Khalistan Issue

Why in News?

Amritpal Singh, a follower of the Sikh militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale who has been preaching the Idea of Khalistan Separatist Movement in Punjab for a few months, has managed to escape.

What is the Khalistan Movement?

- The Khalistan movement is a fight for a separate, sovereign **Sikh state in present day Punjab (both India and Pakistan).**
- The movement was crushed in India following **Operation Blue Star (1984)** and **Operation Black Thunder (1986 and 1988)**, but it continues to evoke sympathy and support among sections of the Sikh population, especially in the Sikh diaspora in countries such as Canada, the UK, and Australia.

What is the Timeline of the Khalistan Movement?

- **India's Independence and Partition:**
  - The origins of the movement have been traced back to **India's independence** and subsequent Partition **along religious lines.**
  - The Punjab province, which was divided between **India and Pakistan, saw some of the worst communal violence and generated millions of refugees.**
  - Lahore, the capital of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh's** great Sikh Empire, went to Pakistan, as did holy Sikh sites including **Nankana Sahib,** the **birthplace of Guru Nanak, the founder of** Sikhism.
- **Demand for Autonomous Punjabi Suba:**
  - The political struggle for greater autonomy began around the time of Independence, with the **Punjabi Suba Movement** for the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state.
  - In 1966, after years of protest, **Punjab was reorganized to reflect the Punjabi Suba demand.**
  - The erstwhile Punjab state was trifurcated into the Hindi-speaking, Hindu-majority states of Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, and the **Punjabi-speaking, Sikh-majority Punjab.**
- **Anandpur Sahib Resolution:**
  - In 1973, Akali Dal, the major force in the new Sikh-majority Punjab, released a list of demands that would guide the political path among other things, the **Anandpur Sahib Resolution demanded autonomy** for the state of Punjab, identified **regions that would be part of a separate state**, and sought the right to frame its own internal constitution.
  - While the Akalis themselves repeatedly made it clear that they were not demanding secession from India, for the Indian state, the **Anandpur Sahib Resolution** was of grave concern.

- **Bhindranwala:**
  - Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a charismatic preacher, soon positioned himself as **"the authentic voice of the Sikhs**, in contrast to the Akali Dal's leadership.
  - It is believed that Bhindranwale was propped up by Sanjay Gandhi to stand against the **Akalis for Congress's political benefit.** However, by the 1980s, Bhindranwale had grown so much that he **started to become a problem for the government.**
- **Dharam Yudh Morcha:**
  - In 1982, Bhindranwale, with support from the Akali Dal's leadership, launched a civil disobedience movement called the **Dharam Yudh Morcha**. He took up **residence inside the Golden Temple,** directing demonstrations and clashes with the police.
  - The movement was geared towards the **demands first articulated in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution**, which addressed concerns of the **state's rural Sikh population**. However, amidst growing religious polarization, sectarian violence, and Bhindranwale's own harsh rhetoric against Hindus, **Indira Gandhi's government declared the movement tantamount to secession.**
- **Operation Bluestar:**
  - Operation Blue Star began on 1st June 1984, but due to fierce resistance from Bhindranwale and his heavily armed supporters, the Army's operation became larger and more violent than had been originally intended, with the use of tanks and air support.
  - **Bhindranwale was killed and the Golden Temple was freed of militants**, however it gravely wounded the Sikh community around the world.
  - It **also galvanised the demand** for Khalistan.
- **Aftermath of Operation Bluestar:**
  - In October 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two Sikh bodyguards, triggering the **worst communal violence since Partition,** where **over 8,000 Sikhs were massacred** in massive anti-Sikh violence.
  - A year later, Sikh nationalists based in Canada blew up an Air India flight killing 329 people. They claimed that the **attack was to "avenge Bhindranwale's killing".**
  - Punjab saw the worst violence, becoming the hub of a long-drawn-out insurgency that lasted till 1995.
  - The bulk of the population turned against the militants, and **India headed towards economic liberalisation.**

What is the Status of the Khalistan movement today?

- Punjab has long been peaceful, but the movement lives among some Sikh communities overseas.
- The diaspora is composed **predominantly of people who don't want to live in India**.
- These people include **many who remember the bad old days of the 1980s,** and thus the support for Khalistan remains stronger there.
- The deep-rooted anger over Operation Blue Star and the desecration of the Golden Temple continues to **resonate with some in the newer generations of Sikhs**. However, even as Bhindranwale is viewed as a martyr by many and the 1980s remembered as dark times, this has not **manifested into tangible political support for the Khalistan cause.**
- There is a small minority that is clinging to the past, and that small minority remains significant not because of popular support, but rather because **they are trying to keep up their political influence with various political partie**s both from the left and the right.

Source: IE

Exclusion of ST Women from Hindu Succession Act

For Prelims: Scheduled Tribe, Hindu Succession Amendment Act, 2005, Article 14 of the Constitution,

Mitakshara school of Hindu law, Inheritance Rights in India.

For Mains: Issues related to Women in India.

Why in News?

A **Member of Parliament** has urged the government to issue a notification that would include **women from the** Scheduled Tribe community in the **inheritance rights** provisions of the **Hindu Succession Amendment Act, 2005.**

- **Section 2(2)** of the Act excludes these women, which results in the **denial of their equal rights** to inherit their father's or **Hindu Undivided Family (HUF)** properties.

What are the Issues Highlighted Around Inheritance Rights?

- The **Hindu Succession Act, 1956**, was amended in 2005 to grant daughters equal rights to **inherit their father's or HUF properties.**
- The **Member of Parliament (MoP)** stated that exclusion of women from the Scheduled Tribe in this act is discriminatory based on gender and is against Article 14 of the Constitution **of India,** which advocates for **equality before the law.**
  - Additionally, MoP argue that **women from Scheduled Tribes are a more disadvantaged group** due to historic oppression and lack of access to education, employment, and property.
- The MoP has urged the Government to issue a notification that would include Scheduled Tribe women in the ambit of the **Hindu Succession Act,** except in **cases where the customs of a particular Scheduled Tribe give women an advantageous position.**

What is Hindu Succession Act, 1956?

- **About:**
  - The **Mitakshara school of Hindu law** codified as the **Hindu Succession Act, 1956** governed **succession and inheritance of property** but only recognised males as legal heirs.
- **Applicability:**
  - It **applies to everyone who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew** by religion.
    - Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains and followers of Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, are also considered Hindus for this law.
  - Traditionally, **only male descendants of a common ancestor** along with their mothers, wives and unmarried daughters are considered a **joint Hindu family.** The legal heirs hold the family property jointly.
- **Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005:**
  - The **1956 Act was amended in September 2005** and **women were recognised as coparceners** for property partitions arising from 2005.
    - **Section 6 of the Act** was amended to make a **daughter of a coparcener** also a **coparcener by birth** "in her own right in the same manner as the son".
  - It also gave the **daughter the same rights and liabilities** "in the coparcenary property as she would have had if she had been a son".
  - The law applies to ancestral property **and to intestate succession** in personal property, where **succession happens as per law and not through a will.**

Source: TH

IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report

Prelims: IPCC, Climate Change, Global Warming, GHG, CCH, Maladaptation

Mains: IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report.

Why in News?

According to the 4th and final installment **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** under the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), there is increased evidence of maladaptation in various sectors and regions.

- The Synthesis Report integrates the main findings of the AR6 cycle based on **contributions from the three Working Groups, and the three Special Reports.**

What are the Key Findings?

- **Unprecedented Global Warming:**
    - Human-induced **global warming** of 1.1 degrees Celsius has spurred changes to the **Earth's climate that are unprecedented** in recent human history.
    - Already, with 1.1 degrees Celsius of global temperature rise, changes to the climate system that are unparalleled over centuries to millennia are now occurring in every region of the world, from rising sea levels to more **extreme weather events** to rapidly disappearing sea ice.
- **More Widespread Climate Impact:**
    - **Climate impacts** on people and ecosystems are more widespread and severe than expected, and future risks will escalate rapidly with every fraction of a degree of warming.
- **Adaptation Measures:**
    - Adaptation measures can effectively build resilience, but **more finance is needed to scale solutions.**
    - Climate policies in at least 170 countries now consider adaptation, but in many nations, these efforts have yet to progress from planning to implementation. Measures to build resilience are still largely small-scale, reactive and incremental, with most focusing on immediate impacts or near-term risks.
    - Current **global financial flows for adaptation are insufficient for,** and constrain implementation of, adaptation options, especially in developing countries.
- **Global Temperature may Surpass 1.5 degrees Celsius:**
    - There is a more than **50% chance that global temperature rise will reach or surpass 1.5 degrees Celsius** between 2021 and 2040 across studied scenarios, and under a high-emissions pathway, specifically, the world may hit this threshold even sooner — between 2018 and 2037.
- **Maladaptation:**
    - India has many such examples of maladaptation, resulting in vulnerable communities becoming more helpless to the impacts of climate change rather than being able to adapt to them.
        - Maladaptation is defined as the changes in natural or human systems that inadvertently increase vulnerability to climate stimuli.
        - It is an adaptation **measure that does not succeed in reducing vulnerability** but increases it instead.
    - Odisha has one of the most dynamic coasts in the country, with **sea levels rising** at a rate more than the average for the rest of the country. It is also the most cyclone-prone state in India.

