UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 09-03-2020

WISTEMM

- The Indo-U.S. Fellowship for Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (WISTEMM)"program of Department of Science and Technology(DST) in association with Indo-U.S. Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) have provided international exposure to several women scientists.
- WISTEMM aims to provide opportunities to Indian Women Scientists, Engineers & Technologists to undertake international collaborative research in premier institutions in U.S.A, to enhance their research capacities and capabilities.
- The programme is run for two categories of women scientists---

1. Women Overseas Student Internship (Module I) for women students pursuing PhD,
2. Women Overseas Fellowship (Module II) for women with PhD degree and holding regular position at any recognized institution/laboratory in India.

- Around 20 women scientists have visited 20 leading institutions across the United States of America for furthering their research work and to get trained in the state of the art technologies related to their research.
- The fellowship is for bright Indian women Citizen within the age bracket of 21 to 45 years.
- The funding support extended under the program includes stipend, airfare, health insurance, contingency and conference allowances.

KIRAN Scheme

- Department of Science and Technology (DST) has started several pioneering initiatives for promoting women in science.
- In the year 2014, DST restructured all women specific programmes under one umbrella called Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN).
- It encompasses women-exclusive schemes and encourages them to foster their career by undertaking research in Science and Technology (S&T) and also focusing on S&T solutions of issues & challenges at the

grassroots level for social benefits.

- The mandate of KIRAN Program is to bring gender parity in S&T through gender mainstreaming.
- Women Scientist Scheme (WOS) addresses challenges faced by S&T qualified women primarily due to social responsibilities.
- Its two components WOS-A and WOS-B are directly implemented by KIRAN Division and the third component WOS-C or KIRAN-IPR is implemented by TIFAC with grant-in-aid from DST.

Women Transforming India Awards

- NITI Aayog organized the Fourth Edition of the Women Transforming India Awards.
- WTI Awards are NITI Aayog's initiative to highlight the commendable and ground-breaking endeavors of India's women leaders and change makers.
- Since 2018, the Awards have been hosted under the aegis of NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform with a special focus on entrepreneurship.
- Launched on International Women's Day, two years ago, the Women Entrepreneurship Platform has become a forum dedicated to educating, enabling and empowering women entrepreneurs.

Nari Shakti Puraskar

- Nari Shakti Puraskar (formerly Stree Shakti Puraskar), literally meaning "Woman Power Award", is India's highest civilian award for recognizing the achievements and contributions of women.
- The awards are given away by the President of India every year on 8 March, International Women's Day at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- The Nari Shakti Puraskar is conferred on individual women, public and private institutions and public departments for their activism and/ or their contributions to the cause of women's empowerment.
- The award, instituted in the year 1999 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, is given in six institutional categories and two individual categories.
- The award carries a cash prize of rupees one lakh (INR 100,000) and a citation.

TRAFFIC

- TRAFFIC, the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network, is the leading non-governmental organization working globally on the trade of wild animals

and plants in the context of both biodiversity and sustainable development.

- It was founded in 1976 as a strategic alliance of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- TRAFFIC's headquarters are located in Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- The organization’s aim is to ‘ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature’.
- It states that through research, analysis, guidance and influence, it promotes sustainable wildlife trade (the green stream work) and combats wildlife crime and trafficking (the red stream work).
- Recently a report of TRAFFIC titled “Assessment of illegal trade-related threats to Red Panda in India and selected neighboring range countries” has looked at a ten-year period from July 2010 to June 2019, and analyzed poaching and illegal trade of the species.

Red Panda

- The red panda is a small arboreal mammal found in the forests of India, Nepal, Bhutan and the northern mountains of Myanmar and southern China.
- In India, it is found in Sikkim, western Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling district of West Bengal and parts of Meghalaya.
- It is also the state animal of Sikkim.
- Red pandas have been reported from 11 districts of Arunachal Pradesh, which is presumed to hold the largest red panda population in the country.
- It is survival is crucial for the eastern and north-eastern Himalayan subalpine conifer forests and the eastern Himalayan broadleaf forests.
- The only living member of the genus Ailurus, the Red Panda is listed as ‘endangered’ on the IUCN Red List of threatened species.
- The animal has been hunted for meat and fur, besides illegal capture for the pet trade.
- An estimated 14,500 animals are left in the wild across Nepal, Bhutan, India, China and Myanmar.
- In recent times Red Panda has fewer hunters because the younger generations of people across its Himalayan habitat are losing interest in animal products.

SAWEN

- South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) is an inter-governmental wildlife law enforcement support body of South Asian countries namely - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- SAWEN was officially launched in 2011 in Paro Bhutan, it operates from Kathmandu, Nepal.
- It provides a platform for its member countries to cooperatively work together in the fight against the burgeoning wildlife crime.
- It focuses on harmonization of policies and laws; strengthening institutional capacity; sharing of knowledge, experiences and technologies among the member countries; and promoting collaboration with national, regional and international partners to enhance the wildlife law enforcement in the region.

Great Barrier Reef

- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, is located off the east coast of the Queensland mainland, Australia.
- It spreads across a length of over 2,300 km and is roughly the size of Italy.
- It is home to about 3,000 coral reefs, 600 continental islands, 1,625 type of fish, 133 varieties of shark and rays and 600 types of soft and hard corals.
- It was entered into UNESCO World heritage List in 1981.
- Recently scientists have warned that the Great Barrier Reef will face a critical period of heat stress over the coming weeks, following the most widespread coral bleaching the natural world has ever endured.
- Warming ocean temperatures, a sign of climate change, is associated with the deteriorating health of the Reef.

Coral Bleaching

- According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), when corals are stressed by changes in conditions such as temperature, light or nutrients, they expel the algae living in their tissue, causing them to turn white, hence bleached.
- Coral bleaching does not mean the corals are dead, but make them vulnerable, hence increasing their mortality.
- Warm ocean temperatures are one condition that could lead to coral bleaching.
- For instance, in 2005, the US lost half of its coral reefs in the Caribbean in one year due to a massive bleaching event.

- Even so, NOAA says that not all bleaching events are due to warmer temperatures.
- In January 2010, cold water temperatures in the Florida Keys caused a coral bleaching event that resulted in some coral deaths.

NASA Perseverance

- NASA's Mars rover for the 2020 mission is named as Perseverance.
- NASA's last rover sent to Mars was Curiosity, back in 2012.
- The rover has is a robotic scientist and weighs just under 1,043 kilograms.
- The Perseverance rover will be managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Labs (JPL) and will hunt for signs of past microbial life on Mars.
- Perseverance will also characterize the planet's climate and geology, and collect samples of Martian rocks and dust.
- NASA has plans for a future mission which could bring these samples back to Earth.
- The rover is targeted to land on Mars' Jezero Crater a little February 18, 2021.
- The Mars 2020 is part of a larger program that includes missions to the Moon as a way to prepare for human exploration of the planet.
- NASA plans to put the next man and first woman on the moon by 2024 and wants a sustained human presence on the Moon by 2028 with its Artemis program.

Source: PIB, Indian Express

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering