

24 to 30 – 06 – 2022

News: Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLNP)

- Manipur's Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLNP) residents oppose the site's relocation.
- People argue that the proposed site has no connection with efforts to save the endangered deer. On the other hand, the people in surrounding villages have been doing everything possible to protect the deer.

Keibul Lamjao National Park

- Keibul Lamjao National Park is located in the **Loktak Lake of Bishnupur district of Manipur.**
- It is the **only floating National Park in the World.**
- Major species in the park are **Brow-antlered deer and Sambar.**
- Keibul Lamjao National park is **drained by the Manipur River.**
- Threats faced includes the **excessive flooding resulting in the destruction of phumdis and thereby sangais.**
- The park was initially **declared as a sanctuary in 1966, and later upgraded to the status of National Park in 1977.**

News: Bedti – Varada River Interlinking Project

- Environmental groups in Karnataka have criticised the project to link the Bedti and Varada rivers in Karnataka, calling it unscientific and a waste of public money.

Bedti – Varada River Interlinking Project

- The Bedti-Varada project was envisaged in 1992 to supply drinking water.
- The plan aims to link the Bedti, a river flowing west into the Arabian Sea, with the Varada, a tributary of the Tungabhadra River, which flows into the Krishna, which in turn flows into the Bay of Bengal.
- A massive dam will be erected at Hirevadatti in Gadag district.
- A second dam will be built on the Pattanahalla River at Menasagoda in Sirsi, Uttara Kannada district.
- Both dams will take water to the Varada via tunnels.
- The water will reach Kengre and will then go down a 6.88 km tunnel to Hakkalumane, where it will join the Varada.
- The project thus envisages taking water from the water surplus Sirsi-Yellapura region of Uttara Kannada district to the arid Raichur, Gadag and Koppal districts.

- A total of 302 million cubic metres of water from Pattanahalla and Shalmalahalla tributaries of the Bedti and Varada rivers, while 222 million cubic metres of water will be drawn from the barrage at Suremane built against the Bedti river.
- The Project would need 61 megawatts of power to pull the water all the way to Gadag. Even after this, it is unknown whether the water would reach Gadag.

Issues associated with this Project

Difficult to Redirect

- It is difficult to redirect a westward-flowing river to flow eastward.

Rain-fed Rivers

- In early summer, the Bedti and Varada rivers begin to dry up.
- It is a sad irony that government scientists plan to interconnect these rivers under the pretext of providing drinking water despite knowing well that they do not flow all year.

Project Report not Accurate

- The **Detailed Project Report (DPR)** drawn up by the irrigation department is not accurate as it was drawn without assessing the availability of water and quoting the observation of the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) report on the interconnection of the Bedti-Aghanashini and Varada rivers.

Environmental Impact

- **Over 500 acres of forests will be lost.** The end result will be that there will still be no water.
- **Flora and fauna will also suffer** due to this project.
- The **Bedti valley has been designated as an active biodiversity zone by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.**
- The area is home to 1,741 types of flowering plants as well as 420 species of birds and animals.
- The nutrients that the river carries with it are responsible for sustaining fish stocks, especially in the Bedti's estuary in Dedi.
- The river valley serves as a corridor for around 35 different animal species. The Bedti is known as Gangavali in the estuary region.

Affect Lifelines for Thousands

- The **Bedti and Varada** rivers are also lifelines for thousands of farmers in the **Malenadu** region, the foothills of the **Western Ghats**, in addition to fishing communities along the coast.

News: P – Notes

- Investment in the Indian capital markets through Participatory notes (P-notes) dropped to Rs 86,706 crore till May-end, 2022.

Participatory notes (P-notes)

- Participatory Notes are also known as **Overseas Derivative Instruments, Equity Linked Notes, Capped Return Notes, and Participating Return Notes** etc.
- In January 2014 when the Indian securities market regulator, **SEBI** issued the new Regulations for Foreign Portfolio Investors, **participatory notes got formally defined** under the tag "Offshore Derivative Instrument" (ODIs) in Section 2(1) (j) of the said regulation.
- As per this definition, **participatory notes or ODIs are issued by selected foreign portfolio investors** (which is a broad category also including FIIs. Hence, **Regulation excludes certain category of Foreign portfolio investors, like**

individuals, from issuing the PNs) against securities held by it that are listed or proposed to be listed on any recognized stock exchange in India.

