Project Tiger

Source: TH

Why in News?

Over time, the tiger conservation initiative has evolved, establishing Tiger Reserves (55) and implementing crucial wildlife protection laws.

- However, conflicts in Tiger Reserves between the forest bureaucracy and forest dwellers have intensified due to violations of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, and the **Forest Rights Act, 2006.**
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** announced the merger of the two flagship programmes **Project Tiger (PT)** and **Project Elephant** as **Project Tiger and Elephant (PTE).**

What are the Shortcomings in Tiger Conservation?

- The **Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2006** didn't prohibit the diversion of a **"tiger's forest"** for development projects and allowed wildlife to be killed as a last resort if they threatened human lives.
- The government planned to notify the FRA Rules in 2009 and operationalise the Act.
  - But in November 2007, the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** passed an order that gave the Chief Wildlife Wardens 13 days' time to submit a proposal to delineate Critical Tiger Habitats (CTHs), each with an area of 800-1,000 sq. km.
  - As a result, the government ended up notifying 26 Tiger Reserves in 12 States Section 38 (V) of WLPA, and without complying with its provisions.
- Tiger Reserves in **Similipal, Odisha**, the **Critical Tiger Habitats (CTHs)** lacked a **Buffer Area.**
  - It was only in **2012** that they were included following a directive from the Supreme Court, which gave the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** a three-month ultimatum.
- The **Tiger Task Force** found the approach of using guns, guards, and fences wasn't protecting tigers, and that the increasing conflict between the **forest/wildlife bureaucracy** and those who coexist with the **tigers** was a recipe for disaster.

What are Initiatives Taken for Tiger Conservation?

Project Tiger:

- **About:**
  - **Project Tiger** is a **wildlife conservation initiative** in India that was launched in 1973.
  - The primary objective of Project Tiger is to ensure the survival and maintenance of the tiger population in their natural habitats by creating dedicated **Tiger Reserves.**
  - Starting with only **nine reserves** covering **9,115 sq. km,** the project marked a paradigm shift in wildlife conservation efforts.
- **Method of Tiger Census:**
  - The unreliable **pug-mark method** of the **first** tiger census in **1972** gave way to more accurate techniques like the **camera-trap method.**
- **Growth Rate in Tiger Population:**
  - The first tiger census, in **1972,** used the unreliable pug-mark method to count **1,827** tigers.
  - As of **2022**, the tiger population is estimated at **3,167-3,925**, showcasing a growth rate of **6.1%** per year.
  - India is now home to **three-quarter**s of the **world's tigers.**
- **Tiger Reserve:**
  - In 1973, **Project Tiger** began with **nine reserves** covering **9,115 sq. km.** By **2018,** it had grown to **55 reserves** in different states, totalling **78,135.956 sq. km** or **2.38%** of India's land area.

Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972:

- The **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** provides a legal framework for the protection of various species of wild animals and plants, management of their habitats, regulation, and control of trade in wild animals, plants, and products made from them.
- The **Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLPA), 1972** laid the groundwork for tiger conservation. It established **National Parks** and **Wildlife Sanctuaries**, segregating rights in favour of State governments and introducing the concept of **Critical Tiger Habitats (CTH).**
- The amendment to **WLPA** in **2006** led to the creation of the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** and a comprehensive tiger conservation plan.
- This marked a departure from the **earlier fortress conservation approach,** acknowledging the **inseparable link between tiger protection, forest conservation, and the well-being of local communities.**

Tiger Task Force:

- In 2005, the formation of the **Tiger Task Force**, prompted by concerns about tiger conservation, emphasized the necessity for a reassessment. The task force pointed out flaws in the existing strategy that heavily depended on **weapons, guards**, and **fences.**

//

T I G E R

Royal Bengal Tiger (Panthera Tigris) is the National animal of India.

Subspecies of Tiger

✻ The continental *(Panthera tigris tigris)*
✻ The Sunda *(Panthera tigris sondaica)*

Habitat

Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas

Countries Where Tiger Population Is Found

▣ Found only in **13 Tiger Range countries-** India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam
   ◆ As per the latest report by IUCN, tiger has gone extinct in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

Protection Status

▣ **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
▣ **CITES:** Appendix I

Threats

▣ Habitat loss
▣ Poaching and illegal trade
▣ Human-Wildlife conflict

What is the Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006?

