



Human Development Report

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Human Development Report (HDR)



Released by: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1990.

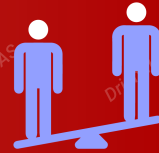


Human Development Index

- It measures average achievement in human development taking into account:
 - Life expectancy at birth,
 - Expected and Mean years of schooling,
 - Gross National Income (GNI).
- India's rank in HDI slipped from 130 in 2020 to **132 (out of 191 countries)** in 2022 with a score of **0.633**.
 - Switzerland is ranked 1 with a score of 0.962.

Inequality-Adjusted HDI (IHDI)

- It is the level of human development where inequality is taken into account.
- India's HDI for 2021-22 **fell by 25%** (i.e. scored 0.475) after inequality was considered.
 - The share of income held by the richest 1% of the population is more than the income held by the poorest 40%.



Indices Under HDR

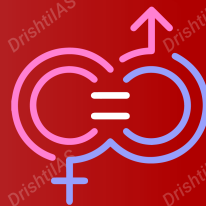


Gender Development Index (GDI)

- It estimates HDI values for women and men. The **closer this ratio is to 1, the smaller the gender gap** between women and men in HDI terms.
- India with a score of 0.849 is significantly behind the world average in this parameter.

Gender Inequality Index (GII)

- It assesses gender inequality using three dimensions:
 - Reproductive health
 - Empowerment
 - Labour market
- A low GII value indicates low inequality between women and men, and a high GII value indicates high inequality between women and men.
- India with a score of **0.490 ranked 122nd** is unequal for its female citizens.



Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

- It captures the multiple deprivations that people in developing countries face in their **health, education and standard of living**.
- As of 2019, India had more than 381 million who were suffering from multi-dimensional poverty.

Planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index (PHDI)

- It adjusts the standard HDI by a country's level of **carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint**, each on a per capita basis.
- It was **proposed in HDR 2020**.
- India scored **0.609** in the PHDI for 2021-22.



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Eastern Economic Forum

For Prelims: Significance of Russia's Far East, IPEF, China's RCEP.

For Mains: Eastern Economic Forum and India's Balancing Act.

Why in News?

Recently, Russia hosted the 7th [Eastern Economic Forum \(EEF\)](#) at Vladivostok.

- The forum is a platform for entrepreneurs to expand their businesses into [Russia's Far East \(RFE\)](#).



What is the Eastern Economic Forum?

▪ About:

- The EEF was established in 2015 to encourage **foreign investments in the RFE**.
- The EEF displays the **economic potential, suitable business conditions and investment opportunities** in the region.
- Agreements signed at the EEF increased from **217 in 2017 to 380 agreements in 2021, worth 3.6 trillion roubles**.
- The agreements focus on **infrastructure, transportation projects, mineral excavations, construction, industry and agriculture**.

▪ Key Players:

- China, South Korea, Japan and India are the Key Players in the region, where China is the biggest investor.
 - China who sees potential in promoting the **Chinese [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#)** and the **Polar Sea Route** in the RFE.
 - China's investments in the region **account for 90% of the total investments**.

▪ Objectives:

- Russia has strategically developed the region with the **aim of connecting Russia to the Asian trading routes**.
- With the fast modernisation of cities like Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Ulan-Ude, Chita and more, Russia aims to **attract more investments** in the region.
- To **survive the economic crisis and the sanctions** with the help of China and other Asian powers.

What is the Significance of the RFE?

- The region encompasses **one-third of Russia's territory and is rich with natural resources** such as fish, oil, natural gas, wood, diamonds and other minerals.
- The small population living in the region is another factor for encouraging people to move and work in the Far East.
- The region's riches and resources **contribute to 5 % of Russia's [GDP \(Gross Domestic Product\)](#)**.
 - But despite the abundance and availability of materials, **procuring and supplying them is an issue** due to the unavailability of personnel.
- The RFE is **geographically placed at a strategic location**, acting as a **gateway into Asia**.

What does India Seek at the Forum?

- **India** seeks to expand **its influence in the RFE**. During the forum, India expressed its **readiness in expanding trade, connectivity and investments** in Russia.
- India is keen to **deepen its cooperation in energy, pharmaceuticals, maritime connectivity**, healthcare, tourism, the diamond industry and the Arctic.
 - In 2019, India offered a USD 1 billion **line of credit to develop infrastructure in the region**.
- Through the EEF, **India aims to establish a strong inter-state interaction** with Russia.
 - Business representatives of Gujarat and the Republic of Sakha (Russia) have **launched agreements in the diamond and pharmaceuticals industry**.

