Prelim Bits 20-09-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The ninth session of the governing body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) began in Delhi.

- The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) is known as **Plant Treaty** or **Seed Treaty**.
- The Plant Treaty was adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in 2001.
- ITPGRFA finally entered into force in 2004 after 13 countries deposited their instruments of ratification with the Director-General of the FAO.
- The Plant Treaty is a **legally-binding international instrument** that aims to:
    1. Establish a global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists with access to plant genetic materials;
    2. Ensure that recipients share the benefits that they derive from the use of these genetic materials with the countries where they originated; and
    3. Recognize the enormous contribution of indigenous people and farmers as traditional custodians of the world's food crops.
- There are 131 organizations that are party to the ITPGRFA (130 countries and 1 intergovernmental organization, the European Union).
- The multilateral system supports agricultural research and development as well as global food security by providing each member access to important food and forage crops.
- **Benefits** - Under this system, a global pool of plant genetic resources has been created and made available to all members.
- A total of 64 crops species are included in this pool and these account for as much as 80% of global food required. As many as 1,000 samples of plant genetic resources are exchanged each day.
- The benefits can be both non-monetary and monetary in nature. These include both monetary and non-monetary benefits.

Reference

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Series Funding

Insuretech player Zopper has raised $75 million in series C funding led by Creaegis.

- Many companies have to complete a number of fundraising rounds before getting to the initial

public offering (IPO) stage.

- These fundraising rounds allow investors to invest money into a growing company in exchange for equity/ownership.
- The initial investment is known as seed funding. It is followed by various rounds known as Series A, B, and C.
- A new valuation is done at the time of each funding round.
- Valuations are determined by various factors, including market size, company potential, current revenues, and management.

Seed Funding

- Seed Funding is also known as seed financing, seeding round, etc.
- It is the very first money that many enterprises raise -whether they go on to raise a Series A or not.
- Some startups may raise pre-seed funding in order to get them to the point where they can raise a traditional seed round, but not every company does that.
- Seed funding is used to take a startup from idea to the first steps, such as product development or market research.
- Seed funding may be raised from family and friends, angel investors, incubators, and venture capital firms that focus on early-stage startups.
- Angel investors are perhaps the most common type of investor at this stage.

Pre-Seed Funding

- Pre-seed funding is the **earliest stage of funding**, so early that many people don't include it in the cycle of equity funding.
- At this stage, founders are working with a very small team (or even by themselves) and are developing a prototype or proof-of-concept.
- The money to fund a pre-seed stage typically comes from the founders themselves, their families and friends, and maybe an angel investor or an incubator.

Reference

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Riparian Forests

A new study has found that increasing Costa Rica's riparian forests can improve its water quality, carbon storage.

- Riparian forest (RF) has many **scared groove.**
- Because of sacred groove, RF gets protected by local people and forest dwellers.

- Riparian forests have huge ecological significance, playing an important role in both nature and human populations.
- Among their many functions are
    1. Preserving plant and animal species,
    2. Preventing bank erosion, and

3. Helping to prevent flooding by retaining water.

- Riparian forests are categorically associated with rivers and thus have a naturally limited distribution.
- Historically, rivers have dwindled as a result of loss of area to agriculture and intensive cultivation of poplar trees.

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India Discrimination Report 2022

Recently, "India Discrimination Report 2022" was released by the non-profit Oxfam India.

> *The women, religious minorities - including Muslims - and historically oppressed communities, such as Dalits and Adivasis continue to face discrimination in getting jobs, livelihoods, and agricultural credit.*

- A new report showed that labour force participation rate (LFPR) of women in India was just 25% in 2021.
- It is considerably lower than Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa, it added citing the latest World Bank estimates.
- LFPR of women was 42.7% in 2004-05, and the significant decline indicates the withdrawal of women from the workforce despite rapid economic growth during the same period.
- **Reason** - The low participation was largely due to gender discrimination in wages and opportunities.
- Wages are lower for women 83% because of discrimination and 17% due to lack of education and work experience.
- **Suggestion** - The Indian government will have to offer incentives for better pay, training, skills acquisition and job quotas to prospective employers to encourage the hiring of women to close the gender gap.
- **Basis** - The findings were based on extensive analysis of government data from 2004-2020.
- The aim is to understand the inequality and discrimination when it comes to access to jobs, income, health and agricultural credits across the country.
- In 2019-20, 60% of all men aged 15 years and above had regular salaried and self-employed jobs. The figure was 19% for women in the age group.
- The report found that there is also a significant gap in the earnings between men and women in the case of regular and self-employment in urban areas.
- The average earning of a man is nearly 2.5 times that of a woman.

Reference

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2. https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/993005-minorities-women-in-india-face-financial-discrimination
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nd-get-fewer-jobs

Process of Inclusion or Exclusion from the ST List

The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal to add several tribes to the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in States such as Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh.

- **Recent change** - The communities approved for inclusion in the ST list are
    1. The Hatti tribe in the Trans-Giri area of Himachal Pradesh,
    2. The hill tribes of Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran of Tamil Nadu,
    3. The Binjhia community in Chhattisgarh and
    4. The Gond community in certain districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- Most of these communities had been either included in the list of Scheduled Castes (SC) or Most Backward Classes till now.
- **Process -** The process of adding or removing a community from SC or ST lists begins at the level of the concerned State or UT.
- A State government may choose to recommend certain communities for addition or subtraction from the list of SCs/STs based on its discretion.
- Following this, the proposal to include or remove any community from the Scheduled List is sent to the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs from the concerned State government.
- After this, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, through its own deliberations, examines the proposal, and sends it to the Registrar General of India (RGI).
- Once approved by the RGI, the proposal is sent to the National Commission for SCs or National Commission for STs.
- Following this, the proposal is sent back to the Union government, which after inter-ministerial deliberations, introduces it in the Cabinet for final approval.
- After this, a bill will be introduced to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950. This has to be passed by both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- After the bill has been passed, the President has to assent for the inclusion or exclusion of any community in the ST or SC lists.
- The final decision rests with the President’s office issuing a notification specifying the changes under powers vested in it from Articles 341 and 342.
- **Criteria to begin the process -** To establish whether a community is a ST, the government looks at several criteria, including
    1. Its ethnological traits,
    2. Traditional characteristics,
    3. Distinctive culture,
    4. Geographical isolation and
    5. Backwardness.
- However, the Supreme Court said it wanted to fix fool-proof parameters to determine if a person belongs to a ST and is entitled to the benefits due to the community.
- It said the judiciary was no longer sure about an “affinity test” used to sift through distinct traits to link a person to a tribe.
- There is the likelihood that contact with other cultures, migration and modernisation would have erased the traditional characteristics of a tribe.

Data

- According to the STs in India as revealed in Census 2011, there are said to be 705 ethnic groups listed as STs under Article 342.

- Over 10 crore Indians are notified as STs, of which 1.04 crore live in urban areas.
- The STs constitute 8.6% of the population and 11.3% of the rural population.

Reference

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