- The enactment of the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** recognized the customary and traditional forest rights in communities.
- This empowered **Gram Sabhas** to democratically manage forest resources and biodiversity within their boundaries.
- **Critical Wildlife Habitat (CWH):**
  - The **Forest Rights Act (FRA)** introduced a **'Critical Wildlife Habitat' (CWH),** similar to the **Critical Tiger Habitat (CTH)** under the **Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA).**
    - However, a key difference was that **once a CWH was notified, it couldn't be redirected for non-forestry purposes**. This particular clause was insisted upon by Adivasi movements during negotiations.
  - **Critical Tiger Habitats (CTH)** cover 42,913.37 sq. km, or 26% of the area under **National Parks** and **Wildlife Sanctuaries.**
- The **Gram Sabhas** were given the authority to **safeguard, preserve**, and **oversee** the **forest, wildlife**, and **biodiversity** within their customary boundaries.

Conclusion

The journey from Project Tiger in 1973 to creation of the NTCA by 2006 amendments reflects India's commitment to tiger conservation and sustainable coexistence. The integration of community empowerment, recognition of forest rights, and a nuanced approach to wildlife protection showcase a holistic paradigm in wildlife conservation.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q1. At the national level, which ministry is the nodal agency to ensure effective implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006? (2021)

(a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

(b) Ministry of Panchayati Raj
(c) Ministry of Rural Development
(d) Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Ans: (d)

Q2. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The definition of "Critical Wildlife Habitat" is incorporated in the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
2. For the first time in India, Baigas have been given Habitat Rights.
3. Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change officially decides and declares Habitat Rights for Primitive and Vulnerable Tribal Groups in any part of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (a)

Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana

For Prelims: Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana, Centrally Sponsored Scheme, **Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana**, Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana, **Scheduled Caste (SC)**

For Mains: Schemes for welfare for STs, Safeguards for STs, Government Initiatives

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** highlighted the **Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana (PM-AJAY)** is a comprehensive scheme amalgamating three **Centrally Sponsored Schemes,** including **Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)**, Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP), and Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY).

- This initiative, launched in the **fiscal year 2021-22,** aims to **uplift** Scheduled Caste (SC) communities by generating employment opportunities through **skill development**, income-generating schemes, and various initiatives.

What are the Key Highlights of the PM-AJAY?

- **Objectives:**
  - Reduce poverty in the SC communities by the **generation of additional employment opportunities** through skill development, income-generating schemes and other initiatives.

- To **increase** literacy **and encourage enrolment of SCs** in schools and higher educational institutions by providing adequate residential facilities in quality institutions, in the aspirational districts/SC majority blocks and elsewhere in India.
- **Components of PM-AJAY:**
  - **Development of SC-Dominated Villages into an "AdarshGram":** This component was formerly known as **Pradhan Mantri AdarshGram Yojana (PMAGY)** and the objective of this component is to ensure integrated development of SC-majority villages.
    - Provide **adequate infrastructure** for socio-economic development needs.
    - Target improvement in identified socio-economic indicators (Monitorable indicators).
      - The **monitorable indicators** are distributed across 10 domains. These domains encompass crucial aspects such as **Drinking water and Sanitation**, Education, Health and Nutrition, Social Security, Rural Roads and Housing, Electricity and Clean fuel, Agricultural Practices, Financial Inclusion, **Digitization**, and Livelihood and Skill Development.
    - **Eliminate disparity** between SC and non-SC population.
    - Ensure completion of education up to at least the secondary level for all SC children.
    - Address factors leading to **maternal and infant mortality.**
    - Eliminate the incidence of **malnutrition**, especially among children and women.
    - **Achievements:**
      - Under the Adarsh Gram Component, a total of **1834 villages have been Declared as Adarsh Gram** during the current FY2023-24.
  - **'Grants-in-aid' for District/State-level Projects:**
    - This component was formerly known as **Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Caste Sub Plan.**
    - The scheme aims at the socio-economic development of SCs through grants for the following types of projects:
    - **Comprehensive Livelihood Projects:** Such projects which create an **entire eco-system for producing sustainable income,** or social advancement to the SCs only shall be taken up. The projects should preferably be a combination of two or more of the following:
      - **Skill Development**: Skilling courses as per norms of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.** Related facilities and infrastructure for conducting Skill Development Activities conducted by the Government. Skill Development Institutions can also be funded.
      - **Grants for Creation/Acquisition of Assets for Beneficiaries/Households:** No standalone individual asset distribution is allowed under the scheme. **If the project involves acquiring or creating assets crucial for livelihoods,** beneficiaries can receive financial assistance for loans, up to Rs. 50,000 or 50% of the asset cost, whichever is less, per beneficiary/household.
      - **Infrastructure development:** Development of infrastructure related to the project and also **Hostels and residential schools.**
    - **Special Provisions:**
      - Upto 15% of the total Grants exclusively on viable income-generating economic development schemes/programmes for SC Women.
      - Upto 30% of the total Grants utilized for infrastructure development
      - Atleast 10% of the total funds for skill development
      - **Promote SC Women Cooperatives** engaged in the production and marketing of consumer goods and services.
    - **Achievements:**
      - During the FY 2023-24, the perspective plan for 17 states has been approved under the Grant-in-aid component.
  - **Construction of Hostels in Higher Educational Institutions:**
    - It enables and encourages SC students to attain quality education and **reduce dropout rate,** Implemented through the State Governments, UT Administrations and central and State Universities/Institutions
      - The cost norms for construction/expansion of hostels will be as under:

- **North Eastern Region:** Rs.3.50 lakh per inmate.
- **Northern Himalayan Regions:** Rs.3.25 lakh per inmate.
- **Gangetic Plains & Lower Himalayan Region:** Rs3.00 lakh per inmate.
  - 100% Central assistance for hostels for boys 'hostels as well– earlier it was cost sharing with the State.
  - **Achievements:**
    - During the FY 2023-24, a total of 15 new hostels have been sanctioned.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q. In 2001, RGI stated that Dalits who converted to Islam or Christianity are not a single ethnic group as they belong to different caste groups. Therefore, they cannot be included in the list of Scheduled Castes (SC) as per Clause (2) of Article 341, which requires a single ethnic group for inclusion. **(2014)**

Q. Whether the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine. **(2018)**

Global Risks Report 2024: WEF

For Prelims: World Economic Forum (WEF), Extreme Weather Conditions, Generative AI, Climate change.

For Mains: Global Risks Report 2024: WEF, Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Source: TH

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** has released the **Global Risk Report** 2024, highlighting some of the most severe risks we may face over the next decade, against a backdrop of rapid technological change, economic uncertainty, a warming planet and conflict.

- The report is based on a survey of nearly 1,500 experts, industry leaders and policymakers.

FIGURE C | Global risks ranked by severity over the short and long term

"Please estimate the likely impact (severity) of the following risks over a 2-year and 10-year period."

Risk categories	2 years	10 years
Economic	1st Misinformation and disinformation	1st Extreme weather events
Environmental	2nd Extreme weather events	2nd Critical change to Earth systems
Geopolitical	3rd Societal polarization	3rd Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
Societal	4th Cyber insecurity	4th Natural resource shortages
Technological	5th Interstate armed conflict	5th Misinformation and disinformation
	6th Lack of economic opportunity	6th Adverse outcomes of AI technologies
	7th Inflation	7th Involuntary migration
	8th Involuntary migration	8th Cyber insecurity
	9th Economic downturn	9th Societal polarization
	10th Pollution	10th Pollution

What are the Key Highlights of the Global Risk Report 2024?

- **Deteriorating Global Outlook:**
  - Various global events in 2023, including lethal conflicts, **Extreme Weather Conditions,** and societal discontent, have **contributed to a predominantly negative outlook.**
- **AI Powered Misinformation and Disinformation**:
  - Misinformation and disinformation are listed as the **most severe risks** over the next two years, highlighting **how rapid advances in technology also are creating new problems** or making existing ones worse.
  - It is concerning that the boom in **Generative AI** chatbots like **ChatGPT** means that creating sophisticated synthetic content that can be used to manipulate groups of people won't be limited any longer to those with specialized skills.
  - AI-powered misinformation and disinformation is emerging as a **risk just as billions of people in a slew of countries**, including large economies like the United States, Britain, Indonesia, India, Mexico, and Pakistan, are set to head to the polls in 2024 and next.
- **Structural Forces Shaping Global Risks:**
  - There are four structural forces shaping global risks over the next decade: **Climate change,** Demographic Bifurcation, Technological Acceleration, and Geostrategic shifts.
  - These forces represent **longer-term shifts in the global landscape**, and their interactions will contribute to uncertainty and volatility.
- **Environmental Risks at the Forefront:**
  - Environmental risks, particularly extreme weather, dominate the risk landscape over all time frames.
  - Concerns about climate change, biodiversity loss, and critical changes to Earth **systems are evident, with potential irreversible consequences.**
- **Economic Strains and Inequality:**
  - The cost-of-living crisis and economic risks such as **Inflation** and economic downturn are **significant concerns for 2024.**
  - Economic uncertainty will **disproportionately affect low- and middle-income countries,** leading to potential digital isolation and worsening societal and environmental impacts.
- **Security Risks and Technological Advances:**
  - Interstate armed conflict is identified as a new entrant into the top risk rankings over the next two years.
  - Technological advances, especially in artificial intelligence, pose security risks as they enable non-state actors to access disruptive tools, potentially leading to increased conflict and crime.
- **Geopolitical Shifts and Governance Challenges:**
  - A deeper divide between global powers, especially between the **Global North and South**, may lead to **challenges in international governance.**
  - The growing **influence of states in the** Global South, combined with geopolitical tensions, could reshape security dynamics and impact global risks.

What are the Recommendations?

- Localized strategies leveraging investment and regulation can **reduce the impact of those inevitable risks** that we can prepare for, and both the public and private sector **can play a key role to extend these benefits** to all.
- Single breakthrough endeavors, grown through efforts to prioritize the future and focus on research and development, can **similarly help make the world a safer place.**
- The **collective actions of individual citizens,** companies and countries may seem insignificant on their own, but **at critical mass they can move the needle on global risk reduction.**
- Even in a world that is increasingly fragmented, cross-border collaboration at scale remains critical for risks that are decisive for human security and prosperity.

What is Global Risk?

- Global risk is **defined as the possibility of the occurrence of an event** or condition which, if it occurs, would negatively impact a significant proportion of global gross domestic product, population or natural resources.
- The Global Risks Report is an **annual study published by the World Economic** Forum ahead of the Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

What is the World Economic Forum?

- **About:**
  - The WEF is a Swiss nonprofit foundation established in 1971, based in Geneva, Switzerland.
  - Recognized by the Swiss authorities as the international institution for public-private cooperation.
- **Mission:**
  - Committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas.
- **Founder and Executive Chairman:** Klaus Schwab.
- Some **major reports published by WEF are:**
  - **Energy Transition Index.**
  - **Global Competitiveness Report.**
  - **Global IT Report**
    - **WEF along with INSEAD, and Cornell University publishes this report.**
  - **Global Gender Gap Report.**
  - Global Travel and Tourism Report.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q1. Which of the following gives 'Global Gender Gap Index' ranking to the countries of the world? (2017)

(a) World Economic Forum
(b) UN Human Rights Council
(c) UN Women
(d) World Health Organization

Ans: (a)

Q2. Who among the following is the founder of World Economic Forum? (2009)

(a) Klaus Schwab
(b) John Kenneth Galbraith

(c) Hobert Zoellick
(d) Paul Krugman

Ans (a)

Q3. The Global Competitiveness Report is published by the (2019)

(a) International Monetary Fund
(b) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
(c) World Economic Forum
(d) World Bank

Ans: (c)

Selection of Tableaux on the Republic Day

For Prelims: Republic Day Parade, Selection of Tableaux on the Republic Day, Ministry of Defence, Viksit Bharat, Bharat-Loktantra ki Matruka, **Constitution Day**.

For Mains: Selection of Tableaux on the Republic Day, Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Source: TH

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Defence has proposed a rollover plan for the States and Union Territories (UTs) to showcase their tableaux in the **Republic Day Parade.**

- It comes after a few states' governments have criticized the central government for not allowing it to be a part of the 2024 Republic Day Parade Tableaux.

Which States/Union Territories have been Selected for the Republic Day Parade?

- **16 States and UTs have been** selected for the 2024 Republic Day Parade, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.
- The MoD has included a provision for **States and Union Territories that are not selected** for the Republic Day parade to **showcase their tableaux at the** Bharat Parv.
  - The Government of India organizes the **six-day mega event "Bharat Parv"** from **January 26-31,** as part of the Republic Day celebrations. This alternative event takes place at the historic **Red Fort**.
- The Government has finalized a **rotational plan to ensure that every State and Union Territory gets an opportunity** to present their tableaux at the Republic Day parade within **a three-year cycle (2024-2026).**
  - The rotational system, agreed upon by 28 States, intends to provide fair **opportunities to all regions,** mitigating accusations of political bias and **fostering a more inclusive celebration.**

What is the Selection Process of Tableaux?

