UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 01-02-2021

STARS Project

- Ministry of Education, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), and World Bank have signed an agreement for the financial support towards the implementation of the STARS project.
- [STARS - Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States.]
- The proposed World Bank support is primarily in the form of a results-based financing instrument called Program for Results (PforR).
- This will ensure major reforms at the state-level through a set of disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs).
- STARS project will cover six states including Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, and Odisha.
- It will improve the quality of education for the identified states.
- It aims at improving the overall monitoring and measurement activities in the Indian school education system in selected states.
- It will draw on the existing structure under Samagra Shiksha.
- At the state level, the project will be implemented through the integrated State Implementation Society (SIS) for Samagra Shiksha.
- A State Incentive Grant (SIG) will encourage states to meet desired project outcomes.
- The SIG matrix has been aligned with the intermediate outcome indicators as per the requirement of PforR.
- An independent verification agency (IVA) will verify each result before disbursement of funds. To know more about STARS Project, click here.

Global Climate Risk Index 2021

- India was ranked the 7th worst-hit country in 2019 in this index, released by environmental think tank Germanwatch.
- This Index ranked countries according to their vulnerability to extreme weather events like storms, floods and heat waves.
- Eight of the 10 countries most affected between 2000 and 2019 were developing countries with low or lower middle income per capita.
- It said that the vulnerable people in developing countries suffered most from extreme weather events, whereas the impact of climate change was visible around the globe.

- It pushes for the need to support developing countries in coping with the effects of climate change.

Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index

- India ranked 10th out of 11 in this newly-launched health index, released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- It measures the progress of 11 Asia Pacific countries across the region towards personalised healthcare.
- [Countries - Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and New Zealand.]
- It measures their readiness in adopting personalised healthcare, enabling the right care to be tailored to the right person at the right time.
- It measures performance against 27 different indicators of personalised health across four categories called ''Vital Signs''. These include,
    1. **Policy Context** indicator takes into account the polities, frameworks, partnerships, people and drivers that will facilitate personalised healthcare.
    2. **Health Information** indicator takes into account data, infrastructure and technical expertise driving personalised healthcare.
    3. **Personalised Technologies** indicator takes into account the devices, applications, platforms and reimbursement structures that will drive personalised healthcare based on stakeholders' needs.
    4. **Health Services** indicator takes into account planning, organisation and delivery of services with respect to personalised healthcare.

Judicial Appointments

- The Supreme Court urged the central government to set a fixed timeline for clearing appointments of judges to the apex court and the high courts, after receiving the recommendations of the collegium.
- [For Supreme Court, the collegium comprises the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and **four** other most senior Supreme Court judges.
- For High Court, the collegium comprises the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and **two** other most senior Supreme Court judges.]
- This ruling was given taking a grim view of the situation where some proposals about appointments remain pending before the government.
- The SC called it is a matter of great concern as there was no comments for five months on a collegium recommendation from the Centre.
- In 2015, the top court struck down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act and the 99th Constitutional Amendment, which sought to give the executive a say in the appointment of judges.
- This judgment had held that judicial appointments will be carried on by the

recommendations of the collegium.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana

- The Economic Survey says that Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) has total estimated outlay of Rs 22,810 crore for the scheme period i.e., up to wage month 31st May, 2023.
- The scheme provides subsidy for two years in respect of new employees engaged on or after 1st October, 2020 and up to 30th June, 2021.
- It will pay 12% employees' contribution and 12% employers' contribution of wages towards EPF in respect of new employees in establishments employing upto 1000 employees for 2 years.
- It will pay only employees' share of EPF contribution i.e. 12% of wages in respect of new employees in establishments employing more than 1000 employee for two years.
- The same payment will be made to the establishments that would re-employee who lost their jobs due to COVID-19.
- To know more about Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana, click here.

Social Stock Exchange

- The Economic Survey 2021 highlighted the need to set up a Social Stock Exchange (SSE).
- SSE will be set up as a structure within the existing stock market ecosystem under the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- It would raise capital by organisations working for the realisation of a social welfare objective.
- SEBI made recommendations to include participation of non-profit organisations (NPO) and for-profit enterprises (FPE) on SSE subject to committing to minimum reporting requirements.
- It recommended standardisation of financial reporting by NPOs on SSE.
- To know more about Social Stock Exchange, click here.

Green Bonds

- Green bonds are debt instruments issued by an entity for raising funds from investors and the proceeds of a green bond offering are used towards financing ‘green’ projects.
- In 2017, SEBI issued guidelines on green bonds including listing of green bonds on the Indian stock exchanges.
- The launch of green indices such as S&P BSE CARBONEX (2012), MSCI ESG India (2013), and S&P BSE 100 ESG Index (2017) allows passive and retail investors to invest in green companies.

- These bonds are often unpredictable, and, at times, unreliable.

Source: PIB, The Indian Express, Frontline, Hindustan Times, Outlook India, Down To Earth

