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Village Rice

- Two consignments of patented 'village rice' sourced from Kumbakonam, Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu was exported to Ghana & Yemen.
- 'Village rice' sourced directly from farmers of Thanjavur (Rice Bowl of Tamil Nadu) is enriched with **protein, fibre, and minerals**.
- Previously, the first consignment of 'red rice' from Assam was exported to the USA.
- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is working with various stakeholders across the globe to harness India's non-basmati rice exports potential.
- The government had set up the Rice Export Promotion Forum (REPF), under the aegis of the APEDA to provide stimulus to the rice exports.

Rice Export Promotion Forum

- Rice Export Promotion Forum (REPF) was set up under the aegis of the Agricultural and Processed Foods Export Promotion Development Authority (APEDA).
- REPF was been set up by the Government of India to provide stimulus to the rice exports.
- It has representations from rice industry, exporters, officials from APEDA, Ministry of Commerce and directors of agriculture from major rice producing states.
- [Major Rice producing states - West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.]
- It will monitor, identify and anticipate the developments related to production and exports and put forward various policy measures.

Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve

- In February 2021, the Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve (SMTR) was jointly declared by the Centre and Tamil Nadu governments by clubbing together the Megamalai WLS and the Srivilliputhur WLS.
- The declaration of SMTR could reduce the problems faced by the River Vaigai, as the formation of a tiger reserve has many advantages.
- The staffs who work here are given pay benefits to motivate them to carry

out their work with zeal. They are provided with special training and equipped with latest gadgets and weapons to tackle illegal activities.
- Whatever funds are provided by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, are directly allotted to the concerned tiger reserve.
- Due provisions are made for giving compensation for damage caused by wildlife to agricultural and horticultural crops as well as injuries caused and deaths of humans and livestock.
- By protecting wild animals, the natural forests, their habitats which act as watersheds, are given protection. If forests are revived through proper protection, we can be ensured of perennial water supply.

Vaigai River

- The Vaigai is a 'heritage river' as it has seen the rise and fall of human civilisation for centuries. The river is mentioned in Sangam literature.
- The 258-kilometres long river originates in the Western Ghats. It travels through the Pandya Nadu region of Tamil Nadu and finally empties into the Palk Strait near the Pamban Bridge in Ramanathapuram district.
- Its main tributaries are Suruliyaru, Mullaiyaru, Varaganadhi, Manjalaru, Kottagudi, Kridhumaal and Upparu.
- The river fulfils the drinking water requirement of five districts of Tamil Nadu - Theni, Madurai, Ramnathapuram, Sivagangai and Dindigul.
- **Deterioration** - Vaigai started to deteriorate at the end of the 18th century when the British started deforesting the Megamalai region (major catchment for Vaigai) for commercial plantations.
- Consequently, the water flow in the river reduced gradually. Following the Great Famine of 1876-77, Major John Pennycuik built a dam at the confluence of Mullaiyar and Periyar rivers that was completed in 1895.
- After completion of the dam, the water from the Periyar was successfully brought to the Vaigai, which revived again.
- The Vaigai presently gets about 80% of its water from the Periyar dam. The balance 20% is obtained from the major watershed of the Megamalai region during the northeast monsoon season.
- Due to indiscriminate removal of sand from the river, water flowing into the Vaigai gets drained within a few days.

Sturgeons

- The nearly 7-foot-long Detroit River fish is one of the largest ever caught in the U.S., which could be more than 100 years old.
- This large fish is a lake sturgeon (Acipenser fulvescens), but the planet's largest freshwater fish species is the beluga sturgeon (Huso huso).
- **Beluga sturgeon** is the biggest of the 27 sturgeon and paddlefish species

alive today. It can reach a maximum length of more than 8 m.
- They are living between Europe and Asia in the Black, Azov and Caspian seas, and the rivers feeding them.
- Beluga sturgeons can live more than 100 years, like lake sturgeon, which gives them plenty of time to grow. So, there's a lot of time to eat.
- They are listed as **critically endangered** on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the category for species most at risk of extinction.
- This species is under great pressure due to poaching. Adult females are prized for their fish eggs (caviar) and valued at more than $8,000/kg.
- **White Sturgeon** - The title for biggest growing sturgeon today may actually belong to the white sturgeon (A. transmontanus).
- People are probably more likely to see larger white sturgeon than beluga sturgeon, as white sturgeons are probably better protected.
- For now, white sturgeons are not threatened with extinction and their population is stable, according to the IUCN. However, they are threatened by the construction of dams.
- To know more about Sturgeons, click here.