- Participatory notes (P-notes) are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be a part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly after going through a due diligence process.
- Such Foreign Portfolio Investor must be registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- P-Notes are Offshore Derivative Investments (ODIs) with equity shares or debt securities or even an index as underlying assets.
- They provide liquidity to the investors as they can transfer the ownership by endorsement and delivery.
- While the FIIs have to report all such investments each quarter to SEBI, they need not disclose the identity of the actual investors.
- The investor in PN does not own the underlying Indian security, which is held by the FII who issues the PN.
- Thus the investors in PNs derive the economic benefits of investing in the security without actually holding it. They benefit from fluctuations in the price of the underlying security since the value of the PN is linked with the value of the underlying Indian security.

- The **PN holder also does not enjoy any voting rights** in relation to security/shares referenced by the PN.

News: PM Awas Yojana

- Recently, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) – Urban has completed seven years of successful implementation.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) (PMAY-U)

- PMAY - U is launched by **Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation**.
- It seeks to provide the provision for **Housing for All by 2022**, as the Nation completes the 75 years of Independence.
- The **beneficiaries are poor people living under EWS, LIG and Middle Income Group categories of India**. The annual income cap is up to **Rs 3 lakh for EWS**, **Rs 3-6 lakh for LIG** and **Rs 6-18 lakhs for MIG**.
- The government is providing an interest subsidy of 6.5% on housing loans which can be availed by beneficiaries for 15 years from the start of loan date.
- For identification as a EWS or LIG beneficiary under the scheme, an individual loan applicant will submit self-certificate/ affidavit as proof of income.
- A beneficiary family will comprise husband, wife, unmarried sons and/or unmarried daughters.

- The beneficiary family should not own a pucca house either in his/her name or in the name of any member of his/her family in any part of India to be eligible to receive central assistance under the mission.
- States/UTs, at their discretion, may decide a cut-off date on which beneficiaries need to be resident of that urban area for being eligible to take benefits under the scheme.
- Finance Minister announced a sub-scheme to PMAY-U that provides affordable rental housing to about 3 lakh urban migrants.

News: National Air Quality Resource Framework of India (NARFI)

- Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government inaugurated the National Mission on "National Air Quality Resource Framework of India (NARFI)".

National Air Quality Resource Framework of India (NARFI)

- National Air Quality Resource Framework of India (NARFI) has been developed by National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru.
- The NARFI is an information mechanism to help decision-makers in government, municipalities, and startups and in the private sectors to address air pollution issues in different climatic zones of India.

- Research-based audited Information and industry-oriented solutions will be shared in an easy-to-understand format.
- The short-term basic training modules tailored for different groups such as active ground level staff in government establishments, implementers, media and policymakers, would be an integral part of the framework.

Objectives

- To help enrich communication and enhance general awareness, leading to self-mitigation.

Modules: The NARFI will evolve around the following five modules

- THEME-1: Emission Inventory, Air Shed, and Mitigation
- THEME-2: Impacts on Human Health and Agriculture
- THEME-3: Integrated Monitoring, Forecasting and Advisory Framework
- THEME-4: Outreach, Social Dimension, Transition Strategy and Policy
- THEME-5: Solutions, Public-Industry Partnership, Stubble Burning & New Technologies.

Significance

- It will enable knowledge creation, developing infrastructure and industrial structures and studying its effects on human health in the country.
- It will provide an all-inclusive guide to collecting air quality data, studying its impact and implementing science-based solutions.

News: 14th BRICS Summit

- Recently, Prime Minister of India attended the 14th BRICS summit which was virtually hosted by China.
- Theme of the 14th BRICS Summit: **Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development.**
- BRICS Plus virtual conference was also held as part of the main meeting with ministers from countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Argentina, Nigeria, Senegal, and Thailand.

