



C.A Dated On 16th July 2018

General Studies-1

Bansagar canal project

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the Bansagar canal project in Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh.

Bansagar canal project:

- Bansagar Dam project is a joint venture between Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- Bansagar Dam is a multipurpose river Valley Project on Sone River situated in the Ganges Basin in Madhya Pradesh.
- The total canal network under it is 171 kms long.
- Canals under this project will bring waters from Shahdol district in Madhya Pradesh for Adwa Barrage, Meza Dam and Jirgo reservoir.
- The project aims to provide a big boost to irrigation in the region. It promises to be greatly beneficial for the farmers of Mirzapur and Allahabad districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- As per the projections, the project will benefit 1 lakh 70 thousand farmers of Mirzapur and Allahabad districts.

About Son River:

- Son River of central India is the second largest of the Ganges's southern tributaries after Yamuna River.
- The Son originates near Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh just east of the headwater of the Narmada River, and flows north-northwest through Madhya Pradesh state before turning sharply eastward where it encounters the southwest-northeast-Kaimur Range.
- Son is an extension of the Narmada Valley, and the Kaimur Range an extension of the Vindhya Range.



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General Studies-2

World Customs Organisation (WCO)

Why in News?

India has become the Vice-Chair (Regional Head) of the Asia Pacific Region of World Customs Organisation (WCO) for a period of two years, from July, 2018 to June, 2020.

Membership of WCO

The WCO has divided its Membership into six Regions. Each of the six Regions is represented by a regionally elected Vice-Chairperson to the WCO Council.

About WCO:

WCO represents **182 Customs administrations** across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade.

As the global centre of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.

General Studies-3

Index Numbers of Wholesale Price in India

The official Wholesale Price Index for 'All Commodities' (Base: 2011-12=100) for the month of June, 2018 rose by 1.1 percent to 119.2 (provisional) from 117.9 (provisional) for the previous month.

INFLATION

The annual rate of inflation, based on monthly WPI, stood at 5.77% (provisional) for the month of June, 2018 (over June, 2017) as compared to 4.43% (provisional) for the previous month and 0.90% during the corresponding month of the previous year.



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The movement of the index for the various commodity groups is summarized below:-

IIP Composition:

PRIMARY ARTICLES --(Weight 22.62%)

FUEL & POWER-- (Weight 13.15%)

MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS --(Weight 64.23%)

Net Neutrality:

Why in News?

In a vital decision that will help secure the rights of Internet users in the country, the Telecom Commission has approved the recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on net neutrality.

What is Net Neutrality?

Net neutrality is the principle that Internet service providers treat all data on the Internet equally, and not discriminate or charge differently by user, content, website, platform, application, type of attached equipment, or method of communication.

For instance, under these principles, internet service providers are unable to intentionally block, slow down or charge money for specific websites and online content.

This is sometimes enforced through government mandate.

Benefits of Net Neutrality:

Combining this approval with the fact that TRAI had barred telecom service providers from charging differential rates for data services (zero rating, for example), India will now have among the strongest net neutrality regulations.



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This is as it should be. Net neutrality is the basic principle of an open Internet that does not allow for content discrimination by ISPs.

The user is free to access any web location at the same paid-for speed without any discrimination by the ISP.

This proviso has helped democratise the Internet and undergird its growth from a networked system of computers that enabled e-commerce, social interaction, knowledge flow and entertainment, among other functions.

Arguments Against:

The other argument for the repeal has been a functional one, suggesting that the Internet is very different today, controlled by a handful of big companies, unlike the much more egalitarian environment earlier; and that therefore, the principle is redundant now.

This is misleading. In India, for instance, the steep growth in Internet access and use has allowed for newer services to thrive.

The government should now ensure that net neutrality is followed in practice.

Harrier Birds:

Why in News?

Harrier birds, a migratory raptor species that regularly visits vast swathes of India, are declining.

This may foretell lurking dangers to the country's grasslands.

Observation Made:

While a general declining trend was observed in all the monitored sites, researchers noted the most dramatic changes at the Rollapadu Bustard Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool district, one of the largest.

In the mid-1990s, an estimated 1,000 birds roosted here.



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By 2016, the number was down to less than 100 birds. In Hessarghatta on the outskirts of Bengaluru, Western Marsh Harriers declined significantly, leaving the area nearly deserted.

Reasons for Population Decline:

The gravest concern is the loss of grasslands, either to urbanisation or to agriculture.

In February-March, peak season for the arrival of the birds, farmlands are burnt or over-grazed.

Of the 15 roosting sites surveyed, eight no longer exist as grasslands, and only five are protected.

Excessive use of pesticides in farms in and around the roosting sites could also be a reason for the lowered population counts.

In crops such as cotton, the use of pesticides kills grasshoppers, the harriers' primary prey, and could lead to mortality of the birds themselves as they are on the top of the food chain.

IUCN Status:

Globally, of the 16 harrier species, only two are listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, even though most of them are declining.

While more intensive research is needed, the conservation of India's grasslands could be a start in protecting the magnificent migrators.