# 11 – 11 – 2021

**News:** E – Amrit Portal

➢ Government of India has launched E – Amrit Portal.

# E – Amrit Portal

➢ 'E-Amrit', a web portal on electric vehicles (EVs), developed and hosted by NITI Aayog under a collaborative knowledge exchange programme with the UK government and as part of the UK–India Joint Roadmap 2030.

➢ E-Amrit is a one-stop destination for all information on electric vehicles—busting myths around the adoption of EVs, their purchase, investment opportunities, policies, subsidies, etc.

➢ E-Amrit intends to complement initiatives of the government on raising awareness on EVs and sensitizing consumers on the benefits of switching to electric vehicles.

➢ In the recent past, India has taken many initiatives to accelerate the decarbonisation of transport and adoption of electric mobility in the country. Schemes such as FAME and PLI are especially important in creating an ecosystem for the early adoption of EVs.

➢ It has been launched in the CoP 26, Glasgow.

# Forum for Decarbonizing Transport

➢ The Forum for Decarbonizing Transport launched by NITI Aayog and World Resources Institute India (WRI – India) is a part of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)-Transport Initiative for Asia (NDC-TIA) project, which focuses on developing a coherent strategy of effective policies and the formation of a multi-stakeholder platform for decarbonising transport in the region.

➢ NDC –TIA is a joint programme of seven organisations that will engage China, India, and Vietnam in promoting a comprehensive approach to decarbonising transport in their respective countries. The project is part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

➢ The IKI is a key element of Germany's climate financing and the funding commitments in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

➢ It will act as the conduit for bringing diverse voices and needs to adopt an integrated approach for greening the transport sector in India.

➢ Aim of the forum is to Bring down the peak level of Green House Gas emissions (transport sector) in Asia (in line with a well below 2-degree pathway), resulting in problems like congestion and air pollution.

**Expected Benefits**

➢ It will help in the development of innovative business models for targeted results and the holistic growth of the electric mobility space in India.

➢ It will also provide a platform to initiate dialogues for the development of uniform policies and help achieve specific results in reducing emissions from the transport sector.

**Need**

➢ India has a massive and diverse transport sector, which is also the third most $CO_2$ emitting sector.

➢ Data from International Energy Agency (IEA) 2020 and Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change 2018 suggests that within the transport sector, road transport contributes to more than 90% of the total $CO_2$ emissions.

➢ With increasing urbanisation, the fleet size i.e. the number of sales of vehicles is increasing rapidly. It is projected that the total number of vehicles will be doubled by 2030.

➢ Therefore, the transition to a decarbonisation path for the transport sector in India is essential to achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement for 2050.

**News:** Union Cabinet approves restoration and continuation of MPLADS

➢ The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved restoration and continuation of Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) which was discontinued in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

# Member Of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)

➢ Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is a scheme formulated by Government of India on 23 December 1993 that enables the members of parliaments (MP) to recommend developmental work in their constituencies with an emphasis on creating durable community assets based on locally felt needs.

➢ MPLADS is a Central Sector Scheme implemented by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

➢ Elected Members of Rajya Sabha representing the whole of the State as they do, may select works for implementation in one or more district(s) as they may choose.

- Nominated Members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha may also select works for implementation in one or more districts, anywhere in the country.

- The MPLADS is a Plan Scheme fully funded by the Government of India. The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crores. But this amount is not disbursed directly to MP but to the District Authority of the chosen district.

- This annual entitlement is released conditionally in two installments of Rs. 2.5 crore each.

- Funds are non-lapsable in nature i.e. in case of non-release of fund in a particular year it is carried forward to the next year.

- MPs need to recommend work worth at least 15% and 7.5% of their funds to create assets in areas inhabited by Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) respectively.

- MPs can also recommend work of up to Rs. 25 lakhs per year outside their constituency or state of election to promote national unity, harmony and fraternity.

- MPs can recommend work of up to 25 lakh for Natural Calamity in the state and up to Rs. 1 crore in the country in case of Calamity of Severe Nature.

- Funds for MPLADS can be converged with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for creating more durable assets and with National Program for Development of Sports (Khelo India).
- Funds can be utilized for procurement of LED lights under Atal Jyoti Yojana (AJAY) Scheme.
- It mandates 100% compulsory auditing of all works completed by trusts which receive funds under the scheme.

**News:** India has mere 37 months before the deadline to end TB in country: Dr Bharati Pawar

- Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar on Wednesday said India has mere 37 months before the deadline to end TB in the country. She reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to eliminate TB in India by 2025, five years ahead of the SDG targets.

# Tuberculosis

- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by bacteria (Mycobacterium tuberculosis) that most often affect the lungs.
- TB is spread from person to person through the air.