14th BRICS Summit

Adoption of Beijing Declaration

- Beijing Declaration states that **BRICS supports talks between Russia and Ukraine.**

- The grouping is willing to support the **United Nations’ and the International Committee of the Red Cross’s (ICRC)** efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to Ukraine.
- Countries also expressed concerns about the situation in Taliban held Afghanistan.

Discussions on the Issues

Humanitarian Situation in Ukraine

- Concerns over the **humanitarian situation in and around Ukraine** and expressed their support to efforts of the **UN Secretary-General, UN Agencies and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** to provide humanitarian assistance in accordance with the basic principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

Terrorism

- While **discussing terrorism and terror cooperation**, the BRICS countries said **that only the UN Security council has the authority for imposing sanctions.**
- On Afghanistan, BRICS countries called for **“Afghanistan authorities to achieve national reconciliation through dialogue and negotiation, and to establish a broad-based and inclusive and representative political structure”**, adding

that Afghan territory must not be used to shelter terrorists or attack any other country.

Initiative on Denial of Safe Haven to Corruption

- The **BRICS Initiative on Denial of Safe Haven to Corruption** aims to further strengthen anti corruption capacity building through education and training programs and enhance anti corruption exchanges and cooperation within multilateral frameworks.

Framework for Consumer Protection in E-commerce

- The declaration welcomed the establishment of the Digital Economy Working Group by upgrading the E-commerce Working Group.
- And the **BRICS** nations have agreed to promote consumer protection in e-commerce by advancing the implementation of **BRICS Framework for Consumer Protection in E-commerce**.

More Focus on Combating Transnational Drug Trafficking

- The summit also expressed concern over the serious drug situation in the world. **BRICS** declaration appreciate **BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group's** active role

in combating transnational drug trafficking and promoting global drug governance and will further strengthen drug control cooperation.

BRICS

- BRICS is the **economic grouping** of five major emerging national economies. Its members are **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa**.
- Population: **3.1 billion people** (41% of world population).
- Combined GDP- US \$18.6 trillion (32% of World GDP).
- Recently, **BRICS Counter Terrorism Action Plan** that will strengthen counter terror cooperation among the members of the grouping has been **finalised**.
- The discussion in this regard was held at the **sixth meeting of the BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group held on July 2021**.
- The plan is one of the key deliverables during India's Chairmanship of BRICS.

Structure

- BRICS **does not exist in form of organization**, but it is an annual summit between the supreme leaders of five nations.
- The **Chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually** among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.

- BRICS cooperation in the past decade has expanded to include an annual programme of over 100 sectoral meetings.

Objectives

- The BRICS seeks to **deepen, broaden and intensify cooperation within the grouping** and among the individual countries for more sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial development.
- BRICS takes into **consideration each member's growth, development and poverty objectives** to ensure relations are built on the respective country's economic strengths and to avoid competition where possible.
- BRICS is **emerging as a new and promising political-diplomatic entity with diverse objectives**, far beyond the original objective of reforming global financial institutions.

Areas of Cooperation

Economic Cooperation

- There are **rapidly growing trade and investment** flows between BRICS countries as well as economic cooperation activities across a range of sectors.
- Agreements have been concluded in the areas of Economic and Trade Cooperation; Innovation Cooperation, Customs Cooperation; strategic

cooperation between the BRICS Business Council , **Contingent Reserve Agreement** and the **New Development Bank**.

- These agreements contribute to **realization of the shared objectives** of deepening economic cooperation and fostering integrated trade and investment markets.

People-to-People exchange

- BRICS members have recognized the need for **strengthening People-to-People exchanges** and to foster closer cooperation in the areas of culture, sport, education, film and youth.
- People-to-People exchanges seek to forge new friendships; deepen relations and mutual understanding between BRICS peoples in the spirit of openness, inclusiveness, diversity and mutual learning.
- Such People to people exchanges include the Young Diplomats Forum, Parliamentarian Forum, Trade Union Forum, Civil BRICS as well as the Media Forum.

