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Significance of India-Bangladesh Transport Connectivity: World Bank

Why in News

Recently, a **World Bank** report named “**Connecting to Thrive: Challenges and Opportunities of Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia**” stated that seamless **transport connectivity between India and Bangladesh** has the potential to increase national income by as much as 17% in Bangladesh and 8% in India.

The report analyzes the **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA)**.



Key Points

- **Issues:**

- **Trade:**

- Bilateral trade accounts for only about **10%** of Bangladesh's trade and a mere **1%** of India's trade.

- In **East Asian and Sub-Saharan African economies**, intraregional trade accounts for **50% and 22%** of total trade, respectively.

- **High tariffs, para-tariffs, and nontariff barriers** also serve as major trade barriers. Simple average tariffs in Bangladesh and India are more than twice the world average.

- **Difficulty in Crossing Border:**

- Weak transport integration makes the border between Bangladesh and India thick. Crossing the India–Bangladesh border at **Petrapole–Benapole**, the most important border post between the two countries, takes several days.

- In contrast, the time to cross borders handling similar volumes of traffic in other regions of the world, including **East Africa**, is **less than six hours**.

- **Isolated North-East:**

- Indian trucks are not allowed to transit through Bangladesh. As a result, the northeast of India is particularly isolated with the rest of the country and connected only through the **27-km-wide Siliguri corridor**, also called the “**chicken's neck**”. This leads to **long and costly routes**.

- **Benefits of Better Connectivity:**

- **Increased Real Income:**

- All districts in **Bangladesh** would benefit from integration, with the **eastern districts enjoying larger gains** in real income.
 - States bordering Bangladesh such as **Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura in the northeast, and West Bengal** on the west, and states further away from Bangladesh such as **Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra** would also **gain huge economic benefits** from seamless connectivity.

- **Increased Exports:**

- Will yield a **297%** increase in Bangladesh's exports to India and a **172%** increase in India's exports to Bangladesh.

- **Strategic Importance:**

- Geographically, Bangladesh's location makes it a **strategic gateway to India, Nepal, Bhutan, and other East Asian countries**. Bangladesh can also become an **economic powerhouse** by improving regional trade, transit and logistics networks.

- **Important Recommendations:**

- **Strengthen the MVA:**

- Harmonizing **driver's licensing and visa regimes**.
- Establishing an **efficient regional transit** regime.
- Rationalizing and **digitizing trade and transport** documents.
- **Liberalizing** the selection of **trade routes**.

- **Improving Regional Connectivity:**

- **Expand the effective capacity** of core transport and logistics infrastructure along regional corridors.
- Ensure **competition in transport service** markets.
- Deploy **modern information technology infrastructure** at land ports and seaports.
- Develop **off-border custom clearance facilities** in Bangladesh and India.

- **Integration of Local Communities:**

- Connecting local markets to regional corridors.
- **Removing logistics bottlenecks** in export-oriented value chains.
- Improving **women's participation in export-oriented agricultural value chains** at the macro, community, and household levels.

Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement

- **BBIN:**

- The **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Initiative** is a sub-regional architecture of countries in **Eastern South Asia**, a sub-region of South Asia.
- The group meets through the official representation of member states to **formulate, implement and review quadrilateral agreements** across areas such as **water resources management, connectivity of power, transport, and infrastructure**.

- **MVA**
 - **About:**
 - It was signed on **15th June 2015** in Thimphu, Bhutan.
 - It seeks to facilitate the unrestricted cross-border movement of cargo, passenger, and personal vehicles between BBIN countries.
 - As per the agreement, **member countries would allow vehicles registered in the other countries to enter their territory under certain terms and conditions.** Customs and tariffs will be decided by the respective countries and these would be finalised at bilateral and trilateral forums.
 - **Implementation of the MVA has been delayed** as the countries work to clarify some of the provisions that are supposed to be elaborated in protocols.
 - **Objective:**

To provide **seamless people-to-people contact and enhance economic interaction by facilitating cross border movement** of people and goods.

