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Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies

- Recently virtual 4th Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies is organised by Working Group on Cryptocurrencies and Money Laundering.
- Working Group on Cryptocurrencies and Money Laundering is established by the Interpol, Europol and the Basel Institute on Governance in 2016.
- The conference aims to shape international cross-sector solutions against the criminal use of cryptocurrencies.
- Representatives from law enforcement and the judiciary, Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), international organisations and the private sector have met virtually.
- The conference underlined the need to expand capabilities on ways to probe virtual assets and regulate virtual asset service providers to prevent money laundering.
- The conference's agenda included trends and investigations on cryptocurrency related offences, exploring criminal flows and operations in the dark markets, ransomware and sextortion case studies, money laundering involving virtual assets, and the transfer of drug proceeds using cryptocurrencies.

Lotus Silk

- Lotus silk is one of the rarest fabrics in the world, and is only extracted by a few skilled craftspeople across the world.
- It is produced only in small scale across Cambodia, Myanmar, and Vietnam.
- Extracting enough lotus silk for one scarf can take two months, and the final product can cost 10 times as much as regular silk.
- The lotus plants are only available to harvest between April and October.
- The key difference between the bright yellow silk and the paler lotus version is that every single strand of lotus silk must be extracted by hand.
- Each stem contains a minuscule amount of thin, sticky fibers, which must be rolled together and dried.
- Once dry, these threads are carefully weighed down and delicately hand-

spooled, then they're put into the loom.
- The final product is soft like silk, breathable like linen, and slightly elastic.

Distress Migration in Bonda Tribes

- Odisha's Bondas, a particularly vulnerable tribal group, and known for their secluded lives away from the mainstream.
- The endangered Bonda tribe are classified as one of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)
- They are known for their distinctive cultural traditions, the Bondas are divided into two groups:

1. **Lower Bondas -** who live in south Odisha's Malkangiri district bordering Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.
2. **Upper Bondas -** who live in the hilly terrains of the remote villages in the district.

- According to the 2011 census, there are 12,231 Bondas and they speak Remo, one of the Mundari group of languages spoken by Munda peoples in India.
- In recent times they are being forced leave their pristine hamlets for low-paid jobs in distant towns of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and States even farther.
- The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic appears to have quickened the 'distress' migration.
- The disturbing trend of distress migration has also caught up with Bonda students who were studying in residential schools before COVID-19 pandemic.
- If migration is taken as the single largest indicator to assess the livelihood status of a community, it is seen that the incidence of migration has increased over the years amongst the Bonda household.
- During the last four years, there has been an increase in the trend of migration which is indicative of the fact that the income opportunities in the area are not adequate to provide employment to the Bondas.

United Nations Population Award

- United Nations Population Award is an annual award, it honours an individual and/or institution in recognition of outstanding contributions to population and reproductive health questions and to their solutions.
- It consists of a gold medal, a diploma and a monetary prize.
- The Award was established by the General Assembly in 1981, in resolution

36/201, and was first presented in 1983.

- The Committee for the United Nations Population Award is comprised of 10 UN Member States, with United Nations Secretary-General and UNFPA Executive Director serving as ex-officio members.
- Nominations for the award are accepted through 31 December of each year.

- Recently Bhutan's Queen Mother Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck has been awarded the United Nations Population Award in the individual category for 2020 for her work on sexual health and ending gender violence.
- She founded a volunteer organisation called 'Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women' (RENEW).
- The awardee in the organisational category is HelpAge India that works on elder care.
- Only two Indians have been awarded in the past four decades since the award was established, they are

1. Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1983.
2. Industrialist-philanthropist J.R.D.Tata in 1992.

Averting a lost Covid generation Report

- Recently, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has released the report "Averting a lost Covid generation".
- It is the first UNICEF report to comprehensively outline the dire and growing consequences for children as the pandemic goes on.
- It shows that while symptoms among infected children remain mild, infections are rising and the longer-term impact on the education, nutrition and well-being of an entire generation of children and young people can be life-altering.
- The report highlight are as follows

1. Children and adolescents account for 1 in 9 reported Covid-19 infections.
2. It estimated that a third of the countries analysed, witnessed a drop of at least 10% in coverage of health services and there was a 40% decline in the coverage of nutrition services for women and children across 135 countries.
3. 65 countries reported a decrease in-home visits by social workers in September 2020, compared to 2019.
4. According to ICMR 11.89% of Covid-19 cases in India are in under 20.
5. 1.5 million School closures have impacted 247 million children enrolled in

elementary and secondary education and 28 million children who were attending pre-school education in Anganwadi Centres.

6. An estimated 20 million children under 5 years of age are suffering from wasting (low weight for height), over 40 million children are chronically malnourished and more than half of the Indian women aged 15-49 years are anaemic.
7. The pandemic has further exposed the fragility of children, less by the virus itself but much more by the indirect and long-term fallout.
8. Covid-19 poses a grave threat to the gains made by India in the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) which saw improvements in recent years.

World Children's Day

- It is celebrated on 20th November each year to promote international togetherness and awareness among children worldwide, and improve children's welfare.
- The date of 20th November is an important date because, on this date, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises every human being under 18 years old as a child and is the world's most widely ratified human rights treaty.
- India ratified it in 1992.

Durand line

- The Durand Line is an important 2430 km international boundary line, running between the countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- It was fixed by British civil servant Sir Henry Mortimer Durand and the then Afghan Emir, Abdur Rahman Khan in 1893.
- The treaty was meant to be for 100 years, but it was not renewed.
- It was established in order to fix the respective spheres of influence and also to improve the diplomatic ties between the British establishment in India and the Afghan Kingdom.
- It was accepted as the then Indo-Afghan border, the modern state of Afghanistan does not accept the Durand Line.
- However, it is internationally recognised as the western border of Pakistan.
- The Pakistani side of the border includes, among others, the North Western Frontier Province, which was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in

2010.

- India also has a small claim to the borderline, through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (about 105 km of the easternmost section of the boundary line).
- Recently India has told UNSC, that it calls for an "immediate comprehensive ceasefire" in Afghanistan, while welcoming all opportunities to bring peace to the country.
- India speculates that there are various terrorist safe havens and sanctuaries operating across the Durand Line.

Source: The Hindu, Indian Express, PIB

