Prelim Bits 16-03-2022 | Daily UPSC Current Affairs

Membership to NATO

Ukrainian President said that Ukraine would no longer press for its membership at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

> Ukraine's interest in securing membership of the organisation has been at the centre of its geopolitical tensions with Russia.

- North Atlantic Treaty or the Washington Treaty states the parties to the treaty seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area.
- The signatories affirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and express their desire to live in peace with all people and governments.
- They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security.

Process to secure NATO Membership

- **Article 10** of the treaty provides for entry of a new member to accede to the treaty by unanimous agreement of the existing members.
- Once the member countries of the NATO have established consensus about a country's potential membership, it is called upon to initiate accession talks with the alliance.
- **MAP** - Following this, they may be invited to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP). Reaching this stage does not secure membership.
- It is a preparatory mechanism providing advice, assistance and practical support tailored to the specific needs of applicant countries.
- It may continue even after the applicant country has become a member.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina were invited to commence MAP in April 2010.
- **MAP obligations -** The five chapters of the MAP identify issues that might be taken up, also suggesting mechanism through which the preparations for "possible eventual membership" can be taken forward.
- They constitute issues relevant to politics and economics, defence/military, resources, security and legality.
- **Confirming intent** - This process begins with NATO experts and representatives of the invited countries at the NATO's headquarters in Brussels.
- The idea is to obtain formal confirmation of the invitee's willingness and ability to meet the political, legal and military obligations and commitments of the NATO membership.
- The second step of the process requires the applicant country to issue a formal letter of intent to NATO. This acts as a confirmation to the obligations and commitments of the organisation.
- **Necessary amendments** are, then, made to make the invitees party to the Washington Treaty followed by ratification of the applicant countries' constitutional protocols to facilitate the membership.
- **Acceding to the Treaty -** After all NATO members notify their acceptance to the US

government about the applicant, the Secretary General would call the potential new members to accede to the Treaty.
- [The US government is the depository of the Washington Treaty.]
- Following the invitee depositing their instruments of accession with the U.S. State Dept, the applicant becomes a member of the NATO.

Reference

https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/explained-how-does-a-nation-secure-nato-membership/article65209951.ece

Phool Dei

- Phool Dei festival is known as the harvest festival of Uttarakhand.
- The term 'Dei' refers to a ceremonial pudding which is the key food in this festival that is made from jaggery.
- This festival is celebrated in the **Garhwal and Kumaun regions of Uttarakhand** every year in the flowering season (March-April) for about a month.
- It is celebrated on the first day of the Hindu month, Chaitra.
- Children, particularly young girls, go into farms, forests and gardens after bathing and collect fresh flowers to offer to the local deities as a welcome gesture for the **onset of spring season**.
- The local belief is that placing flowers at the doorsteps of houses for the gods will bring prosperity and blessings.
- The groups of children, known as *Phoolyari,* bring flowers daily to the households and receive money and sweets in return from each family on the last day of spring.
- The commonly used flowers are red rhododendron flowers or *buransh* (the state tree of Uttarakhand), the yellow *pheonly* flowers (*Reinwardtia indica)* and mustard flowers.

The celebration of Phool Dei indirectly rooted a sense of affection and protection towards nature, especially locals flowers and trees, in our minds.

Reference

1. https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/environment/phool-dei-uttarakhand-s-festival-of-flowers-to-teach-kids-environmental-conservation-81923
2. https://www.tourmyindia.com/states/uttarakhand/phool-dei-festival.html

Mouling National Park

- Mouling National Park of Arunachal Pradesh is located in the right bank of river Siang.
- It was established in 1982 with an objective to create a favourable habitat for plants and animals.
- This park has been recognized as one of the 18 biodiversity hotspots.
- The vegetation of the area varies according to the altitude.
    1. The upper reaches are covered with temperate alpine and coniferous forest and
    2. The lower area is covered with tropical evergreen forest.
- The climate of the area is extremely humid with high rainfall and no well-defined dry season.
- Many endangered species like takins, snowclouded leopard, golden languor, hornbill, monal scalater, serrow are spotted here.

- Dabung Waterfall and Nirbung Waterfall are two of the many attractive waterfalls inside the sanctuary.

Reference

1. https://uppersiang.nic.in/tourist-place/mouling-national-park/
2. https://www.tourmyindia.com/states/arunachalpradesh/mouling-national-park.html

Weather-Based Index Insurance Scheme

Department of Fisheries has said that there is no proposal for providing weather-based index insurance scheme to cover the loss suffered by the fishermen due to adverse climatic changes.

- Weather Based Crop Insurance aims to mitigate the hardship of the insured farmers against the likelihood of financial loss on account of anticipated crop loss resulting from incidence of adverse conditions of weather parameters like rainfall, temperature, frost, humidity etc.
- **Crops covered** - Major Food crops (Cereals, Millets & Pulses) & Oilseeds; Commercial / Horticultural crops
- **Farmers covered** - All farmers including sharecroppers and tenant farmers growing the notified crops in the notified areas are eligible for coverage.
- However, farmers should have insurable interest on the insured crop.
- Non-loanee farmers are required to submit necessary documentary evidence of land records and / or applicable contract / agreements details (in case of sharecroppers / tenant farmers).
- All farmers availing Seasonal Agricultural Operations (SAO) loans from Financial Institutions (i.e. loanee farmers) for the crop(s) notified are covered on compulsory basis.
- The Scheme is optional for the non-loanee farmers. They can choose between WBCIS and PMFBY, and also the insurance company.
- **Perils covered** - Following major weather perils, which are deemed to cause "Adverse Weather Incidence", leading to crop loss, shall be covered under the scheme.
    - Rainfall - Deficit Rainfall, Excess rainfall, Unseasonal Rainfall, Rainy days, Dry-spell, Dry days
    - Relative Humidity
    - Temperature - High temperature (heat), Low temperature
    - Wind Speed
    - A combination of the above
- Hailstorms, cloud-burst may also be covered as Add-on/Index-Plus products for those farmers who have already taken normal coverage under WBCIS.
- The perils listed above are only indicative and not exhaustive, any addition deletion may be considered by insurance companies.
- **Insurance Period** (Risk period) would ideally be from sowing period to maturity of the crop.
- Risk period based on the duration of the crop and weather parameters chosen, could vary with individual crop and reference unit area and would be notified by SLCCCI before the commencement of risk period

Crops	**Maximum Insurance charges payable by farmer (% of Sum Insured)**
Kharif Season - Food & Oilseeds crops (all cereals, millets, & oilseeds, pulses)	2.0% of SI or Actuarial rate, whichever is less
Rabi Season - Food & Oilseeds crops (all cereals, millets, & oilseeds, pulses)	1.5% of SI or Actuarial rate, whichever is less

Rabi and Kharif Season - Annual Commercial / Annual Horticultural crops	5% of SI or Actuarial rate, whichever is less

- The 'net premium payable' in case of the insured loanee cultivator is financed by the Lending Bank.
- **Insurance companies** - Public and private sector General Insurance Companies empanelled by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) and Farmers Welfare and selected by concerned State Government / Union Territory (UT) implement WBCIS.

Reference

1. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1806251
2. https://vikaspedia.in/agriculture/agri-insurance/weather-based-crop-insurance

National Bal Bhavan

- National Bal Bhavan is an institution located at Kotla Road, New Delhi.
- It is an autonomous body run and funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD).
- It was founded in 1956 by Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.
- It was established with the purpose to provide opportunities for creative pursuits to children in the age group of 5 to 16 years.
- It enhances the creative potential of children by providing them various activities, opportunities & common platform to interact, experiment, create and perform according to their age, aptitude and ability.
- It offers a barrier-free environment with immense possibilities of innovation, minus any stress or strain.

Indira Gandhi was appointed as the first chairperson of National Bal Bhavan.

Reference

1. http://nationalbalbhavan.nic.in/
2. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/nbb_annualrpt.pdf

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