Source: IE

International Lunar Research Station: Russia and China

Why in News

China and Russia have agreed to build a **International Lunar Research Station (ILRS)**, possibly on the moon's surface, marking the start of a new era in space cooperation between the two countries.

Russia is a part of **International Space Station** which is a **habitable artificial satellite** - the single largest man-made structure in low earth orbit.

Key Points

- **International Lunar Research Station (ILRS):**
 - **About:**
 - The ILRS is a comprehensive scientific experiment base with the capability of **long-term autonomous operation**.
 - The station would be **built on the lunar surface and/or on the lunar orbit** that would **carry out scientific research activities** such as the lunar exploration and utilization, lunar-based observation, basic scientific experiment and technical verification.
 - **Principle:**
 - Russia and China will adhere to the principle of **co-consultation, joint construction, and shared benefits**.
 - They will facilitate **extensive cooperation** in the ILRS, **open to all interested countries** and international partners.
 - **Significance:**

ILRS will strengthen scientific research exchanges, and promote humanity's exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.
- **Other Programmes Related to Moon:**
 - **NASA's Artemis:** Earlier, in 2020, **National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA)** published the outline for its **Artemis program**, which plans to **send the next man and first woman to the lunar surface** by the year 2024.
 - The **Gateway is an outpost around the Moon** to support human and scientific exploration in deep space.
 - **UAE's Rashid:**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has decided to send an unmanned spacecraft named Rashid to the moon in 2024.
 - **China's Chang'e-4 and Chang'e-5 Missions :**
 - Chang'e-4 is the first probe ever to explore the far side of the moon by China.
 - Chang'e-5 mission will seek to collect lunar material to help scientists understand more about the moon's origins and formation.
- **India's Similar Initiatives:**
 - **Chandrayaan-3:**

India is working on **Chandrayaan-3** which is successor to the Chandrayaan-2 mission and it will likely attempt another soft-landing on the lunar surface.
 - **Space Station:**

India has set its eye on building its **own space station** in **low earth orbit** to conduct microgravity experiments in space in 5 to 7 years.

Moon

- **Facts about Moon:**

- The Moon is Earth's **only natural satellite** and the fifth largest moon in the solar system.
- The Moon's presence **helps stabilize our planet's wobble, which helps stabilize our climate.**
- The Moon's distance from Earth is about **3,85,000 km.**
- The Moon has a very **thin atmosphere** called an exosphere.
- The Moon's **entire surface is cratered and pitted** from impacts.
- The **Earth and Moon are tidally-locked.** Their rotations are so in sync we only see one side of the Moon all the time.

- **Reasons for Studying Moon:**

- **Understanding Early Earth:**

- As it is made of remnants of Earth, **clues about the composition of an early Earth** could very well be hidden between layers of Moon dust.
- Further, the Moon holds potential **clues to how life began on Earth.**

- **To Understand Seismic Activity on Earth :**

Studying **Moonquakes** can help us understand what seismic activity on Earth could have been like during times with less liquid water on the surface, such as during major ice ages or during the Earth's early history, when the surface was much too hot to preserve liquid oceans.

- **Composition of Earth's Atmosphere:**

By measuring **Earth's glow from the Moon**, scientists can accurately estimate how much Earth itself shines, and even the composition of Earth's atmosphere.

- **To Understand Tides, Seasons and Climate:**

- Measuring the **mass, size and orbital properties of the Moon is essential for predicting** rhythms of **tides and seasons.**
- Studying these **tidal and orbital interactions** between Earth and the Moon is extremely important for understanding possible **effects on Earth's climate.**

Source: FE

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi

Why in News

The Union Cabinet has approved the **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN)** as a **single non-lapsable reserve fund for Health** from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess.

The proceeds of **Health and Education Cess** are levied under **Section 136-b of Finance Act, 2007**.

