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News: Union Education Minister launches Bhasha Sangam initiative for schools, Bhasha Sangam Mobile App and Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Mobile Quiz.

Bhasha Sangam

- Bhasha Sangam is an initiative of the Ministry of Education under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, to teach basic sentences of everyday usage in 22 Indian languages.
- The idea is that people should acquire basic conversational skills in an Indian language other than their mother tongue.

Initiatives launched under Bhasha Sangam:

- An initiative for school children that is being made available on DIKSHA, ePathshala and through 22 booklets.
- **Bhasha Sangam Mobile App** developed in collaboration with myGov, by a start up called Multibhashi.

Bhasha Sangam Initiative for schools

- Bhasha Sangam Initiative for schools has been developed by NCERT.

- 100 sentences in 22 scheduled languages are presented in such a way that children in school will be able to read in the Indian language, in Devanagari script, in roman script and translations into Hindi and English.
- 100 sentences are presented in audio and video form with Indian Sign Language.
- Through this programme of Bhasha Sangam learners in school will be able to get acquainted with all the languages-their scripts, pronunciation.
- The initiative is available on DIKSHA, ePathshala and 22 booklets.

Bhasha Sangam Mobile App

- Bhasha Sangam Mobile App is an initiative of Department of Higher Education (DoHE), in collaboration with MyGov.
- The App has been developed by a start up Multibhashi, selected by myGov through a competition.
- The App initially has 100 sentences of every day usage in 22 Indian languages.
- These sentences are available in both Roman script and in the script of the given language, and also in audio format. More sentences will be added to the list.
- A learner will pass through stages on the basis of testing. There is also a detailed testing in the end with generation of digital certificate.

- The app will be made available in both Android and iOS.

News: India will achieve net zero emissions by 2070, says PM

- India will achieve net zero emissions latest by 2070, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the COP26 summit in Glasgow.
- Until Monday, India was the only major emitter that had not committed to a timeline to achieve net zero, or a year by which it would ensure its net carbon dioxide emissions would be zero.
- India also committed to reduce its carbon emissions until 2030 by a billion tonnes. India will also reduce its emissions intensity per unit of GDP by less than 45%. India would also install systems to generate 500 gigawatt of renewable energy by 2030, a 50 GW increase from its existing target.

Net Zero Emissions

- 'Net zero emissions' refers to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere.
- First, human-caused emissions (like those from fossil-fueled vehicles and factories) should be reduced as close to zero as possible. Second, any remaining

GHGs should be balanced with an equivalent amount of carbon removal, for example by restoring forests.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

(UNFCCC)

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was drafted on 9th may 1992 as **part of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro)** and came into force on 21st march 1994 at the ratification of 50 signatories.
- Aim of the convention is to “**stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system**”.
- The convention is **although Non- binding in nature**.
- **Paris Agreement of 2015** is one of the important underlying protocol taken by Parties to the UNFCCC, which asserts to limit the rise of temperature by 2^o C b 2100 and efforts to be taken to reduce it by 1.5^oC.

Parties to the UNFCCC are classified as:

- **Annex I countries:** Industrialized (developed) countries and "economies in transition" (EITs).
- **Annex II countries:** Of the Parties listed in Annex I of the Convention, 24 are also listed in Annex II of the Convention, including the European Union. These Parties are made up of members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Annex II Parties are required to provide financial and technical support to the EITs and developing countries to assist them in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation) and manage the impacts of climate change (climate change adaptation).
- **Annex B countries:** Parties listed in Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol are Annex I Parties with first- or second-round Kyoto greenhouse gas emissions targets.
- **Least-developed countries (LDCs):** 47 Parties are LDCs, and are given special status under the treaty in view of their limited capacity to adapt to the effects of climate change.
- **Non-Annex I countries:** Parties to the UNFCCC not listed in Annex I of the Convention are mostly low-income developing countries. Developing countries may volunteer to become Annex I countries when they are sufficiently developed.
- CoP to UNFCCC are done once in every year.

- Glasgow (UK) hosts the ongoing CoP 26 .

News: Rescue guide launched for Ganges river dolphin'

- Recently, the Jal **Shakti Ministry** released a guide for the safe rescue and release of stranded Ganges river dolphins.
- The document has been prepared by the Turtle Survival Alliance and the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department (EFCCD) of the Uttar Pradesh Government.
- The manual is endorsed by the IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group.
- Best practices on crowd control, dolphin capture from canals and handling, transfer, transport and release are part of the guide.

Ganges River Dolphin

- Ganges River Dolphin is also known as **South Asian River Dolphin**.
- It is one of the **four-subspecies of freshwater** river dolphin in the world, others being **Baiji of Yangtze River in China, Boto of the Amazon River** and the **Indus river Dolphin (also called Bhulan)** (Indus river dolphin was recently declared as state aquatic animal of Punjab).

- Indus river Dolphin is spotted in India in Beas conservation reserve only (recently declared Ramsar site). The Beas River is dotted with islands, sand bars and braided channels, creating a complex environment supporting substantial biodiversity. Further threatened species include the endangered mahseer and hog deer as well as the vulnerable smooth-coated otter.
- Ganges River Dolphin is a blind dolphin, so it uses Echolocation for effective predation.
- Female dolphins are larger than males.
- The females attain sexual maturity at an age of 10-12 years, while the males mature earlier.
- The gestation period is 9-11 months and a female gives birth to only one calf, once in 2-3 years.
- It is designated as the National Aquatic Animal of India & the city animal of Guwahati.
- They are distributed across seven states in India: Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
- The Ganges river dolphin is found in parts of the Ganges-Meghna-Brahmaputra and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.
- They favour areas of the river where fish are plentiful and the water current is slower.

- IUCN Status: Endangered (for both Gangetic and Indus sub-species).
- CITES Status: Appendix I.
- Wildlife Protection Act: Schedule I.
- It is also listed in Appendix I and Appendix II of Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS).
- A stretch of Ganges in Bihar is designated as Dolphin Sanctuary and named it as Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (only one of the kind).
- A list of animals including Ganges River Dolphin are included in the 'list of priority species to be secured' under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
- Recently, The first Dolphin Observatory in India was decided to setup in Vikramshila Sanctuary in Bihar.
- Threats faced include Entangling in Fish nets, Uncontrolled hunting for its oil and meat, Pollution of Ganges and Lowered water levels in Ganges.
- Rising salinity in the Sunderbans region of India is leading to a decrease in its population in the region.
- My Ganga My Dolphin campaign was launched on October 5th 2020 to conduct a dolphin census in a 250 km stretch from Bijnor (UP) to Narora (UP).
Currently, there are 36 dolphins in Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary.