Prelim Bits 06-12-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

India Infrastructure Report (IIR)

The India Infrastructure Report 2023 on Urban Planning and Development was released in December 2023

- **IIR** – It is an ***annual publication*** initiated by the IDFC Foundation in ***2001***.
- **Published by** – IDFC Foundation, Infrastructure Development Corporation (Karnataka) Ltd. (iDeCK) and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).

IDFC Foundation *is a not-for-profit institution, working on philanthropic initiatives in social infrastructure.*

IDeCK*, established in 2000 as a joint venture of the Government of Karnataka, IDFC Foundation and HDFC.*

- **Objectives** – To identify and analyze holistic aspects related to infrastructure development and to provide resource for formulating urban policy.

India Infrastructure Report 2023

- It contains 25 chapters in policy ecosystem on the current state of urban development.
- **Urban governance** – Urban transportation planning and urban redevelopment.
- **Digital technology in urban transformation** – Smart cities and performance-based ranking of cities.
- **Financial aspects** – Financial sustainability of urban local bodies, public-private partnership (PPP) and efficacy of municipal bonds.
- It also highlights on housing and migration and public service delivery.
- **Findings** – India has led in PPPs, especially in roads, ports, airports and energy, while few PPPs have happened in the urban sector.

National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)
• It is a Central Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. • It was established in 1976. • It is a national think-tank undertaking cutting-edge multi-disciplinary research, knowledge exchange and capacity development, policy planning and advocacy in the domain of urban development.

References

1. The Hindu| India Infrastructure report on Urban landscape
2. PIB| India Infrastructure Report 2023

Accredited Compensatory Afforestation (ACA) Program

The success of the Jamuna Open Cast Project (OCP) in Madhya Pradesh exemplified the success of Accredited Compensatory Afforestation (ACA) Program.

- A proactive afforestation program proposed in accordance with ***Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022***.
- **Initiated by** – Union Ministry of Coal
- **Objective** – To ***obtain prior approval*** under section 2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 for raising of ***advance afforestation*** over non-forest land.
- To minimize the ecological footprints of coal mining and a commitment to sustainable coal mining practices.

  Compensatory afforestation is a program to ensure that the forest land diversion to non-forest purposes shall be accompanied by afforestation on an equal area of land, a ***legal requirement*** *under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act of 2016.*

- **Benefits** – It will ***prevent delays*** due to fund flow or administrative/technical procedures and will open a new ***area for investment*** in the forest sector.
- It will expedite afforestation works and encourage ***afforestation over fallow lands***, thereby increase the total carbon sequestered.
- **Significance** – It sets a precedent by demonstrating that ***economic activities can coexist with environmental preservation***.
- It ensures that land, once utilized for coal mining can become a green haven to restore biodiversity and also aligns with the larger environmental conservation objectives.

ACA on Jamuna Open Cast Project (OCP)
• **Aim** – To reclaim the erstwhile coal field for afforestation. • **Location** – South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) in Madhya Pradesh which commenced operation in November 1973. • It *ceased mining activities in June 2014*, due to resource depletion. • **Significance** - According to recent satellite data, *88.07% of the quarry area has been successfully reclaimed*. • 579 hectares of reclaimed land comes under the Accredited Compensatory Afforestation (ACA) program. • 131 hectares will serve as a *crucial groundwater recharge area*, contributing to the broader goal of water conservation.

References

1. PIB| Successful implementation of ACA Program
2. Forestclearance.nic.in| Guidelines on ACA

Gender Equality in Education

In Lok Sabha, the Minister of Education has highlighted several key initiatives taken by the government in promoting the gender quality in education.

- **Samagra Shiksha** – To bridge gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education.
  - *Opening schools* for easier access to girls and *separate toilets* for girls.
  - Appointing additional teachers including *women teachers.*
  - Teacher's sensitization programmes like *gender-sensitive teaching-learning materials.*
- **NISHTHA** – To cover relevance of gender dimensions in teaching and learning process.
  - Help teachers to use and adopt learning activities that foster *gender sensitive classroom environment*.
  - Orient teachers on counseling, provisions of POCSO Act, Juvenile Justice Act, School Safety guidelines, helpline and emergency numbers, drop-box for complaints, etc.
- **Rani Laxmi Bai Aatma Raksha Prashikshan** – To ensure safety and security of girls and empowering girls to tackle risk of assault and boost their self-confidence.
  - *Self Defence training* is imparted to girls of classes VI to XII, studying in Government Schools and in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs).

Reference

PIB| Promoting Gender Equality in Education

State Food Safety Index (SFSI)

In 5th edition of State Food Safety Index, nearly all major states slip on food safety compared to 2019.

- It is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety.
- It is **annual** index **released by FSSAI** on the occasion of **World Food Safety Day (7th June)** since 2019
- It is based on the information submitted by States/UTs.
- **Aim** – To measure the performance of states on parameters of food safety.
- **Parameters** – Originally it had 5 but 6th one was added in 5th report for the period 2022-23.

FSSAI Parameters	Weightage	Measures
Compliance	28%	Activities of State food safety authority
Consumer Empowerment	19%	Performances in consumer empowering initiatives.

Human Resources and Institutional Data	18%	Availability of human resources.
Food Testing Infrastructure	17%	Availability of testing infrastructure.
Improvement in SFSI Rank (added in 2023)	10%	Performances in SFSI ranking.
Training and Capacity Building	8%	Steps taken for equipping people in food testing.

- **Index rankings** – It is based on the groupings like large states (20), small states (8) and UT's (8).

5th SFSI (2022-23)

- The only parameter to record improvement was Training and Capacity Building.

References

1. Indian Express| Declining performance of states in SFSI
2. FSSAI| 5th Edition of SFSI

The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA)

According to recent 'State of Food and Agriculture' (SOFA) report, our current agrifood systems impose huge hidden costs on our health, the environment and society, equivalent to at least $10 trillion a year.

- **Released by** – Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (**FAO**) covering 154 countries.
- It is a comprehensive **annual** overview of food security which had been published **since 1947**.

> ***FAO's 3 mandate*** *are to raise the levels of nutrition & the standards of living of people, to improve the production & distribution of all food and agricultural products and to improve the condition of the rural population.*

Findings of State of Food and Agriculture 2023

- **Hidden costs** – 70% of the costs are due to unhealthy diets (high in ultra-processed foods) and 20% are environment-related causes.
- Attributed losses like labour productivity were particularly elevated in high- and upper-middle-income countries.
- **Vulnerable** – The *hardest hit are lower income countries* where the hidden cost is more than 25% of their GDP.

- **Increased consumption of processed foods** – In *peri-urban, rural areas* and also in African nations as well.
- It was driven by urbanisation, changes in lifestyle and employment profiles as well as increasing commuting times.
- **Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity** – It remained *unchanged for the 2nd year* in a row covering at about 29.6% of global population but still far above pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.
- **Hunger** – *122 million more people* faced hunger in 2022 than in 2019 and it also projected that almost 600 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030

Among the 9 south Asian countries, ***India had the 3rd highest prevalence of undernourishment*** *in the total population, after Afghanistan and Pakistan. The share of undernourished people in India, however, had come down from 21.4% of the population in 2004-06 to 16.6 in 2020-22.*

References

1. Down To Earth| Ultra processed foods increases hidden cost
2. FAO| The State of Food and Agriculture 2023

Other Important News
Madagascar • Andry Rajoelina has been re-elected as the President of Madagascar recently. • Madagascar is the ***world's 4th largest island***, located in the ***Indian Ocean*** off the southeastern coast of Africa. • Madagascar is surrounded by the Indian Ocean on all sides except for its western border, which lies along the *Mozambique Channel*. • It is ***one of the world's poorest*** country and is heavily dependent on foreign aid.
Agniveervayu (Women) • Indian Air Force recently inducted 153 women Agniveervayu into its non-officer cadre for the 1st time. • Agniveervayu (Women) is a group of ***female soldiers*** in the Indian Air Force (IAF). • Agniveers are cadets appointed to the Army wings under the Agnipath scheme, a short-term service youth recruitment. • Agniveers are recruited for a period of 4 years, with the option to extend their service for an additional 4 years. • After completing their service, 25% of Agniveers will be selected to join the regular military as permanent soldiers.

Gram Manchitra

• Ministry of Panchayati Raj recently launched Geographic Information System application “Gram Manchitra”.
• **Aim -** To encourage the Spatial Planning by the Gram Panchayat.
• It uses the National Informatics Centre's (NIC) Geographic Information System (GIS) platform of Bharat Maps.

International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

• India, re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council recently.
• The ***International Maritime Organization (IMO)*** is a United Nations agency that regulates shipping. **HQ**- London, England.
• The IMO was established in 1948 at a UN conference in Geneva. It currently has ***174 Member*** States.
• The IMO was prompted to take action on marine pollution prevention and response by major oil pollution incidents.

Statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji

• PM unveils Statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Rajkot Fort, Sindhudurg, Maharashtra recently.
• Chhatrapati Shivaji (1630-1680) was the founder of the Maratha kingdom of India.
• **Victories -** Shivaji’s conflict with the ***Adil Shahi Sultanate of Bijapur*** began when he was only 16.
• **Ashta Pradhan -** He promoted the use of Marathi and Sanskrit in his courts and created an elaborate administrative system with a council of ministers known as Ashta Pradhan.

Navy Day 2023

• Prime Minister recently attended the ‘Navy Day 2023’ celebrations at Maharastra.
• The Indian Navy celebrates Navy Day on December 4 every year to commemorate ***"Operation Trident,"*** the Navy's audacious attack on Karachi harbour during the 1971 War.

India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF)

• India Internet Governance Forum IIGF’23 held recently in New Delhi.
• IIGF is an initiative associated with the UN Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF).
• IIGF, was created in 2021, and is supported by a 14-member multi-stakeholder Committees.
• UN IGF is a multi-stakeholder platform bringing together representatives from various groups, considering all to be at par to discuss public policy issues related to the Internet.

"ISSA Vision Zero 2023" Award

• The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) bagged the "ISSA Vision Zero 2023" Award in the recently held 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Sydney, Australia.

• ***"Vision Zero"*** is a transformational approach for prevention of accidents at work places integrating the 3 dimensions of safety, health and well-being at all levels of work.

• **International Social Security Association (ISSA)** is the principal international institution bringing together social security agencies and organizations of the world.

• **Aim -** To promote dynamic social security as the social dimension in a globalizing world by supporting excellence in social security administration.

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