How does India act at Balancing Between the EEF and IPEF?

- Since the coming together of countries like Myanmar, Armenia, Russia, and China for EEF seems like the forming of an **Anti-Sanctions Group** in the international order, India has vested interests in both the forums, EEF and **[IPEF \(U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework\)](#)**.
- India has **not shied away from investing** in the Russia-initiated EEF despite the current international conditions, where western countries impose Sanctions on Russia.
- At the same time, India has given **its confirmation and acceptance to three of the four pillars in the IPEF**.
- India understands the benefits of being involved in the development of the RFE but it **also perceives the IPEF as a vital platform to strengthen its presence in the Indo-Pacific region**.
- The IPEF also presents an ideal opportunity for India to act in the region, without being part of the China-led **[Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership](#)** or other regional groupings like the **[Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership](#)**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. India is a member of which among the following? (2015)

1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
2. Association of South-East Asian Nations
3. East Asia Summit

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) India is a member of none of them

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Established in 1989, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) cites minimum eligibility that countries must share borders with the Pacific Ocean to be a member. India is not a member and was invited to be an observer for the first time in November 2011. It is a 21-member body. **Hence, 1 is not correct.**
- Established in 1961, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) is a regional intergovernmental organization comprising ten countries in Southeast Asia, which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic, political, security, military, educational, and socio-cultural integration among its members and other countries in Asia. India is located in South Asia and is not a member of ASEAN. **Hence, 2 is not correct.**

- Established in 2005, the East Asia Summit (EAS) is an 18 member States body for strategic dialogue and cooperation on the key political, security, and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region. It comprises the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states along with 8 members-Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. **Hence, 3 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. **(2020)**

Source: [TH](#)

First Meeting of the Reconstituted National Medical Device Promotion Council (NMDPC)

For Prelims: National Medical Device Promotion Council (NMDPC), CDSCO, FDI, PLI, Medical Devices Park, NABL Accreditation, Medical Devices Rules, 2017, National Medical Devices Policy 2022.

For Mains: Challenges and Issues with respect to the Medical Device Industry of India, Government Initiatives to Promote the Medical Device Industry of India.

Why in News?

Recently, important **issues of Medical Technology (MedTech) Industry were taken-up** at the first meeting of the reconstituted [National Medical Device Promotion Council \(NMDPC\)](#).

What were the Key Highlights of the Meeting?

- **Agenda:**
 - [Central Drugs Standards and Control Organisation \(CDSCO\)](#) and the State Licensing Authorities (SLAs) provided updates for the **smooth transition to licensing of Class A and B Medical Devices w.e.f 1st October 2022.**
 - Medical devices under [Medical Devices Rules, 2017](#) are classified as:
 - **Class A (low risk):** E.g., absorbent cotton balls, alcohol swabs.
 - **Class B (low moderate risk):** E.g., thermometer, BP monitoring device.
 - **Class C (moderate high risk):** E.g., implants.
 - **Class D (high risk):** E.g., heart valves.
 - Department of Pharmaceuticals provided the latest status of the various initiatives such as **100% [Foreign direct Investment \(FDI\) in MedTech Sector on automatic route, \[Production-Linked Incentive Scheme \\(PLI\\) scheme for Medical Devices, \\[Medical Devices Parks\\]\\(#\\)\]\(#\)](#)** in four States (Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh), etc.
 - The discussion regarding the requirement of [National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories \(NABL\) accreditation of In-House labs of the manufacturers of specific Medical Devices](#) was taken-up during the meeting.

- **Concerns Highlighted:**
 - There is a **regulatory burden of [labelling requirements of Medical Devices](#)**.
 - There are **only 18 certified Medical Device Testing Laboratories** that have been approved by CDSCO and that is **grossly insufficient keeping in view the size of the country**.
 - Indian Medical Devices Industry presently **lacks research ecosystem and infrastructure for manufacturing of high tech, advanced medical devices (Class C&D)**.

What were the Key Recommendations made by the NMDPC?