- **Ministry Responsible for Conducting Parade:**
  - The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is responsible for **conducting the parade and coordinating arrangements** with States and other agencies.
  - Preparations for the ceremony, which has become synonymous with national pride and patriotism, **begin months in advance**. This process includes the **selection and shortlisting** of tableaux.
  - The Ministry of Culture **collaborates with the MoD** in the selection process, given the **cultural and artistic nature of the tableaux**, supporting in the evaluation and promotion of cultural displays.
- **Selection and Shortlisting:**
  - There is a standard procedure for selecting parade participants. Every year, months ahead of the event, the MoD invites **States, UTs and departments to submit sketches or designs** for tableaux on a broad theme.
    - For instance, the **theme of 2024 is 'Viksit Bharat'** (Developed India) and **'Bharat-Loktantra ki Matruka'** (India-Mother of Democracy).
  - The sketch or design must be **simple, colourful, easy to comprehend and avoid statistical data** and unnecessary details.
  - Additionally, the Ministry shares basic guidelines that must be included in the proposal like the use of eco-friendly material and technology.
  - Writing or use of logos on the tableaux is **not allowed except for the name of State/UT presenting**, which can be in Hindi in the front, English at the back and in the regional language on the sides of the tableau.
- **Committee of Experts:**
  - The MoD constitutes a **committee of experts** from the fields of **arts, culture, painting, sculpture, music, architecture, and choreography,** among others, to screen proposals.
    - The expert committee, consisting of renowned artists recommended by **IGNCA (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts)** and **ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations),** selected the tableaux of 16 States and UTs for the year 2024 parade after **four rounds of meetings.**
  - **In the first phase**, the panel carries out a basic evaluation and suggests modifications in the sketch or design.
  - Once the designs are approved post any modifications, participants present a **three-dimensional model of the proposed tableau** to the panel.
  - These are **examined by experts for final selection.** Only shortlisted candidates are informed about the next round.

What is Republic Day?

- India became Independent **on 15th August, 1947** which is celebrated as Independence Day.
- Republic Day is celebrated as the **day when India acquired a written Constitution** and became an independent republic.
  - The term **'Republic' indicates that India has an elected head called the President.**
- The Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November 1949 and came into effect on 26th January 1950.
  - **26th November is observed as** Constitution Day.
- 26th January was **chosen to be observed as the Republic Day** because it was on this day in 1930 when the Indian National Congress (INC) declared **Purna Swaraj or Indian independence from the British regime.**
  - During INC's Lahore session of December 1929, Purna Swaraj resolution was passed. The **session was presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. What was the exact constitutional status of India on 26th January 1950? (2021)

(a) A Democratic Republic
(b) A Sovereign Democratic Republic
(c) A Sovereign Secular Democratic Republic
(d) A Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. Discuss each adjective attached to the word 'Republic' in the 'Preamble'. Are they defendable in the present circumstances? **(2013)**

World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024

For Prelims: International Labour Organisation's (ILO), Unemployment, Labor Market, G20 countries, Informal Work.

For Mains: World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024.

Source: TH

Why in News?

Recently, the **International Labour Organisation's (ILO)** has released the ***World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024*** report, which highlighted that Global **Unemployment** rate is set to increase in 2024 and growing inequalities and stagnant productivity are causes for concern.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Resilience Amid Deteriorating Economic Conditions:**
    - Despite deteriorating economic conditions, global labor markets have shown surprising resilience, with **improvements in both the unemployment rate and the jobs gap rate** (the number of persons without employment who are interested in finding a job).
- **Global Unemployment Trends:**
    - The global unemployment rate stood at 5.1% in 2023, a modest improvement from 2022.
    - However, the **report projects a worsening** Labor Market **outlook,** with an additional two million workers expected to be looking for jobs in 2024, raising the global unemployment rate to 5.2%.
- **Uneven Recovery:**
    - The recovery from the pandemic is uneven, **with new vulnerabilities and multiple crises** eroding prospects for greater social justice.
    - Differences **persist between higher and lower income countries,** both in terms of unemployment rates and jobs gap rates.
    - While the jobs gap rate in 2023 was 8.2% in high-income countries, it stood at 20.5% in the low-income group.
    - Similarly, while the 2023 unemployment rate persisted at 4.5% in high-income countries, it was 5.7% in low-income countries.
- **Income Inequality Widening:**
    - Income inequality has widened, and **Disposable Incomes have declined in the**

- **majority of** G20 countries**.**
  - **Disposable income** is net income. It's the **amount left over after taxes.**
  - The erosion of **real disposable income is seen as a negative factor** for aggregate demand and a more sustained economic recovery.
- **Working Poverty Persists:**
  - Despite quickly declining after 2020, the number of workers living in extreme poverty (earning less than **USD 2.15 per person per day in purchasing power parity terms**) grew by about 1 million in 2023.
  - The number of workers living in moderate poverty (earning less than USD3.65 per day per person in PPP terms) increased by 8.4 million in 2023.
  - Working poverty is **likely to persist as a challenge.**
- **Informal Work Rates Remain High:**
  - Rates of **Informal Work** are expected to remain static, accounting for around 58% of the global workforce in 2024.
- **Labor Market Imbalances:**
  - The return to pre-pandemic labor market participation rates has varied between different groups.
  - Women's participation has **bounced back quickly**, but a gender gap still persists, especially in emerging and developing nations.
  - Youth unemployment rates and the **NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training)** category remain high, posing challenges for long-term employment prospects.
- **Productivity Growth Slowed:**
  - After a brief post-pandemic boost, labor productivity has returned to the low **levels seen in the previous decade.**
  - Productivity growth has continued to slow despite technological advances and increased investment, with **barriers including skills shortages and the dominance of large digital monopolies.**
- **Outlook Uncertain and Structural Concerns:**
  - The imbalances observed **are not simply part of pandemic recovery** but may be structural. Workforce challenges pose a **threat to both individual livelihoods and businesses.**
  - Falling living standards, weak productivity, persistent inflation, and greater inequality **undermine efforts to achieve** Social Justice and sustainable recovery. The report emphasizes the need to address these challenges effectively and quickly.
- **Positive Real Wages:**
  - Real wages in **India and Turkey** are "positive" compared to other **G20 countries,** but the **available data refer to 2022 relative to 2021.** This implies that, despite global challenges, **wage increases in India have managed to outpace inflation,** contributing to an improvement in real wages.
  - The other G20 countries saw real wages fall; the declines were **particularly pronounced in Brazil (6.9%)**, Italy (5%) and Indonesia (3.5%).

What is the International Labour Organisation?

- **About:**
  - It was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice.
    - It became a specialized agency of the United Nations **in 1946.**
  - It is a tripartite organization, the only one of its kind bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in its executive bodies.
- **Members:**
  - India is a founding member of the ILO with a total 187 member States.
  - In 2020 **India assumed the Chairmanship** of the Governing Body of ILO.
- **Headquarter:**
  - Geneva in Switzerland.
- **Awards:**
  - In 1969, ILO received the **Nobel Peace Prize** for improving fraternity and peace among nations, pursuing decent work and justice for workers, and providing technical assistance

to other developing nations.

Vaccine Drive to Fight Cervical Cancer

Source: IE

Why In News?

The Indian Government intends to initiate a **three-phase vaccination drive against human papillomavirus (HPV)** for girls **aged 9-14,** aiming to mitigate the **risk of cervical cancer.**

- The vaccine also offers protection against the **HPV strains** that cause cancer of the **anus, vagina** and **oropharynx.** Additionally, it also protects against the **HPV strains** that are responsible for **genital warts.**

Note

The Serum Institute of India in 2023 launched an indigenous HPV vaccine known as **CERVAVAC.**

What is Cervical Cancer?

- **About:**
    - Cervical cancer develops in a **woman's cervix**. It is the **4th** most common type of cancer among women, globally and **2nd most common** among women in India.
        - India contributes the largest share of the **global cervical cancer** burden; nearly **1 in every 4 deaths** globally due to **cervical cancer** (as per The Lancet study).
    - Almost all cervical cancer cases **(99%)** are linked to infection with **high-risk** Human Papillomavirus (HPV) , an extremely common virus transmitted through sexual contact.
        - Effective primary (HPV vaccination) and secondary prevention approaches (screening for and treating precancerous lesions) will prevent most cervical cancer cases.
    - When diagnosed, cervical cancer is **one of the most successfully treatable** forms of cancer, as long as it is detected early and managed effectively.
    - India accounts for about a **fifth** of the global burden for **cervical cancer,** recording about

1.25 lakh cases and about **75,000 deaths** each year.
- **Types of Strain**:
  - Persistent infections with certain **high-risk** HPV strains lead to nearly **85%** of all cervical cancers.
  - At least **14 HPV types** have been identified as **oncogenic** (potential to cause cancer).
    - Among these, **HPV types 16** and **18**, considered to be the most **oncogenic**, have been found to be responsible for about **70%** of all cervical cancer cases globally.

