Prelim Bits 23-11-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Arittapatti Biodiversity Heritage Site

The Tamil Nadu Government declared Arittapatti in Madurai district, a biodiversity heritage site.

Arittapatti is the first Biodiversity Heritage Site of Tamil Nadu.

- Arittapatti was declared as a Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS) under **Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002** by the State Government in consultation with local bodies.
- **Location** - The site located in the Melur block of Madurai district and spans a total area of 193.21 hectares.
- Arittapatti village is rich in ecological and historical significance.
- **Historical Significance** - Several megalithic structures, 2200-year-old rock-cut temples, Tamil Brahmi inscriptions and Jain beds are found here.
- **Ecological Significance** - The village houses wildlife such as the **Indian Pangolin** (*Manis crassicaudata*), **Slender Loris** (*Loris spp*) and pythons (*Python molurus).*
- It also houses around 250 species of birds including 3 important raptors namely
    1. Laggar Falcon (*Falco jugger*),
    2. Shaheen Falcon (*Falco peregrinus)* and
    3. Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*).
- The area is surrounded by a chain of 7 inselbergs that serve as a watershed for 72 lakes and 3 check dams.

The Anaikondan Lake built during the reign of the Pandiyas in the 16th century is one of the lakes in the site.

Biodiversity Heritage Sites

- **Biodiversity Heritage Sites** (BHS) are well defined areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems - terrestrial, coastal and inland waters and, marine having rich biodiversity.
- In accordance to the **Biological Diversity Act of 2002**, the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) issues the guidelines for selection and management of the BHS.
- The State Biodiversity Board (SBB) chooses and declares BHS in the state.
- SBB also constitutes State-level Monitoring Committee that monitors the implementation of management plan of BHS.

Ameenpur Lake in Telangana is the first waterbody in the country to be declared as a BHS.

References

1. The Hindu - TN gets its first biodiversity heritage site
2. Indian Express – Arittapatti - first biodiversity heritage site in TN
3. National Biodiversity Authority - Biodiversity Heritage Site

Champions of the Earth Award 2022

Indian wildlife biologist Dr Barman is among the honourees of UN Environment Programme's 2022 Champions of the Earth award.

- Dr Purnima Devi Barman has been honoured with the UNEP's 2022 Champions of the Earth award in the Entrepreneurial Vision category.
- Dr Barman, a wildlife biologist, leads the 'Hargila Army'.
- It is an all-female grassroots conservation movement dedicated to protecting the **Greater Adjutant Stork** from extinction.
- She has been awarded the Green Oscars, for her efforts in conserving greater adjutant storks.

Champions of the Earth award

- The annual Champions of the Earth award has been awarded to trailblazers at the forefront of efforts to protect our natural world.
- It is the UN's **highest environmental honour** launched by UNEP in 2005.
- The Champions of the Earth award recognizes outstanding leaders from government, civil society and the private sector whose actions have a transformative impact on the environment.
- The Champions of the Earth award will celebrate visionaries in 4 categories:
    1. Inspiration and action
    2. Entrepreneurial vision
    3. Science and innovation
    4. Policy Leadership
- In addition to this award, UNEP confers 'Lifetime Achievement Award', recognising decades of consistent action on behalf of the planet and its inhabitants.
- To date, the award has recognised 111 laureates: 26 world leaders, 69 individuals and 16 organisations.
- 2022 Champions of the Earth award recognized individuals and organizations for their transformative action to prevent, halt and reverse **ecosystem degradation.**

In 2018, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was recognized by UNEP under Policy Leadership category for his pledge to eliminate single use plastic in India by 2022.

References

1. The Hindu – Indian honoured with Champions of the Earth award
2. UNEP - 2022 Champions of the Earth award

Project UNNATI

The Union Ministry of Rural Development wants to link performances of the States under the UNNATI project with its labour budget for the upcoming financial year.

- UNNATI project was **launched in 2020** to reduce dependence on MGNREGA scheme.
- It was launched with the intention of **upgrading the skill base** of the MGNREGA workers to help them transition from partial employment to full employment.
- The project was planned to end on March 2022 but has now been extended by 2 years.
- So far the project has trained 25,056 persons against the 2 lakh target.
- **Objective** - The project aims to train one adult member (18-45 years) of a household that has completed 100 days of work under the MGNREGA.
- **Structure** - Under the project, the selected candidates are skilled using 3 established training programmes —
    1. The Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushal Yojana (**DDU-GKY**)
    2. The Rural Self Training Institute (**RSETI**) and
    3. The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (**KVK**).
- The 3 training programmes are coordinated by Rural Skill Division of Rural Development Ministry.
- The skilling project will have 2 types of skilling
    1. Skilling for wage employment – By DDU-GKY
    2. Skilling for Self-employment – By RSETI and KVK
- **Fund** - The expenditure towards stipend is borne by the Central government and released to the States.
- **Monitoring** - The MGNREGA Scheme along with Rural Skill Division monitors the progress of the project.

References

1. The Hindu - Skill training of MGNREGS workers lags
2. Project UNNATI on skilling MGNREGA workers

Karmayogi Bharat technology platform

The Prime Minister launched the 'Karmayogi Bharat' technology platform and the Karmayogi Prarambh module.

- The Karmayogi Bharat is responsible for any other digital assets pertaining to the **Mission Karmayogi** Programme, including iGOT - Karmayogi platform.
- It will be responsible for owning, managing, maintaining, and improving the digital assets on behalf of Government with an annual subscription-based revenue model.

Mission Karmayogi is a national programme for civil services capacity building.

Karmayogi Prarambh Module

- The Karmayogi Prarambh module falls under the ambit of Mission Karmayogi.
- The Karmayogi Prarambh module is an online **orientation course for all new appointees** in various government departments.
- The instructive module would provide a **code of conduct** for government servants, including directives on workplace ethics and integrity.
- The Centre has designed the program to improve the functioning of civil services through online instructive modules.
- The newly appointed government employees would be able to access courses on the website of Karmayogi Bharat platform to enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies.
- The government through this module, provides to acclimatise government servants to human resource policies and facilitates their smooth transition into their new roles.

References

1. PIB – PM Launches Karmayogi Prarambh module
2. Karmayogi Bharat
3. Hindustan Times - Karmayogi Prarambh launched at Rozgar Mela

Famine

Somalia is on the brink of its worst famine in half a century as drought intensifies and global food prices soar.

- Famine is declared in an area when severe hunger is already widespread, and when people have started dying of starvation because they do not have enough nutritious food.
- According to the United Nations, the affected area must meet three conditions:
    1. At least 20% of the population is facing extreme food shortages
    2. At least 30% of children are suffering from acute malnutrition
    3. At least two people out of every 10,000 inhabitants are dying each day due to starvation, or a combination of severe hunger and illness.
- **Declaration of famine** - The decision to declare a famine is generally made jointly by the government and the United Nations.

> *Famine is an extreme crisis of access to adequate food, manifested in widespread malnutrition and loss of life due to starvation and infectious disease – Oxfam*

Famine in Somalia

- The United Nations (UN) has projected that parts of Somalia will be hit with famine and it would be more severe than the 2011 Somalia Famine.
- **Causes of Famine in Somalia** – Along with the below reasons hunger has been worsened due to the soaring cost of grain, fuel and fertilizer following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and aggravated **famine in Somalia**.

1. Climate change and 5th failed rainy season in a row.
2. Loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Years of insurgency by Islamist insurgents al Shabaab.

References

1. Indian Express – Somali Reluctant On Famine Declaration
2. Outlook - Somalia Is Reluctant To Declare Famine

