



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

GS-1

Taj Mahal Beautification:

Why in News?

A proposal by the [Uttar Pradesh](#) government to construct a barrage across the Yamuna, a kilometre and a half away from the Taj Mahal, is stuck between two expert committees of the Union Environment Ministry. .

About the Project:

The project of the Irrigation Department envisages construction of a barrage for "securing the foundation of the Taj Mahal, improving the water level at Agra, beautifying and navigating the Yamuna at 1.50 km downstream of the Taj Mahal."

Benefits:

- Such a storage, generally used in irrigation and hydro-electricity projects, would ensure a minimum quantity of water all through the year.
- It would help to recharge the ground water and facilitate navigation through river routes.
- That stretch of the Yamuna is a National Waterway (Delhi to Allahabad) and the barrage would serve as an alternative to motorised transport and would also help to develop a green belt around the pond which would "improve the environment around the Taj Mahal;

Background:

- A discussion on the scheme first began at the Union Environment Ministry last year.
- A committee led by Satish Wate, former Director of the CSIR-National Environment Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur, ruled that the project ought to be evaluated by the Environment Appraisal Committee (River Valley and Hydro Electric Projects).
- This committee, on February 27, held that the project did not involve hydropower generation or irrigation and therefore was better suited for another Environment Ministry committee — the one on infrastructure projects — and known as the EAC (Infrastructure Projects-2).



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

GS-2

Urbanisation & it's Effects:

How urbanisation of cities in the last decade can sharply increase the local temperature has been well documented by a recent study undertaken by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar.

Observation in Odisha:

- Blame it on increased urbanisation, the local surface temperature in large cities in Odisha — Cuttack and Bhubaneswar — has increased by as much as 40-50% during the period 2001-2010.
- While temperature has increased by about 0.9 degree C due to regional warming, which is a global phenomenon, urbanisation or changes in land use and land cover alone has contributed 40-50% of that increase in these cities.
- In other words, there has been a 0.5 degree C increase in absolute local temperature in large cities in the State during the period 2001 to 2010 solely due to urbanisation.
- In the case of smaller cities and town in the State of Odisha, the change in local warming caused by urbanisation or changes in land use and land cover has been about 25%.

Thirty-year data

- The team used 30 years of surface temperature measurements taken from over 22 sites over the state of Odisha coupled with Earth Observation data and model output to explore the effect of land use land cover and its changes.
- The 0.5 degree C increase in local temperature in Bhubaneswar can be traced back to rapid urbanisation of the city in about 15 years.

Cropping patterns

- The study shows that across the State of Odisha, changes in cropping pattern and urbanisation have together had a clear effect on long term temperature changes. For instance, the cropping pattern has seen a clear shift from Kharif crops (July-October) to Rabi crops (October-March).



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

- Compared with 2004, Kharif crop cultivation area in 2010 had reduced by 28,000 sq. km, whereas there has been an increase of 38,000 sq. km in Rabi crop cultivation area during the same period.

Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

Why in News?

The government's flagship health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) — is now undergoing a price review of the over 1,000 medical packages being offered to patients.

Why is it being done?

- The Indian Medical Association has long been demanding a “reasonable and fair package rate” under Ayushman Bharat while consultants such as PricewaterhouseCoopers had said the rates were not sustainable for quality healthcare.
- The government has set up committees of leading doctors from across the country to review the cost of nearly 1,300 medical packages.
- This is done to ensure sustainability and quality healthcare.

Salient Features of Scheme:

Ayushman Bharat consists of two major elements.

1. National Health Protection Scheme

- Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Scheme, which will cover over 10 crore (one hundred million) poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore (five hundred million) beneficiaries) providing coverage up to 5 lakh rupees (\$7,100) per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
- Benefits of the scheme are portable across the country and a beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public or private empaneled hospitals across the country.
- It will be an entitlement based scheme with entitlement decided on the basis of deprivation criteria in the SECC database.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

- One of the core principles of Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission is to co-operative federalism and flexibility to states.
- For giving policy directions and fostering coordination between Centre and States, it is proposed to set up Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Council (AB-NHPMC) at apex level Chaired by Union Health and Family Welfare Minister. States would need to have State Health Agency (SHA) to implement the scheme.
- Covering almost all secondary and many tertiary hospitalizations (except a negative list).[\[6\]](#)

2. Wellness centres

- Rs 1200 crore (\$170 million) allocated for 1.5 lakh (150,000) health and wellness centres, Under this 1.5 lakh centres will be setup to provide comprehensive health care, including for non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services, apart from free essential drugs and diagnostic services.
- The government will upgrade existing Public Health Centres to Wellness Centres. The welfare scheme has been rolled out on August 15, 2018.
- Further, Contribution of private sector through CSR and philanthropic institutions in adopting these centres is also envisaged

Protection of [Children](#) from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:

Context:

A total of 36,022 cases were registered in 2016 under the Protection of [Children](#) from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. .



