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 Gro-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 jurisdictio*n 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

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