Prelim Bits 08-12-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Changes in Adoption Rules & CARINGS

Since the new Adoption Regulations of the Juvenile Justice Act were notified in September 2022, the pendency in the adoption of children has come down.

- The new Rules for adoption were brought about by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- These Rules empower **District Magistrates to issue adoption orders**. Earlier, this power was exercised by the judiciary.
- These Rules introduced the pre- and post-adoptive counselling sessions for prospective adoptive parents by counsellors trained with the help of the National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS).
- A complete health check-up will be done through the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the child's district before processing the adoption.
- In accordance with the new rules, prospective adoptive parents can now opt from their **home State or region**.
- Changes have been made to the Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System (**CARINGS**) online platform for adoption.
- Those children who couldn't find families within their stipulated referral cycles, are now being offered to prospective parents who are Indian residents, NRIs and OCI card holders irrespective of their seniority.
- These children would have otherwise been referred to prospective parents who are foreigners.
- According to the new regulations, if the child adjusts well with the foster family, it can adopt the child after 2 years of fostering (earlier, 5 years).

CARINGS

- Child Adoption Resource Information & Guidance System (CARINGS) is the application providing the adoption services.
- It is an online platform designed to bring transparency in adoption system. It curtails delays at various level of adoption.

Central Adoption Resource Authority

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.
- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country & inter-country adoptions.
- CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, ratified by Government of India in 2003.
- It primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.

Reference

1. The Hindu | Pendency falls in the rate of adoption of children two months after notification
2. CARA | About CARA
3. CARINGS | Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System
4. PIB | Adoption Services through CARINGS portal

Ranganath Mishra Commission

In the Supreme Court, the Central government informed that it had taken a decision to not accept Justice Ranganath Mishra Commision's report.

- Ranganath Mishra Commission is the name of the **National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities** that was constituted by the Government of India in 2004.
- It was constituted to look into various issues related to the linguistic and religious minorities in the country.
- Chaired by former CJI Ranganath Misra, the Commission submitted its report in 2007.
- The report recommended that SC status be completely delinked from religion and be made religion-neutral like STs.
- It had recommended permitting Dalits who converted into Islam and Christianity to avail Scheduled Caste status.

Reference

1. New Indian Express | Govt has rejected Ranganath panel's report on converted Dalits, SC told
2. The Hindu | No plan to implement Misra commission report
3. Economic Times | Ranganath Mishra Commission report a lost chance

Nature Positive Fund

Over 100 experts want the United Nation, World Economic Forum, European Commission and WWF to reject the 'Nature Positive Fund' at the 15th COP15 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada.

- 'Nature positive' means enhancing the resilience of our planet and societies to **halt and reverse nature loss**.
- It has become a movement, with leaders from governments, businesses and civil society committing to action.
- Conservationists say 'nature-positive' world needs to be achieved by the end of the decade.
- According to the Global Nature Positive Initiative at WWF, the idea is that there should be more nature in 2030 than 2020.

  The 'nature-positive' goal could be the equivalent of the 1.5C pledge - where emissions cuts are needed to curb rising temperatures, nature protection is needed to boost biodiversity.

- Critics say that the nature positive agenda promotes the financialization of nature's destruction, via a
  1. Monetary valuation of ecosystems,
  2. Biodiversity offsetting and

3. Diverting the conversation away from the need to curb biodiversity destruction and towards ‘sustainable’ finance regulation.

- The funds that are involved for nature positive agenda are known as ‘Nature Positive Fund’.

Reference

1. Down To Earth | Over 100 experts oppose ‘Nature Positive Fund’ in open letter to UN before COP15
2. Live Mint | Nature Positive
3. Weforum | What is 'nature positive' and why is it the key to our future?

Bharat Bill Payment System

According to RBI, the scope of the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) will soon be expanded to include all categories of payments and collections, both recurring and non-recurring in nature.

- Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) is a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conceptualized ecosystem driven by National Payments Corporation of India’s (NPCI’s) NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd (NBBL).
- It is a **one-stop ecosystem for all recurring bills** providing an interoperable and accessible "Anytime Anywhere" payment service to all customers across India.
- It offers repetitive payments of all type like credit card, electricity, telecom, DTH, gas, water bills, insurance, loan repayments, Cable, FASTag recharge, municipal taxes, etc. through a single window.
- It has multiple modes of payment and provides instant confirmation of payment via an SMS or receipt with a Be-assured symbol.

