Prelim Bits 17-07-2022 & 18-07-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Global Liveability Index 2022

The Global Liveability Index 2022 has been released by the European Intelligence Unit.

- It ranked 173 cities on the basis of their liveability or living conditions
- The ranking is determined by five factors — stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure.
- While ranking the highest weightage is given to stability and culture and environment (25% each) followed by healthcare and infrastructure with 20% each and education with 10%.
- Cities that topped the list were
    - Vienna, Austria
    - Copenhagen, Denmark
    - Zurich, Switzerland
    - Calgary, Canada
    - Vancouver, Canada
    - Geneva, Switzerland
    - Frankfurt, Germany
    - Toronto, Canada
    - Amsterdam, Netherlands
    - Osaka, Japan and Melbourne, Australia (tie)
- The lest 10 liveable cities in the list were
    - Tehran, Iran
    - Douala, Cameroon
    - Harare, Zimbabwe
    - Dhaka, Bangladesh
    - Port Moresby, PNG
    - Karachi, Pakistan
    - Algiers, Algeria
    - Tripoli, Libya
    - Lagos, Nigeria
    - Damascus, Syria
- For the first time the list included five Indian cities; Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad, and Bangalore.
- All five scored poorly, ranked between 140 and 146.
- The ranking of various cities are as follows.
    - Delhi at 140
    - Mumbai at 141
    - Chennai at 142
    - Ahmedabad at 143
    - Bangalore ranked ranked the least at 146th with a score of 54.4 out of 100.
- This came as a shocker as the silicon valley of India topped the ‘Ease of Living Index 2020’ released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

- The city received a score of 46.4, out of 100, in infrastructure. This score is the lowest among all Indian cities.
- The infrastructure score is based on the quality of roads, public transportation system, international links, energy provision, telecommunications, water, and availability of good quality housing.
- Pakistan's largest city Karachi was one of the five least livable cities in the world in the index, but it has still scored better than the IT capital of India in terms of infrastructure.
- Bangladesh capital Dhaka stood at 166th postion.
- The silicon valley of India scored equal to Lagos in Nigeria, the third-least livable city in the world, in terms of infrastructure.
- Ukraine's capital Kyiv was not included in the index this time due to Russia's full-scale war
- Russian cities Moscow and St Petersburg fell in the rankings over "censorship" and the impact of Western sanctions.

Reference

1. https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/imran-khan-s-pti-wins-punjab-bypolls-amid-political-turmoil-101658119489904.html
2. https://indianexpress.com/article/india/global-liveability-index-2022-bangalore-ranked-as-the-least-liveable-city-in-india-8010508/

Sustainable Development Goal 15

A progress report on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 15 (SDG-15) has been released by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

- **Sustainable Development Goals-** The SDGs, is officially known as Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- It is a set of 17 Global Goals with 169 targets between them.
- UN member states are expected to use these goals while framing their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years.
- The SDGs follow, and expand on, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were agreed by governments in 2000, and ended on 2015.
- **Key findings on SDG 15 –** SDG 15 is Life on Land.
- It is an ambitious goal to protect life on land by 2030, which covers all land-based ecosystems and biodiversity.
- The analysis covered east, central and south Asia, eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, west Asia, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and small island developing states.
- As per the report the progress on the global goal for the protection of life on Earth has stagnated and is off track.
- The overall progress on SDG-15 in at least 12 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa has reversed and is trending in the wrong direction.
- Also 23 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have also shown "stagnant progress" under the goal.
- **Findings related to Forest cover -** The world's forest area continues to decline, but at a slightly slower rate than in previous decades.
- The proportion of forests fell from 31.9 per cent of total land area in 2000 to 31.2 per cent in 2020, representing a net loss of almost 100 million hectares.
- The loss is high particularly in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa
- This has been primarily due to the conversion of forests into agricultural land.
- This includes crop-land expansion of 49.6 per cent and livestock grazing (38.5 per cent) which goes against Goal 15.1

- The forest cover shrunk faster during 2010-2020 than 2000-2010 in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- This shrinking is called reverse progress in sustainable forest management.
- **Findings related to Species extinction -** Under SDG target 15.5, the world was supposed to halt, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species by 2020.
- However, the risk of species extinction continued to rise.
- The risk is highest in south Asia and small-island developing states. Around 40,000 species are documented to be at risk of extinction over the coming decades.

Reference

1. https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/agriculture/sustainable-development-goal-15-world-off-track-on-protecting-life-on-land-finds-un-report-83749

Statue of Peace

A 'Statue of Peace' of Swami Ramanujacharya made of marble was inaugurated in Srinagar.

