Prelim Bits 04-01-2024 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Free Movement Regime (FMR)

The Centre has decided to start an advanced smart fencing system for the entire India-Myanmar border with the end of free movement regime.

- **Free Movement Regime** – It is a mutual pact between ***India and Myanmar*** to allow tribes dwelling along the border on either side to ***travel up to 16 km*** inside the other ***without a visa***.

  India shares a 1,643 km-long border with Myanmar, which passes through the States of Arunachal Pradesh (520 km), Nagaland (215 km), Manipur (398 km), and Mizoram (510 km).

- **Initiated in –** *1970's*, last *revised in 2016.*
- **Aim –** To facilitate ***people-to-people ties*** between the countries as residents in the region enjoy strong ethnic and familial relations on both sides of the border.
- **Eligibility –** It can be used by either a ***citizen*** of India or a citizen of Myanmar with the production of a ***border pass***, usually *valid for a year*, and can *stay for up to 2 weeks per visit*.
- **Challenges** – Myanmar's military coup in 2021 prompted an ***influx of undocumented migrants***, who took shelter in Mizoram, and also entered Manipur.
- The migrants belonging to the *Kuki-Chin-Zo ethnic group share ethnic* ties with communities in Mizoram and Manipur.
- **Suspension** – *Manipur has suspended the FMR since 2020*, due to COVID-19 pandemic but now urges the centre to end FMR as it attributes to the ongoing ethnic violence in the State.

  India's International border security is Centre's domain.

- **End of FMR** – Fencing along the entire border will be completed in the next 4-and-half years and it necessitates a visa requirement.
- **Significance of Ending FMR** – It is to *stop the misuse of the FMR by insurgent groups* to carry out attacks on the Indian side and flee towards Myanmar and also to put a *brake on the influx of illegal immigrants, drugs and gold smuggling*.

References

1. The Indian Express – Ending Free movement Regime
2. The Hindu – Free Movement Regime
3. The Print – Government to terminate Free Movement Regime

Biodiversity Credits (or) Bio Credits

There is an urgent need to regulate frameworks to ensure the effective implementation of biodiversity credits.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)

- **Aim -** KMGBF aims to catalyze transformative action by governments, and subnational and local authorities, with the involvement of all of society, to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.
- **Adoption -** KMGBF was adopted in 2022 at the 15th Conference of Parties (CoP15) of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- **Financing work -** Biodiversity credits are increasingly being pushed as a means for financing work on the various targets set under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).

Biodiversity Credits

- Biodiversity credit is a financial mechanism, which represents an asset created through investments in the restoration, conservation, and development of biodiversity in a specific landscape.

  Biocredits are similar to carbon credits used to control greenhouse gas emissions.

- Biocredits are not designed to offset or compensate for actions with negative impacts on biodiversity.
- Instead, proceeds from the sale of biocredits are used to protect and restore biodiversity where it exists.
- To promote biocredits, the ***biodiversity credit alliance*** was also launched at CoP15.

Biodiversity Credit Alliance (BCA)

- BCA provides guidance for the establishment of a credible and scalable market that stands up to the scrutiny of multiple stakeholders.
- BCA is working together with the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to ensure strong foundations and principles exist and can be applied by all market participants going forward.
- BCA was launched during the COP 15 with the support from UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDCA).
- BCA is a voluntary international alliance that brings together diverse stakeholders to

support the realization of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

References

1. Down To Earth – 2024 may see action on biodiversity credits
2. WEF – Biodiversity credits can deliver benefits for business
3. UNDP – Biodiversity Credit
4. UNDP – Biodiversity Credit Alliance

Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)

INDIA bloc leaders want a meeting with the Election Commission to discuss and provide suggestions on the use of VVPATs.

- A VVPAT is a machine that is attached to the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM).
- The VVPAT attached to the EVM generates a paper slip which has the name of the candidate voted for and the symbol of his party.
- This is recorded in the machine's control unit and a printer is attached to the balloting unit and kept in the voting compartment.
- The paper slip remains visible on the VVPAT for seven seconds through a transparent window.
- The paper slip can later be retrieved and tallied with the button pressed in the EVM.
- The use of VVPATs falls under Rule 49A of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, which provides that every EVM shall have a control unit and a balloting unit.
- It further states that a printer with a drop box may also be attached to a voting machine for printing a paper trail of the vote.

  These machines were first used in a by-election in Nagaland in 2013.

- In case of any dispute, the paper slips in the VVPATs can be tallied with the buttons pressed on the EVMs.
- These printed slips can be counted to verify the results.

References

1. The Indian Express – What are VVPATs?
2. Times of India – Lawyer moves HC for VVPAT in all EVMs
3. The Hindu – INDIA bloc to express its view on VVPAT slips

Chipko Movement

Sainikpuri residents plan 'chipko' movement to save trees.

Chipko movement

- The Chipko movement was a non-violent agitation in 1973 that was aimed at

protection and conservation of trees.

Gandhian social activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt, founder of the cooperative organisation Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh, led the first Chipko movement near the village of Mandal in 1973.

- The movement is an uprising against the felling of trees in Uttar Pradesh's Chamoli district (now Uttarakhand) in 1973.
- The uprising originated in Chamoli district and in no time spilled onto other states in north India.
- The name of the movement chipko comes from the word embrace, as the villagers hugged the trees and encircled them to prevent being hacked.
- The Chipko movement can essentially be called a women's movement.