//

40% OF INDIANS WILL FACE WATER SCARCITY BY 2050

What does the IPCC report mean for India?

- An increase in annual mean precipitation is projected
- Increase in rainfall will be more severe over southern parts of India
- Rainfall could increase by around 20% on the southwest coast compared to 1850-1900 level
- Monsoon precipitation is projected to increase in the mid- to-long term over South Asia
- Rising temperature and precipitation can increase the occurrence of glacial lake outburst floods and landslides over moraine-dammed lakes
- Snowline elevations will rise and glacier volumes will decline
- Regional mean sea level will continue to rise
- Cities in India will be

India is expected to see an increase in frequency and severity of hot extremes

Forest fire incidents may rise due to increased heat waves condition

experiencing more heat stress, urban floods, salinity ingress due to sea-level rise and other climate-induced hazards such as cyclones

- India is one of the most vulnerable countries globally in terms of the population that will be affected by sea-level rise. (Cities to be affected: Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Goa, Cochin and Puri among others)

- By the middle of the century, around 35 million people in India could face annual coastal flooding
- Economic costs of sea-level rise and river flooding for India would also be among the highest in the world
- Direct damage is estimated at between $24 billion if emissions are cut only about as rapidly as currently promised
- Climate change and rising demand mean that about 40% of people in India will live with water scarcity by 2050 compared with about 33% now
- Both the Ganges and Brahmaputra river basins will also see increased flooding as a result of climate change, particularly if warming passes 1.5°C
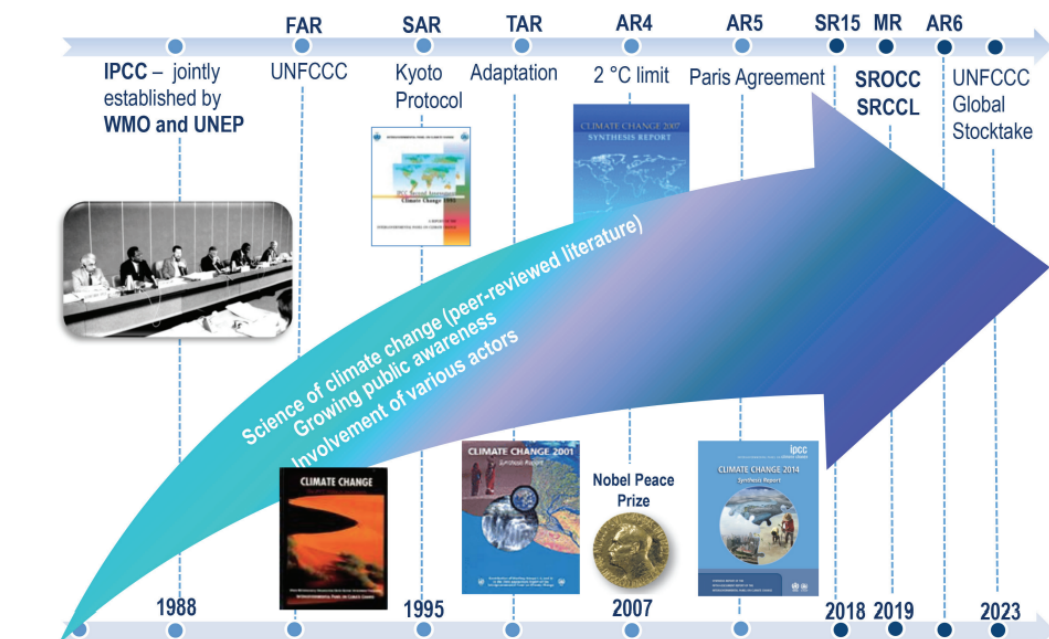- Productivity of food crops, including maize, will be affected

What are the Recommendations?

- The world must rapidly shift away from burning fossil fuels — the number one cause of the climate crisis.
- A mix of strategies can help **avoid locking in the** carbon emissions, including retiring existing fossil fuel infrastructure, canceling new projects, retrofitting fossil-fueled power plants with **carbon capture and storage (CCS)** technologies and scaling up renewable energy sources like solar and wind.
- There is a need for urgent, systemwide transformations to secure a net-zero, climate-resilient future.
- While fossil fuels are the number one source of GHG emissions, deep emission cuts are necessary across all of society to combat the climate crisis.