- Ramanujacharya was born in Tamil Nadu in 1074.
- He is revered worldwide as a Vedic philosopher, social reformer and one of the most important exponents of Sri Vaishnava tradition.
- In his 120 year life, travelled across Bharat, understanding the way of life of all sections, at the same time, focusing on individual needs.
- Sri Ramanuja, is a proponent of Vishishtadvaita
- He was an epic personality who always longed for the creation of an equitable society.
- He studied the scriptures deeply in his teenage years and brought the treasure of Vedic literature to the doorsteps of the common man.
- Dispelled the concept of Mayavada which portrays the world is illusionary.
- He became the preceptor of the Bhakthi movement and the source for all other Bhakthi Schools of thought.
- By adopting the formula of Manasa, Vacha, Karmana, he placed his life in the service of the people. His message led to the emergence of many sects across the country.
- Was an inspiration for mystic poets like Kabir, Meerabai, Annamacharya, Bhaktha Ramdas, Thyagaraja and many others.
- Narsi Mehta, the famous poet of Gujarat, composed 'Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye Je Peer Parai Jaane Re', with the message of Ramanujacharya.
- Sant Kabir also accepted that whatever he could do in his life, was due to Ramanujacharya.
- He initiated the concept that Nature and her resources like Water, Air, Soil, Trees etc., are sacred and should be protected from pollution.
- Sri Ramanujacharya wrote 9 scriptures, the Navrathnas. It includes
    - Vedartha-Sangraha
    - Sri Bhashya
    - Bhashyam
    - Gita-Bhasya
    - Vedanta-Dipa
    - Vedanta-Sara
    - Saranagati-Gadya
    - Sriranga-Gadya
    - Shri Vaikuntha-Gadya
    - Nitya-Grantha
- The incredible statue inaugurated symbolises peace in the valley and in the country.He had a deep relationship with Kashmir.

- By the next year Gujarat will also have a statue of Peace.
- Earlier this year in the month of February, a Statue of Equality of Ramanujacharya in a sitting posture was inaugurated in Hyderabad.

Reference

1. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/travel-news/statue-of-peace-of-swami-ramanujacharya-unveiled-in-srinagar/articleshow/92795192.cms
2. https://statueofequality.org/about-bagwad-sri-ramanujacharya-history-philosophy/
3. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1839894

Wildfires in Europe

Europe is battling intense wildfires with countries like Spain, Greece and France struggling to stamp out fires and contain the damage.

- Due to wildfires thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes, and thousands of hectares of forest land burned to the ground amid a searing heatwave.
- **Causes -** Wildfires require right climatic conditions, burnable fuel and a spark.
- Rising temperatures suck moisture out of plants, creating an abundance of dry fuel.
- Drought and high heat can kill plants and dry out dead grass, and other material on the forest floor that fuel the fire once it starts sweeping through a patch.
- The spark is sometimes caused by lightning, at other times by accident or recklessness of the local population.
- As for Europe, the region has been hit by an early fire season due to an unusually dry, hot spring that left the soil parched.
- Authorities attribute this to climate change.
- **Effects –** PORTUGAL: Temperatures hit 47 degrees Celsius in Portugal recently.
- Before the recent heatwave hit, mainland Portugal already had 96% of its territory in severe or extreme drought at the end of June.
- In the last seven days 659 people have died due to the heatwave, most of them elderly.
- FRANCE: In France the wildfires had now spread over 11,000 hectares (27,000 acres).
- Greece also witnesses similar situation.
- The fire poses a direct risk to people's life and property
- However the wildfire smoke, and particularly the concentration of PM 2.5, or particles smaller than 2.5 microns, can also affect the respiratory and cardiovascular systems.
- For those already suffering from cardiovascular or respiratory illnesses, there is a risk of flare-ups.
- **Measures needed -** Wildfires across the world are becoming bigger and more frequent.
- To deal with the fires the approach has to change from firefighting to mitigation of factors that lead to extreme fire events.

Reference

1. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-why-are-wildfires-intensifying-in-europe-8035287/

Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011

The Centre has amended the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011.

- The amendments to come into effect from 1st April, 2022
- Amendments made –
- **Size of commodities -** The amendments has omitted the Rule 5 of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities), Rules 2011 prescribing the pack sizes of various types of commodities.
- **Mandatory mention of MRP -** A new provision has been introduced to indicate the unit sale price on pre packed commodities
- This will allow easier comparison of the prices of the commodities at the time of purchase.
- Earlier, the commodity manufactured or pre-packed or imported was required to be mentioned in the package.
- Declarations of MRP has been simplified by removing illustration.
- Declaration of MRP in Indian currency inclusive of all taxes is made mandatory.
- This has allowed the manufacturer/packer/importer to declare the MRP on the pre packed commodities in a simplified manner.
- **Month and Year is sufficient -** For reducing compliance burden and removing the ambiguity of declaration of date on pre packed commodities for consumers, the declaration has now been required to the month and year in which the commodity is manufactured for the pre packed commodities.
- Rules for declaring the commodities sold in pre packed commodities in numbers have been eased out
- This will reduce the compliance burden for manufacturer /importer/packer.
- **Expressing the number of units -** Earlier such declarations could be denoted as ‘N’ or ‘U’ only.
- Now the quantities can be expressed in terms of the number or unit or piece or pair or set or such other word which represents the quantity in the package.
- This will remove the ambiguity of declaration of quantity sold by number in pre packed commodities.

Reference

1. https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1842006

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