UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 13-04-2021

Aahaar Kranti

- This is a mission that aims to spread the message of the need for a nutritionally balanced diet and to understand the importance of accessibility to all local fruits and vegetables.
- It was launched by Vijnana Bharati (Vibha) and Global Indian Scientists' and Technocrats' Forum (GIST).
- **Motto** - 'Uttam Aahaar Uttam Vichaar' or 'Good Diet-Good Cognition'.
- It is designed to address the peculiar problem being faced by India and the world called 'hunger and diseases in abundance'.
- It proposes to address the current situation of hunger by working
    1. To apply the knowledge of Ayurveda-based nutrition to practice,
    2. To rouse the people to the values of India's traditional diet, to the healing powers of local fruits and vegetables, and to the miracles of a balanced diet,
    3. To promote better awareness, nutrition and agriculture,
    4. To renew the focus on nutritionally balanced diets Uttam evam santulit aahaar in locally sourced fruits and vegetables.
- It will train the teachers, who will pass on the message to many students and through them to their families and ultimately the society at large.
- The messages will be imparted through the curriculum or as games or instructions in all vernacular languages besides English and Hindi.
- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)'s Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark is collaborating, and various central and state government ministries and agencies are involved.

International level

- The United Nations has also declared 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables, which vibes very well with Aahaar Kranti.
- The UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) # 3 that emphasizes on human well-being - "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages." This makes Aahaar Kranti more meaningful.

Umngot River

- People of Meghalaya's villages fear the death of Umngot River and their tourism-based livelihood if the 210 MW hydroelectric project comes up.
- Umngot River is considered as the cleanest river in India and in some parts is as transparent as crystal and you can actually see the river bed.
- This river, which flows in both India and Bangladesh, is in Meghalaya.
- It is the natural boundary between RiPnar (of Jaintia Hills) with HimaKhyrim (of Khasi Hills).
- Over this river hangs a single span suspension bridge called Dawki Bridge.

Decriminalising Begging

- The Supreme Court has asked the Centre and five States (Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana, Bihar) to file their response on a plea seeking a direction to repeal the provisions criminalising begging.
- This plea claimed that the provisions of the statute criminalising the act of begging were violative of constitutional rights, specifically Article 21 (Right to Life).
- The plea said that these provisions put people in a situation to make an unreasonable choice between committing a crime or not and starving.
- It has referred to the 2018 verdict of the Delhi High Court which had decriminalised begging in the national capital and said provisions of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959.
- [Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 treats begging as an offence cannot sustain constitutional scrutiny.]
- It said that the government had the mandate to provide social security to everyone and ensure that all had basic facilities, as embedded in the Directives Principles of State Policy in the Constitution.
- The petition has sought directions to declare as "illegal and void" all provisions, except some sections, of
    1. Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959,
    2. Punjab Prevention of Beggary Act, 1971,
    3. Haryana Prevention of Begging Act, 1971 and
    4. Bihar Prevention of Begging Act 1951.

Indus and Ganges River Dolphins

- A new study has shown that the detailed analysis of South Asian river dolphins has revealed that the Indus and Ganges River dolphins are two separate species.
- Currently, they are classified as two subspecies under Platanista gangetica.
- The study estimates that Indus and Ganges river dolphins may have diverged around 550,000 years ago.
- The Indus and Ganges River dolphins are both classified as 'Endangered'

species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- **Threats** - Physical barriers such as dams and barrages across the river reduced the gene flow; declining river flow; accidental catches; accidental injury due to the use of mechanised boats; pollution.

Agroforestry in Silk Sector

- Agriculture Ministry signed a MoU with the Central Silk Board (under the Textiles Ministry) to implement Agroforestry in the silk sector under the ongoing Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme.
- The signing of this MoU aims to incentivize the farmers to take up sericulture based Agroforestry models thereby contributing to the Make in India and Make for the World vision of the Prime Minister.
- It will add another dimension to agroforestry for faster returns to the growers as well as support the production of the range of silks.
- The Central Silk Board (CSB) will act as a catalyst to promote Agroforestry in the silk sector.
- The initiative of formalizing the collaboration is especially targeted for augmentation of sericulture host plants to be cultivated both as block plantations and border or peripheral plantations on farmlands.
- Planting sericulture based tree species on farm and rearing silkworms has the potential of creating additional income opportunities for farmers besides their regular source of income from agriculture activities.

Sub-Mission on Agroforestry Scheme

- The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC & FW) has been implementing the SMAF scheme since 2016-17 as part of the recommendation of the National Agroforestry Policy 2014.
- India was the first country to have such a comprehensive policy which was launched at the World Agroforestry Congress held in Delhi in 2014.
- At present, the scheme is being implemented in 20 States and 2 UTs.
- SMAF encourages farmers to plant trees with the agriculture crops for climate resilience and an additional source of income to the farmers, as well as enhanced feedstock to wood-based and herbal industry.
- Hence there is a concerted effort to include medicinal, fruits, fodder, tree-borne oilseeds, lac host etc. in addition to the longer rotation timber species.

National Non-ferrous Metal Scrap Recycling Framework

- Ministry of Mines has issued a National framework for scrap recycling of non-ferrous metals (like aluminium and copper), in a bid to cut down the scrap imports.

- This framework seeks to use life cycle management approach for better efficiency in mineral value chain process.
- It envisages bringing both product and processing stewardship to enhance non-ferrous metal recycling.
- **Objectives** - To promote a well organized recycling ecosystem and to work towards sustainable development and intergenerational equity.
- To minimize the effect of end of life products on landfills and environmental pollution by promoting an environmentally sound processing and recycling system for secondary industry.
- To work towards economic wealth creation, job creation and increased contribution to GDP through metal recycling;
- To adopt data based analysis and policy making at all stages of recycling chain.
- To promote 6Rs principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Redesign and Remanufacture through scientific handling, processing and disposal of all types of non-ferrous scrap, through authorized centers /facility.
- To shift towards a circular economy in the coming years for base metals, critical raw materials and other essential materials.
- To create a mechanism for treating metal scrap and residues produced from dismantling and shredding facilities in compliance to Hazardous & Other Wastes (Management & Trans-boundary Movement) Rules, 2016
- **Implementation** - The framework envisages setting up of a central Metal Recycling Authority to facilitate recycling of metals.
- The government will work towards establishing standards for Quality of scrap used for recycling.
- Standard procedures for recycling and processing of scrap will be laid down in consonance with MoEFCC rules/guidelines.
- A mechanism for registration of segregators, dismantlers, recyclers, collection centers etc. will be developed for facilitating the recycling activities to transition to an organized sector.
- Technology up-gradation and adoption of Best Available Technology (BAT) for scrap recycling.
- It is proposed to set up Urban Mines, envisaged as a location to collect and hold large quantities of similar materials.
- Fiscal and non fiscal incentives for registered recycling units.
- Financial assistance and concessions to recyclers setting up a new recycling unit in MSME along with Ministry of Finance and others.
- Process Standards, like Recycling Industry Operating Standards (RIOS) established by Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries(ISRI) or similar, will be put in place.
- Efforts to strengthen a well organized Scrap Supply Chain will be made.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Ministry of Mines

