

ENVIRONMENT**Biodiversity Policy for conservation and restoration**

Recently, NTPC released a **Biodiversity Policy** for conservation and restoration of biodiversity.

Key Points of Biodiversity Policy 2022:

- It aims to establish a comprehensive vision and guiding principle for conservation, restoration, and enhancement of biodiversity.
- The policy also aims to adopt **systematic consideration of local threats to biodiversity** beyond the company's business activities.
- This Policy is an **integral part of NTPC's Environmental Policy**.
- Its **objectives** are aligned with environmental and sustainability policies.
- The policy is also designed to **support all the professionals of the NTPC Group** to help them contribute toward the achievement of the targets set in this field.

Significance

- Overall **conservation will increase** with participation from business/firm's side.
- **Better practices of conservation** will be known and will yield better results.
- **Grass root participation** will make people feel more connected to the cause.
- Biodiversity offers goods and services that provide the **world's natural living infrastructure** and are essential for a well-functioning global economy.
- It is estimated that approximately **40% of the world's economy** is based on biological products or processes.

Steps taken by the Government for Conservation

- **Survey, inventorization, taxonomic validation** and threat assessment of floral and faunal resources;
- Assessment of the forest cover to develop an accurate database for planning and monitoring;
- **Establishment of a Protected Area Network of National Parks**, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation and Community Reserves;
- **Designating Biosphere Reserves** for conservation of representative ecosystems;
- Undertaking of species oriented programmes, such as Project Tiger and Project Elephant;
- Complemented with ex-situ conservation efforts.
- **Biological Diversity Act 2002** has also been enacted with the aim to conserve biological resources of the country and regulation of access to these resources to ensure equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their use, under which a National Biodiversity Authority and State Biodiversity Boards in all States have been set up for implementing the provisions of the Act.
- The Central Government provides financial assistance to States and Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as:
 - Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat;
 - Project Tiger, and Project Elephant for better protection and conservation of wildlife and their habitat; and
 - Identification of Forest Management Scheme towards protection and management of forests.
- The Government supports conservation of some prioritised/threatened medicinal plants harboured in specially designated **Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas (MPCAs)** that are primarily forested areas.
- The **National Afforestation & Eco-development Board** of the Ministry promotes afforestation, tree planting, ecological restoration and eco-development activities in the country, with special attention to degraded areas as well as ecologically fragile areas.
- **India Business & Biodiversity Initiative (IBBI)**
- To guide and mentor business organisations in India on conservation and sustainable use, the CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development launched the India Business & Biodiversity Initiative (IBBI).
- This business-led initiative serves as a **national platform** for business, to promote sharing and learning, and will ultimately lead to mainstreaming sustainable management of biological diversity by business.

- IBBI was initiated by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India
- **Vision:**
 - To sensitise, guide and mentor Indian business organisations in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use related to their operations, across their value chain and beyond towards conservation of India's biodiversity.
- **Biosphere Reserve Programme**
 - The Biosphere Reserve Programme is guided by **UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme** as India is a signatory to the landscape approach supported by MAB programme.
 - UNESCO MAB programme is an intergovernmental scientific program, launched in 1971 by UNESCO, that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments.

Way Ahead

- Any effort at conserving and enhancing biodiversity can only succeed if we **tackle the challenge of global warming**. Global warming has to be urgently brought under control.
- The people should take a **pledge to work towards conserving** biodiversity and sensitising the youth on the issues of conservation.

PRELIMS**1. What is a unicorn, and what does it take to become one?**

- Recently Prime Minister **praised India's start-up ecosystem** as he highlighted that the country has reached a landmark figure of 100 unicorns with a valuation of more than \$300 billion.

What is a unicorn startup?

- Unicorns are privately held, venture-capital backed start-ups that have reached a value of \$1 billion. The valuation of unicorns is not expressly linked to their current financial performance, but largely based on their growth potential as perceived by investors and venture capitalists who have taken part in various funding rounds.

When was the term first used?

- American venture capitalist Aileen Lee is credited with coining the term in 2013.
- It was used to emphasise the rarity of the emergence of such startups.

Are unicorns still a rarity?

- From the time the term was first used, it has become more common for startups to bag the unicorn tag, but the \$1 billion valuation still gets industry attention, and is considered an impressive achievement.
- According to PitchBook, a financial data and software company, a convergence of private and market funding is allowing more unicorns to emerge, faster.

What is India's unicorn record?

- A record 44 unicorns were established in India last year during the pandemic.
- 14 more unicorns were formed anew in last four months this year.
- According to Invest India, the government's National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency, The year 2021, 2020, and 2019 saw the birth of the maximum number of Indian unicorns with 44, 11, and 7 unicorns coming each year, respectively.
- Between 2015 and 2021, the country's startup ecosystem has seen a nine-time increase in the number of investors, and a seven-time increase in the total funding of startups.
- India gradually transitioning from the age of unicorns to the age of decacorns. A decacorn is a company that has attained a valuation of more than USD10 billion. As of May 2022, 47 companies world over have achieved the decacorn status. India has four startups namely, Flipkart, BYJU's, Nykaa and Swiggy, added in the decacorn cohort.

