



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED ON 29 JAN 2019

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UN Report on Hunger:

Why in News?

Feeding a hungry planet is growing increasingly difficult as climate change and depletion of land and other resources undermine [food](#) systems, the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization said on Wednesday as it renewed appeals for better policies and technologies to reach “zero hunger.”

Hunger and Climate Change:

- Population growth requires supplies of more nutritious food at affordable prices, but increasing farm output is hard given the “fragility of the natural resource base” since humans have outstripped Earth’s carrying capacity in terms of land, water and climate change, the report said.
- About 820 million people are malnourished.
- The FAO and International Food Policy Research Institute released the report at the outset of a global conference aimed at speeding up efforts to achieve zero hunger around the world.

Civil strife, conflicts

- Food security remains tenuous for many millions of people who lack access to affordable, adequately nourishing diets for a variety of reasons, the most common being poverty.
- But it’s also endangered by civil strife and other conflicts.
- In Yemen, where thousands of civilians have died in airstrikes by a Saudi-led coalition, the aid group Save the Children says 85,000 children under 5 may have died of hunger or disease in the civil war.
- In Afghanistan, severe drought and conflict have displaced more than 2,50,000 people, according to UNHCR, the U.N. refugee agency.

Salient Observations of report:



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- FAO Director-General Jose Graziano da Silva noted that the number of hungry and malnourished people in the world has risen to levels last seen a decade ago.
- After decades of gains in fighting hunger, this is a serious setback and FAO and the U.N. sister agencies, together with member governments and other partners, are all very concerned.
- The FAO estimates that global demand for food will jump by half from 2013 to 2050.
- Farmers can expand land use to help make up some of the difference, but that option is constrained in places like Asia and the Pacific and urbanisation is eating up still more land that once may have been used for agriculture.
- Increasing farm output beyond sustainable levels can cause permanent damage to ecosystems, the report said, noting that it often causes soil erosion, pollution with plastic mulching, pesticides and fertilizers, and a loss of biodiversity.
- China destroys 12 million tons of tainted grain each year, at a loss of nearly \$2.6 billion, the report said.

National Conference on "Prison Design":

Why in News?

The first ever National Conference on "**Prison Design**" will begin in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh tomorrow(29th January 2019). The two-day conference is being hosted by the DG Prison, Andhra Pradesh on the behalf of State and is being sponsored by the Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D).

Aim of Conference:



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- This conference aims to provide a platform to the Sr. Police officers, Prison officers and Architects from Prison Department and Police Housing Corporation to meet and deliberate upon on the various issues relating with planning, Design and Constructions of prison keeping in view the safety and security need as well as administrative ease of day to day functioning of the prison.
- The idea of conference is also to incorporate new construction technology, Information and Communication Technologies and modern safety and security gadgets in Prison Administration, besides ensuring conducive living environment in a holistic sense.

Prison administration:

- Prison Administration is a very important aspect of Criminal Justice System.
- Though as per the constitutional provision, it is a state subject but the Govt of India over the years has been providing all the requisite support and assistance to modernise the correctional administration system in the country.

About BPR&D:

- BPR&D is committed to provide synergetic platform to all Prison professionals, Police Officials and civil Architects to evolve better "**Prison Designs**" suiting to the safety and security needs of the prison.
- It also aims to ease handling of the administration of the prisons on one hand and provide conducive structures for humane living conditions for the inmates as per the constitutional mandates.

Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) :

Why in News?

A Signing ceremony of Agreement between India and OECD for India's participation in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2021, in presence of Union HRD Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar was held in New Delhi today.



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Details of agreement:

- India will participate in the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) to be conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2021.
- The participation in PISA 2021 would indicate the health of the education system and would motivate other schools /states in the subsequent cycles.
- This will lead to improvement in the learning levels of the children and enhance the quality of education in the country.
- OECD has agreed to ask some of the questions based on Indian context.

About PISA:

- PISA is a **competency based assessment** which unlike content-based assessment, measures the extent to which students have acquired key competencies that are essential for full participation in modern societies. It would lead to recognition and acceptability of Indian students and prepare them for the global economy in the 21st century.

What are the key features of PISA?

