

GOVERNANCE**World Food Day 2021**

World Food Day is celebrated every year on October 16th to commemorate the date of the founding of the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organisation in 1945. FAO is a specialised agency of the UN that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

In 2021, the UN Secretary-General also convened the very first Food Systems Summit to discuss ways to transform the production and consumption of food.

Key Points**About:**

- It is observed annually to address the problem of global hunger. The day is also observed by organisations like World Food Programme (Was awarded Nobel Peace Prize 2020) and International Fund for Agricultural Development.
- It emphasises on the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) i.e. Zero Hunger.

Need of the Hour:

- The Covid-19 pandemic has underlined that an urgent change of route is needed. It has made it even harder for farmers - already grappling with climate variability and extremes - to sell their harvests, while rising poverty is pushing an increased number of city residents to use food banks, and millions of people require emergency food aid.
- World needs sustainable agri-food systems that are capable of nourishing 10 billion people by 2050.

FAO's Contribution in India:

- It has closely watched India's fight against malnutrition in the past decades but its scope had many constraints. Due to reasons such as pregnancy at a young age, lack of education and information, inadequate access to drinking water, lack of cleanliness, etc. India is lagging behind in achieving the expected results of "malnutrition free India" by 2022, envisaged under the National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan).
- FAO supported India's proposal to declare 2023 as the International Year of Millets. The move will encourage intake of nutritious food, increase their availability further and benefit small and medium farmers who mostly grow coarse grains on their land where there is a problem of water and the land is not so fertile.

FAO's Hunger Index, India's Opposition and Farmers Protest:

- India has slipped to 101st position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021.
- However, the Indian government has questioned the poll-based assessment and methodology used by the FAO. India claims the methodology to be unscientific.
- On the other hand the food producers (farmers) of the country are on the roads for close to a year and are on warpath against the central government while vehemently opposing the farm laws. Farmers are terming the laws to be anti-peasant (food producers) and saying these laws will provide alarming loss to them which could further impact India's ranking in combating hunger and nutrition.

Related Indian Initiatives:

- The Eat Right India and Fit India Movement along with Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Jal Jeevan Mission and other efforts will improve the health of Indians and heal the environment.
- Introduction of 17 new biofortified varieties of crops to overcome the shortcomings of the common variety of crops which lacks important micronutrients. Example: MACS 4028 Wheat, Madhuban Gajar, etc.
- Increased ambit and effective implementation of the Food Security Act, 2013.
- Amendments to the APMC (agricultural produce market committee) Acts to make them more competitive.
- Steps to ensure that farmers get one and a half times the cost as Minimum Support Price (MSP), which along with the government procurement, is an important part of ensuring the country's food security.
- Development of a large network of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).
- Amendments in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to deal with the issue of grain wastage in India.
- Government is making efforts to make India Trans Fat free by 2022, a year ahead of the World Health Organisation (WHO) target, in synergy with the vision of New India @75 (75 years of India's independence).

1. Trans Fat is a food toxin present in Partially Hydrogenated Vegetable Oils (PHVOs) (e.g. vanaspati, shortening, margarine, etc.), baked and fried foods.
2. It is a major contributor to the rise in non-communicable diseases in India and also a modifiable risk factor for Cardio-Vascular Diseases (CVD). Eliminating CVD risk factor is especially relevant during Covid-19 as people with CVD are predisposed to have serious conditions having an impact on mortality.

ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

COP26 Climate Conference

The COP 26 United Nations Climate Change Conference will be hosted by the UK from 31st October to 12th November. Earlier, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its assessment report on Earth's climate, highlighting heat waves, droughts, extreme rainfall and sea-level rise in the coming decades.

Key Points

COP 26 Goals:

According to the United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention (UNFCCC), COP26 will work towards four goals:

- **Net Zero by 2050:**
 1. To secure Global Net-Zero by Mid-Century and keep 1.5 Degrees within reach.
 2. Countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets that align with reaching net zero by the middle of the century.
 3. To deliver on these stretching targets, countries will need to:
 - ✓ Accelerate the phase-out of coal
 - ✓ Curtail deforestation
 - ✓ Speed up the switch to electric vehicles
 - ✓ Encourage investment in renewables.
- **Adapt to Protect Communities and Natural Habitats:** Countries will work together to 'protect and restore ecosystems and build defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure and agriculture to avoid loss of homes, livelihoods and even lives.'
- **Mobilise Finance:** Developed countries must make good on their promise to mobilise at least USD100bn in climate finance per year.
- **Work Together to Deliver:** Another important task at the COP26 is to 'finalise the Paris Rulebook'. Leaders will work together to frame a list of detailed rules that will help fulfil the Paris Agreement.

Suggestions for India:

- Update its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). (NDCs detail the various efforts taken by each country to reduce the national emissions)
- Sector by sector plans are needed to bring about development. Decarbonisation of the electricity, transport sector and starting to look at carbon per passenger mile is needed.
- Aggressively figure out how to transition the coal sector.

Conference of Parties (COP)

About:

- The Conference of Parties comes under the UNFCCC which was formed in 1994. The UNFCCC was established to work towards "stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. COP is the apex decision-making authority of UNFCCC.
- It laid out a list of responsibilities for the member states which included:
 1. Formulating measures to mitigate climate change.
 2. Cooperating in preparing for adaptation to the impact of climate change.
 3. Promoting education, training and public awareness related to climate change.

Meetings:

- COP members have been meeting every year since 1995. The UNFCCC has 198 parties including India, China and the USA. Generally it meets in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host the session.

Presidency:

- The office of the COP President normally rotates among the five United Nations regional groups which are - Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others.

- The President is usually the environment minister of his or her home country. S/he is elected by acclamation immediately after the opening of a COP session.

2.Climate Finance

Recently, the Finance Minister of India and her US counterpart met for the eighth ministerial meeting of the U.S.-India Economic and Financial partnership. The major highlight of the ministerial meeting is that it discussed climate finance for the first time under the aegis of Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue (CAFMD).

Key Points

About:

- Climate finance refers to local, national or transnational financing—drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing—that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change.
- 1. Climate finance is needed for mitigation, because large-scale investments are required to significantly reduce emissions.
- 2. It is equally important for adaptation, as significant financial resources are needed to adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of a changing climate.

Climate Finance & UNFCCC:

- To facilitate the provision of climate finance, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has established the financial mechanism to provide financial resources to developing country Parties.
- 1. **The Adaptation Fund under Kyoto Protocol:** It aims to finance concrete projects and programmes that help vulnerable communities in developing countries that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to adapt to climate change.
- 2. **Green Climate Fund:** It is the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC, established in 2010. India has been pushing for rich countries to meet their Paris Accord climate finance commitment of USD 100 billion per year.
- 3. **Global Environment Fund (GEF):** GEF has served as an operating entity of the financial mechanism since the Convention came into force in 1994. It is a private equity fund focused on seeking long term financial returns by investments in clean energy under climate change.
- 4. GEF also maintains two additional funds, the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF).

Climate Financing in India:

- **National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC):** It was established in 2015 to meet the cost of adaptation to climate change for the State and Union Territories of India that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.
- **National Clean Energy Fund:**
 1. The Fund was created to promote clean energy, funded through an initial carbon tax on use of coal by industries.
 2. Governed by an Inter-Ministerial Group with the Finance Secretary as the Chairman.
 3. Its mandate is to fund research and development of innovative clean energy technology in the fossil and non fossil fuel based sectors.
- **National Adaptation Fund:**
 1. The fund was established in 2014 with a corpus of Rs. 100 crore with the aim of bridging the gap between the need and the available funds.
 2. The fund is operated under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

3.E-Waste Generation

International E-Waste Day has been observed on 14th October since 2018.

- The aim of the day is to raise awareness about the millions of tonnes of e-waste generated worldwide each year, which has a negative impact on the environment and natural resources.
- Earlier this year, the Principal Bench of National Green Tribunal (NGT) issued directions for the implementation of E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016.

Key Points

E-Waste:

- E-Waste is short for Electronic-Waste and the term is used to describe old, end-of-life or discarded electronic appliances. It includes their components, consumables, parts and spares.

- It is categorised into 21 types under two broad categories:
 1. Information technology and communication equipment.
 2. Consumer electrical and electronics.
- Laws to manage e-waste have been in place in India since 2011, mandating that only authorised dismantlers and recyclers collect e-waste. E-waste (Management) Rules, 2016 was enacted in 2017.
- India's first e-waste clinic for segregating, processing and disposal of waste from household and commercial units has been set-up in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- Originally, the Basel Convention (1992) did not mention e-waste but later it addressed the issues of e-waste in 2006 (COP8). The Nairobi Declaration was adopted at COP9 of the Basel Convention on the Control of the Trans-boundary Movement of Hazardous Waste. It aimed at creating innovative solutions for the environmentally sound management of electronic wastes.

E-waste Generation:

- This year's Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) will total about 57.4 million tonnes (MT) and will be greater than the weight of the Great Wall of China, Earth's heaviest artificial object.
- According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), India generated more than 10 lakh tonnes of e-waste in 2019-20, an increase from 7 lakh tonnes in 2017-18. Against this, the e-waste dismantling capacity has not been increased from 7.82 lakh tonnes since 2017-18.

Challenges Related to Management of E-Waste in India:

- **Less Involvement of People:** A key factor in used electronic devices not being given for recycling was because consumers themselves did not do so. However, in recent years, countries around the world have been attempting to pass effective 'right to repair' laws.
- **Involvement of Child Labor:** In India, about 4.5 lakh child laborers in the age group of 10-14 are observed to be engaged in various E-waste activities and that too without adequate protection and safeguards in various yards and recycling workshops.
- **Ineffective Legislation:** There is absence of any public information on most State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/PCC websites.
- **Health hazards:** E-waste contains over 1,000 toxic materials, which contaminate soil and groundwater.
- **Lack of incentive schemes:** No clear guidelines are there for the unorganized sector to handle E-waste. Also, no incentives are mentioned to lure people engaged to adopt a formal path for handling E-waste.
- **E-waste Imports:** Cross-border flow of waste equipment into India- 80% of E-waste in developed countries meant for recycling is sent to developing countries such as India, China, Ghana and Nigeria.
- **Reluctance of Authorities' involved:** Lack of coordination between various authorities responsible for E-waste management and disposal including the non-involvement of municipalities.
- **Security Implications:** End of life computers often contain sensitive personal information and bank account details which, if not deleted leave opportunity for fraud.

Way Forward

There are various startups and companies in India that have now started to collect and recycle electronic waste. We need better implementation methodologies and inclusion policies that provide accommodation and validation for the informal sector to step up and help us meet our recycling targets in an environmentally sound manner.

Also, successfully raising collection rates required every actor to be involved, including consumers.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

The Earthshot Prize 2021

Vidyut Mohan, a Delhi-based entrepreneur, won the inaugural edition of The Earthshot Prize. He won it for his innovative technology that recycles agricultural waste to create fuel.

Key Points

About:

- It is an award set up by Prince William and the Royal Foundation, the charity founded by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and historian David Attenborough. Earlier, Sir David Attenborough has also been conferred with the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for 2019.

- Established in 2020, 2021 was the first year when awards were handed out to finalists for their contributions towards
- The award will honour five finalists between 2021 and 2030 for developing solutions to fight the climate crisis. They will receive a prize of one million Euros. The winners will be chosen by the Earthshot Prize Council.
- Each year five winners will be selected, one for each of the Five United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) :
 - Restoration and protection of nature
 - Air cleanliness
 - Ocean revival
 - Waste-free living
 - Climate action.

Eligibility: Prizes could be awarded to a wide range of individuals, teams or collaborations – scientists, activists, economists, community projects, leaders, governments, banks, businesses, cities, and countries – anyone whose workable solutions make a substantial contribution to achieving the Earthshots.

Objectives:

- To encourage and support the development of solutions for Earth's environmental problems.
- To incentivise change and help repair the planet over the next ten years.
- To turn the current pessimism surrounding environmental issues into optimism, by highlighting the ability of human ingenuity to bring about change, and inspiring collective action.

The Earthshot Prize 2021 Indian Winner:

- "Clean our Air" Takachar, India: A portable machine created to turn agricultural waste into fertiliser so that farmers do not burn their fields and cause air pollution.
- This technology will help convert crop residues into sellable bio-products like fuel and fertilizers.
- The technology reduces smoke emissions by 98%.
- The burning of agricultural waste causes air pollution that in some areas has reduced life expectancy by a decade.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. The Covid Pandemic has reiterated the need for "Right to Health" in India. Critically examine its feasibility in India. (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

Amidst the pandemic, the frantic cries for oxygen, hospital beds, medicine and even a place to cremate their own, laid bare our failure to extend dignity in both life and death. This was compounded with the loss of income, debt, food insecurity, and illiteracy. That is the situation of lakhs of families in India today. The most profound loss is of people's faith in the ability of the country's healthcare system to protect them. It is the primary responsibility of government to reinstate this faith.

Body

Making Health as fundamental right will be of immense help

- If health is a fundamental right, it will give a spine to the entire health ecosystem, empower doctors and healthcare workers, and ensure transparency, inclusivity, and accountability.
- Moreover, it will pave the way for special legislation, capable institutions, increased budgets, medical training and research, wellness and prevention, and outreach of services.
- It instils immense confidence and positivity amongst the citizens.
- In a country where 63 million people slip back into poverty due to catastrophic healthcare costs, it is hard not to see the logic of legally mandating health as a right, and thereby empowering the citizen to hold the state accountable for it.
- By declaring health as a fundamental right, the government would be compelled to think seriously about the pollution aspect or the environmental impact when, say, granting permissions for new industries or framing development policies.

Challenges in making health a fundamental right

- India has never spent more than 2% of its GDP on healthcare.

- And healthcare facilities across the country straddle different levels of efficiency and sufficiency.
- The impact of COVID-19 has shaken even States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu that traditionally did well in the area of healthcare.
- A 2019 NITI Aayog report highlighted that states in India had unequal public health systems.
- This imbalance was primarily due to restricted technical expertise and fiscal constraints.
- While fiscal dependence of states on the centre continues to be a major challenge, if the subject of health was moved to the Concurrent List, it would lead to excessive bureaucracy, red tape and institutional constraints.

Conclusion

It is time India declared the right to health a fundamental right. Strong health laws will help build societal resilience to future pandemics and public health emergencies. Emergency responses can't come at the cost of neglect of human rights obligations. It is critical then that the right to health be implemented, using the principles of transparency, proportionality and solidarity. The COVID19 experience has also demonstrated the importance of a decentralized/polycentric response – India's co-operative federalism, therefore, must be strengthened.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. The "Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation" (AMRUT) is launched by which of the following ministry?

- Ministry of Rural Development
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**
- Ministry of Jal Shakti
- Ministry of Tourism

Q2. Recently, which of the following has launched a 'One Health' consortium?

- National Dairy Development Board
- Animal Welfare Board of India
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
- None of the above**

Q3. Consider the following statements about UN Human Rights Council:

- It has 47 members serving at any time with elections held to fill up seats every year.
- It oversees expert investigation of violations in specific countries (Special Procedures).
- It passes non-binding resolutions on human rights issues through a periodic review of all 193 UN member states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3**

Q4. Consider the following statements about PM GatiShakti:

- It is a digital platform that connects 16 ministries of Government of India.
- It aims to ensure holistic planning and execution of infrastructure projects.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2**
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q5. Consider the following statements:

- Nihang is an order of Sikh warriors.
- Nihangs observe the Khalsa code of conduct in its strictest sense.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2**
- Neither 1 nor 2