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News: Jute

- West Bengal is experiencing a crisis that has led to the closure of several Jute Mills.

Reasons behind the closure

- High Rate of Procurement by Mills
- Farmers are far-off from the mills locations and Cumbersome procurement process involved.
- Hoarding
- Impact of Cyclone Amphan (May 2020)

Jute

- Jute is a low –land tropical, plantation and cash crop which is grown entirely over Ganga – Brahmaputra Delta, in India and Bangladesh.
- It is used for making coarse cloth, bags, sacks and decorative items. It is a cash crop in West Bengal and adjoining eastern parts of the country.
- India lost large jute growing areas to East Pakistan (Bangladesh) during partition.
- Jute crop requires humid climate with temperature fluctuating between 24 degree Celsius and 38 degree Celsius.
- The minimum rainfall required for jute cultivation is 1000 mm. New grey alluvial soil of good depth receiving silt from annual floods is most suitable for jute growth.
- At present, India produces about three-fifth of jute production of the world.
- West Bengal accounts for about three-fourths of the production in the country. Bihar and Assam are other jute growing areas.
- Being concentrated only in a few states, this crop accounts for only about 0.5 per cent of the total cropped area in the country.
- Even though India is the largest producer of Jute, Bangladesh is the largest exporter of Jute in the world.

Jute – Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise for Jute (ICARE)

- Jute – ICARE is an **initiative of the Ministry of Textiles** to **double the income of Jute farmers**.
- It introduced some of **the better agronomic practices and microbial – assisted retting** among farmers.
- **Retting is a process in which jute is placed in liquid so as to promote loosening of the fibers from the woody tissue.**

Issues faced by Jute Industry

The main problems being faced by the Jute industry are the following:

- **Inadequate supply of raw materials** – After independence, 70 per cent of the jute producing areas went to Bangladesh.
- Thus, the jute industry suffers from inadequate supply of raw jute.
- **Competition from substitutes** – Paper, plastics, cloth and hemp has emerged as substitutes and are available at cheaper rates in the world market.
- **Obsolete machinery** – Many jute mills are uneconomical because of outdated machinery. Other reasons are-labour problem and irregular supply of raw jute.

News: World Press Freedom Index

- On the World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD) (3rd May), the 20th edition of the World Press Freedom Index was published by Reporters without Borders (RSF).

World Press Freedom Index

- World Press Freedom Index was published by **Reporters without Borders**. Latest **Rank of India was 150th which plummeted from 142nd**.
- Top performer remains to be **Norway** (for the fifth successive year).
- Worst performer was **North Korea from a list 180 total countries** assessed.

India's Neighbours

- **Nepal** has climbed up by 30 points in the global ranking at **76th position**.
- The index placed **Pakistan at 157th position, Sri Lanka 146th, Bangladesh 162nd and Myanmar at 176th position**.
- **China** was ranked at **175th position**.
- The decline in Indian performance is accounted to the Pressure exerted by Gov. to accept the nationalist Hindu lie.
- The **security of Journalists has improved, reduction of deaths from 6 to 0**.
- There has been constant violation of press freedom.