Key Points

- **Salient Features of the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN):**

- It is a non-lapsable reserve fund for Health in the **Public Account**.
- Proceeds of share of health in the **Health and Education Cess** will be credited into PMSSN.
- Accruals into the PMSSN will be utilized for the flagship schemes of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare namely,
 - **Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**.
 - **Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)**.
 - **National Health Mission**.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)**.
 - **Emergency & disaster preparedness and responses during health emergencies.**
 - Any **future programme/scheme** that targets to achieve progress towards **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the targets set out in the **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017**.
- **Administration and maintenance** of the PMSSN is entrusted to the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW)**.

In any financial year, the expenditure on such schemes of the MoHFW would be initially incurred from the PMSSN and thereafter, from Gross Budgetary Support (GBS).

- **Benefits of PMSSN:**

Enhanced access to universal & affordable health care through availability of earmarked resources, while ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of financial year.

- **Significance of Spending on Healthcare:**

- **Improved Developmental Outcomes:** From an economic standpoint, better health improves productivity, and reduces losses due to premature death, prolonged disability and early retirement.
- **Enhance Opportunities:** One extra year of population life expectancy raises GDP per capita by 4%, investment in health creates millions of jobs, largely for women, through a much needed expansion of the health workforce.

- **Health and Education Cess:**

In the **Budget speech 2018**, the Finance Minister while announcing Ayushman Bharat Scheme, also announced **replacement of existing 3% Education Cess by 4% Health and Education Cess**.

It is collected with the aim of addressing the educational and healthcare needs of rural families in India.

Cess

- Different from the usual taxes and duties like excise and personal income tax, a **Cess is imposed as an additional tax besides the existing tax (tax on tax)** with a purpose of raising funds for a specific task.
- The Union government is empowered to raise revenue through a gamut of levies, including taxes (both direct and indirect), surcharges, fees and cess.
 - A cess, generally paid by everyday public, is added to their basic tax liability paid as part of total tax paid.
 - **Article 270** of the Constitution allows **cess to be excluded from the purview of the divisible pool of taxes** that the Union government must share with the States.
- Cess collected for a particular purpose **cannot be used for or diverted to other purposes**. A particular cess continues to be levied till the time the government collects enough funds for the purpose that it was introduced for.

For example, the **Swachh Bharat cess** (abolished in 2017) was levied by the government for cleanliness activities.
- **Difference between Surcharge and Cess:**
 - **Surcharge is an additional charge or tax levied on existing tax**. The main surcharges are on personal income tax (on high income slabs and on super rich) and on corporate income tax.
 - Despite **both are not shareable with state governments**, surcharge can be kept with the **Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)** and spent like any other taxes, the cess should be kept as a separate fund after allocating to CFI and can be spent only for a specific purpose.
 - A **surcharge is discussed under Article 270 and 271** of the Indian Constitution.
 - Unlike a cess, which is meant to raise revenue for a temporary need, **surcharge is usually permanent in nature**.

Source: TH

Kala-azar Elimination: Bihar to Miss Deadline

Why in News

The new cases of **Kala-azar or Visceral Leishmaniasis** have been reported in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, casting **serious doubt** on the state government's efforts **to eradicate the disease in the state by 2022.**

- Bihar has already **missed the Kala-azar elimination target four times since 2010.**
- The first deadline was 2010, under the **National Health Programme**, followed by 2015. It was later extended to 2017 and 2020 due to the government's failure to eliminate Kala-azar.

Key Points

- **Kala-azar or Leishmaniasis:**
 - Visceral leishmaniasis, also known as kala-azar, is characterized by **irregular bouts of fever, substantial weight loss, swelling of the spleen and liver, and anaemia.**
 - If the disease is not treated, the **fatality rate** in developing countries can be as high as **100% within 2 years.**
 - It is a **Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD)** affecting almost 100 countries including India.
 - NTDs are a diverse group of **communicable diseases** that prevail in **tropical and subtropical conditions** in 149 countries.
 - It is caused by a **parasite called Leishmania**, which is transmitted through the **bite of sand flies.**
 - There are three types of leishmaniasis:
 - **Visceral leishmaniasis**, which affects multiple organs and is the most serious form of the disease.
 - **Cutaneous leishmaniasis**, which causes skin sores and is the most common form.
 - **Mucocutaneous leishmaniasis**, which causes skin and mucosal lesions.
 - Visceral leishmaniasis, which is commonly known as Kala-azar in India, is fatal in over 95% of the cases, if left untreated.
- **Reasons for Missing the Deadline:**
 - **Lack Direction:** Elimination programmes lack direction and **Kala-azar returns year after year.**
 - **Widespread Poverty:** It was mostly the poor belonging to the **Dalits, Other Backward Communities and Muslims**, who were the main victims of the disease.
- **Trend of Decline:** However, there also has been a **trend of decline in the number of Kala-azar cases** in Bihar in the last few years.
 - There were **23,084 cases in 2010**, and by **2020, there were 2,712 cases**, according to official data.

National Kala-azar Elimination Programme

- The National Health Policy-2002 set the goal of Kala-azar elimination in India by the year 2010 which was revised to 2015.
- Continuing focused activities with high political commitment, **India signed a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bangladesh and Nepal** to achieve Kala-azar elimination from the South-East Asia Region (SEAR).
- **Elimination** is defined as reducing the annual incidence of Kala-azar to **less than 1 case per 10,000 population** at the sub-district level in India.
- Presently all programmatic activities are being implemented through the **National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP)** which is an umbrella programme for prevention & control of vector borne diseases and is subsumed under **National Health Mission (NHM)**.

National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme

- NVBDCP is the central nodal agency for prevention and control of six vector borne diseases i.e. **Malaria, Dengue, Lymphatic Filariasis**, Kala-azar, **Japanese Encephalitis** and **Chikungunya** in India.
- It works under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Source: DTE

National Employability Through Apprenticeship Program

Why in News

The **National Employability Through Apprenticeship Program (NETAP)** has released its latest edition of the **Apprenticeship Outlook Report** for 2021 (January-June 2021).

Apprenticeship is a Skill Training program wherein a person is engaged by a company as an apprentice and gains classroom (theory) learning for a short period, followed by on-the-job (practical) training.

Key Points

About the National Employability through Apprenticeship Program:

- It was set up in 2014 as a 100% employer-funded **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)**.
- The program was launched by the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** and TeamLease Skills University (Gujarat).
- It is in accordance with the **National Employability Enhancement Mission** of the **AICTE**.
- NETAP was structured to **overcome the challenges of the Apprenticeship Act, 1961**.
NETAP **proposed to appoint 2 lac apprentices every year** for the next 10 years. At peak capacity, it will be the world's largest apprenticeship program.
- It will help the unemployed youth to build skills through **Learning by doing and Learning while earning** along with providing them with access to practical skills.

National Employability Enhancement Mission

- It is a pioneering initiative taken **jointly by AICTE and Government of India**.
- Introduced in **2013**, the NEEM aims to **offer practical trainings to enhance employability** of any person who:
 - Is either pursuing graduation/diploma in any technical or non-technical stream, or
 - Have discontinued studies of degree or diploma courses.
- A NEEM Trainee is any registered person who has a **minimum education up to Class X** and is **between 16 to 40 years** of age.
- A total of **23 industries** have been listed in the NEEM where a trainee can be enrolled. It includes the automobile industry, pharmaceuticals, electronics & hardware, food processing, healthcare services and the financial sector.
- The NEEM is envisioned to place at least 10,000 students per year in registered companies or registered industries for the purpose of providing training.

- **Key Findings of the Apprenticeship Outlook Report:**
 - **India's Apprenticeship Ecosystem:** Some 41% of the employers in India are keen on hiring apprentices while 58% of enterprises want to increase the quantum of their apprenticeship hiring this year.
 - **Leading Cities:** **Chennai** has emerged as the most apprentice friendly city. Among non-metro cities, **Ahmedabad and Nagpur** are the most promising cities for apprenticeship.
 - **Leading Sectors:** The manufacturing, automobiles and ancillaries, and retail are the leading sectors.
 - **Positive Trend for Hiring Women Apprentices:** Overall the preference for women apprentices has increased by 10% from the previous half year. This trend was more visible in **Bengaluru, Mumbai and Kolkata.**
- **Significance:**
 - **India's working-age population is estimated to continue to increase through 2041.** This will have major implications on the required rate of job creation in the economy.
 - Statistics show that **approximately 3% of children dropout after grade 5th and 8th in the country** owing to socio-economic challenges. Apprenticeship can be an important mechanism for seamless transitioning from school to work and bridging of skill-gap in the workforce.
- **Other Initiatives to Promote Apprenticeships:**
 - Apprenticeship Act of 1961 (and the Amendments to the Act).
 - **Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS)**
 - National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)
 - **Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement Scheme**
 - **YuWaah Youth Skilling Initiative**
 - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana**

Source: TH

INS Karanj

Why in News

Recently, Indian Navy's third stealth **Scorpene class** (of **Project-75**) Submarine **INS Karanj** has been commissioned at the Naval Dockyard Mumbai.



Key Points

- **About:**

- The **previous INS Karanj** (a Russian-origin submarine) was **commissioned in 1969**, at Riga in the erstwhile USSR. It had served the nation for **34 years up to 2003**.
- The **new INS Karanj** would form part of the **Western Naval Command's Submarine fleet**.
- The ship's name, Karanj, is believed to be derived from the **Karanja island** (also known as Uran Island), a town in Raigad district, which lies in the south-east of Mumbai Harbour.

The Indian Navy has its base at Uran near Navi Mumbai.

- **Project 75:**

- It is a programme by the Indian Navy that entails **building six Scorpene Class** attack submarines.
- It is given support by the **Department of Defence Production (Ministry of Defence)** and **Indian Navy** throughout its various phases of construction.
- The **Mazagon Dock limited (MDL)** is manufacturing six Scorpene submarines with **technology assistance from Naval Group of France** under a USD 3.75 bn deal signed in October 2005.

MDL aptly called "Ship Builder to the Nation", is one of India's leading Defence public sector undertaking shipyards under the Ministry of Defence.

- **Other Submarines of the Ongoing Project-75:**

- Two submarines, **Kalvari** and **Khanderi**, have been commissioned into the Indian Navy.
- The fourth Scorpene, **Vela**, has commenced its sea trials.
- The fifth Scorpene '**Vagir**' was launched in November 2020.
- The sixth and last submarine, **Vagsheer**, is being readied for boot together.

- **Scorpene Class Submarines:**

- The submarines in the Project-75 Scorpene Class are powered by **diesel-electric propulsion systems**.
- Scorpene is one of the most **sophisticated submarines**, capable of undertaking **multifarious missions** including anti-surface ship warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, and area surveillance.
- Scorpene is a conventional powered submarine (diesel-electric) **weighing 1,500 tonnes** and can go up to **depths of 300m**.
- The **Scorpene class is the Navy's first modern conventional submarine series in almost two decades** since INS Sindhusashtra, procured from Russia in July 2000.
- The Navy is **looking to install Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) modules** on all the Scorpene submarines to enhance endurance.

Way Forward

With the launch of Karanj, India further **cements its position as a Submarine Building Nation** and MDL has more than lived up to its reputation as Warship and Submarine Builders to the Nation. This is totally in sync with the current impetus of the Government towards **Make in India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.

Source: PIB

King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award

Why in News

The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** received the prestigious International “**King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award**” conferred by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, Rome.

The award was announced on the eve of **World Soil Day - 2020 (5th December 2020)** in view of the **ICAR's excellent contributions in “Soil Health Awareness”** on the theme “**Stop soil erosion, save our future**” (2019 theme).

Key Points

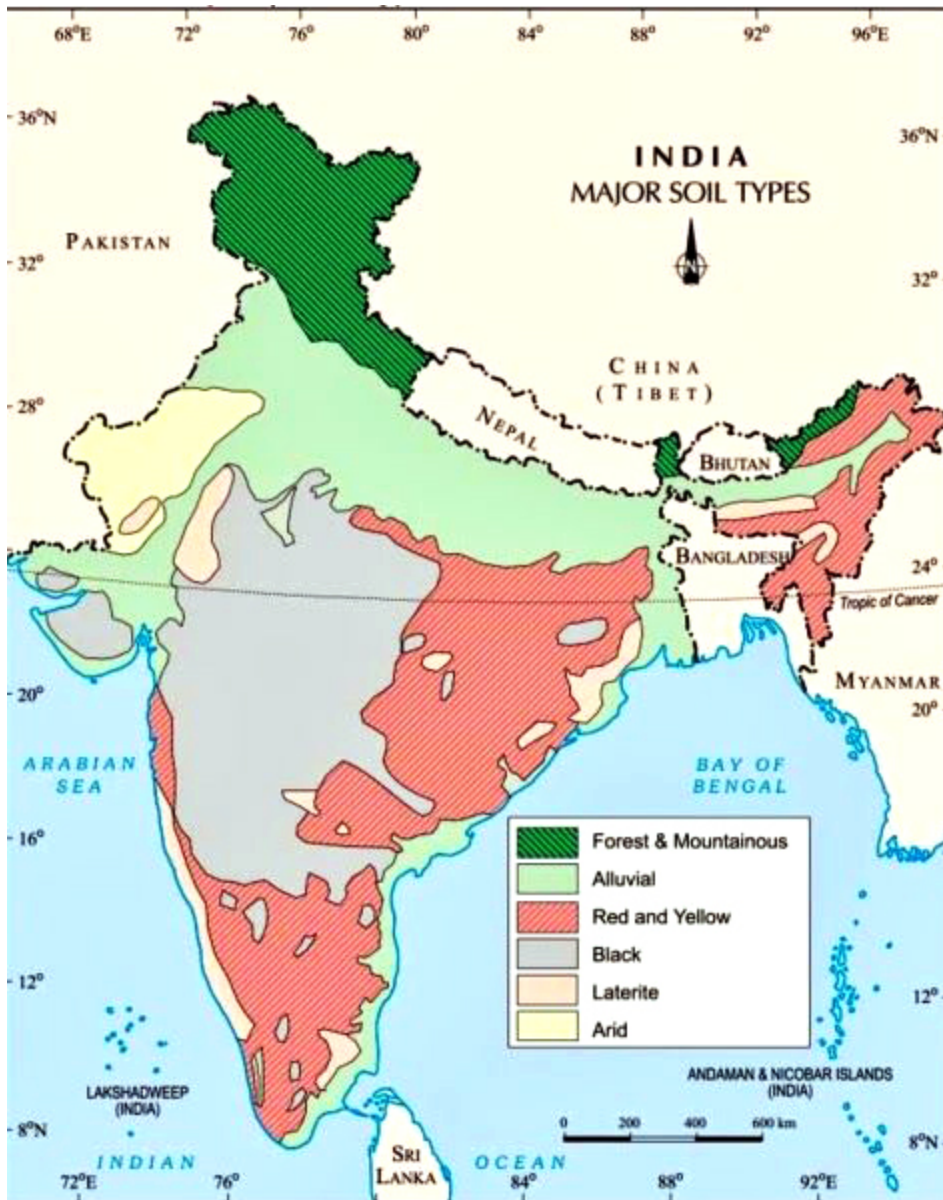
- **About King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award:**
 - Launched in 2018, the King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award **acknowledges individuals or institutions that raise public awareness of soils** by organising successful and influential World Soil Day celebrations.
 - The award, **sponsored by the Kingdom of Thailand**, is named after **King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand** for his lifelong commitment to raising awareness of the importance of sustainable soil management and rehabilitation for food security, poverty alleviation and more.
 - The former winners of the Award include **Practical Action in Bangladesh in 2018** and the **Costa Rican Soil Science Society (AACCS) in 2019**.
- **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):**
 - It is an autonomous organisation under the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)**, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
 - It was established on **16th July 1929** and was formerly known as the **Imperial Council of Agricultural Research**.
 - It is headquartered at **New Delhi**.
 - ICAR is the organisation responsible for the coordination, guidance and management of agricultural research and education in India.
 - In this capacity, ICAR **oversees one of the largest networks of agricultural research and education institutes** in the world, covering the whole country in the fields of horticulture, soil science, fisheries and animal sciences among others.