Global Health Summit 2021

- It is a special event of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the Italian G20 Presidency co-hosted by the European Commission.
- This summit adopted the agenda to overcome Covid pandemic. It also decided to develop and endorse a Rome Declaration of principles.
- **Rome Declaration** - It is aimed at guiding joint action to prevent future health crises and to build a safer, fairer and more equitable and sustainable world. The principles are,

1. Support and enhance the existing multilateral health architecture
2. Support the full implementation of the multi-sectoral, evidence based One Health approach.
3. Promote the multilateral trading system and the importance of open, secure, efficient and reliable global supply chains across the whole value chain related to health emergencies.
4. Enable equitable, affordable, timely, global access to high-quality prevention, detection and response tools.
5. Support low- and middle-income countries to build expertise, and develop local and regional manufacturing capacities for tools.
6. Build on expertise of relevant organisations and platforms to facilitate data sharing, capacity building, licensing agreements, etc.
7. Enhance support for existing preparedness and prevention structures for equitable immunisation against vaccine preventable diseases, and health programmes for these and other diseases.

8. Invest in the worldwide health and care workforce, and in adequate resourcing, training, and staffing of diagnostic health labs, etc.
9. Address the need for enhanced, streamlined, sustainable and predictable mechanisms to finance long-term pandemic preparedness, prevention, detection and response.

- The COVAX Facility has already distributed vaccines to more than a 100 countries around the world. However supply constraints and political choices are creating vaccine inequity risks.
- The resources that have been mobilized aren't enough. The ACT-Accelerator is lacking 18.5 billion of funding for this year.
- It has observed that some countries are discussing opening up, and said that globally "no one is safe until everyone is safe".

Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index

- Ernst & Young has released the 57th Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index (EY RECAI 57). It is a biannual report released since 2003.
- It ranks the world's top 40 countries on the attractiveness of their renewable energy investment and deployment opportunities.
- In the RECAI 57, the US and China are in the top two spots.
    - **The US** retains the top position as it reaccepted the Paris Accord, decided to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) levels by 50-52% as early as 2030 and achieve 100% carbon free power by 2035.
    - **China** maintains the second position by adding 72.4GW of new wind power in 2020, as developers rushed to beat an onshore wind subsidy cut.
- **India** has moved up to 3rd spot from 4th spot (in EY RECAI 56) owing to an exceptional performance on the solar photovoltaic (PV) front.
- The index has ranked India as the most attractive destination for solar PV investment and deployment.
- India's solar sector would grow substantially post the pandemic, with generation from solar PV forecast to outdo coal before 2040.
- The drastic change has been led by the government's policy ambitions, which have led solar PV to be the most cost-competitive source of power in the region.
- In 2020, global renewable energy capacity investments **grew 2%** to $303.5 billion, the second-highest annual figure recorded to date.
- However, the EY RECAI 57 estimated that future development to achieve net zero will require a further investment of $5.2 trillion and highlighted the role of institutional investors in financing the energy transition.

- Environment, sustainability and governance (ESG) goals are increasingly being prioritised on the investor agenda while institutional investors' interest in renewables continues to grow.

Effects of Meat Industry on Environment

- India measure nutrition per acre, health per care, and our work with real farmers and true cost accounting is showing that small farms with biodiversity, without chemicals, can feed two times Indian population.
- Livestock provides just 18% of calories but takes up more than 80% of farmland. Now, 81% of the world's agricultural land is used to provide meat, eggs, and dairy products.
- But, plant foods require far less land and far fewer resources, and could feed the entire world's population.
- A global switch to plant-based diets could save up to 8 million lives by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by two thirds.
- **Carnism** is the invisible belief system that conditions us to eat certain animals when we would never dream of eating others. Three Ns of justification for consuming meat is normal, natural, and necessary.
- The meat industry has been promoting meat consumption by,
    - **Objectification**, viewing animals as things rather than living, breathing, feeling beings.
    - **Deindividualization**, looking at animals as a group rather than individuals with their own personalities and preferences.
    - **Dichotomization**, categorizing animals into edible or inedible.
- Animals around the world are largely being held in captivity, in extremely toxic and inhumane conditions.
- If viruses are coming out of that, that's the microbiome's check on the reality that we live in.

Glyphosate

- It is a water soluble toxic broad-spectrum systemic herbicide.
- This molecule found in our food and water system that causes huge endocrine disruption in our bodies and poisons our environment.
- It poisons our genome and blocks the ability to make glutathione, which is our main antioxidant.

Source: PIB, WHO, Down To Earth, Business Today, Live Science

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