Prelim Bits 09-06-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Bio Economy

Prime Minister said that India's 'bio-economy' has grown eight times in the last 8 years and has reached USD 80 billion from USD 10 billion.

- The 'BioEconomy' as a concept acquired prominence when European Union announced BioEconomy strategy in 2012.
- The BioEconomy covers all sectors and systems that **rely on biological resources** (such as animals, plants, micro-organisms and derived biomass, including organic waste), their functions and principles.
- It includes and interlinks:
    1. Land and marine ecosystems and the services they provide;
    2. All primary production sectors that use and produce biological resources (agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture); and
    3. All economic and industrial sectors that use biological resources and processes to produce food, feed, bio-based products, energy and services.
- It encompasses the sustainable production of renewable resources from land, fisheries and aquaculture environments.
- It also encompasses the conversion of these renewable resources into food, feed, bio-based products and bio-energy, as well as the related public goods.
- The ultimate aim is to
    1. Protect the environment,
    2. Avoid overexploitation of natural resources and
    3. Enhance biodiversity.

Circular Bioeconomy

- The bioeconomy aims to drive both sustainable development and circularity.
- In particular, the principles of the circular economy - **reuse, repair and recycle** - are a fundamental part of the bioeconomy.
- Through reuse, repair and recycling, the total amount of waste and its impact is reduced.
- It also saves energy, minimises pollution of soil, air and water, thus helping to prevent damage to the environment, climate and biodiversity.
- A circular bioeconomy allows for using **renewable natural capital** to transform and manage our land, food, health and industrial systems, with the goal of achieving sustainable wellbeing in harmony with nature.

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Recent Meeting of RBI's MPC

The Monetary Policy Committee of Reserve Bank of India met from 6-8 June 2022.

- It has decided to hike the Repo Rate by 50 basis points to 4.90 %
- Consequently, the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) Rate stands adjusted to 4.65% and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and Bank Rate to 5.15%
- This is because the SDF, MSF and Bank Rate changes based on the value of Repo Rate.
- The MPC also decided to remain focused on **withdrawal of accommodation** (has been there since 2019) to ensure that inflation remains within the target going forward, while supporting growth.

  The accommodative stance of the RBI indicates its willingness to expand money supply and cut interest rates.

- **Inflation** - Assuming normal monsoon in 2022 and average crude oil price of $105 per barrel in Indian basket, inflation is projected at 6.7% in 2022-23.
- **Growth forecast** - The MPC has observed that the global economy continues to grapple with
  1. Multi-decadal high inflation and slowing growth,
  2. Persisting geopolitical tensions and sanctions,
  3. Elevated prices of crude oil and other commodities and
  4. Lingering COVID-19 related supply chain bottlenecks.
- **Recovery** - There is a broadening of the **recovery** in economic activity in India.
- Urban demand is recovering and rural demand is gradually improving.
- Merchandise exports posted robust double-digit growth for the 15th month in a row during May while non-oil non-gold imports continued to expand at a healthy pace, pointing to recovery of domestic demand.
- India's GDP growth in 2021-22 is estimated at 8.7%, higher than pre-pandemic level. Real GDP growth for 2022-23 is estimated at 7.2%

Other Measures

- **Measures to benefit Cooperative Banks** - Limits on individual housing loans by cooperative banks for Tier I /Tier II UCBs is revised from Rs. 30 lakh/ Rs. 70 lakh to Rs. 60 lakh/ Rs. 140 lakh, respectively.
- As regards Rural Cooperative Banks (RCBs), the limits shall increase from Rs.20 lakh to Rs.50 lakh for RCBs with assessed net worth less than Rs.100 crore; and from Rs. 30 lakh to Rs. 75 lakh for other RCBs.
- Urban cooperative banks (UCBs) can now extend doorstep banking services to their customers.
- RCBs can now extend finance to commercial real estate (loans to residential housing projects) within existing aggregate housing finance limit of 5% of total assets.
- **e-mandate transactions** - The limit per transaction for e-mandate based recurring payments increased from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 15,000.
- This is done to further augment customer convenience and facilitate recurring payments like subscriptions, insurance premia and education fees of larger value.
- **Enhancing scope of UPI system** - Now, credit cards too can be linked with UPI platform,

beginning with RuPay cards.
- UPI has become the most inclusive mode of payment in India.
- Currently, over 26 crore unique users and 5 crore merchants are on boarded the UPI platform.
- **Related Links** - Monetary Policy Committee and Monetary Policy

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Mela Kheerbhawani

On June 8, Kashmiri Hindu Pandits will celebrate the Zyestha Ashtami at the Mata Kheerbhawani temple at Tulmulla, Ganderbal, Kashmir.

- Mela Kheerbhawani, held at the temple every year, is the largest gathering of Hindus in Kashmir after the annual Amarnath Yatra.
- The festival falls on the auspicious day of "Zeshta Ashtami".
- The festival was revived over a decade ago when many Kashmiri Hindus resumed visits to the temple on Zyestha Ashtami from Jammu and New Delhi as well.
- Hundreds of local Muslims, too, traditionally join the celebrations.

Mata Kheerbhawani Temple

- Situated 30 km from Srinagar city, Mata Kheerbhawani temple is one of the most sacred pilgrimage sites for Kashmiri Hindus.
- [Goddess Kheer Bhawani is considered to be the Presiding Deity of most of the Kashmiri Hindus.]
- The Temple is dedicated to the Goddess Mata Ragnya Devi or Mata Kheer Bhawani (originally Bhawani Mata).
- It has been constructed over a **Sacred Spring**. Within the spring is a marble Temple.
- The Temple-Spring complex is known as Kheer Bhawani as the devotees offer milk and 'kheer (milk and rice pudding)' to the Sacred Spring.
- **Legend** has it that the water of the temple's spring changes colour from white to red and black.
- The colour of the water is said to predict the impending future. If it changes to black, it is seen as inauspicious or an impending disaster.

Reference

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India Business & Biodiversity Initiative

India's largest power generating firm NTPC Limited has issued renewed Biodiversity Policy 2022 to establish a comprehensive vision and guiding principle for conservation, restoration, and enhancement of biodiversity.

> *NTPC was the first PSU to issue Biodiversity Policy in 2018. In the same year, NTPC became a member of the India Business and Biodiversity Initiative (IBBI).*

- India Business & Biodiversity Initiative was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in 2014.
- The lead Executing Agencies are the Indian Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- **Vision** - To sensitise, guide and mentor Indian business organisations in biodiversity conservation & sustainable use related to their operations, across their value chain and beyond towards conservation of India's biodiversity.
- The IBBI serves as a national platform of businesses and its stakeholders for dialogue sharing and learning, ultimately leading to mainstreaming sustainable management of biological diversity into businesses.
- **Membership** to IBBI is open for companies from any sector and size, as well as stakeholder organizations that can contribute to the platform in terms of technical assistance.
- The business members of IBBI are subject to become signatories to a 10-point IBBI Declaration, demonstrating the organization's commitment towards biodiversity.

Reference

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Operation Rakth Chandran

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 14.63 metric tonnes of red sanders in the international market from a consignment kept in an Inland Container Depot (ICD) in Gujarat.

- The DRI seized 840 logs of red sandalwood or red sandalwood under the Operation Rakth Chandran.
- It has been seized under the Customs Act, 1962.
- Its export is prohibited as per the country's foreign trade policy.
- Rich hue and therapeutic properties of this tree are responsible for its high demand across Asia, particularly in China.
- They are used in cosmetics, medicinal products and high-end furniture and woodcraft.
- **Related Links** - Red Sanders and Red Sandalwood

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