Prelim Bits 17-10-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Berlin Process

Leaders from the European Union and the Western Balkans met at Tirana, Albania to discuss the path to membership in the bloc for 6 Balkan countries.

- **Berlin Process** – A platform for high-level cooperation between the leaders of the 6 Western Balkan countries (WB6)
- **Establishment** – 2014
- **Objective**
  - To improve connectivity, neighbourly and interpersonal relationships among WB6
  - To integrate the WB6 into a single market and supporting their green and digital transformation
  - To support for the EU integration
- **Goals** – It was given during 2014 Declaration of the German Chair
  - Resolution of bilateral and internal issues
  - Reconciliation within and between the societies in the region
  - Enhancing regional economic cooperation
  - Laying the foundations for sustainable growth

The EU enlargement process has been stalled since 2013 when the last country to become a member was Croatia.

- **Prerequisite for joining EU**
  - To reform their economies and political institutions
  - To overcome regional conflicts
  - To stand together as Russia wages war in Ukraine
- **Challenges** – Dispute between Serbia and Kosovo remains a great concern for the EU before the summit.

The summit, which is being held for the first time in a non-EU member country, takes place at a pharaonic landmark, known as the Pyramid.

Balkan Countries

- **WB6 -** Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia
- **Balkan Countries -** Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Greece, Turkey and WB6

References

1. The Hindu| Western Balkan nations to join EU
2. BerlinProcess| About Berlin Process

PLFS Annual Report 2022 - 2023

NSSO has released the 6th Annual Report of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted during July 2022-June 2023.

- **Launched By** – National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)
- **Year of launch** - 2017
- **Indicators**
  - **Labour Force Participation Rates (LFPR)** - Percentage of persons in labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.
  - **Worker Population Ratio (WPR) -** Percentage of employed persons in the population
  - **Unemployment Rate (UR)** - Percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force
- **Objective**
  - To estimate the employment and unemployment indicators in time interval of 3 months for the *urban areas only in the 'Current Weekly Status' (CWS)*
  - To estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both *'Usual Status' (ps+ss) and CWS in both rural and urban* areas annually
- **Time period of 6th report** - 2022- 2023
- **Sampling method** - A *rotational panel sampling design* has been used in urban areas where each, selected household is visited 4 times.
- **Trends –** The LFPR and WPR has witnessed an increase whereas Unemployment Rate (UR) has declined in 2022- 2023 over 2017-18.

References

1. The Hindu| Improvement in Labour indicators
2. MOSPI Web| 6th PLFS Report

Dhanauri Wetland

National Green Tribunal (NGT) has granted the UP government 4 weeks time to update on the status of obtaining the Ramsar tag for Dhanauri Wetland.

- Dhanauri Wetland is to be notified as *Balmiki Ramsar Wetland and Sarus Sanctuary/Conservation Reserve* whose proposal is pending before the Uttar Pradesh Wetland authority.
- **Location** - Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh
- **Area coverage** – 98 hectares
- **Importance** – It is home to over 217 species of birds including *Sarus Crane*.
- It is possibly the largest roosting site for sarus cranes in north India.

- It *recharges groundwater* and helps the community sustain its agricultural practices in the region.
- **Recognition** – It has been recognised as an ***Important Bird Area*** by Bird Life International and so recorded by the BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society).

Out of 75 Ramsar sites in India, 10 are in UP – Bakhira Sanctuary, Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary, Saman Bird Sanctuary, Sandi Bird Sanctuary, Sur Sarovar, Haiderpur Wetland, Upper Ganga, Sarsai Nawar Jheel, Samaspur Bird Sanctuary and Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary.

Sarus Crane

- Sarus Crane is the *State Bird of Uttar Pradesh.*
- It is the *tallest flying bird* in the world.

Act/List	Status
IUCN	Vulnerable
WPA, 1972	Schedule I
CITES	Appendix I

References

1. Indian Express| Dhanauri Wetland
2. Times of India| Timeline of protection of Dhanauri Wetland

Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA)

25th meeting of Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-25) was held at Nairobi, Kenya in 2023.

- **SBSTTA** – It is an open-ended intergovernmental scientific advisory body created under *Article 25 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).*
- **Objectives**
  - To provide the COP and its other subsidiary bodies, with timely advice for implementation of the Convention
  - To meet parties scientific, technical and technological needs
  - To move from agreement to action towards the common vision of living in harmony with nature
- **Reports to** –COP
- **Participants** – Government representatives
- **Functions**
  - Provides assessments of *the status of biological diversity*
  - Provides assessments of the types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the convention
  - Responds to questions that the COP may put to the body

SBSTTA-25

- It is the 1st meeting since the *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* was adopted in 2022.
- Around 670 participants from 135 countries attended the meeting.
- **Proposal** – To create categorical indicators instead of simple binary indicators to provide a more nuanced report on progress.
- **Online discussion board** – To help experts share their views on the monitoring framework and indicators.
- Comments on the discussion Board indicate the need to improve the existing indicators and that the progress is slow.