- **Soil Degradation:**

- Soil degradation is the **physical, chemical and biological decline in soil condition** caused by its **improper use or poor management**, usually for agricultural, industrial or urban purposes.
 - It can be the **loss of organic matter, decline in soil fertility**, and structural condition, **erosion, adverse changes in salinity, acidity or alkalinity**, and the effects of toxic chemicals, pollutants or excessive flooding.
- The soil degradation is **caused by excessive pressure on land to meet the competing demands of the growing population** for food, fodder and fibre.
- These processes, in turn, **reduce agricultural productivity leading** to social insecurity.
- Emission of **greenhouse gases** to the atmosphere resulting in **climate change** and **global warming** could be the major reason for soil degradation.
- Various human activities, such as the introduction of **large scale irrigation canals** and **faulty land use lead** to accelerated soil degradation through salinization, flooding, drought, erosion and waterlogging.
- The other causes of degradation due to **direct/indirect human interventions** are:
 - Deforestation and removal of natural vegetation
 - Overgrazing
 - Agriculture-related activities
 - Over exploitation of the vegetation for domestic purpose

Glinka World Soil Prize

- It is also conferred by FAO in line with soil. It is an annual award for dynamic change-makers dedicated to solving one of our world's most pressing environmental issues, i.e. **soil degradation**.
- It honours individuals and organizations whose leadership and activities have contributed, or are still contributing to the promotion of sustainable soil management and the protection of soil resources.



Source:PIB

Bharat Bangla Maitri Bridge

Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated **Bharat Bangla Maitri Bridge** in Tripura's South district.



Key Points

- **About:**

- The bridge ‘**Maitri Setu**’ has been built over the **Feni river** which flows between Indian boundary in Tripura State and Bangladesh.
Feni originates in the **South Tripura district**. The river passes through Sabroom town on the Indian side, and **meets the Bay of Bengal** after it flows into Bangladesh.
- The **1.9 Km** long bridge joins **Sabroom (in Tripura) with Ramgarh (in Bangladesh)**.
- The name ‘Maitri Setu’ **symbolises growing bilateral relations** and friendly ties between India and Bangladesh.

- **Constructed by and Cost:**

The construction was taken up by the **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd** at a project cost of **Rs. 133 crore**.

- The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited is a **fully owned company of the Government of India**.
- It is responsible for **development & maintenance of National Highways & Strategic Roads** of India.

- **Significance:**

- Now **Agartala** (capital of Tripura) **will become the nearest city to an international sea port** in India.
- Tripura will become the '**Gateway of North East**' with **access to Chittagong Port** of Bangladesh, which is just 80 km from Sabroom.
Bangladesh and India have a long standing and time-tested **Protocol on Transit and Trade** through inland waterways.
- It would serve as a **new trade corridor** between the two countries, helping the **Northeast states grow**. It will **enhance people-to-people contact**.

Source:TH