What is IPCC?

- The IPCC is the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change.
- It was set up in 1988 by the **World Meteorological Organization** and United Nations Environment Programme to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.

IPCC contribution to climate science and policymaking

International Day of Forests

For Prelims: International Day of Forests, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Sundarbans, Major and minor forest produce.

For Mains: Significance of Forests for India, Issues Associated with Forests in India.

Why in News?

The **International Day of Forests**, also known as **World Forests Day**, is celebrated each year on **March 21** to raise awareness about the **importance of forests** and **trees for the survival of humanity and the planet.**

- The theme for 2023 is **'Forests and Health.'**

What is the History of International Day of Forests?

- The history of the **International Day of Forests** can be traced back to 1971 when the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** established **World Forestry Day.**
    - The day was established to create and raise awareness of the importance of forests for

people and the planet.
- In 2011, the **[United Nations]** declared the years **2011 to 2020 as the International Decade of Forests.**
  - Its objective was to promote sustainable management, conservation, and development of all types of forests.
- In 2012, the **International Day of Forests** was established.

What is the Status of Forests in India?

- As per the **[India State of Forest Report-2021]**, forest and tree cover in the country increased by **2,261 square kilometres since the last assessment in 2019.**
- India's total forest and tree cover was **80.9 million hectares**, which accounted for **24.62% of the geographical area of the country.**
  - The report said **17 States and Union Territories had more than 33% of their area under forest cover.**
  - **Madhya Pradesh** had the largest forest cover, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
  - The top five States in terms of forest cover as a percentage of their total geographical area were **Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76%), Manipur (74.34%) and Nagaland (73.90%).**

What is the Significance of Forests for India?

- **Ecosystem Services: One-third of the land on Earth is covered by forests,** which play a vital role in maintaining the **hydrological cycle, regulating climate, and preserving** [biodiversity]**.**
  - For example, forests in the **[Western Ghats]** help to regulate the **water cycle of southern states** and protect against soil erosion.
- **Hub of Biodiversity:** India is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, many of which are found only in the country's forests.
  - For example, the [Sundarbans] **mangrove forests in the Bay of Bengal** are home to the **[Royal Bengal tiger.]**
- **Poverty Alleviation:** Forests are also important for **[poverty alleviation.]** Forests provide more than **86 million** [green jobs.] Everyone on the planet has had some form of contact with forests.
- **Home of Tribal Community:** They are also the **homes of the tribal community.** They are **ecologically and economically** a part and parcel of the forest environment.
  - For example, [Gond tribes] **of Madhya Pradesh.**
- **Raw Material for Industries:** Forests provide **raw materials for a number of industries**, viz. silk worm rearing, toy making, leaf plate making, plywood, paper and pulp etc.
  - They also provide **[major and minor forest produce:]**
    - Major such as **timber, round wood, pulp-wood, charcoal and fire-wood**
    - Minor produce like **bamboo, spices, edible fruits and vegetables.**

What are the Issues Associated with Forests in India?

- **Biodiversity Loss:** Deforestation and other activities that damage forests also lead to a **loss of biodiversity**, as plant and animal species are unable to survive in their natural habitat.
  - This can have **knock-on effects on the ecosystem as a whole**, as well as on the cultural practices of the communities that depend on these species.
- **Shrinking Forest Cover:** According to the National Forest Policy of India, the ideal percentage of total geographical area under forest should be at least 33% to maintain ecological stability. However**, it currently covers just 24.62% of the country's land** and is shrinking rapidly.
- **Climate Change:** Forest disturbances caused by **[climate change]**, including **insect outbreaks, invasive species due to climate led migration,** [wildfires]**,** and storms, reduce forest productivity and change species distribution.
  - By 2030, **45-64% of forests in India will experience the effects of climate change** and rising temperatures.
- **Resource Access Conflict:** There is often conflict between the interests of local communities and

those of commercial interests, such as **pharmaceutical industries** or timber industries.**
  - This can lead to **social tensions and even violence**, as different groups struggle to access and use the resources of the forests.

Way Forward

- **Comprehensive Forest Management:** Forest conservation should include all components of protection and sustainable management of forests such as, **forest fire control measures, timely survey, tribal-dedicated policies, reducing man-animal conflicts** and sustainable wildlife health measures.
- **Dedicated Forest Corridor: Dedicated Forest corridors** can be maintained for safe **intrastate and interstate passage of wild animals** and protecting their habitat from any external influence, giving a message of peaceful-co existence.
- **Resource Mapping and Forest Optimisation: Potential resource mapping** can be done in **unexplored forest areas,** and they can be brought under scientific management and sustainable resource extraction maintaining density and forest health.
- **Viewing Tribals as Forest Entrepreneurs:** There is a need to **revitalise Forest Development Corporations (FDCS)** to structure commercialization of forests and **engage tribal communities as "Forest Entrepreneurs"** In exploration, extraction, and enhancement of forest-based products.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

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. A particular State in India has the following characteristics: (2012)

1. It is located on the same latitude which passes through northern Rajasthan.
2. It has over 80% of its area under forest cover.
3. Over 12% of forest cover constitutes the Protected Area Network in this State.

Which one among the following States has all the above characteristics?

(a) Arunachal Pradesh
(b) Assam
(c) Himachal Pradesh
(d) Uttarakhand

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q. "The most significant achievement of modern law in India is the constitutionalization of environmental problems by the Supreme Court." Discuss this statement with the help of relevant case laws. **(2022)**

Global Terrorism Index 2023

For Prelims: Institute for Economics & Peace, United Nations Security Council, Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).

For Mains: Global Terrorism Index (GTI), Major Challenges Related to Terrorism Globally.

Why in News?

India ranks **13th** on The **Global Terrorism Index (GTI).** The report shows that Afghanistan **continues to be the country most affected by** terrorism for the 4th year in a row, even though attacks and deaths decreased.

What are the Major Highlights of the GTI?

- The **GTI report is produced by the** Institute for Economics & Peace **(IEP), a think tank**, using data from TerrorismTracker and other sources.
    - **Terrorism Tracker** provides event records on terrorist attacks since 1 January 2007.
    - The dataset contains almost **66,000 terrorist incidents for the period 2007 to 2022.**
- Globally, **deaths from terrorism fell by 9%** to 6,701 deaths, marking a **38% decrease from its peak in 2015.**
- Pakistan **recorded the second largest surge in terror-related deaths worldwide** in 2022, the toll increasing significantly to 643.
- **South Asia** remains the region with the worst average GTI score.
    - **South Asia** recorded 1,354 deaths from terrorism in 2022.
- **Islamic State (IS)** and its affiliates were the **deadliest terror group globally for the eighth consecutive year,** recording the most attacks and deaths of any group in **2022.**

What are the Major Challenges Related to Terrorism Globally?

- **Terror Financing:** According to the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and **World Bank**, criminals are estimated to launder up to **four trillion dollars a year.** Fund movements by terrorists have also been concealed through charities and alternative remittance methods.
    - It taints the **international financial system** and erodes public trust in the integrity of the system.
- **Politicisation of Countering Terrorism:** The members of the **United Nations Security Council (P5)** have exercised the **veto power** to varying degrees when it comes to identifying terrorists.
    - Also, **absence of universally accepted definitions** for what constitutes terrorism provides terrorists with an edge and **allows some countries to remain silent and veto any action at global institutions.**
- **Use of Emerging Technology by Terrorists**: Innovations in computing and telecommunications like widespread **internet access, end-to-end encryption**, and **virtual private network (VPN)** have made new types of operations possible for a higher number of **radicalised individuals** across the globe, contributing to the threat.

Way Forward

- **Re-energizing Counter Terrorism Agenda:** It is necessary to re-energize the global agenda of counter-terrorism by **emphasising the need for unity,** and checking the **veto power of P5** when it comes to identifying terrorists worldwide.
- **Adopting a Universal Definition of Terrorism**: A universal definition of terrorism is needed so that all members of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** can incorporate it into their own criminal laws, **banning terror groups, prosecuting terrorists under special laws**, and making cross-border terrorism an extraditable offence worldwide.
    - In 1986, India proposed a draft document on the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)** at the UN. However, it is yet to be adopted by the UNGA.
- **Curbing Terror Funding:** There is a need for stronger laws that **require banks to perform due diligence on clients** and to report suspicious transactions to prevent terrorism.
    - Also, India can move towards **regulating** cryptocurrency.

Source: IE

Gandak River

Why in News?

Recently, under **Namami Gange Program**, the development of **river front** on **Gandak River** in the district of Gopalganj, Bihar has been undertaken and two Ghats have been constructed.
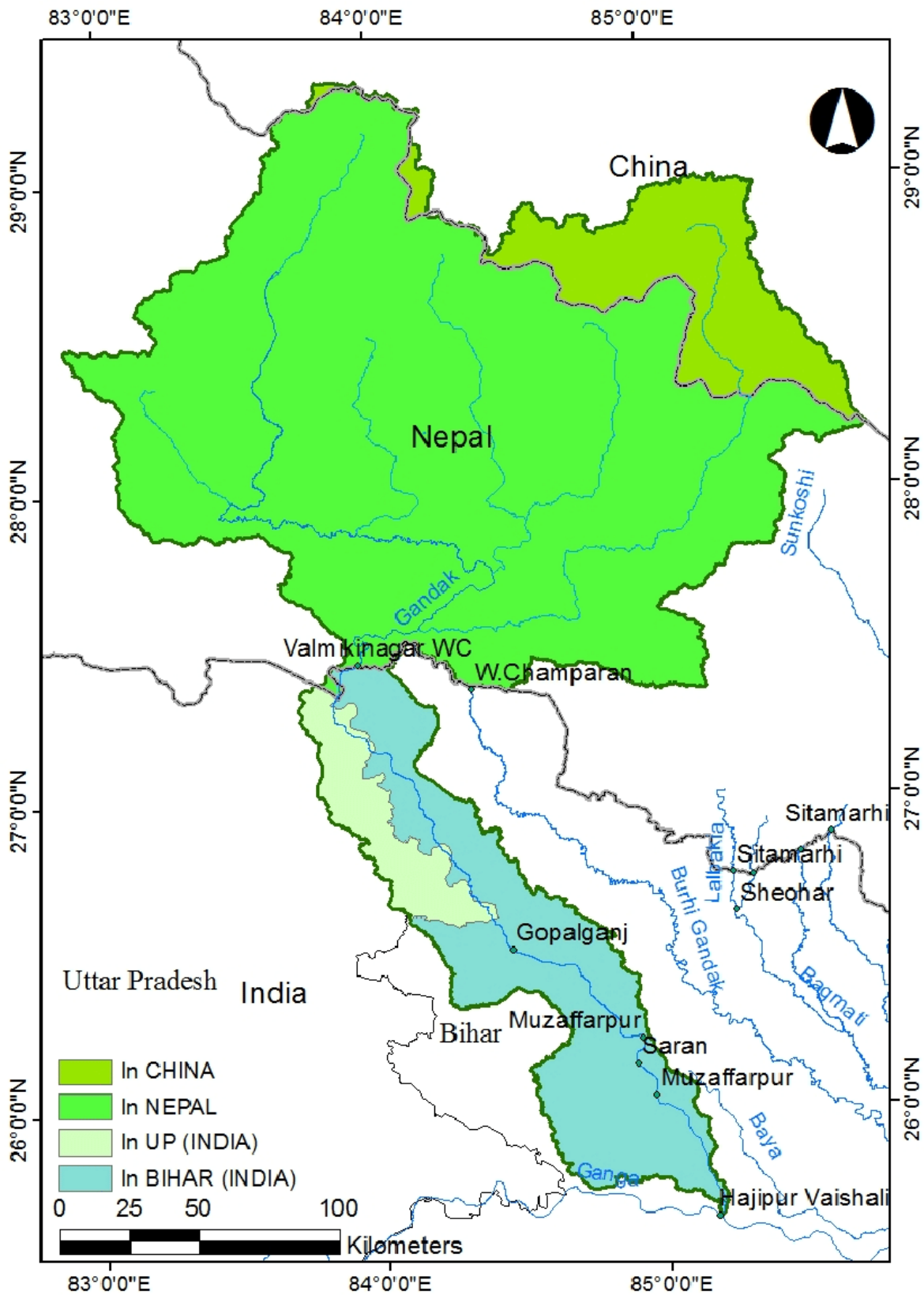
- River Gandak was declared as **National Waterway (NW)-37** from Bhaisalotan Barrage to Gandak and Ganga River confluence at Hajipur, Bihar along with **111 NWs in the country vide National Waterways Act, 2016.**

What are the Key Facts about River Gandak ?

