Prelim Bits 30-11-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

IWIS and CITIS

Recently held 8th India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) & 1st Climate Investments and Technology Impact Summit (CITIS) were included in the G20 India events in 2023.

India Water Impact Summit (IWIS)

- **Launch** – Though started as a one-time event in ***2012***, it evolved as an ***annual event since 2nd summit in 2017***.
- **Objective** – To bring clarity to the scientific, technological, socio-cultural, legal, policy and governance issues ***pertaining to river basin management in India***.
- **Organised by**
  - **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** – The implementation wing of National Ganga Council which was setup in 2016 under the River Ganga Authority order 2016 under the aegis of Ministry of Jal Shakti
  - **Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga)** – A think tank and a centre of excellence formed under the aegis of NMCG is headquartered at IIT Kanpur.
- **8th IWIS 2023 –** Its aims to unite various stakeholders to address dynamic challenges and opportunities in India's water sector.
- **Theme** – Development vis-à-vis Land, Water and Rivers.
- **Focus** - Samarth Ganga on lines of productive land and lifestyle for rivers.

Global Coalition for River Science and Management is a platform for hosting the best practices for monitoring and managing different aspects of river systems around the world.

Climate Investments and Technology Impact Summit (CITIS)

- **Objectives** – To bind potential investors with technology providers.
- To review, test and implement new technologies that will significantly improve India’s river and land management scenario.
- To adopt suitable financing mechanisms.
- To collaborate within multiple sectors that are intricately linked with climate, air, land, rivers and water management.

References

1. PIB| Launch of 8th IWIS
2. IWIS| India Water India Summit

Fast Track Special Court (FTSCs)

The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of Fast Track Special Court (FTSCs) till March 2026.

- It is a dedicated court to strengthen the *deterrence framework for sexual offenders* and to ensure the *swift disposal of cases* related to rape and the POCSO Act.
- **Launch**– ***2019***
- **Mandate** – Exclusively handle pending cases of Rape and POCSO Act.
- **Implemented by** – Department of Justice, Ministry of Law & Justice which has an online monitoring framework for monthly monitoring of case statistics.
- **Financing**- Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)
- **Coverage** – A total of 1023 Fast Track Special Courts will be set up all over the country
- **Members** – 1 Judicial Officer and 7 Staff Members in each court.
- FTSCs will be linked to National Judicial Data Grid.
- **Evaluation –** The Scheme will be evaluated by an independent external agency.

As on August 2023, 758 FTSCs including 411 exclusive POCSO Courts are functional in 29 States / UTs which have disposed of more than 1, 88,000 pending cases.

References

1. PIB| Continuation of FTSCs
2. DOJ.GOI| Fast Track Special Court

Climate Engineering

The UNESCO report has stressed for mandatory participation of the vulnerable, neglected and marginalised individuals in policy decisions related to climate engineering.

- It is the intentional large-scale intervention in the Earth's climate system to counter climate change.
- It is also known as *geoengineering* which involves 2 techniques.
- **Carbon dioxide removal (CDR)** – It ***removes and stores the emitted carbon dioxide*** from the atmosphere. It includes
  - Direct air capture
  - Land-use management (afforestation / reforestation)
  - Sequestering carbon dioxide (CO2)
  - Increasing the uptake of CO2 by the ocean
  - Enhancing natural weathering processes that remove CO2 from the atmosphere

According to a report in the journal Nature, so far, new CDR technologies have removed only about 0.1% of carbon that is around 2.3 million tonnes per year.

- **Solar Radiation Modification (SRM)** – It ***reflects sunlight back to space*** to reduce the amount reaching the Earth's surface and is also known as *solar geoengineering*.
- Techniques to increase surface reflectivity of Earth includes
    - Painting structures with reflective paints
    - Planting crops with high reflectivity
    - Enhancing the reflectivity of marine clouds
    - Injecting aerosols into the lower stratosphere to mimic the cooling induced by volcanic eruptions
    - Placing reflectors or shields in space
    - Removing infrared-absorbing clouds from the atmosphere to reduce trapped heat
- **Challenges** - *CDR is expensive* and is being developed by only a very small group of countries, firms and academics.

Reference

Down To Earth| Ethics of Climate Engineering

Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)

According to experts, if Global Biodiversity Framework Funds (GBFF) fails to find adequate money, countries will have to find more funds domestically.

- **Establishment** – It was launched at the 7th Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Canada in ***2023*** where Canada and the United Kingdom made the initial contributions.
- **Objectives**
    - To help countries *achieve the 23 targets set under the KMGBF* (the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework).
    - To *receive funding from all sources* and quickly disburse through streamlined procedures.
    - To *enhance the access* for indigenous peoples and local communities, according to their own priorities.
- **Finance** - Private, philanthropic and government investments unlike GEF, which relied on just 40 donors for finance.
    - It has a *cumulative budget of 5.25 billion USD for 2022-26*, of which 36% is for biodiversity and the remaining is for projects on climate change, pollution, land and ocean health.
- **Managed by** – Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- **Trustee of the GBFF** – World Bank

- **GBFF Council** – More representations from developing countries than developed and decisions are to be taken by consensus.
- **Activities** – It will be used to approve projects until December 31, 2030, unless otherwise decided by the Council or the COP of UNFCC.

References

1. Down To Earth| Climate financing
2. CBD| Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)

Quarterly Bulletin of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

According to the recent quarterly bulletin of Periodic Labour Force Survey, unemployment rate in urban areas has come down.

- PLFS – It is published by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) since 2017.
- **Objective** – To estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators (Worker Population Ratio, Labour Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate).