- **Harmonize the Labelling Provisions:**
 - There is a need to move forward to harmonize the provisions of labeling of Medical Devices under the **Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodity) Rules, 2011 into Medical Device Rules, 2017, for licensed medical devices**.
- **Investment in the Medical Devices Park:**
 - The Medical Devices Industry Associations representatives were encouraged to **actively engage with states, which were sanctioned Medical Devices Parks** by the Department for creating common infrastructure facilities and come forward to **invest in the proposed parks to boost domestic manufacturing**.
- **Active Participation in the National MedTech Expo, 2022:**
 - The industry's support was also asked for the proposed **National MedTech Expo, 2022 to showcase the strengths and capabilities of Indian Medical Devices Industry**.
- **Need of More Certified Medical Devices Testing Laboratories:**
 - An adequate common infrastructure including accredited laboratories in various regions of the country for standard testing should be in place.
- **Post-market Surveillance system and Medical Device Registry:**
 - There must be a robust **IT enabled feedback driven post-market surveillance system and medical device registry**, particularly for implants to **ensure traceability of patient who has received the implant** in order to assess the performance of the implant.
- **New Legislation for a New Regulator:**
 - The Committee has recommended that the **new legislation should set up a new set of regulators at different levels for regulating the medical devices industry**.
 - The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers should allow the new regulator to involve institutions such as Indian **[Institute of Science \(IISc\)](#), [Council of Scientific and Industrial Research \(CSIR\)](#), [Defence Research and Development Organisation \(DRDO\)](#)** and network of **[Indian Institute of Technology \(IITs\)](#)** to test medical devices for safety and efficacy.
 - **Medical device regulations must be dispensed with by qualified and well-trained Medical Device Officers** to give a boost to the Medical Device industry in the country.
- **Research Linked Incentive (RLI) Scheme:**
 - The Committee recommended the Department to start a **RLI Scheme** in Line with the PLI scheme.
- **Upskilling of the Medical Device Officers:**
 - The Ministry should work in synergy with State governments and **impart the necessary skills to the local medical device officers**.
- **A Single Window Clearing Platform:**
 - A **single window clearing platform for application of license for manufacturing, export, import must be set up** that shall also integrate all these bodies involved in the regulation of medical devices.
 - The Ministry must incorporate such an **all-encompassing "single window clearing/approval system" in the proposed [new separate Act for the regulation of Medical Devices](#)**.

What is NMDPC?

- **About:**
 - **National Medical Device Promotion Council (NMDPC)** is chaired by the **Secretary**,

Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.

- It has **members from stakeholder departments/ organizations**, functions of which have a bearing on the growth of the sector.
 - Also, it has **representation from several medical device industry associations**, representing the sector in India.
- **Significance:**
- NMDPC, going forward, is **expected to become a vibrant forum for all issues relating to the medical devices sector**, which is a sunrise sector with **huge potential for social obligations and the economic aspirations of India**.

[Source: TH](#)

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin)

For Prelims: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), Ministry of Rural Development, Below the Poverty Line (BPL), Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011, Gram Sabha, and geo-tagging.

For Mains: Significance of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin).

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Ministry of Rural Development** has come up with penalties for any further delay in completing the flagship rural household scheme — **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin)**.

Why is the Need for Imposing Penalties?

- **About:**
 - The penalty would be levied on the state government. If the sanction of the house is delayed for more than one month from the date of issue of the target, **the State government will be penalised Rs 10 per house** for the first month of delay and Rs 20 per house for each subsequent month of delay.
 - Similarly, if the first instalment due to the beneficiary is **delayed for more than seven days** from the date of sanction, then the State governments will have to pay **Rs 10 per house per week of delay**.
 - No penalty would be imposed if the central funds are not available with the State.
- **Need:**
 - **To Reorient Focus:** Due to [Covid-19](#), there was sluggishness in the implementation of the scheme, therefore by imposing penalties the central government is ensuring that the States pay more attention to the programme.
 - **Issues with State Government:** West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Odisha along Assam are the leading four laggard States who are far behind their targets.
 - Further, the West Bengal government repackaged the scheme as **“Bangla Awas Yojana”** and due to this reason, the central government withheld funds meant for the scheme.

What do we Know about Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna Gramin?

- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Rural development.
- **Aim:** To **provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families**, who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses **by the end of March 2022.**
 - To **help rural people [Below the Poverty Line \(BPL\)](#) in construction of dwelling units** and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses by providing assistance in the form of a full grant.
- **Beneficiaries:** People belonging to SCs/STs, freed bonded labourers and non-SC/ST categories, widows or next-of-kin of defence personnel killed in action, ex-servicemen and retired members of the paramilitary forces, disabled persons and minorities.
- **Selection of Beneficiaries:** Through a three-stage validation - [Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011](#), [Gram Sabha](#), and [geo-tagging](#).
- **Cost Sharing:** The cost of unit assistance is shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio of **60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for North Eastern and hilly states.**
- **Features:**
 - The unit assistance has been increased from Rs. 70,000 to Rs. 1.20 lakh in plain and from Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 1.30 lakh in hilly states.
 - The assistance for construction of toilets shall be leveraged through convergence with [Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin \(SBM-G\)](#), [MGNREGS](#) or any other dedicated source of funding.
- **Performance:**
 - Under the scheme, the government has set the target of 2.95 crore houses and by August 2022, 2.02 crore houses have been constructed.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. How does the National Rural Livelihood Mission seek to improve livelihood options of rural poor? (2012)

1. By setting up a large number of new manufacturing industries and agribusiness centres in rural areas
2. By strengthening 'self-help groups' and providing skill development
3. By supplying seeds, fertilizers, diesel pump-sets and micro-irrigation equipment free of cost to farmers

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

- **The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) is a poverty alleviation project implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development.** This scheme is focused on promoting self-employment and organization of rural poor. The basic idea behind this programme is to organize the poor into SHGs (Self Help Groups) and make them capable for selfemployment.
- Pillars of NRLM:
 - Enhancing and expanding existing livelihood options of the poor,
 - Building skills for the job market outside,
 - Nurturing self-employed and entrepreneurs **Hence, 2 is correct.**
- The Mission neither focuses on setting up a large number of new manufacturing industries, nor agribusiness centres in rural areas. Its objective is not to supply seeds, fertilizers, diesel pump-sets and micro-irrigation equipment. **Hence, 1 and 3 are not correct. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. The basis of providing urban amenities in rural areas (PURA) is rooted in establishing connectivity. Comment (2013)

[Source: TH](#)

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2022

For Prelims: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO), Afghanistan, Russia, Resilient supply chains, International Year of Millets, Global Center for Traditional Medicines.

For Mains: India and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Why in News?

The [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\)](#) summit 2022 was held recently in **Samarkand, Uzbekistan**.

- Samarkand declaration was signed by the member states.
- India takes over Presidency of the SCO for 2023.

What are the Key Highlights of the Summit?

- The Samarkand declaration advocated “commitment to peaceful settlement of differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation”.
- They stress that the principles of mutual respect for **sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity of States**, equality, mutual benefit, non- interference in internal affairs, and non-use or threat of use of force are the basis for sustainable development of international relations.
- The member countries are planning to develop common principles and approaches to form a **unified list of terrorists, separatist and extremist organizations** whose activities are prohibited on the territories of the SCO member states.
- Russia is also looking at **more customers for its gas** as Western countries look to cut their dependence on it.
- Russia suggested that the organisation should think about holding its own big athletic event.
- **Indian Perspective:**
 - **Connectivity:** India urged Shanghai Cooperation Organisation **member states to give each other full right to transit**, as it would **enhance connectivity** and help in establishing **reliable and resilient supply chains in the region**.
 - **Food Security:** As the whole world is facing an unprecedented energy and food crisis, India emphasised the initiative to promote millet and address issues related to food security.
 - In this context, India is trying to popularise millets, as SCO can play a big role in marking 2023 as the **International Year of Millets**.
 - **Working Group on Traditional Medicine:** [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) opened its **Global Center for Traditional Medicines** in Gujarat in April 2022.
 - This was the **first and only worldwide centre for conventional medicine** established by the WHO.
 - **Tourism: Varanasi was declared as the SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital** for

2022-2023 to promote the **rich cultural and historical heritage** of the people and the **tourism potential of SCO member states**.

- Further, it will **promote tourism, cultural and humanitarian exchanges** between India and the SCO member Countries.
- It also underlines **India's ancient civilizational links with the Member States of SCO**, especially the Central Asian Republics.
- Under the framework of this **major cultural outreach program, a number of events will be hosted in Varanasi during 2022-23**.

What do we know about Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?

▪ About:

- It is a **permanent intergovernmental international organisation. It was created in 2001**.
- The **SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and entered into force in 2003**.
- It's a **Eurasian political, economic and military organisation** aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- It is seen as a counterweight to **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, It is a **nine-member economic and security bloc** and has emerged as one of the **largest transregional international organisations**.