The trigger for the modern Chipko movement was the growth in development that Uttar Pradesh witnessed following the 1963 China border conflict.

Chipko Andolan

- The original Chipko andolan dates back to the 18th century when Rajasthan's Bishnoi community started it.
- The incident includes the sacrifice of a group of villagers, who led by a lady named Amrita Devi, laid down their lives while protecting trees from being felled on the orders of then King of Jodhpur.
- After this incident, the king, in a royal decree, banned cutting of trees in all Bishnoi villages.
- The Chipko Andolan also stands out as an eco-feminist movement.

References

1. The Hindu – Sainikpuri residents plan chipko movement
2. The Indian Express – What is the Chipko movement?
3. Britannica – Chipko Movement

Sikki or Golden Grass

Sikki artisans suffer livelihood losses amid climate change & state apathy.

- **Family -** Zizanoides grass family.
- **Scientific name -** Chrysopogon zizanioides

Sikki finds mention in ancient Sanskrit texts such as the Ramayana, where it is referred to as viran, sugandhimool, ushir and nalad.

- **Tarai Region -** This grass grows indigenously in the Tarai regions of Uttar Pradesh

and Bihar and has an average height of 3-4 feet and Sikki is also now grown to arrest soil erosion in hilly regions.
- The stem is used to make artefacts; the roots are used for extracting oil that is used both for perfumery and medicinal purposes.
- Sikki is used to make traditional items such as multipurpose baskets, ornaments, showpieces and many more utility items that are still considered valuable in rural India.

Sikki vermillion boxes that are considered auspicious are given as part of dowry to brides in the Mithilanchal region of Bihar.

- **GI Tag -** Sikki got the geographical identification tag in 2018 along with Makhana (aquatic fox nut) and the Madhubani paintings.
- Unlike many plant-based products, Sikki items barely get mouldy or infested with fungi.

Sikki is locally known as Kaincha in the state of Odisha.

References

1. Down To Earth – Sikki artisans suffer livelihood losses
2. Down To Earth – Odisha's artisans strike gold with golden grass

Other Important Topics

Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber Connection

• PM Inaugurates Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber Connection and dedicates Low Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD) plant at Kadmat recently
• **Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber** connection will lead to faster Internet for the people of Lakshadweep.
• The project is funded by ***Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF)***, Department of Telecommunications.
• **Low Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD)** is a desalination technique that uses low-grade thermal energy to evaporate seawater and produce fresh water.

Savitribai Phule

• Savitribai Phule (1831 - 1897) was a social reformer, poet in Maharastra.

• She is considered the 1st female teacher in India and is known as the mother of Indian feminism.

Rani Velu Nachiyar

• Rani Velu Nachiyar was the ***1st queen to fight against the British*** colonial power in India.

• She is known by Tamils as **Veeramangai**, who was the princess of Ramanathapuram.

Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research among Teaching professionals ('SMART 2.0')

• The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) along with *National Commission for Indian System of Medicine* (NCISM) has launched 'SMART 2.0' recently.

• The program aims to promote robust clinical studies in priority areas of Ayurveda with Ayurveda academic institutions/hospitals across the country through mutual collaboration.

Fog Pass Device

• A Fog Pass Device is a ***GPS-based navigation device*** that helps train loco pilot navigate through dense fog.

• It provides on-board ***real-time information*** (Display as well as voice guidance) to Loco Pilots.

• It gives information regarding location of fixed landmarks such as Signal, Level Crossing gate (Manned & Unmanned), Permanent Speed Restrictions, Neutral Sections etc.

Mountain Green Cover Index (MGCI)

• Recently National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) signed a 3-year MoU with the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) to develop & report a *Green Cover Index* for National highways.

• **MGCI** is a metric that measures the amount of green vegetation in mountain areas (forest, shrubs, trees, pasture land, crop land, etc.) in order to monitor progress towards the mountain target.

Cyber kidnapping

• Cyber kidnapping is a type of cybercrime where attackers gain unauthorized access to computer systems or data and then demand ransom.

• In cyber kidnapping, online attackers target victims and force them into isolating themselves to demand ransom from their families.

• They monitor the victims through video chat and use pictures captured by them in isolated conditions to extort money from their families.

Starlink

• Starlink is a ***satellite internet network*** operated by SpaceX, an American aerospace company.
• It provides coverage to over ***70 countries*** and aims to provide high-speed internet coverage to every part of the world.
• It also aims to provide global mobile phone service after 2023.

Perihelion

• The Earth reached its *perihelion, or the closest point in its orbit around the Sun* recently.
• Perihelion occurs in early January, about 2 weeks after the **Winter Solstice**.

Vazhakulam variety

• Vazhakulam pineapple is a pineapple grown in the Vazhakulam area of Kerala, India.
• The pineapple is unique in aroma, flavour and sweetness due to its high sugar content and low acidity.
• Vazhakulam is considered as the biggest pineapple market in India.
• It got its ***GI tag in 2009***.

Czech Republic

• The Czech Republic, also known as *Czechia*, is a landlocked country in Central Europe with its capital Prague.
• It borders Poland, Germany, Austria, and Slovakia.
• With a *lack of natural lakes*, reservoirs are important in the Czech Republic.

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