- When people with TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air.
- Symptoms are cough with sputum and blood at times, chest pains, weakness, weight loss, fever and night sweats.
- TB is a treatable and curable disease.
- It is treated with a standard 6-month course of 4 antimicrobial drugs that are provided with information, supervision and support to the patient by a health worker or trained volunteer.
- Anti-TB medicines have been used for decades and strains that are resistant to 1 or more of the medicines have been documented in every country surveyed.
- Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is a form of TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to isoniazid and rifampicin, the 2 most powerful, first-line anti-TB drugs. MDR-TB is treatable and curable by using second-line drugs.
- Extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) is a more serious form of MDR-TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to the most effective second-line anti-TB drugs, often leaving patients without any further treatment options.
- India is committed to eliminating tuberculosis from the country by 2025, five years ahead of the global target by the World Health Organisation (WHO) i.e. 2030.

➢ To align with the ambitious goal, the programme has been renamed from the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) to National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP).

➢ Recently, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the annual Tuberculosis (TB) Report 2021.

**Tuberculosis Cases in India**

➢ India has the largest caseload, 2.64 million tuberculosis patients, across the world. It accounts for 30% of the world's TB cases.

➢ People living with HIV are the most vulnerable among all those TB patient groups which have other comorbidities (rate of death). Hence, the World Health Organization lays social emphasis (through awareness programmes) on them.

➢ India accounts for 9% of all HIV-associated TB deaths in the world, the second-highest number globally.

➢ A total of 92,000 HIV-associated TB patients were recorded on an annual basis.

➢ Awareness among TB patients about their HIV status has gone up to 81% from 67%.

➢ The other such group is patients suffering from diabetes. According to the report, 20% of all TB cases in India also suffer from diabetes.

**Government Initiatives**

- **Nikshay Ecosystem**: It is a National TB information system which acts as one-stop solution to manage the information of patients and monitor program activity & performance across the country.

- **Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY)**: NYP scheme was launched with the aim of providing financial support to TB patients for their nutrition.

- **TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign**: This campaign was launched in September 2019 with highest level of commitment to eliminate TB.

- **Saksham Project**: This project was launched by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to provide psychosocial counselling to Drug resistant-TB patients.

- On the basis of the score in State TB Index, Himachal Pradesh was the top performing state for tuberculosis control under the category of states with 50 lakh population.

- Lakshadweep and Budgam district in Jammu and Kashmir were declared Tuberculosis free.

- Recently, BRICS Virtual Summit hosted by India, decided to conduct a study on the epidemiological impact and intersection of the COVID-19 and Tuberculosis pandemics in these countries.

**News:** Cabinet approves price support to Cotton Corporation of India

➢ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs CCEA approved incurring expenditure for reimbursing losses under MSP operations for cotton during the cotton season October 2014-15 to September 2020-21.

# Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)

➢ Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) is incorporated under Companies Act 1956, under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles.

➢ CCI is a public sector agency responsible for equitable distribution of cotton among the different constituents of the industry and aid imports of cotton.

➢ It is also responsible to undertake price support operations, whenever the market prices of cotton falls below the minimum support prices (MSP).

➢ The government of India announces Minimum Support Price (MSP) for both medium and long-staple cotton.

➢ CCI is having pan India presence through headquarters at Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra) to safeguard the economic interest of cotton farmers in all the cotton growing regions and to ensure smooth supply of good quality cotton to the textile industry in India.

**News:** The United States of America becomes the 101ˢᵗ member country of the International Solar Alliance

➢ Recently, United States of America joined the India –led International Solar Alliance.

# International Solar Alliance (ISA)

➢ The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of 121 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

➢ The primary objective of the alliance is to work for efficient consumption of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

➢ The alliance is a treaty-based (Paris Declaration) inter-governmental organization.

➢ ISA is the nodal agency for implementing One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG).

➢ Countries that do not fall within the Tropics can join the alliance and enjoy all benefits as other members, with the exception of voting rights.

➢ After the United Nations, it is the largest grouping of states world-wide.

- The framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance opened for signatures in Marrakech, Morocco in November 2016, and 200 countries have joined.

- The ISA is headquartered in Gurugram, India.

- The ISA aims to pave the way for future solar generation, storage and technologies for Member countries' needs by mobilizing over USD 1000 billion by 2030.

**Host Country Agreement**

- The Host Country Agreement is an agreement between the International Solar Alliance and India.

- Its motive is to make ISA functioning independent in discharging its functions.

- Through this agreement ISA will get power to contract, to acquire and dispose movable and immovable property, to institute and defend legal proceedings.

- Under the agreement ISA will get tax concessions and exemptions necessary for ISA independent functioning.

**News:** Eight arrested for fishing near Olive Ridley rookery

➢ Eight fishermen from Andhra Pradesh have been nabbed for fishing in a prohibited area near Rushikulya river mouth in Ganjam district of Odisha.

➢ To ensure the safety of Olive Ridley turtles during their breeding and mating season, the State government has clamped a seven month fishing ban within 20 km from the coast at the river mouths of Rushikulya, Dhamara, and Devi from November 1.

# Olive Ridley Turtles

➢ Olive Riddley turtles are also known as Pacific ridley sea turtle.

➢ Olive ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant and are best known for their behavior of synchronized nesting in mass numbers, termed arribadas.