▪ Official Languages:

- Russian and Chinese.

▪ Permanent Bodies:

- SCO Secretariat in Beijing.
- Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent.

▪ Chairmanship:

- It is by rotation for a year by Member States.

▪ Genesis:

- Prior to the creation of SCO in 2001, **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were members of the Shanghai Five**.
- Shanghai Five (1996) emerged from a series of border demarcation and demilitarization talks which the four former Soviet republics held with China to ensure stability along the borders.
- Following the accession of Uzbekistan to the organisation in **2001, the Shanghai Five was renamed the SCO**.
- **India** and Pakistan became members in **2017**.
- **Current Members: Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan**.
- **Iran** is set to **become a permanent member of the SCO in 2023**.
 - **India was made an observer at the SCO in 2005** and has generally participated in the ministerial-level meetings of the grouping which focus mainly on security and economic cooperation in the Eurasian region.

[Source: IE](#)

Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia

For Mains: Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia and related issues

Why in News?

Recently, Jean-Luc Godard, one of the legends of French New Wave cinema, died by assisted suicide at the age of 91.

What is Assisted Suicide?

- **About:**
 - Assisted suicide and euthanasia **both are practices under which a person intentionally ends their life** with active assistance from others.
 - Several European nations, some states in Australia and Colombia in South America allow assisted suicide and euthanasia under certain circumstances.
- **Types:**
 - **Active:**
 - Active euthanasia, which is legal in only a few countries, entails the use of substances to end the life of the patient.
 - **Passive:**
 - It involves simply **stopping lifesaving treatment or medical intervention** with the consent of the patient or a family member or a close friend representing the patient.

What are the Arguments for and against Assisted Suicide?

- **Arguments for:**
 - **Freedom of Choice:**
 - Advocates argue that the **person should be able to make their own choice.**
 - **Quality of Life:**
 - Only the individual really knows how they feel, and how the physical and emotional pain of illness and prolonged death impacts their quality of life.
 - **Dignity:**
 - Every individual should be able to die with dignity.
 - **Resources:**
 - It **makes more sense to channel the resources of highly skilled staff, equipment, hospital beds, and medications** toward lifesaving treatments for those who wish to live, rather than those who do not.
 - **Humane:**
 - It is **more humane to allow a person with intractable suffering** to be allowed to choose to end that suffering.
 - **Loved ones:**
 - It can **help to shorten the grief** and suffering of loved ones.
- **Arguments Against:**
 - **Moral and Religious Arguments:**
 - Several faiths see **euthanasia as a form of murder and morally unacceptable.** Suicide, too, is “illegal” in some religions. Morally, there is an argument that euthanasia will weaken society’s respect for the sanctity of life.
 - **Patient Competence:**
 - **Euthanasia is only voluntary if the patient is mentally competent**, with a lucid understanding of available options and consequences, and the ability to express that understanding and their wish to terminate their own life. Determining or defining competence is not straightforward.
 - **Guilt:**
 - Patients may feel they are a burden on resources and are psychologically pressured into consenting. They may feel that the financial, emotional, and mental burden on their family is too great.
 - **Slippery slope:**
 - There is a risk that **physician-assisted suicide will start with those who are terminally ill** and wish to die because of intractable suffering, but then begin to

- include other individuals.
- **Regulation:** Euthanasia cannot be properly regulated.

Does India allow Assisted Suicide or Euthanasia?

- In a landmark judgment, the [Supreme Court](#) of India legalised **passive euthanasia** in 2018, stating that it was a **matter of 'living will'**.
- According to the judgment, **an adult in his conscious mind is permitted to refuse medical treatment or voluntarily decide not to take medical treatment** to embrace death in a natural way, under certain conditions.
- The **court laid down a set of guidelines for 'living will'** and defined passive euthanasia and euthanasia as well.
- It also laid **down guidelines for 'living will' made by terminally ill patients** who beforehand know about their chances of slipping into a permanent vegetative state.
- The court specifically stated that the **rights of a patient, in such cases, would not fall out of the purview of Article 21** (right to life and liberty) of the Indian Constitution.
- The SC's judgment was in **accordance with its verdict in March 2011** on a separate plea.
 - While ruling on a petition on behalf of Aruna Shanbaug, the **court had allowed passive euthanasia for the nurse** who had spent decades in a **vegetative state**. Shanbaug had become central to debates on the legality of right to die and euthanasia in India.
 - A vegetative state is **when a person is awake but is showing no signs of awareness**.
- However, another bench of the Supreme Court, in 2014, **cited inconsistencies in earlier verdicts on passive euthanasia**, including the one given in the Shanbaug case, and referred the matter to a Constitution bench.