1. PISA is a triennial international survey (every three years) which aims to evaluate the education system worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students.
2. Students are assessed in reading, mathematics, science and collaborative problem-solving.
3. Participation in PISA allows benchmarking performance against a wide range of countries.
4. PISA uses test items aligned with international benchmarks. Test items are adapted to the local context and language, pilot tested and validated before being used for the test.
5. OECD have agreed to contextualize the questions for Indian students.



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National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP)

Why in News?

In order to make agriculture education useful, the recommendations of the 5th Dean Committee have been implemented in all the Agricultural Universities under which amendment of agricultural degree courses has been done to include biotechnology, information technology, bio-informatics, remote sensing, organic farming, agriculture business management etc.

About the Project:

- Emphasis has been given on experiential learning, skill and entrepreneurship development.
- Along with this, four new programs, B.Tech (Biotechnology), B.Sc. Community Science, B.Sc. Food Nutrition and Dietetics and B.Sc. Sericulture have also been included.
- ICAR has recently launched Rs 1100 crore ambitious National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) to attract talent and strengthen higher agricultural education in the country.
- This project will be funded by the World Bank and the Indian Government on a 50:50 basis.
- In addition, a four year degree in Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries and Forestry has been declared a professional degree.
- Rajendra Agriculture University has been upgraded as Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University to strengthen the government's effort to bring green revolution in Eastern India including North East.

Other Steps Taken:

- In order to promote the participation of students in agricultural business, Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) scheme is being run, under which practical experience of agriculture and entrepreneurship is provided to undergraduate students.



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- A MoU has been signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to promote skill development in the field of agriculture.
- Under this, skill development training programs are being organized regularly in KVKs across the country. These training programs are based on agriculture and related topics.

Superbug:

Why in News?

In a significant find in the global spread of multi-drug resistant (MDR) bacteria, scientists have found a "superbug" gene — first detected in New Delhi over a decade back — in one of the last "pristine" places on Earth that is some 12,870 km away.

Details of Find:

- Soil samples taken in Svalbard — a Norwegian archipelago between mainland Norway and the North Pole — have now confirmed the spread of blaNDM-1 (called New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase-1) into the High Arctic.
- This Antibiotic-Resistant Gene (ARG), originally found in Indian clinical settings, conditionally provides multi-drug resistance (MDR) in microorganisms, revealed the research team from U.K.'s Newcastle University.
- British scientists later found the "superbug" in New Delhi's public water supply.
- Since then, the resistant gene has been found in over 100 countries, including new variants.

How it reached there?

- Carried in the gut of animals and people, the new research said that blaNDM-1 and other ARGs were found in Arctic soils that were likely spread



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through the faecal matter of birds, other wildlife and human visitors to the area.

Project Cosmic Microwave Background-Bharat

Why in news?

A three-week long programme entitled, '[Cosmology – The next decade](#)', which consisted of a school to train early career researchers and a workshop for active researchers in the field of cosmology came to a close on January 25.

In the workshop, [project CMB-Bharat](#), which could help us listen to the faintest murmurs of the early universe, was discussed.

About the Project:

- CMB expands into Cosmic Microwave Background, and the scientific space project CMB-Bharat has been presented as a [proposal to ISRO](#) and is being considered by it.
- This was one highlight of the workshop that also saw discussions on the X-ray telescope eROSITA which is to be launched in June 2019.

CMB-Bharat

- CMB-Bharat is a proposal for comprehensive next generation Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) mission in international collaboration with major Indian contribution.
- It proposes 'near-ultimate' survey polarisation that would exhaust the primordial information in this 'gold-mine' for cosmology."

Significance of project:



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- The “ultrahigh goal” according to him was that the project would reveal the first clear signature of quantum gravity and ultrahigh energy physics in the very early universe.
- This referred to quantum gravitational waves, which are different from what LIGO detectors had observed that were classical in nature.
- The “high” goals lay in neutrino physics where we could discover more about the neutrino species, their total mass and mass hierarchy; map all dark matter and most baryons in the observable universe.
- The problem of knowing the hierarchy of masses of the different species of neutrino is a very deep one and being hotly pursued by many countries.
- The “legacy” was to improve probe of the cosmological model by a factor of over 10 million, and to generate rich galactic and extragalactic astrophysics datasets.
- CMB-Bharat mission presents an unique opportunity for India to take the lead on prized quests in fundamental science in a field that has proved to be a spectacular success, while simultaneously gaining valuable expertise in cutting-edge technology for space capability through global cooperation.