References

1. Down To Earth| 25th meeting of SBSTTA
2. CBD| SBSTTA

Har Shikhar Tiranga Mission

Shikar Tiranga national team of Mt. Everest climbers hoisted Indian flag atop Arma Konda (1,680 metres), the highest peak of Andhra Pradesh.

- **Mission** – An expedition to *hoist the Indian national flag on the highest peak of every State* in India.
- This expedition was a part of the larger Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, commemorating 75 years of Indian independence.
- **Tagline** – A journey of unity, patriotism, and adventure.
- **Objectives**
  - To *showcase India's high-altitude diversity* to the world.
  - To promote *adventure and environmental awareness*.
  - To spread the message of the national flag.
- **Team** – Includes Army personnel and civilians
- They *scaled 28 mountains* since 2022 to till date.
- **Supported by** – Defence Ministry and Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) is in Dirang, Arunachal Pradesh.

Highest points

- Tamil Nadu – Dodda Betta Peak (2,636 m)
- Kerala – Anamudi (2,647 m)
- Himachal Pradesh - Mt. Reo Purgyil (6,818 m) of Spiti Valley

References

The Hindu| Har Shikhar Tiranga Mission

Other Important News

Ferry service between India - Srilanka

• India-Sri Lanka ferry service restarted ***after 40 years*** from *Nagapattinam* in Tamil Nadu to *Kankesanthurai* in Jaffna, Northern Sri Lanka.
• **Aim –** To bolster bilateral ties, boosting tourism, and increasing people-to-people relations.
• The high-speed craft (HSC), ***Cheriyapani*** has been designated for the ferry service.

Madeira River

• Madeira River has recorded an historically low level, causing the halt of the Santo Antonio hydroelectric dam.
• **About -** The Madeira River is the largest and most important tributary of ***River Amazon***.
• **Significance -** The River's water flow accounts for around 15% of the total volume of water that flows into the Amazon River.
• **Dams -** Two huge hydroelectric dams are under construction – Santo Antonio and Jirau.

Rio Negro River

• The Rio Negro River is the second largest tributary of Amazon.
• The Negro River drains about 10% of the Amazon basin and is the world's 6th largest by water volume.
• The river is tea-colored and the black-water rivers derive entirely from soils of lowland forests, rich in leaves and other decaying organic matter.

Nagarjunasagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR)

• It is India's largest tiger reserve located in the Nallamala hill ranges of ***Andhra Pradesh and Telangana***.
• NSTR was notified in 1978 and became a tiger reserve in 1983.
• It was renamed as the Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary in 1992.
• Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary (GBM) were located here.

India Art, Architecture and Design Biennale, 2023

• The India Art, Architecture and Design Biennale, 2023 is scheduled to be held from December 9-15, 2023.
• It will be organized by the ***Ministry of Culture***.

Hydro-electric power projects (HEP)s in Bhutan

• The recent floods in Sikkim has created worries over India assisted, under-construction mega hydropower projects in Bhutan.

India assisted HEPs in Bhutan

• Punatsangchhu Stage-I - 1,200 MW
• Punatsangchhu Stage-II - 1,020 MW
• Kholongchu - 660 MW
• Chhukha – 336 MW
• Tala - 1,020MW
• Kurichhu - 60 MW

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

• The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, celebrated annually on ***October 17***.
• The United Nations designated this day in 1992 to commemorate the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty.
• **Aim -** To promote understanding and dialogue between people living in poverty and the wider society.
• **Theme, 2023 -** "Decent Work and Social Protection: Putting dignity in practice for all".
• According to the United Nations, 8.4% of the world's population were living in extreme poverty at the end of 2022.

BhoomiSeva

• It is a dynamic self-funded startup stands for "Nourishing Earth, Enriching Lives."
• It delivers patented, automated, and ICAR-certified equipment that performs soil health tests.
• It recently launched a soil health card project that will be promoted through a network of 12.5 lakh chemists' shops through "Bhu-Vision" (soil testing platform).

Al Aqsa

• Al Aqsa refers to the compound of Islamic religious buildings, including the Dome of Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque, in Jerusalem's Old City.
• Located adjacent to Christian and Jewish religious sites, it has been a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

World Food Day 2023

• **About -** World Food Day is celebrated on ***October 16*** every year.
• **History -** The day commemorates the founding of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in 1945.
• **Theme, 2023 -** 'Water is Life, Water is Food. Leave No One Behind'.
• **Significance** - It encourages action for the future of food, people, and the environment and awareness of hunger.

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