

Prelim Bits 24-02-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Whale Stranding

14 pilot whales were stranded near the shore of Kalpitiya, a town located on Sri Lanka's west coast.

- Whale stranding, also known as beaching, is a phenomenon in which whales are stuck on land, usually on a beach.
- Other aquatic animals like dolphins and porpoises are also known to beach.
- Most of the stranding events involve single animals but sometimes, mass strandings can also happen.
- **Potential Hotspots** - Tasmania, New Zealand's Golden Bay and Massachusetts's Cape Cod in the United States.
- This region's tidal variation (deep water becomes shallow abruptly) is one of the main reasons for whale stranding.

Other reasons

- Topography of the region
- Illness
- Human activities in the oceans
- Rising temperatures of the oceans
- Changes in prey and predator distribution
- Increasing noise pollution in the oceans

References

[The Indian Express | Whale Stranding](#)

Solar Geo-engineering

Geoengineering means manipulating the earth's climate to lower its temperature in a bid to counter global warming.

- Solar Geoengineering, also called solar radiation modification, involves re-emitting the absorbed sunlight back into space.
- It aims at increasing the amount of heat radiated back into the space using artificial methods.
- This will, in turn, reduce the temperature of the earth's surface.

Types of solar Geoengineering

- **Stratospheric Aerosol Injection** - It includes spraying large quantities of tiny

particles into the earth's stratosphere to reflect sunlight and keep the earth cooler.

- The compounds used are Sulphur dioxides or finely powdered calcium carbonate, as aerosols.
- **Natural Aerosol** - Sulphur clouds released during volcanic eruptions has particles that reflect sunlight and cause a cooling effect.
- **Marine Cloud Brightening** - It proposes spraying sea salt into low-lying clouds to increase their brightness and the ability to reflect sunlight.

Concerns

- Solar geoengineering is not a permanent solution to global warming or climate change.
- **Net Heating Effect** - Stratospheric Aerosol Injection is particularly controversial because the reflective effect of aerosols wears off after some time, leading to a net heating effect.
- **Real time Impacts** - There is also not enough evidence to show how altering the atmosphere can affect regional as well as global precipitation cycles.

References

[The Hindu | Solar Geo-engineering](#)

22nd Law Commission of India

Union Cabinet has recently approved the extension of term of 22nd Law Commission of India up to 2024.

Law Commission of India

- **Status** - It is a non-statutory body, constituted by the Government of India from time to time.
- The Commission was initially formed in 1955 and is re-constituted occasionally.
- **Composition** - A full-time chairperson with 4 full-time members, including a member-secretary.
- Law and Legislative Secretaries in the Law Ministry will be the ex-officio members of the commission.
- A retired Supreme Court judge or Chief Justice of a High Court will head the Commission.

References

[The Economic Times | 22nd Law Commission of India](#)

Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Treaty

India has recently supported and urged the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for the early conclusion of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty.

- The Treaty, also known as the Treaty of the High Seas, is a framework under UNCLOS.
- The *areas beyond national jurisdiction* comprises 95% of the ocean and provide invaluable ecological, economic, social, cultural, scientific and food-security benefits to humanity.
- The treaty will allow to designate marine protected areas and will regulate human activities in the High Seas.
- It *will be an international legally binding instrument*.
- BBNJ encompasses the high seas, beyond the exclusive economic zones or national waters of countries.

References

[PIB | BBNJ Treaty](#)

Suposhit Maa Abhiyan

Prime Minister of India has recently lauded the Lok Sabha speaker, Om Birla for his initiative of 'Suposhit Maa'.

- It is a scheme to ensure nutritional support to pregnant women in Kota, Rajasthan.
- The scheme is in line with achieving 'Malnutrition-free India' by 2022.
- The scheme aims to provide nutritional support to pregnant women and adolescent girl.
- 1,000 pregnant women will be covered by the scheme and it was later extended to 3,000 in the 2nd phase.
- Only one pregnant woman from a family will be covered by the scheme.
- The scheme would also ensure the child's health through medical exams, blood tests, medicine provisions, delivery.

References

1. [News on Air | Suposhit Maa Abhiyan](#)
2. [India Today | Suposhit Maa Abhiyan](#)