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)		
	Quarterly Bulletin	**Annual Report**
Launch Year	2018	2017
Latest Report	For July- Sep, 2023	For 2022-2023
Total Reports	20	6
Measurement	Only current weekly status (CWS)	Both current weekly status (cws) and usual status (us)
Coverage	Urban areas	Rural and Urban areas

> ***Current Weekly Status (CWS)*** *is the activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey is known as the current weekly status (CWS) of the person.*

- **Fieldwork –** Data collection through 1st visit and revisit and since 2020 revisit data collection was also done through telephone mode.
- **Sample Design –** It uses a rotational panel scheme for each selected household in urban areas.
    - First visit schedule – 4 times
    - Revisit schedule – 3 times periodically

Findings of 20th quarterly PLFS bulletins (July- Sep, 2023)

- The ***unemployment rate in urban areas of the country decreased*** from 7.2% to 6.6% in 1 year time period.
    - For persons of age 15 years and above, the unemployment rate was 6.6% while it was 6% for male category.

- The ***labour force participation rate in urban areas increased*** from 47.9% to 49.3% for persons of age 15 years and above in 1 year period.

References

1. The Hindu| Unemployment rate drops in Quarterly PLFS
2. PIB| 20th Quarterly PLFS Bulletin

Other Important News
Nansen Award • A former Somali refugee intent on bringing books and education to his compatriots in Kenya was recently received UN refugee agency's prestigious Nansen Award. • The Nansen Refugee Award is a medal given annually by the ***United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).*** • The award recognizes individuals, groups, or organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the cause of refugees, displaced, or stateless people. • The award was established in 1954 to honor ***Fridtjof Nansen***, a Norwegian scientist, polar explorer, diplomat, and the first High Commissioner for Refugees for the League of Nations.
Muthassi Plavu • A recent study has found that the Muthassi Plavu at ***Thrikkodithanam, Kerala*** is 543 years old. • Muthassi Plavu is a jackfruit tree stands tall near an ancient Mahavishnu temple. • It has also ascertained the age of two other jackfruit trees located on the same property as 416 years and 396 years, respectively and temple advisory committee started efforts to secure a heritage status for the 3 trees. • Thrikkodithanam temple, regarded as an important seat of the ***Tamil Vaishnavite movement,*** dated back to 11 BC.
Perur Lake • Perur- Sundakamuthur Lake or Perur Lake located in the southwestern edges of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. • This Lake Stores the water from Noyaal River and distributes to the other lakes in the surrounding lakes of Coimbatore. • The Perur Lake Forum has conducted a 6-year study on the decline of water birds in urban wetlands.
XPoSat • Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced that India is set to launch its 1st X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat). • **Aim -** To investigate the polarisation of intense X-Ray sources. • The satellite is planned to be launched on a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). It is expected to have a mission life of at least 5 years. • The satellite will carry 2 scientific payloads in a low Earth orbit – POLIX And XSPECT (X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing).

Volcanoes of Iceland

Skaftareldar	It was erupted in 1783 near the Vatnajokull glacier. As a result, 25% of the country's population died at the time.
Grimsvotn	It is the most active volcano in Iceland. At the time of its eruption, it was the largest in Iceland. (eruptions – 1902, 2004, 2011).
Vesuvian	It is also known as Plinian eruption. These eruptions are distinguished by powerful bursts of gas, and volcanic material like rocks and hot gases shot up into the stratosphere.
Eyjafjallajokull	It is an icecap in in Iceland that witnessed 3 months of volcanic activity. The activity heated a nearby glacier river, called Krossa, by 6 degrees C.
Herdubreid	It is a rare example of a tuya volcano (active at the same time it had glacier cover). This one is located in Vatnajokull National Park.

Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) of EU

• India and Indonesia were the top 2 beneficiaries of the European Union's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) schemes for exports in 2022.
• In 2023, however, the situation is expected to change significantly as some of the largest recipients of GSP benefits, including several sectors from India, graduated out of the scheme.
• Under the GSP scheme, the EU allows identified products originating in certain developing countries preferential access to its markets in the form of reduced or zero rates of customs duties.
• As the items become more competitive and reach a particular threshold, the GSP is withdrawn.

Kasturi Cotton

• It is India's premium Cotton in the world cotton Trade.
• It is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Textiles, the Cotton Corporation of India, Trade Bodies & Industry.
• The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) has been designated as the implementing agency for Traceability, Certification and Branding of "KASTURI Cotton India".
• India is the 2nd largest cotton producer and the largest consumer of cotton in the world.

Jaguar (Panthera Onca)

• It is the largest wild cats and the umbrella species found from northern Mexico southward to northern Argentina.
• Jaguars are the largest of South America's big cats and the third largest cats in the world.
• **Conservation Status**
  - IUCN - Near Threatened.
  - CITES - Endangered.
• International Jaguar Day, celebrated on ***November 29*** every year.

Red Planet Day

• Red Planet Day is annually observed on ***November 28*** to mark the launch of Mariner 4, the first aircraft to land on Mars in 1964.
• Scientists explain that Mars, also known as the Red Planet, is cold and a sandy desert.
• It is the 4th planet from the sun, situated between the sun and from Earth.

Mabella Vaccine

• Vaccine maker Indian Immunologicals (IIL) has recently launched measles and rubella vaccine ***Mabella*** for children.
• It was launched as part of the 25th celebrations of the IIL division Human Biologicals Institute (HBI) in Udhagamandalam (Ooty), Tamil Nadu.

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