- **About:**
    - The river Gandak, is also known as the **Gandaki and Narayani River in Nepal.** It is a significant river that flows through the **northern part of India and Nepal.**

- **Valmiki National Park and Tiger Reserve** in Bihar is located on the banks of this river.
- **Source:**
  - The river Gandak originates at an altitude of 7620 m above main sea level in the **north of Dhaulagisi in Tibet near Nepal border.** Originating from the Himalayas, the river stretches over a length of 630 kilometers, with 445 kilometers running through India and 185 kilometers in Nepal.
- **Drainage Basin:**
  - The Gandak River has a total drainage basin area of 29,705 square kilometers.
  - The river **flows through the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh**, and joins the **Ganges** near Patna just downstream of Hajipur.
- **Tributaries:**
  - The major tributaries of the Gandak River include the Mayangadi, Bari, Trisuli, Panchand, Sarhad, Budhi Gandak.

What is National Waterways Act-2016?

- The **National Waterways Act, 2016** is an act of the Indian parliament that was passed in March 2016. The act provides for the declaration of 111 waterways as National Waterways in India, including inland rivers, and **canals.**
  - The act aims to promote the development of inland water transport and provide an alternative mode of transportation for goods and passengers.

Multiple Indicator Survey-NSS 78th Round Report 2020-2021

Why in News?

The National Sample Survey Office **(NSSO)** carried out the Multiple Indicator Survey (MIS) covering the entire country in its 78th round.

What is a Multiple Indicator Survey?

- A MIS is a type of survey designed to collect data on a range of key **indicators related to the well-being of individuals, households, and communities.** The survey typically covers topics such as health, education, water and sanitation, nutrition, and child protection.

What are the Objectives of the MIS?

- To collect information for developing estimates of some important **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)** indicators.
- To collect information Purchase/Construction of house(s)/ flat(s) by the household for residential purpose after 31.03.2014 and information on Migration.

What are the Key Findings?

- **Drinking Water Accessibility:**
    - **Kerala, Manipur, Nagaland, and Jharkhand have less than 90% access** to an improved source of drinking water.
    - Among major states, **Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Odisha are among the worst** in access to tapped drinking water for both rural and urban households.
- **Access to an Exclusive Toilet:**
    - Among the major states **Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha have the lowest proportion** of rural households with access to an exclusive toilet.
- **LPG Connections for Cooking:**
    - In the states like **Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal, Nagaland** and Madhya Pradesh, for more than 70% of households, **firewood is the primary source of energy for cooking.** These states along with Jharkhand have less than 25% of households using **LPG for cooking–** the lowest among all states and UTs
- **Education, Employment, or Training:**
    - Among big states, **Uttarakhand, Odisha, Kerala, and Delhi** have the **highest proportion (more than 20%) of men aged 15 to 24** who were not in **education, employment, or training** at the time of the survey.
    - For **females,** the proportion was **highest in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha,** Gujarat, West Bengal, and Bihar.
- **Other Major Findings:**

Sl No	Item Description	Percentage (all-India)		
		Rural	Urban	All*
1	Percentage of persons reported to have improved source of drinking water[1]	95.0	97.2	95.7
2	Percentage of persons reported access to improved latrine, among the persons who had reported access to latrine[2]	97.5	99.0	98.0
3	Percentage of persons reported access to hand washing facility with water and soap/detergent within the premises	77.4	92.7	81.9
4	Percentage of households using clean fuel as primary source of energy for cooking[3]	49.8	92.0	63.1
5	Percentage of persons of *age 15-29 years* were in formal and non-formal education and training for the 12 months preceding the survey	33.0	39.4	34.9
6	Percentage of persons of *age 15-24 years* not in education, employment or training (NEET) as on date of survey	30.2	27.0	29.3
7	Percentage of persons of age *18 years and above* who used mobile telephone with active sim card during the three months preceding the date of the survey	67.8	83.7	72.7
8	Percentage of households in rural areas reported availability of all-weather roads within 2 km from the place of living	92.5	-	-
9	Percentage of households reported purchase/ construction of any *new house/flat* after 31.03.2014	11.2	7.2	9.9
10	Percentage of households reported purchase/construction of new house/flat for the *first time*, among the households which reported purchase/construction of any new house/flat after 31.03.2014	47.5	57.9	49.9
11	Percentage of persons having current place of residence different from the last usual place of residence	26.8	34.6	29.1

*: Rural + Urban

India and Maldives: 4th Defence Cooperation Dialogue

Why in News?

Recently, **India and the Maldives** conducted the **4ᵗʰ Defence Cooperation Dialogue (DCD)** in Male.

- The **DCD is the highest institutionalised interactive mechanism** between the two countries. It charts the future course of relations **between both Armed Forces.**

What are the Areas of Cooperation Between India and Maldives?