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

Performance of various States:

- According to the annexure given by Ms. Irani, Uttar Pradesh had the most number of cases registered in 2016, with 4,954 cases. Maharashtra came a close second with 4,815 cases, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 4,717 cases.
- Uttar Pradesh, though, has seen a drop in the number of cases in three years. In 2014, over 8,000 cases were reported. That number fell by almost 40% by the time 2016 ended. Maharashtra, on the other hand, has seen an increase, from 3,926 to 4,815 cases.
- When it comes to cases closed, Madhya Pradesh had the highest rate -- with over 50% of cases being closed, as opposed to West Bengal, where only 10% of cases were closed in 2016.

- In Manipur, although the number of cases registered were only 136, the number closed was only 11. Arunachal Pradesh too has dismal numbers when it comes to cases closed -- only one of 169 cases.
- The closure rate of POCSO cases was just 31% across States and Union Territories in 2016, a slight improvement since 2014, when only 22% of the cases were disposed of.

About the Act:

What is POCSO Act 2012 ?

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 is applicable to the whole of India. The POCSO Act 2012 defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years and provides protection to all children under the age of 18 years from sexual abuse. It also intends to protect the child through all stages of judicial process and gives paramount importance to the principle of "best interest of the child".



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

ASEAN :

Why in News?

Southeast Asian leaders have pressed their call for self-restraint in the disputed South [China](#) Sea after a new incident and renewed their alarm over the U.S.-China trade war with one warning it may spiral out of control.

The long-raging territorial conflicts and the protracted dispute between the two global economic powerhouses are high on the agenda of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations leaders meeting Sunday in an annual summit in the Thai capital of Bangkok.

About ASEAN:

- The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (is a [regional intergovernmental organization](#) comprising ten countries in [Southeast Asia](#), which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates [economic, political, security, military, educational](#), and [sociocultural](#) integration among its members and other countries in Asia.
- It also regularly engages other countries in the [Asia-Pacific](#) region and beyond.
- A major partner of [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation](#), ASEAN maintains a global network of alliances and dialogue partners and is considered by many as a global powerhouse, the central union for cooperation in [Asia-Pacific](#), and a prominent and influential organization.
- It is involved in numerous international affairs, and hosts diplomatic missions throughout the world



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

Members:



GS-3

Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP):

Why in News?

Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP), claimed as the world's largest multi-stage and multi-purpose lift irrigation scheme, was inaugurated by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao at Medigadda where the first barrage of the project is located in Jayashankar-Bhupalapally district on Friday.

About the Project:

- The project is intended to irrigate over 37 lakh acres of new and existing ayacut, providing drinking water to Hyderabad and villages en route and supplying water for industrial needs by lifting 195 tmc ft of water from the Godavari at 2 tmc ft a day during the flood season.
- By lifting one more tmc ft water a day later, the government plans to bring another 8 lakh acres under irrigation.
- **Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project [KLIP]** is a multi-purpose [irrigation](#) project on the [Godavari River](#) in [Kaleshwaram](#), [Bhoopalpally](#), [Telangana](#), India.
- This is world's largest multi-stage lift irrigation project.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

- Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project starts at the confluence point of [Pranahita River](#) and *Godavari River* i.e, at Kaleshwaram village in Telangana.
- Pranahita river in itself is a confluence of various other smaller tributaries like Wardha, Penganga and Wainganga Rivers.
- It is estimated that Pranahita river has an annual average flow of 280 TMC.
- It remains untapped as its course is principally through the dense forests and other ecologically sensitive zones such as wild life sanctuaries.

Controversies

- This project is facing several criticisms.
- First, the main criticism is aimed at its economic viability, measured in terms of return on investment. Setting aside the fixed costs, the operating costs involve heavy expenditures on maintaining the pumping stations and the cost of electricity to run the pumps.
- Unless the agricultural benefits accrued to the farmers are at least twice as much - if not more - critics feel the project is not justified. Second, is there enough flow in the river to meet the expectations?

Side Pocketing:

What is the side pocketing rule?