[Source: IE](#)

Green Fins Hub

For Prelims: Green Fins Hub, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Coral Reefs, Coastal and Marine Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Blue Economy, Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Initiative, Deep Ocean Mission, O-SMART, Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

For Mains: Green Fins Hub and its Significance, Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism, Challenges and Initiatives to Promote.

Why in News?

Recently, the [United Nations Environmental Programme \(UNEP\)](#), along with the UK-based charity **Reef-World Foundation**, **launched the Green Fins Hub**.

- Green Fins Hub is a **global digital platform for diving and snorkelling operators worldwide**.

What is Green Fins?

- **About:**
 - **Green Fins** is a proven conservation management approach **implemented internationally by The Reef-World Foundation and the UNEP** which leads to a measurable **reduction in the negative environmental impacts associated with marine tourism**.
 - **Originally established in Thailand in 2004**, the Green Fins approach is a tool for supporting **adoption and implementation of best practices in the diving and snorkeling tourism industry**.
- **Aim:**
 - It aims to **protect coral reefs through environment-friendly guidelines** promoting sustainable diving and snorkelling.
 - It provides the **only internationally recognised environmental standards for marine tourism** and its robust assessment system measures compliance.

What is Green Fins Hub?

- **About:**
 - The **Green Fins Hub** is the **first-ever global [marine tourism](#) industry platform**.
 - It would **give sustainable marine tourism a 'major boost'**.
 - It is expected to scale up to reach a **potential 30,000 operators worldwide from about 700 operators across 14 countries**.
- **Significance:**
 - It is intended to catalyse a **seismic shift towards [sustainability](#) in the marine tourism sector** through Green Fins membership.
 - **Coral reefs are home to at least 25% of marine life**, are the mecca for marine-related tourism, **contributing up to 40% or more of the [gross domestic product](#)** in some island nations. However, they are a **most vulnerable ecosystem**, especially to climate change with the difference between a global temperature rise of 1.5 or 20C being existential for reefs.
 - **Increasing accessibility of best practice, knowledge and citizen science** through the Green Fins Hub could be a **game changer in ensuring a future for coral reefs and other fragile marine ecosystems**.
 - The **platform will help diving and snorkelling operators** worldwide to make **simple, cost-efficient changes to their daily practices** by utilising tried and tested solutions.
 - It would also help them **keep track of their annual improvements and communicate with their communities and customers**.

What is Sustainable Coastal and Marine Tourism?

- **[Sustainable Tourism](#)** refers to sustainable practices in and by the tourism industry. It refers to **addressing the issues of a greener tourism sector both on the demand as well as supply side**.
 - According to the UN, **sustainable tourism should incorporate the following:**
 - **Make optimal use of environmental resources** that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
 - **Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities**, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
 - **Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits** to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.
- **Coastal and Marine Tourism (CMT)** represents at least **50% of total global tourism**. It constitutes the **largest economic sector for most Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and many coastal states**.

- With anticipated global growth rates of more than 3.5%, coastal and marine tourism is **projected to be the largest value-adding segment of the ocean economy by 2030, at 26%**.

What are the Challenges Associated with CMT?

- **Continued Depletion and Degradation of Natural Assets** is putting the sustainability and viability of the industry, along with the local communities that rely on it, at risk.
- **Covid-19 Pandemic Caused a Major Disruption** in the tourism industry. The World Travel and Tourism Council has projected around 75 million job losses and a tourism-induced GDP reduction of more than \$2 trillion globally.
- **Climate Change will Affect Strongly the Coastal Areas** with high anthropic vulnerability, through temperature increase, more frequent environmental events, water scarcity and sea level rise (SLR).



What are the Other Initiatives Towards Coastal and Marine Tourism?