Natural Pathogenic Fungi to Save Eucalyptus Forests

Source: DTE

Why in News?

Recently, scientists have found a natural remedy to protect **eucalyptus** forest plantations from a pest, **eucalyptus snout beetle,** which is known to cause serious damage to eucalypts.

- The researchers have managed to collect a naturally occurring **pathogenic fungi** and characterized it to turn it into a **biopesticide** for controlling beetle populations.
- **Eucalyptus (evergreen tree)** wood is a crucial material for **paper pulp production.**

What is Eucalyptus Snout Beetle?

- **Eucalyptus snout beetle** (*Gonipterus platensis*) is a **leaf-feeding beetle** that is a major defoliator of eucalypts, according to the **Food and Agriculture Organization** of the **United Nations.**
  - The pest is indigenous to **Australia** but occurs in many countries throughout the world where eucalypts are grown.
- It can cause damage over vast areas as it has a great flight capability and gets transferred with transport of forest products.

- The beetle feeds on **leaves, buds** and **shoots**, resulting in stunted growth and deflation and causing heavy losses.

How can Fungi Control the Eucalyptus Snout Beetle?

- In the recent research, the scientists collected the **fungi** from **naturally infected beetles in eucalyptus forest plantations** and characterized them to develop a **bio-pesticide** for controlling the beetle.
- The **fungi** belong to the genera **Beauveria** and **Metarhizium,** which are known to infect and kill insects.
  - **Beauveria pseudobassiana** and **Metarhizium brunneum** were the most virulent fungi.
  - **B bassiana** was highly effective both by contact and ingestion, with a mortality rate of 100%.
- The fungi could be used to develop a **bio-pesticide** for sustainable forestry using integrated pest management.
- The fungi is developed by treating insecticidal activity, **UV-B radiation** **tolerance** among other parameters to ensure that recovered **fungi** are suitable to produce **bio-insecticide** and **mass production** and **commercialisation.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following organisms: (2013)

1. Agaricus
2. Nostoc
3. Spirogyra

Which of the above is/are used as biofertilizer/biofertilizers?

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

Ans: (b)

- Biofertilizers are products containing carrier based (solid or liquid) living microorganisms which are

agriculturally useful in terms of nitrogen fixation, phosphorus solubilisation or nutrient mobilization to increase the productivity of soil or crop.

- Classification of biofertilizers based on microorganism:
  - Bacterial Biofertilizers: Rhizobium, Azospirilium, Azotobacter, Phosphobacteria, Nostoc, etc. Hence, 2 is correct.
  - Fungal Biofertilizers: Mycorrhiza
  - Algal Biofertilizers: Blue Green Algae (BGA) and Azolla.
  - Actinomycetes Biofertilizer: Frankia.
- Agaricus is an edible fungus and is commonly known as mushroom. It is a saprophytic fungus found growing on soil humus, decaying litter on forest floors, in the fields, lawns, wood logs and manure piles. Hence, 1 is not correct.
- Spirogyra is a large genus of freshwater green algae found in shallow ponds, ditches and amongst vegetation at the edges of large lakes, generally growing free-floating. It is valued for human consumption, and is known as an important source of natural bio-active compounds for antibiotic, antiviral, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and cytotoxic purposes. Hence, 3 is not correct.
- Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

Q. Lichens, which are capable of initiating ecological succession even on a bare rock, are actually a symbiotic association of (2014)

(a) algae and bacteria
(b) algae and fungi
(c) bacteria and fungi
(d) fungi and mosses

Ans: (b)

- Lichen is not a single organism. Rather, it is a symbiosis between different organisms – a fungus and an alga or cyanobacterium. Cyanobacteria are sometimes referred to as 'blue-green algae', though they are quite distinct from the algae.
- Lichens are amongst the first organisms to colonize the barren surfaces (e.g., road cuttings, rock outcrops and volcanic ash) and prepare these areas for later plants by trapping moisture and windblown organic debris and then contributing to the organic deposits when they themselves die and decay.

Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

Indian Army Eyes Upgraded 'Pup Tents' for Icy Heights Along LAC

Army Plans insulated **'Pup Tents'** for Troops on **Icy** Line of Actual Control (LAC) **Heights** at **-50°C.**

- The pup tents are meant for soldiers deployed in extreme cold weather conditions, such as in **eastern** Ladakh**,** Sikkim and **Siachen glacier.**
- The **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** is the **border** that divides the **territories of India** and **Aksai Chin(China occupied Indian Territory).**
  - It is divided into **three sectors:** the **eastern sector** which spans **Arunachal Pradesh** and Sikkim **(1346 km)**, the **middle sector** in **Uttarakhand** and Himachal Pradesh **(545 km)**, and the **western sector** in **Ladakh (1597 km).**

Read More: [India-China Conflict](#)

Gangireddu Melam

Gangireddu Melam, a traditional folk performance associated with the [Sankranti](#) **harvest** festival in **Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.**

- The **bulls**, adorned with colorful flowers and garments is the **central motif of the dance.** The performance also incorporates elements of local folklore and storytelling, showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage.
- The harvest festival of 'Sankranti' is celebrated in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for three days as **Bhogi, Sankranti, and Kanuma.**
  - **Sankranti** marks the f**irst day of the sun's transit into the Makara,** marking the **end of the** [winter solstice](#) and the start of longer days.
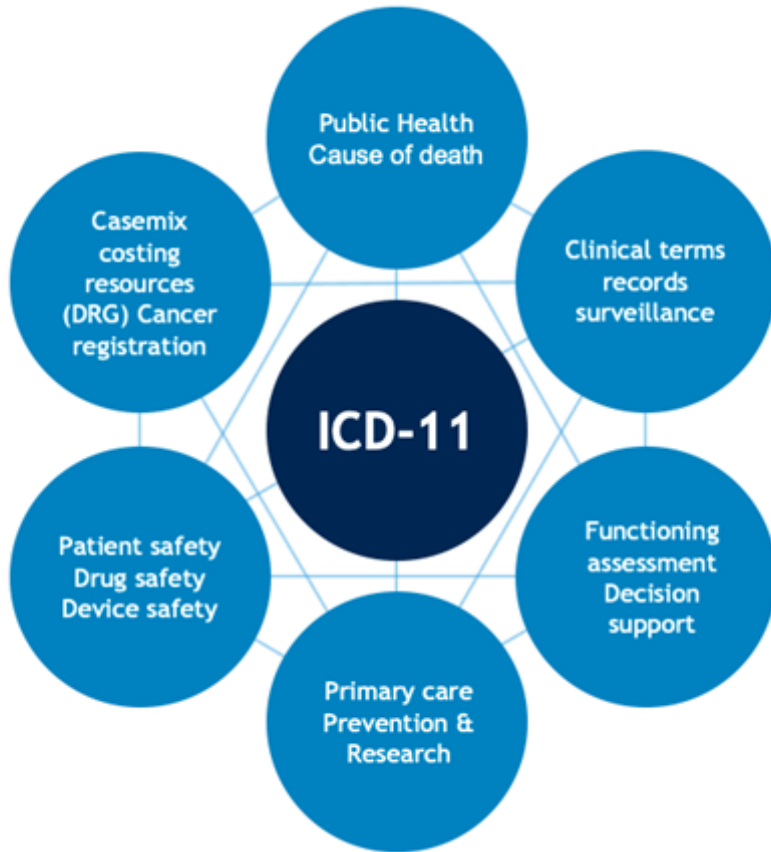 - Sankranti is celebrated in various parts of the country with different names:

Read more: Winter Solstice, Sankranti

ICD 11 TM Module 2 Launch: Global Integration of Ayush Medicine

The **World Health Organisation(WHO)** has officially unveiled the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) **11**, Traditional Medicine Module 2, marking the commencement of its implementation phase.

- This module incorporates data and terminology from Ayurveda**, Siddha, and Unani Medicine into the WHO ICD-11 classification**, indexing the terminology as codes.
  - The Ministry of AYUSH, in collaboration with the WHO, has classified diseases from **Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani systems under the TM-2 module.**
- WHO stated that including traditional medical terminologies in ICD-11 establishes a vital link between traditional medicine **and global standards.**

Read more: [International Classification of Diseases](#), [Global Center for Traditional Medicine](#)

Indian of the Year Award 2023

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Science & Technology presented th**e "Indian of the Year Award" for 2023 to Team** [Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)](#) in the category of 'Outstanding Achievement.'

- The award recognized ISRO's contribution to space exploration, particularly highlighting the historic soft landing of [Chandrayaan-3](#) **on the Moon's uncharted South Polar region.**
- The remarkable growth of the private space sector was also highlighted in the event, with **190 startups** and over Rs. 1,000 crore invested in the current financial year 2023-24.

Read more: [India's Space Endeavors](#)