2. Why Neptune and Uranus appear in different colours ?

- Neptune and Uranus have much in common they have similar masses, sizes, and atmospheric compositions yet their appearances are in different shades of blue.

- At visible wavelengths, Neptune is a rich, deep azure hue, while Uranus is a distinctly pale shade of cyan. Astronomers now have an explanation for why the two planets are different colours.
- One reason why this difference had not been explained so far was the absence of similar data for comparison. Previous studies of the spectrum of each planet concentrated on individual wavelength regions.
- In the new comparison, researchers have developed a single atmospheric model that matches observations of both planets from the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope, as well as the Gemini North telescope and the NASA Infrared Telescope Facility.
- The model shows that the haze around Uranus is thicker than that around Neptune
- Uranus's stagnant, sluggish atmosphere and makes it appear a lighter tone than Neptune.
- If there was no haze in the atmospheres of Neptune and Uranus, both would appear almost equally blue as a result of blue light being scattered in their atmospheres.
- The model leading to this conclusion describes three aerosol layers in the atmospheres of Neptune and Uranus. The key layer that affects the colours is the middle layer, which is a layer of haze particles that is thicker on Uranus than on Neptune.
- On both planets, methane ice condenses onto the particles in this layer, pulling the particles deeper into the atmosphere. Because Neptune has a more active, turbulent atmosphere than Uranus does
- Neptune's atmosphere is more efficient at churning up methane particles into the haze layer. This removes more of the haze and keeps Neptune's haze layer thinner than it is on Uranus, with the result that the blue colour of Neptune looks stronger.

3. **How this fertilizer differs from conventional urea?**

- Prime Minister inaugurated the country's first liquid nano urea plant in Kalol, Gujarat. This patented product is expected to substitute imported urea and produce better results in farms
- COST EFFECTIVE:**
- The liquid nano urea produced by Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO) comes in a half-litre bottle priced at Rs 240, without any subsidy at present.
 - In contrast, a farmer pays around Rs 300 for a 50-kg bag of heavily subsidized urea. The government's fertilizer subsidy payout this financial year will be Rs 2 lakh crore.
 - According to IFFCO, a bottle of nano urea can effectively replace at least one bag of conventional urea. The international market price of a bag of urea is between Rs 3,500 and Rs 4,000, and significant quantities are imported.
 - The product has been developed at IFFCO's Nano Bio technology Research Centre (NBRC) in Kalol, Gujarat.

HOW IT WORKS:

- Urea artificially provides nitrogen to plants.
- Liquid nano urea, which contains 4% nitrogen by volume, comes in the form of a nano particle. The efficiency of liquid nano urea can be 85-90%, compared to 25% for conventional urea.
- Conventional urea is often applied incorrectly, and the nitrogen in it is vaporized or lost as gas.
- A lot of nitrogen is also washed away during irrigation. Liquid nano urea is sprayed directly on the leaves and gets absorbed by the plant. IFFCO advises that 2-4 ml of nano urea should be mixed a liter of water and sprayed on crop leaves at active growth stages.
- Liquid nano urea has a shelf life of a year, and farmers need not worry about "caking" when it comes in contact with moisture.
- The product has been tested on more than 90 crops across 11,000 locations in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendras of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR-KVKs), research institutes, state agriculture universities, and progressive farmers.

- Apart from reducing the country's subsidy bill, it is aimed at reducing the unbalanced and indiscriminate use of conventional urea, increase crop productivity, and reduce soil, water, and air pollution.

FUTURE OF PRODUCTION:

- IFFCO commissioned the Kalol liquid nano urea plant, the country's first, in August 2021. Over 3.6 crore bottles of this urea have been produced, of which 2.5 crore have been sold. IFFCO is setting up additional facilities for production of nano fertilisers in Aonla, Phulpur, Bengaluru, Paradeep, Kandla, Deoghar and Guwahati, besides expanding the Kalol plant, for the production of nano urea, nano DAP and nano micronutrients. These units will have a production capacity of 2 lakh bottles per day.

4. World Summit of Information Society (WSIS)

- The Minister of State for Communications attended the opening ceremony of World Summit of Information Society (WSIS) 2022.
- It's the beginning of a 4 days event where India will showcase its telecom prowess during multilateral & bilateral engagements.

About World Summit of Information Society (WSIS)

- The WSIS Forum, co-organized by **ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD**, in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line Facilitators/Co-Facilitators
- **Headquarter in Geneva**
- It represents the world's largest annual gathering of the ICT for development community.
- The Agenda and Programme of the Forum will be built on the basis of the submissions received during the Open Consultation Process.
- It has proven to be an **efficient mechanism for coordination** of multi-stakeholder implementation activities, information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices and continues to provide assistance in developing multi-stakeholder and public/private partnerships to advance development goals.
- It will provide **structured opportunities** to network, learn and participate in multi-stakeholder discussions and consultations on WSIS implementation.

It will provide an **opportunity to serve as a platform to track the achievements** of WSIS Action Lines in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provide information and analyses of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005.

ANSWER WRITTING**Q. Discuss the vital role played by India in effectuating the “Arabian Agreement 1953” that ended the Korean War.(250)****Introduction**

- The end of the Second World War left Korea divided between a Communist North controlled by the Socialist camp and a South Korea dominated by Western powers. On June 25, 1950, the Korean War began when some 75,000 soldiers from the North Korean People's Army poured across the 38th parallel. This invasion was the first military action of the Cold War, where the US and the USSR and later China were at loggerheads.

India's concerns

- India was partly motivated by the realization that the Cold War could take a very dangerous dimension in Asia, which could reach India's vicinities, which led the government to take a great deal of interest in the war.

India's Response

- Two basic imperatives guided India's stand on the war. The first pertained to containing the war and not allowing it to escalate.
- India's second imperative was upholding the principle of great power unity. To that end, it believed that the Security Council had to create the space for all five great powers to deliberate and work together.
- At the tangible, material level, India sent a medical unit, the 60th Para Field Ambulance, to render assistance to those injured in the war.

- In addition to contributing personnel, India played an important role in seeking to resolve the war at a political and diplomatic level.
- China and the US did not have formal diplomatic relations after the Communist revolution in China and India was the only link between the two.
- Owing to the non-representation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) at the Security Council, and the boycotting of this body by the Soviet Union, India appealed for the PRC to be included in the Security Council and called for the body to jointly resolve the problems.
- India's government supported UN Security Council resolutions that sought to restore the status quo without demonizing any party or proposing measures that would prolong or expand the war.
- As a result, a ceasefire was declared on July 27, 1953. A Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission was set up with an Indian- General Thimayya, as its Chairman, and an Indian 'Custodian Force' under his charge, was made responsible for the difficult task of repatriation.

Conclusion

The Korean War was a test for India's commitment to non-alignment and peace. Without India's diplomatic and conciliatory efforts, the War could have transformed into a wider military conflict resulting into great powers fighting to the end.

QUIZ

1. The term Myocardial Infarction (MI) is often in news , Consider the following statements with reference to this term.
 1. MI is also commonly known as a heart attack
 2. Heart attack can be happen due to electrical instability in some parts of the heart muscles.Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
2. Recently the term unicorn start-ups is in news, which of the following statements is/are correct regarding these start ups
 1. Unicorns are privately held, venture-capital backed startups that have reached a value of \$1billion
 2. A decacorn is a company that has attained a valuation of more than USD10 billion
 3. As of now India does not recognize any company as dacacorn.Select the correct answer using the codes given below
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - All of the above
3. With reference to Neptune and Uranus consider the following statements
 1. On both planets, Carbon dioxide ice condenses onto the particles
 2. The key layer that affects the colours is the middle layer, which is a layer of haze particles that is thicker on Uranus than on NeptuneSelect the correct statement/s using the codes given below
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
4. Assertion (A): Caste based census is carried out by central government only.
Reason (R): "caste" falls under Union List of the Indian Constitution.
Choose the correct answer using the codes given below
 - A is true and R is the correct explanation of A

- b) R is true but A is not the correct Assertion of R
c) A and R both are true and R is the correct explanation of A
d) A and R both are false
5. Consider the following statements
1. The orders of constitutional courts prevail over that of statutory tribunals if they contradict each other.
 2. As far as territorial jurisdiction is concerned NGT is subordinate to the High Court.
Select the correct answer using the codes given below.
- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. "Rushikonda Hills" recently seen in news is a part of which of the following
- a) **Eastern ghats**
b) Western ghats
c) Aravali
d) Vindhayas
7. Consider the following statement with regards to ASHA programme
1. India launched the ASHA programme in 2005-06 as part of the National Urban Health Mission
 2. With the launch of the National Rural Health Mission in 2013, it was extended to Rural areas as well.
Choose the correct statement/s using the codes give below
- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. The cabinet secretariat function under which of the following ?
- a) Ministry of Home Affairs
b) Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
c) Directly under Prime Minister of India
d) Directly under President of India
9. Operation Sadbhavna is related to which of the following state ?
- a) Jammu and Kashmir
b) Ladakh
c) North Eastern states
d) All of the above
10. With regards to National multi dimensional poverty index consider the following statement
1. It was released by Ministry of statistics and programme implementation
 2. National MPI is a baseline report that is based on the reference period of 2015-16 of the National Family Health Survey-4
 3. The recent report shows Kerala registered lowest population poverty levels
- Choose the correct statement using the code given below
- a) 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) All of the above