Prelim Bits 06-04-2022 | Daily UPSC Current Affairs

RNOR Tag

Overseas Indians float local trusts to escape Resident but Not Ordinary Resident (RNOR) tag.

- An RNOR is a non-resident Indian who
    1. Has been an NRI in 9 out of the 10 previous years preceding to that year, *OR*
    2. Has, during the 7 previous years preceding that year, been in India for a period of, or periods amounting in all to 729 days or less. *OR*
    3. An Indian Citizen, who is not a tax resident of any other country, and having a total income of Rs 15 lakh and more (Excluding income from foreign sources) *OR*
    4. An Indian Citizen, or a PIO, having Income in India of Rs 15 lakh or more (Excluding Income from foreign sources), and the period of stay in India was 120 days and more but less than 182 days.
- The status of an RNOR lies in between that of a non-resident Indian who stays more than 181 days in the country and a regular resident Indian.
- **Impacts** - An RNOR has to fork out higher tax - unlike an NRI who pays a much lower tax (of 12.5% to 15%) in accordance with the respective tax treaty between India and the country where she is based.
- But more than the tax impact, there is a fear that this may be the first step towards a mandatory disclosure of all overseas assets.
- Currently, only resident Indians have to spell out their foreign assets in the Income Tax (I-T) return forms while NRIs and RNORs do not have to make any such disclosure. This may change for RNORs.

Reference

1. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/invest/overseas-indians-float-local-trusts-to-escape-rnor-tag/articleshow/90628847.cms
2. https://www.goodmoneying.com/rnor-status-tax-rules/

Splinternet

Russia's invasion of Ukraine does seem as a potential trigger for a splintered internet.

- The idea of 'Splinternet' was proposed by Clyde Wayne Crews, a researcher at libertarian think-tank Cato Institute.
- The 'Splinternet' is an internet splintered into disparate realms controlled by different dispensations or powers.
- It is also referred to as cyber-balkanization or internet balkanization.
- The fundamental proposal was to have more internets instead of having more regulations.
- Over the past two decades, a splintering of internet has occurred in some limited ways. For example,
    1. **China's** 'Great Firewall' keeps American tech giants out while pushing online services developed indigenously.

2. In 2019, **Russia** passed the online Iron Curtain (the sovereign internet law) that enabled it to disconnect its internet from rest of the world.
3. In **Iran**, a project called the National Information Network (NIN) or National Internet in Iran has been initiated by the state-owned Telecommunication Company of Iran.

Reference

1. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/russia-ukraine-war-splinternet-7849249/
2. https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2022/04/russia-inches-closer-to-its-splinternet-dream/?comments=1
3. https://www.wired.com/story/russia-splinternet-censorship/

Steel Slag Road

Surat has become the first city in the country to get a processed steel slag (industrial waste) six-lane road.

> Steel Slag Road is a brainchild of the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI), NITI Aayog, and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
>
> This road is built under the 'Waste to Wealth and Clean India' initiative.

- Steel Slag is an industrial by-product obtained from the steel manufacturing industry.
- It is **generated from a steel furnace** burning at around 1,500-1,600 degree centigrade in the form of molten flux material as an **impurity**.
- **Use in Road** - The construction cost of the processed steel slag road is 30% cheaper than roads built from natural aggregates.
- The thickness of the road is also 30% lesser than normal ones, while the durability is much longer due to the utilisation of steel slag.
- Utilization of processed steel slag in road construction paves the way for
    1. Sustainable use of waste and reduces the reliance on perishable natural aggregates,
    2. Reduce GHG emissions and carbon footprint in road construction activity.
- This process is in line with India's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 9 for building resilient infrastructure through inclusive and sustainable industrialization & green technologies.
- **Other uses** - Steel slag can be used as **aggregates in concrete** to replace natural aggregates, because it has favorable mechanical properties, and high resistance to abrasion and impact.
- It is used to **treat acidic water**.
- In Agricultural sector, due to its ability to **correct soil acidity**, it is used as silicate fertilizer that is capable of providing silicon to the plants.

Reference

1. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/surat-indias-first-steel-slag-road-7847675/
2. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/engineering/steel-slag
3. https://www.india.com/explainer/india-first-steel-slag-road-surat-what-is-it-how-is-it-different-sustainable-gujarat-steel-road-5317306/

Attappady

Prehistoric relics were discovered along the banks of three rivers flowing through Attappady hills.

- Attappady Block came into being in 1962 and the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) in 1976.
- It situates in the Western Ghats in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- Main source of income of scheduled tribes living in this area is from agriculture and allied sectors and collection of minor forest produce.
- Major chunk of minor forest produce collected in Kerala is from Attappady.
- Lack of irrigation and deforestation are the serious constraints to Agricultural Development in this area.
- The main water sources are the river **Bhavani, Siruvani and Varagar**.
- Along with agricultural activities cattle, rearing is also the main source of income.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/health-team-in-keralas-attapady-wins-praise-for-risking-lives/article34626454.ece
2. https://itdpattappady.kerala.gov.in/2018/03/21/attapady-profile/

WWF Report on Online Wildlife Trade

A report by the World Wildlife Fund shows illegal purchases of wildlife online are growing in Myanmar in a threat both to public health and to endangered species.

- The report found that enforcement of bans on such transactions has weakened amid political turmoil following a 2021 military takeover.
- The number of such dealings rose 74% over a year earlier to 11,046, nearly all of them involving sales of live animals.
- For the 173 species traded, 54 are threatened with global extinction.
- The animals bought and sold included elephants, bears and gibbons, Tibetan antelope, critically endangered pangolins and an Asian giant tortoise.
- The most popular were various species of monkeys, often bought as pets.
- Most of the animals advertised for sale were taken from the wild.
- They included civets, which along with pangolins have been identified as potential vectors in the spread of diseases such as SARS and COVID-19.

Reference

https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/wwf-report-says-online-wildlife-trade-on-rise-in-myanmar/article65280589.ece

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