- **Reforms** - Since its **launch in 2017**, the RBI has, from time to time, announced various improvements to this platform including
    1. All categories of billers who raise recurring bills,
    2. Facilitating in-bound cross-border bill payments,
    3. Reducing the eligibility criteria for Operating Units (BBPOUs), etc.
- BBPS currently does not enable non-recurring payments or collection requirements of individuals even if they are recurring in nature.
- Consequently, some categories of payments remain outside the ambit of BBPS - professional service fee payments, education fees, tax payments, rent collections, etc. So, RBI decided to expand the scope of BBPS.

Reference

1. The Hindu Business Line | Digital payments. Scope of Bharat Bill Payment System to be expanded further
2. Bharatbillpay | About
3. NPCI | Bharat BillPay Product Overview

Weasels

The logo of the UN biodiversity conference that opened in Montreal features a human reaching to embrace a panda - but from an ecological perspective, a weasel or badger would be a more appropriate choice.

- Weasels are small mammals that are closely related to ermine, ferrets, polecats and minks - all members of the *Mustela* genus - and are in the same family (Mustelids) as badgers, wolverines and otters.
- **Habitat** - Weasels are adaptable and live all over the world.
- Their homes include marshes, scrubs, hedgerows, alpine meadows, riparian woodlands and riverbank habitats, according to the IUCN.
- Some weasel types are long-tailed weasel, short-tailed weasel, tropical weasel, Mountain weasels, African striped weasel, etc.,
- The most common weasel is the short-tailed weasel. It can be found in North America, Europe and Asia, in regions as far north as the Arctic.
- **Habits** - They are nocturnal animals. Most of a weasel's time awake consists of hunting, storing excess food and eating.
- Their bodies don't store fat, so they need a constant supply of food to provide enough energy. They eat 40 to 60% of its body weight every day.
- Though weasels can dig their own burrows quite quickly, they sometimes take over other animals' burrows and make them their own.
- **Diet -** Weasels are aggressive predators. They generally hunt alone.
- Weasels' diets usually consist of rats, mice, voles and rabbits.
- **Conservation status** - Most weasels are listed as least concern by the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. There are a few exceptions.
- The mountain weasel and Japanese weasel are listed as near threatened because their population has had a significant decline.
- The Colombian weasel is listed as vulnerable because of "a continuing decline in population due to ongoing deforestation".
- In New Zealand, the weasel is considered an invasive species and a threat to native wildlife. In 2016, it planned to eradicate them by 2050.

Significance of protecting small carnivores

- Generally, large mammals with widespread appeal, also known as charismatic megafauna, often represent the highest achievement in biodiversity protection.
- But, losing small carnivores can change ecosystems.
- A 2021 review suggests that over the past couple of decades over half of all small carnivores have declined in number, and a quarter are at risk of extinction.
- Proportionally, these are the same levels of decline and endangerment as the better-publicized threats to large carnivores.
- **Indicators** - Compared with larger species, small carnivores have shorter lives and use smaller areas.
- This allows them to respond quickly to even minor fluctuations in temperature, habitat change and food availability.
- These attributes make small carnivores sensitive indicators of even minor shifts in how well their ecosystems work.
- A prime example is diminutive island fox (Channel Islands, U.S.) that was threatened by golden eagles that preyed on them.
- Restoring island foxes was a complex initiative that involved reintroducing bald eagles - which prey on fish, not mammals - to the islands to chase off golden eagles.
- **Significance** - Many small carnivores typically prey on small seed-eating rodents like mice and gophers.
- This reduces rodent impacts on plants and farm crops.
- It also helps to reduce the spread of tick-borne diseases, since small rodents can serve as hosts for infected ticks.

- For these reasons, it makes sense to use small carnivores as barometers of ecosystem health.

Reference

1. Down To Earth | Weasels, not pandas, should be the poster animal for biodiversity loss
2. Live Science | Facts About Weasels
3. A-Z-animals.com | Weasel

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