- **Global Initiatives:**
 - **Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and World Wild Fund (WWF)** are partnering with hotels, cruise ships, tour operators and the industry to create nature-positive tourism where all supply chain actors converge to create value for people, nature and businesses.
 - **Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Initiative** is a UN-convened global community focused on the intersection between private finance and ocean health, supporting the implementation of the Sustainable [Blue Economy Finance Principles](#).
 - **The Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles** are the foundational keystone to invest in the ocean economy. Launched in 2018, they are the world's first global guiding framework for banks, insurers and investors to finance a sustainable blue economy. They promote the implementation of SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and set out ocean-specific standards.
 - **Ocean Recovery Alliance has become a signatory of the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative**, led by the UNEP and World Tourism Organization, in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.
 - **The Global Tourism Plastics Initiative** has the objective to [tackle plastic pollution](#) by promoting a shift towards circular economy of plastics in tourism

operations where plastics never become waste, rather than to completely eliminate plastics from all tourism operations.

▪ **Indian Initiatives:**

- [Deep Ocean Mission](#)
- [India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development](#)
- [O-SMART](#)
- [Integrated Coastal Zone Management](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. Most of the world's coral reefs are in tropical waters.
2. More than one-third of the world's coral reefs are located in the territories of Australia, Indonesia and Philippines.
3. Coral reefs host far more animal phyla than those hosted by tropical rainforests.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- Coral reefs are large underwater structures composed of the skeletons of corals, which are marine invertebrate animals. The coral species extract Calcium Carbonate from seawater to create a hard, durable exoskeleton that protects their soft, sac-like bodies. Besides other conditions, reef-building corals require warm ocean temperatures (20 to 28°C). Hence, most of the coral reefs are found in tropical waters. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Reef-building corals are scattered throughout the tropical and subtropical Western Atlantic and Indo-Pacific oceans, generally within 30°N and 30°S latitudes. More than three-quarters of the world's reef-building coral species can be found within the waters of "Coral Triangle", the area covering the reefs of Northern Australia, Indonesia, Philippines and Papua New Guinea extending from Indonesia in the west to the Solomon Islands in the east, and the Philippines in the north. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Coral reefs have much more animal phyla than those found in tropical rainforests. 32 of the 34 recognised animal Phyla are found on coral reefs compared to 9 in tropical rainforests. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option D is the correct answer.**

Source: DTE

Ethical Marketing of Drugs

For Mains: Ethical Marketing of Products, Ethics in Human Actions

Why in News?

Recently, [The Central Board for Direct Taxes \(CBDT\)](#) has accused the makers of the **Dolo-650 tablet** of spending **Rs 1,000 crore to distribute freebies to doctors** for prescribing the medicine.

- It is likely to put the stress on making the [Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices \(UCPMP\)](#) a legally binding code of ethics.

What do we need to know about Freebies in Drug Marketing?

- **About:**
 - **Drug manufacturing companies** have been observed practicing '**Gift-giving**': offering **freebies** ranging from **free dinners and drug samples** to **promotional merchandise** to doctors for their product marketing.
 - In order to promote their products, pharma companies allegedly **arrange accommodation in five-star hotels, local sight-seeing, etc.** in conferences conducted by doctors.
 - This is a **well-oiled racket that sees pharmaceutical (pharma) companies** 'gifting' doctors to push their respective drugs under the guise of marketing.
- **Pharma Company's Stand:**
 - Drug firms would offer **branded souvenirs** like pen stands, calendars, diaries or sanitizers to doctors.
 - The idea is to **ensure top-of-the-mind recall of their brands.**
 - The Indian market is price-controlled. Therefore, the differentiator here is the brands and this is common practice.
 - However, these practices **do not ensure doctors will prescribe their drugs.** It is simply a **marketing strategy.**
 - Around **95% of the items being gifted have a value less than Rs 500.**
 - It does not constitute a bribe. It is done to make the doctor remember a brand among the hundred others with a similar price point.
- **All India Drug Action Network's Stand:**
 - **Ethical marketing and promotion** should be brought within the ambit of the new **Drugs, Medical Devices, and Cosmetics Act being formulated.**
 - It is observed that often, **doctors are made lead investigators** in clinical trials, or made part of committees for which **they earn a hefty fee.**

What is Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP)?

- **About:**
 - This is a **set of guidelines** published by the **Central Government in December 2014** to the **pharmaceutical industry** for the **promotion and marketing** of drugs and medical devices.
 - However, these guidelines are **voluntary code and not legally binding** on companies.
- **Significance:**
 - This code governs the **conduct of pharmaceutical companies** in their marketing practices, duly covering the various aspects such as **medical representatives, textual and audio-visual promotional materials, samples, gifts, etc.**
 - The code establishes **relationships with healthcare professionals**, wherein the provisions related to travel facilities, hospitality and cash or monetary grants to physicians or their families have been elaborated.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - According to **Clause 7.2 of the UCPMP**, "companies or their associations/representatives **shall not extend any hospitality like hotel accommodation to healthcare practitioners and their family members** under any pretext".
 - A drug **must not be promoted prior to receipt of marketing approval** by the competent authority.

