UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 19-01-2021

Great Green Wall

- Great Green Wall (GGW) initiative, launched by the African Union in 2007 had hit a wall due to funds crunch.
- It was conceived by 11 countries located along the southern border of the Sahara and their international partners.
- It was launched to address desertification, land degradation and climate change in the Sahel region.
- [Sahel region stretches from Senegal on the Atlantic coast, through parts of Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Gambia, Cameroon, Chad and Sudan to Eritrea on the Red Sea coast.]
- It aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- At the fourth One Planet Summit for Biodiversity co-organised by France, the United Nations and World Bank, France has announced $14 billion to scale up work of GGW.
- The GGW goals will also contribute to the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goal 15 (SDG 15) - Life on land.
- [SDG 15 - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss]
- **PROGREEN** is a World Bank fund dedicated to boosting countries' efforts to address landscape degradation.
- It will also invest $14.5 million in five countries in the Sahel region: Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Mali and Mauritania.

Adaptation Gap Report 2020

- It was released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- The report informs national and international efforts to advance climate change adaptation. It has two parts,
    1. Recurrent assessment of global progress on adaptation in three areas: planning, financing and implementation.
    2. Deeper assessment of the status of adaptation within a particular sector or theme, but still framed around the above three elements (This year, the theme is Nature-based Solutions).
- The report has found that the annual cost of adaptation to the effects of

climate change for developing countries would quadruple by 2050.

- The report has found that there are huge gaps in finance for developing countries and in adaptation projects to the stage where they bring real protection against climate impacts such as droughts, sea-level rise, etc.
- UNEP called for a drastic scale-up of public and private finance for adaptation, and increased investment in Nature-based Solutions.
- Adaptation - reducing the fallout among communities and increasing their capacity to deal with climate-related disasters such as floods and drought - is a pillar of the 2015 Paris accord.

- **Adaptation cost** includes costs of planning, preparing for, facilitating and implementing adaptation measures.
- The adaptation cost has also outpaced the growth in adaptation finance and that is the reason for a maintained Adaptation Finance gap.
- **Adaptation Finance** refers to the flow of funds to developing countries to help them tide over the damages caused by weather events from climate change.
- **Adaptation Finance Gap** is the difference between Adaptation Cost and Adaptation Finance.
- Adaptation costs are higher in developed countries but the burden of adaptation is greater for developing countries in relation to their gross domestic product (GDP).

International Migration Report 2020

- This United Nations report has found that the global migration has slowed down by nearly 30%, owing to restrictions that were put in place to contain the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
- The report found that two million fewer people migrated between 2019-20 than expected.
- The report showed how two-thirds of registered migrants lived in less than 20 countries.
- The United States topped the list, hosting 51 million migrants in 2020.
- The most number of migrants lived in Europe in 2020.
- In terms of the largest Diasporas in 2020, India topped the list. 18 million Indians were living outside their country of birth in 2020.
- In 2020, women and girls comprised 48% of all international migrants, and refugees accounted for 12% of international migrants.

Lithium Reserves in India

- Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), an arm of the Department of Atomic Energy, is carrying out domestic exploration for

lithium in geological domains of the country.

- [India currently imports all its lithium needs. China is a major source of lithium-ion energy storage products being imported into the country.]
- AMD's survey has found the presence of 1,600 tonnes of lithium resources in the pegmatites (igneous rocks) of Marlagalla-Allapatna region, along the Nagamangala Schist Belt of Karnataka.
- Lithium can be extracted either through solar evaporation of large brine pools or by hard-rock extraction of the ore.
- In India, there is some potential for recovering lithium from the brines of Sambhar and Pachpadra in Rajasthan, and Rann of Kachchh in Gujarat.
- The major mica belts in Rajasthan, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh, and the pegmatite belts in Odisha and Chhattisgarh, are the other domains.
- To know more about the lithium import agreement, click here.

Deferring Fuel Efficiency Regulations

- Auto industry wants the government to defer the implementation of Corporate Average Fuel efficiency (CAFE-2) regulations and BS-VI stage II norms to April 2024.
- As of now, the CAFE-2 norms that aim to make cars more fuel efficient are set to come into effect in 2022 and BS-VI stage II norms are set to come into force beginning April 2023.
- The growth rate of passenger vehicle (PV) sales has slowed down over the last decade and more so over the last five years.
- Almost 50% of the car buyers in India are first-time buyers and since price elasticity for car purchase is high in India, it is a major factor for slowdown in growth.
- If rising cost of raw materials is a factor, high tax rates, rising service tax and insurance cost, and shift from BS-IV to BS-VI in a quick time has lifted the acquisition cost.
- The industry has made the above representations to defer the implementation due to the sales suffered due to pandemic.

Archaeological Excavations in Tamil Nadu

- The Central Advisory Board for Archaeology (CABA) has given permission to excavate seven sites in Tamil Nadu for 2020-21.
- Tamil Nadu state archaeology department will soon begin excavations at three sites - Korkai (Tuticorin), Gangaikonda Cholapuram (Ariyalur) and Mayiladumparai (Krishnagiri).
- This is in addition to the ongoing excavations at Keeladi cluster, Adichanallur, Sivagalai and Kodumanal.

- The department will also conduct field studies in Tiruvannamalai, Salem, Krishnagiri and Vellore.
- The Korkai excavation will reveal more about the Thamirabarani river valley civilization because excavations are already on in sites such as Adichanallur and Sivagalai in the same region.

Source: The Indian Express, Times Now, Times of India, Down To Earth, Wion News, Live Mint

