Prelim Bits 11-08-2021 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Doctor to Population Ratio

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended 1:1000 as the doctor to population ratio.
- Currently, the doctor-population ratio in India is 1:1456. But, India is on the path to achieve the WHO-recommended ratio by 2024, and is increasing the number of beds from 11 lakh to 22 lakhs.
- Ayushman Bharat Yojna and Jan Arogya Yojna are the programmes that focus on providing all kinds of health facilities to people.

IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report

Recently, the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released the 6th Assessment Report.

- This report said that the 1.5 degree Celsius warming was inevitable even in the best case scenario, and has been shown to be closer than thought.
- This is the first time that the IPCC is saying that the rise in global temperatures was a direct result of human activities.
- The most ambitious emission pathways would lead to the 1.5 degree C warming be achieved in the 2030s, overshoot to 1.6 degree C, before the temperatures drop back again to 1.4 degree C by the end of the century.
- **Net-zero targets** - For India, the report would make a case by increasing the pressure to agree to a net-zero target.
    - A net-zero target is a deadline by which it should be able to bring down its emissions to a level that equals the absorptions made by its carbon sinks.
- Immediate emission cuts and a steady pathway to net-zero is expected to bring better benefits than a business-as-usual scenario and a sudden drop in emissions towards the end to meet the target.
- Even the countries that have pledged a net-zero target, the substantial part of their emission cuts is planned only for 2035 and beyond. They will be put under pressure to reconsider their pathways.
- **NDCs** - The IPCC report could also lead to renewed demands that all countries update their climate action plans called nationally-determined contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Agreement.
- Every country has submitted an NDC by listing the climate actions they would take by 2025 or 2030 - To be updated every 5 years from 2025.
- 110 countries have updated their NDCs, but not China, India or South Africa.

Impacts

- The impacts projected at 2°C of warming would be present at 1.5°C as well, and are being witnessed even now.
    a. Every additional half degree of warming will increase the intensity and frequency of hot extremes, heavy precipitation and drought.

    b. At 2 degree C of global warming, heat extremes would reach critical tolerance thresholds for agriculture and human health.
    c. For each additional degree C of global warming, extreme daily rainfall events would intensify by about 7%.
- The 6th Assessment Report suggested that the results of emission reductions might begin to show over time scales of 10 to 20 years.

Compound Events

It is a new element of discussion in the sixth Assessment report.

- It is defined as two or more climate change-induced events happening back to back, triggering each other, or occurring simultaneously.
    - Example - Glacial lake bursts, a familiar occurrence in the Himalayan region, accompanied with heavy rainfall and flooding.
- If occurring together, they feed into each other, aggravating each other's impacts.
- If occurring one after the other, they give little time for communities to recover, thus making them much more vulnerable.

Wildfires

A massive wildfire continues to burn on the northern tip of Greece's second-largest island called Evia, which is close to the mainland.

- Wildfires or forest fires (or bushfires in Australia) are unplanned fires that burn through natural areas such as forests, grasslands or prairies.
- They occur during hot and dry seasons, as dry leaves, shrubs, grass and deadwood are easily combustible and easily ignite.
    - Ignition can either happen naturally, such as through lightning strikes, or triggered accidentally or intentionally.
- Such fires typically come to an end when there is no more vegetation to burn or because of rain.
- **Impacts** - As the fires burn through vegetation or forests, smoke and carbon are released into the atmosphere.
- But the fires also release nutrients into the soil and are an important part of ecological succession, plant germination, and soil enhancement.
- **Factors** - The size of a wildfire depends on the amount of vegetation available and also the strength and direction of the wind.
- Some of the other factors that influence the wildfires are weather events such as frequent heatwaves, extreme rainfalls and rising sea levels.
- Similar to Wildfires, click here to know about Zombie Fires.

Definition of Minority

- The Central Government notifies minority communities at the national level under the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992.
    - The Government has enacted the NCM Act, 1992 to constitute a National Commission for Minorities.
- The term "minority" is not defined in the Indian Constitution. However, the Constitution recognises religious and linguistic minorities.

Religious Minorities

- Six communities notified as minorities under the Section 2 (c) of NCM Act are Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains.
- Notification of any community specific to a State as minority community within a State comes under the purview of the State concerned.
- **Article 25 (1)** - People's freedom of conscience and right to freely profess, practise and propagate religion.
- **Article 26** - Right of every religion or any section to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, manage its own religious affairs, and own, acquire and administer property.
- **Article 28** - People's freedom to attend religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions.

Linguistic Minorities

- As per the Commissioner for linguistic minorities, Linguistic Minorities are group of people residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language or script of their own.
- The language of the minority group need not be one of the 22 languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
- In other words, linguistic minorities,
    - At the State level mean any group of people whose mother tongues are different from the principal language of the State, and
    - At the district and taluka/tehsil levels, different from the principal language of the district or taluka/tehsil concerned.
- Linguistic minorities are identified by the respective States/UTs.
- **Article 350-B** inserted by the 7th Constitutional (Amendment) Act 1956 to provide for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities appointed by the President of India.
- This Special Officer would investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution.

Common Provisions

- **Article 29** - Right of any section of the citizens residing in India with a distinct language, script or culture of its own to conserve it.
- It grants protection to both religious minorities as well as linguistic minorities.
- Also, the Supreme Court held that the scope of this article includes minorities as well as the majority, as the word 'section of citizens' is used.
- **Article 30** - All minorities shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- The protection under Article 30 is confined only to minorities and does not extend to any section of citizens (as under Article 29).

Source: PIB, The Indian Express, Business Line, Science Direct, Deccan Herald

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