- The promotion of the drug must be **consistent with the terms of the marketing approval**.
- **No gifts, pecuniary advantages or benefits in kind** may be offered/supplied to persons qualified to prescribe or supply drugs by a pharmaceutical company.
- Gifts for the **personal benefit of healthcare professionals and family members** are also not to be offered or provided.

Way Forward

- If found guilty of unethically promoting drug brands to doctors, **companies should face the same penal action as is mentioned in the [Indian Penal Code](#)** for bribery and other similar unethical practices.
- The government should make it **mandatory for periodic disclosures of payments** made by companies to doctors and professional bodies, directly or indirectly via other parties, **to be accessible to the public**. The disclosures should include the **amount, purpose of expenditure, and the party paid**.
- The UCPMP should be **legally binding on the companies**. Currently, the codes neither have the power nor the incentive to punish companies
 - It falls upon pharma associations to enforce the voluntary code.

[Source: BS](#)

Asiatic Caracal

Why in News?

Caracal, which was used by **India's nobility in the sport of coursing like the [cheetah](#)**, is struggling to survive, although both species had a similar distribution in the past.



What are the Key Points of Caracal?

- **Scientific Name:** *Caracal Caracal Schmitzi*
- **About:**
 - The Asiatic caracal is a medium-sized and locally threatened cat species, which has been widely reported to be on the **brink of extinction in India**.
 - It is also known by its persian name Siyahgosh or 'black ears'.
- **Distribution:**
 - They are found mostly in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh and are located in **Kutch, the Malwa Plateau, the Aravalli hill range**.
 - Besides India, the caracal is found in several dozen countries across **Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia**.
- **Habitats:**
 - It occurs in semi-deserts, steppes, savannah, scrubland, dry forest and moist woodland or evergreen forest.
 - It prefers open terrain and drier, scrubby, arid habitats and needs cover.
- **Threats:**
 - Large-scale hunting, illegal trading and **loss of natural habitats** are considered significant threats to the species.
- **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I
 - **CITES:** Appendix I
- **Conservation Initiatives:**
 - In 2021, the **National Board for Wildlife** and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change included Caracal in the list of Critically Endangered species under critically endangered species recovery programme.

What is a Species Recovery Programme?

- It is one of the three components of the **Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH)**.
- IDWH was started in 2008-09 as a Centrally sponsored Scheme. It is meant for providing support to protected areas (national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation reserves and community reserves except tiger reserves), protection of wildlife outside protected areas and recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats.
- There are **22 species** on the **critically endangered species recovery programme**.
 - Snow Leopard, Bustard (including Floricans), Dolphin, Hangul, Nilgiri Tahr, Marine Turtles, Dugongs, Edible Nest Swiftlet, Asian Wild Buffalo, Nicobar Megapode, Manipur Brow-antlered Deer, Vultures, Malabar Civet, Indian Rhinoceros, Asiatic Lion, Swamp Deer, Jerdon's Courser, the Northern River Terrapin, Clouded Leopard, Arabian Sea Humpback Whale, Red Panda and Caracal.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following: (2012)

1. Black-necked crane
2. Cheetah
3. Flying squirrel
4. Snow leopard

Which of the above are naturally found in India?

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only

- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
(c) 2 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- **Black-necked crane** is commonly found in **Tibetan and trans-Himalayan region**. In winters they migrate to less colder regions of Indian Himalayas. It has been evaluated as Near Threatened in IUCN list. **Hence, 1 is correct.**
- **Cheetah is an extinct species in India**. They have gone extinct during the pre-independence era mainly due to hunting. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the species was already heading for extinction in many areas. The last physical evidence of the Asiatic cheetah in India was in 1947, in Eastern Madhya Pradesh or Northern Chhattisgarh. It has been evaluated as vulnerable in IUCN list. **Hence, 2 is not correct.**
- **Flying Squirrels** are found in **Western Ghats, Northeast** and other Indian forests. It has been evaluated as least concern in IUCN list. **Hence, 3 is correct.**
- **Snow leopard**, listed as vulnerable in IUCN list, is found in the **Himalayan ranges**. **Hence, 4 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Source: DTE

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