Political and Security Cooperation

- BRICS member political and security cooperation is aimed **at achieving peace, security, development and cooperation for a more equitable and fair world.**

- BRICS provides opportunities for **sharing policy advice and exchanges of best practices in terms of domestic and regional challenges** as well as advancing the **restructuring of the global political architecture** so that it is more balanced, resting on the pillar of multilateralism.
- BRICS is utilized as a driver for South Africa's foreign policy priorities including the pursuit of the African Agenda and South-South Cooperation.

Cooperation Mechanism

Cooperation among members is achieved through:

- Track I: Formal diplomatic engagement between the national governments.
- Track II: Engagement through government-affiliated institutions, e.g. state-owned enterprises and business councils.
- Track III: Civil society and People-to-People engagement.

Importance for India

- India can benefit from collective strength of BRICS by way of consultation and cooperation on economic issues of mutual interests, as well as topical global issues, such as, international terrorism, climate change, food and energy security, reforms of global governance institutions, etc.

- India remains engaged with the other BRICS countries (except China) on its NSG membership.
- The NDB will help India to raise and avail resources for their infrastructure and sustainable development projects. The NDB has approved its first set of loans, which included a loan of US\$ 250 million in respect of India for Multi tranche Financing Facility for Renewable Energy Financing Scheme’.

News: Lithium

- Recently, High-grade Lithium has been discovered in Nigeria.
- Greenbushes mine in Western Australia is the largest hard-rock Lithium mine in the world.
- The largest importers of lithium are South Korea, China, Japan, US and Belgium.

Lithium

- Lithium is a chemical element with the symbol Li.
- It is a soft, silvery-white metal.
- Under standard conditions, it is the lightest metal and the lightest solid element.
- It is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in mineral oil.
- It is an alkali metal and a rare metal.

- **Australia tops the production of Lithium** with 42000 tonnes followed by Chila, China and Argentina.
- **Lithium Triangle (Argentina, Bolivia and Chile) countries has 54% of the Lithium reserves** in the world.
- Chile individually holds the largest reserves of Lithium followed by Australia and Argentina.

Uses of Lithium

- Lithium metal is **used to make useful alloys**.
- For example, with lead to make 'white metal' bearings for motor engines, with aluminium to make aircraft parts, and with magnesium to make armour plates.
- In Thermonuclear reactions.
- To make electrochemical cells. Lithium is an important component in Electric Vehicles, Laptops etc.

Lithium in India

- India **currently imports all its lithium needs**.

- Recent surveys by the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) have shown the **presence of lithium resources in Mandya district, Karnataka.**
- The survey shows presence of 1,600 tonnes of lithium resources in the igneous rocks of the Marlagalla Allapatna region of Karnataka's Mandya district.

Lithium in Stars

- Recently, **Scientists have found a clue to the mystery behind the high abundance of Lithium in some evolved stars.**
- The mystery is the reason behind the high abundance of Lithium in stars, which according to predicted models must get destroyed in the hot plasma of the star.
- The research involved the **investigation of lithium among red giants showed that just about 1% of sun-like red giants** had a lithium-enriched surface.
- The research surveyed **GALAH, a collection of about 500,000 stars named after a common Australian bird** with well-determined physical and chemical properties, including lithium abundances.
- Regarding the reason for **Lithium production, scientists have for the first time confirmed that all the lithium-rich stars are burning helium** in their core.

- They speculated that lithium production is linked to the violent helium-core flash.

Lithium Triangle

- Lithium Triangle is an intersection of **Chile, Bolivia and Argentina**, known for high quality salt flats.
- Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia, Salar de Atacama in Chile and Salar de Arizaro in Argentina **contains over 45% of known global lithium reserves**.
- Beneath Salar de Uyuni, the world's largest salt flat lies the world's greatest lithium deposits.
- **Bolivia, one of South America's poorest countries, envisions development by harvesting lithium on an industrial scale from underground saltwater brines.**
- It can be mined from rock or processed from brine.
- Lithium dissolved in underground saline aquifers called "brine", pumped to surface by wells and then allowed to evaporate in vast knee-deep ponds.



