchange for the US Dollar.
- It aims to strengthen and complement other financial safety nets.
- It will further deepen financial cooperation between the two countries and contribute to regional and global financial stability.
- **Related Links** - Currency Swap

Reference

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2. https://www.mof.go.jp/english/policy/international_policy/financial_cooperation_in_asia/bsa/india_20220228.html
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Konark Sun Temple

Konark is going to be the first model town in Odisha to shift from grid dependency to green energy by using solar energy in Sun Temple.

- The name Konark derives from the Sanskrit words 'kona' (angle) and 'ark' (the Sun).
- Located on the coastline in the state of Odisha, the temple was built c. 1250 CE by King

Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern **Ganga** dynasty (8th century CE - 15th century CE).

- The Konark Sun Temple is dedicated to the Hindu **Sun God Surya**.
- The temple follows the **Kalinga or Orissa style of architecture**, which is a subset of the *nagara* style of Hindu temple architecture.
- Each structure built in the Sun Temple represents the **passage of time**.
- **Stone-carved wheels** - The 12 stone-carved wheels of the Temple represent the 12 months of a year.
- These wheels that are found at the base of the temple also show time.
- Each wheel here has 8 spokes. The spokes of the wheel form the shape of a sundial.
- Each spokes represent a 'prahar' which is a 3-hour period, adding up to 24 hours which is a day.
- **Sun chariot** - The temple is shaped in the form of a huge sun chariot.
- This chariot is drawn by 7 horses, which represents seven days of a week.
- Like the temples of Khajuraho, the Konark Sun Temple also has an abundance of sculptures that depict kama, artha, dharma and moksha that are the four major pursuits of life.
- The temple was also known as **Black Pagoda or Kaala Pagoda** by the European sailors, as the temple was dark in colour and a major landmark for the sailors.

The Konark Sun Temple is one of the UNESCO World Heritage Site in India for its unique model of antique architecture.

Reference

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3. https://www.worldhistory.org/Konarak_Sun_Temple/

POCSO Act 2012

The Bombay High Court grants protection to a director in the POCSO case.

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act is meant to **protect children from offences** of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography.
- The Act provides for the establishment of **Special Courts** for trial of offences and related matters, keeping the best interest of the child as of paramount importance at every stage of the judicial process.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by India in 1992.

This Convention requires sexual exploitation and sexual abuse to be addressed as heinous crimes.

- **Salient features** - The Act is gender neutral, and it defines a child as any person below 18 years of age.
- The Act regards the best interests and welfare of the child as a matter of paramount importance at every stage so as to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and

social development of the child.
- It defines different forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography.
- It deems a sexual assault to be “aggravated” under certain circumstances, such as,
    - When the abused child is mentally ill or
    - When the abuse is committed by a person in a position of trust or authority vis-à-vis the child, like a family member, police officer, teacher, or doctor.
- People who traffic children for sexual purposes are also punishable under the provisions relating to abetment in the Act.
- The Act prescribes stringent punishment graded as per the gravity of the offence, with a maximum term of rigorous imprisonment for life, and fine.
- It defines "child pornography" as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a child which include photograph, video, digital or computer generated image indistinguishable from an actual child, and image created, adapted, or modified, but appear to depict a child.'
- The Act recognizes that the Intent to commit an offence, even when unsuccessful for whatever reason, needs to be penalized.
- The Act also provides for punishment for abetment of the offence, which is the same as for the commission of the offence.
- **Related Link -** POCSO (Amendment) Act, 2019

POCSO e-Box for Children

- This e-Box is an online complaint box for reporting child sexual abuse.
- It is a National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) initiative to help children report such crimes directly to the Commission.
- The online complaint management system enables easy reporting and timely action against the offenders under the POCSO Act, 2012.
- **Related Link -** She Box

Reference

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