- Simply put, side pocketing is a framework that allows mutual funds to segregate the bad assets in a separate portfolio within their debt schemes.
- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) introduced the framework in December — primarily triggered by the IL&FS fiasco — after it emerged that many fund houses have huge exposure to the beleaguered entity and could potentially take a huge hit on their net asset value thereby affecting investor returns.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

How does it work?

- The capital markets regulator has laid down that such a portfolio can be created only if there is a credit event at the issuer level in the form of downgrade of a debt or money market instrument to 'below investment grade' or subsequent downgrades from such levels.
- In other words, if a debt instrument is downgraded to default rating by credit rating agencies, then the fund house has the option to create a side pocket so that good assets can be ring-fenced.

How does it benefit investors?

- Side pocketing segregates the bad assets from the good ones.
- All existing investors in the scheme are allotted equal number of units in the segregated portfolio as held in the main portfolio and no redemption or subscription is allowed in the segregated portfolio.
- Thereafter, the units have to be listed on a stock exchange within 10 days to facilitate exit of the unit holders.
- Effectively, this makes the price discovery of the bad assets a transparent procedure with investors having the freedom of either selling it at prevailing price or holding it if they expect the value to recover in future.

Can the side pocket rule be misused?

- When side pocketing was introduced, a section of market participants felt that it could be misused by fund houses to hide their bad investment decisions.
- SEBI, however, has put in place checks and balances to minimise any such misuse.
- The regulator has said that trustees of all fund houses will have to put in place a framework that would negatively impact the performance incentives of fund managers, chief investment officers (CIOs), etc. involved in the investment process of securities under the segregated portfolio.
- So, fund managers know that any creation of such side pocket in the future would also affect their own appraisals and incentives. Further, SEBI has also said that side pocket should not be looked upon as a sign of encouraging undue credit risks as any misuse of the option would be considered serious and stringent action can be taken.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

RBI Committee:

Why in News?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in consultation with the government, has set up a six-member committee to review the economic capital framework of the [central bank](#).

Members:

- Former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan will be the committee's chairman and former Deputy Governor Rakesh Mohan deputy chairman.
- The other members are Economic Affairs Secretary Subash Chandra Garg, RBI Deputy Governor N.S. Vishwanathan and two board members of the RBI — Bharat Doshi and Sudhir Mankad.
- Dr. Jalan was the Governor of the RBI between November 1997 and September 2003.

About the Committee:

- The committee would submit its report within 90 days from the date of its first meeting, the RBI said in a statement on Wednesday.
- The terms of reference of the committee would be to review status, need and justification of various provisions, reserves and buffers presently provided for by the RBI, keeping in mind 'public policy mandate of the RBI, including financial stability considerations.'

Global best practices

- The committee will also review best practices followed by the central banks globally in making assessment and provisions for risks, to which central bank balance sheets are subjected.
- The panel would also suggest an adequate level of risk provisioning that the RBI needs to maintain, and to determine whether it is holding provisions, reserves and buffers in surplus or deficit of the required level.
- The committee would also propose a suitable profit distribution policy taking into account all the likely situations of the RBI, including holding more provisions than required and the RBI holding less provisions than required, the statement said.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 24-June-2019

Background:

- After the government started pushing the central bank to review its economic capital framework, the RBI board, at its meeting on November 19, decided to set up a committee to review the issue.
- The economic capital issue was a bone of contention, among other issues, between the central bank and the Finance Ministry.
- **Chikungunya:**
- **Why in News?**

The Institute of Life Sciences (ILS), which functions under the Department of Biotechnology, has entered into a non-exclusive license for product commercialisation after having successfully developed antibodies against the Chikungunya viral (CHIKV) infection.

Significant impact

- Generation of antibodies has had significant impact on the progress of CHIKV-based research.
- It will help researchers unravel myriad aspects of virus pathogenesis. Moreover, with greater light shed upon the CHIKV infection biology using these antibodies, research communities are now a step closer to developing efficacious antivirals and other control strategies against the Chikungunya virus.
- "With no prior antibodies reported against CHIKV, Dr. Chattopadhyay's group was the first to develop and characterize novel, highly sensitive and specific polyclonal antibodies against the non-structural proteins - nsP1, nsP3 and nsP4 of CHIKV.
- Furthermore, her laboratory has also developed and characterized a monoclonal antibody against nsP2 of CHIKV.

Lack of information

- The molecular virologist, who has 20 years of experience in the field, and her team, started working on this aspect as there was hardly any information on the basic mechanisms underlying CHIKV virus infection and pathogenesis.

ILS sources said the antibodies against CHIKV were receiving a tremendous response, and were being purchased by research laboratories across world.