- **Tourism:**
  - **Tourism is the mainstay of Maldivian economy.** The country is now a major tourist destination for some Indians and a job destination for others.
  - In August 2021, **Afcons,** an Indian company, signed a contract for the largest-ever infrastructure project in Maldives which is the **Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP).**
- **Security Partnership:**
  - Defence cooperation extends to the areas of Joint Exercises - **"**Ekuverin**", "Dosti", "Ekatha" and "Operation Shield"** (begun in 2021).
  - India provides the largest number of training opportunities for **Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF)**, meeting around **70% of their defence training requirements.**
- **Rehabilitation Centre:**
  - Signing of an **USD 80-million contract for the Addu reclamation** and shore protection project.
- **Infrastructure:**
  - In 2022, the **National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (NCPLE)** was inaugurated by India's External Affairs Minister.
    - NCPLE is the largest grant project executed by India in Maldives.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. What do you understand by 'The String of Pearls'? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps

taken by India to counter this. **(2013)**

Q. Discuss the political developments in the Maldives in the last two years. Should they be of any cause for concern to India? **(2013)**

Rapid Fire Current Affairs

World Sparrow Day

Every year on **20th March,** World Sparrow Day is observed, it is designated to raise awareness about sparrow conservation and protection, as their numbers are declining globally. The theme of World Sparrow Day 2023 is **"I Love Sparrows"**, with the goal of encouraging more people to appreciate the relationship **between humans and sparrows**. According to the survey conducted by **the Travancore Nature History Society (TNHS)**, The **house sparrow** population in Thiruvananthapuram city has recorded a significant reduction. The decline in population has been attributed to the oppressive heat and a lack of food supplies in the traditional areas of the city.

Read more: World Sparrow Day

herSTART

Recently, **Government of India has launched a monthly allowance of Rs. 20,000** for up to one year for **women-led Startups under 'herSTART'** platform. **Women-led business enterprises** are playing a noticeable role in society by generating employment opportunities in the country, bringing in demographic shifts and inspiring the next generation of women founders.

herSTART is a platform to **boost innovation and start-up efforts of women** entrepreneurs and also help them connect with various government and private enterprises. In India at least 36 unicorns and potential unicorns in India have at least one-woman founder or co-founder. India is focussing on creating women-led entrepreneurship through initiatives, schemes, networks and communities and activating partnerships among diverse stakeholders in the **Startup ecosystem**.

Currently, As of January 2023, 47 companies' world over has achieved the decacorn status (startups that have a valuation of over 1 billion dollars). Presently, India has **five Startups** namely, **Flipkart, BYJU's, Nykaa, Swiggy and PhonePe** added in the **decacorn unit.**

Kalanidhi Awards 2023

Recently, Carnatic vocalist **Bombay Jayashri,** who is known for her melodic and meditative style of singing and is recognised by a **Padma Shri** from the Indian government has been selected for the **Sangita Kalanidhi award of the Music** Academy for 2023. **Sangita Kalanidhi award** is considered the **highest accolade in the field of** Carnatic music, it came into existence in 1942. The award comprises a **gold medal** and a **birudu patra (citation).**

Vasanthalakshmi Narasimhachari has been selected for **The Nritiya Kalanidhi award** for dance. Vasanthalakshmi Narasimhachari excels both in **Bharathanatyam** and Kuchipudi.

Read more: Sangita Kalanidhi award

Enemy Properties

Recently, the home ministry has begun the process to sell **enemy properties.** These are immovable assets left behind by people who have **taken citizenship in** Pakistan and China after wars with these countries. The guidelines for disposal of enemy properties have been changed, under which the process for eviction of enemy properties now shall be initiated with the help of a **district magistrate** or **deputy commissioner** before the sale of properties.

Enemy properties valued between Rs 1 crore and Rs 100 crore will be disposed of by the **Custodian of Enemy Property of India** an authority created under **the Enemy Property Act, 1968** through an electronic auction or otherwise, as may be decided by the central government and at the rate determined by the **Enemy Property Disposal Committee.**

A survey conducted by the **Directorate General of Defence Estates** will assess the present condition and **value of the enemy properties identified by the CEPI.** There are a total of 12,611 establishments of enemy property, estimated to be worth over Rs. 1 lakh crore, in the country. Out of the 12,611 properties vested with the CEPI, **12,485 were related to Pakistani nationals and 126 to Chinese citizens.** The **highest number of enemy properties were found in Uttar Pradesh and least is Andhra Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**

PDF Refernece URL: https://www.drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/21-03-2023/print