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Food Waste Index Report 2021

- This United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report aims to advance progress on the Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 (SGD 12.3).
- [SDG 12.3 aims at halving per-capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains.]
- This report presents the most comprehensive food waste data collection, analysis and modelling to date, generating a new estimate of global food waste.
- It publishes a methodology for countries to measure food waste, at household, food service and retail level, in order to track national progress towards 2030 and to report on SDG 12.3.
- **Findings** - The 2021 index has revealed that 17% of all food available at consumer levels was wasted in 2019.
- The food waste amounted to 931 million tonnes of food sold. Around 690 million people had to go hungry.
- It was prepared by using data from 54 countries and then extrapolated to the remaining countries.
- On an average, 74 kgs of food was wasted per capita/year at household level. India wastes in 50 kg/capita/year.
- **Recommendations** - Countries can raise climate ambition by including food systems in their NDCs.
- Regional Food Waste Working Groups will provide capacity building and training to participating Member States in measuring food waste, developing a national baseline, etc., for food waste prevention.
- The UN Food Systems Summit will provide an opportunity to launch bold new actions to tackle food waste globally.

Food Loss Index

- The Food Waste Index report is in contrast to the Food Loss Index of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- The Food Waste Index covers the later stages of food's journey - food waste - occurring at household, food service and retail level.

- Food loss and waste causes about $940 billion/year in economic losses.
- As of now, none of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement mention food waste and only 11 mention food loss.

MMDR Amendment Bill 2021

- Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2021 amends the Mines and Minerals Act, 1957 that regulates the mining sector in India.
- **Removal of restriction on end-use of minerals** - By providing that no mine will be reserved for particular end-use, the bill removes the distinction between captive and non-captive mines.
- [Captive mines are any mines (other than coal, lignite, atomic minerals) which are reserved by the central government to be leased through an auction for a particular end-use.]
- **Sale of minerals by captive mines** - The Bill proposes to allow captive miners (lessee) of both coal and other minerals to sell up to 50% of their production in the open market after,
    1. Meeting the requirements of the end-use plant and
    2. On paying additional royalty to the state government.
- The Bill proposes to fix additional royalty payments to states for the extension of mining leases for central public sector enterprises (CPSEs).

- **Auction** - The Bill empowers the central government, in consultation with state, to specify a time period for completing the auction of mineral concessions (other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals) by the state.
- If the state government is unable to complete the auction process within this period, the auctions may be conducted by the central government.
- **Transfer of statutory clearances** - Upon expiry of a mining lease, mines are leased to new persons through auction.
- The statutory clearances issued to the previous lessee are transferred to the new lessee for a period of 2 years. New lessee is required to obtain fresh clearances within this period.
- The Bill provides that the transferred statutory clearances will be valid throughout the lease period of the new lessee.
- **Allocation of mines with expired leases** - The Bill adds that mines, whose lease has expired, may be allocated to a government company in certain cases.
- This will be applicable if the auction process for granting a new lease has not been completed, or the new lease has been terminated within a year.
- The state government may grant a lease for such a mine to a government company for a period of up to 10 years or until the selection of a new lessee,

whichever is earlier.

- **Rights of certain existing concession holders** - The Bill provides that the right to obtain a prospecting license or a mining lease will lapse on the date of commencement of the 2021 Amendment Act.
- Such persons will be reimbursed for any expenditure incurred towards reconnaissance or prospecting operations.
- **Extension of leases** - The period of mining leases of government companies (other than leases granted through auction) may be extended on payment of amount prescribed in the Bill.
- **Conditions for lapse of mining lease** - The Act provides that a mining lease will lapse if the lessee
    1. Hasn't started mining operations within 2 years of lease grant, or
    2. Has discontinued mining operations for a period of two years.
- The Bill adds that the threshold period for lapse of the lease may be extended by the state government only once and up to one year.
- **Non-exclusive reconnaissance permit** - The Bill has removed the provision for a non-exclusive reconnaissance permit (for minerals other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals).

Article 244 (A)

- A politician promised to implement Article 244 (A) of the Constitution to safeguard the interests of the people in Assam's tribal-majority districts.
- Inserted into the Constitution in 1969, Article 244(A) allows for creation of an 'autonomous state' within Assam in certain tribal areas. It also provides for a Legislature and a Council of Ministers.
- **Different from the Sixth Schedule** - The Autonomous Councils under the Sixth Schedule do not have control over law and order, while those autonomous areas under the Article 244(A) have this.

Sixth Schedule

- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution provides for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- It allows for greater political autonomy and decentralised governance in certain tribal areas of the Northeast through autonomous councils.
- This special provision is provided under Article 244(2) and Article 275(1) of the Constitution.
- In Assam, the hill districts of Dima Hasao, Karbi Anglong and West Karbi and the Bodo Territorial Region are under this provision.

Amendment to Insurance Ombudsman Rules

- The government has amended the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017 to bring insurance brokers within the ambit of Ombudsman mechanism.
- Under the amended rules, policyholders can make complaints regarding deficiencies in insurance services electronically to the ombudsman.
- A complaints management system will be created to enable policyholders to track the status of their complaints online.
- Further, the ombudsman may use videoconferencing for hearings.
- The selection committee will now include an individual with a track record of promoting consumer rights or advancing the cause of consumer protection in the insurance sector.
- The ombudsman mechanism was administered by the Executive Council of Insurers, which is renamed as the Council for Insurance Ombudsmen.

Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve

- Odisha government has proposed a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of the state at Mahendragiri.
- [Similipal Biosphere Reserve is Odisha's first such reserve, which was notified in 1996.]
- The area of the proposed Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve is spread over Gajapati and Ganjam districts in the Eastern Ghats.
- Mahendragiri hill ecosystem acts as a transitional zone between the flora and fauna of southern India and the Himalayas, making the region an ecological estuary of genetic diversities.
- Mahendragiri is inhabited by the Soura people, a particularly vulnerable tribal group as well as the Kandha tribe.

Jal Jeevan Mission

- Jal Jeevan Mission has reached a new milestone in providing over four crore rural households with a clean tap water supply.
- It envisages supplying 55 litres of safe drinking water per person per day through individual Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) by 2024 to all rural households.
- Nodal ministry for the implementation - Jal Shakti Ministry.
- It is based on a **community approach** to water and includes extensive information, education and communication as key components.
- It will implement source sustainability measures as mandatory elements, such as recharge and reuse through grey water management, water conservation, rain water harvesting.
- Fund sharing pattern between the Centre and states is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 50:50 for other states, and 100% for Union

Territories.

- It prioritizes provision of FHTCs in quality affected areas, villages in drought prone and desert areas, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) villages, etc.

Source: PIB, the Hindu, The Indian Express, Down To Earth, Business Standard