➢ Females return to the same beach from where they hatched, to lay their eggs. They lay their eggs in conical nests about one and a half feet deep, which they laboriously dig with their hind flippers. In the Indian Ocean, the majority of olive ridleys nest in two or three large groups near Gahirmatha in Odisha. The coast of Odisha in India is one the largest mass nesting site for the olive ridley, along with the coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica.

➢ The 480-km-long Odisha coast has three arribada beaches at Gahirmatha, the mouth of the Devi river, and in Rushikulya, where about 1 lakh nests are found annually.

- Olive Riddleys are distributed throughout tropical warm waters of Indian Ocean, Atlantic Ocean and Pacific Ocean.

- IUCN Status is Vulnerable whereas Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act and Appendix I of CITES Convention protects the turtle.

- Major threats faced include heavy predation of eggs by dogs and wild animals, indiscriminate fishing with trawlers and gill nets, accidental collision with boats, slaughtering of nesting females by human and loss of arribadas due to beach soil erosion.

- Operation Kachhapa was launched to conserve Olive Ridley Turtles. It was launched by Odisha state forest department in collaboration with Wildlife Society of Odisha and other local NGOs.

- Operation Olivia has been conducted annually since 1980s by Indian Coast Guard to protect the Olive Riddley breeding from November to December.

- Odisha has half of the world's Olive Ridley turtle population and 90% of India's turtle population.

- There are five species of turtles in Indian waters — Leatherback (Vulnerable), Loggerhead (Endangered), Hawksbill (Critically Endangered), Green (Endangered) and Olive Ridley. All these turtles are protected under Schedules of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

- With an objective to conserve the Olive Ridley Turtles, the <span style="color:red">UNDP Sea Turtle Project was initiated by Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun as the Implementing Agency in November 1999</span>.

- The following species of marine are being covered under this project - <span style="color:red">green, hawksbill, loggerhead, leatherback, and olive ridley</span>.

- One of the main aims of the GOI – UNDP national sea turtle project was to <span style="color:red">evaluate the status of and threats to marine turtles along the entire coastline</span> of India.

- The project is for <span style="color:red">10 coastal states in India especially Odisha</span> where it has contributed towards the preparation of a map of breeding sites of Sea Turtles; identification of breeding places and habitats along the coastline, and migratory routes taken by Sea Turtles.

- The project also helped in the <span style="color:red">development of guidelines to safeguard the turtle mortality rate and for tourism in sea turtle areas</span>. Amongst the major achievements of the project is the <span style="color:red">demonstration of the use of Satellite Telemetry to locate the migratory route of sea turtles in the sea</span>.

**News:** Kalaris back on track post lockdown

➢ Kalari units that impart Kalaripayattu, an ancient martial art form, are getting back on track in Kerala after an interval of two and a half years.

➢ More than 10,000 Kalari units in the State had stopped functioning abruptly after the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country.

# Kalaripayattu

➢ Kalaripayattu is a martial art based on the ancient knowledge of the human body.

➢ It originated in Kerala during 3rd century BC to the 2nd century AD. It is now practised in Kerala and in some parts of Tamil Nadu.

➢ The place where this martial art is practised is called a 'Kalari'.

➢ It is a Malayalam word that signifies a kind of gymnasium.

➢ Kalari literally means 'threshing floor' or 'battlefield'.

➢ The word Kalari first appears in the Tamil Sangam literature to describe both a battlefield and combat arena.

➢ It is considered to be one of the oldest fighting systems in existence.

➢ It is also considered as the father of modern Kung - Fu.

➢ The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has recently included Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang –Ta and Mallakhamba in Khelo India Youth Games 2021.

➤ 2021 edition of Khelo India was conducted at Haryana.

**News:** Coringa set for fishing cat collaring project

➤ Conservation biologists of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, will begin collaring 10 fishing cats in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) in Andhra Pradesh next week.

# Fishing Cat

➤ The Fishing cat is a symbolic species of floodplains, deltas and coastal wetlands of South and Southeast Asia.

➤ They have a patchy distribution from Sind in Pakistan to Cambodia.

➤ The South Asian countries of India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka hold the core of the global Fishing Cat population.

➤ It is the only wetland cat found in India.

➤ In India, Fishing Cats are mainly found in the Sunderbans Mangrove forest, on the foothills of Himalayas along the Brahmaputra & Ganga valleys and Western Ghats mainly along the smaller coastal wetlands along the Bay of Bengal formed by Mahanadi, Godavari and Krishna rivers.

➤ It is the state animal of West Bengal.

- Recently, Fishing cats were found in the Chilika Lake of Odisha. There was also the presence of smooth-coated otter & Eurasia otter found.

- The 2018 census had recorded the existence of 115 fishing cats.

- IUCN Status: Vulnerable.

- CITES: Appendix II.

- Wildlife Protection Act: Schedule I.

- The Odisha Government has started a two-year conservation project for Fishing Cats in Bhitarkanika National Park.

- Fishing Cat Project, launched in 2010 started raising awareness about the Cat in West Bengal.

- Recently, Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has decided to put radio collars in the 10 fishing cat individuals. This is the first such project in India.

- In Asia, a similar project had been done in Bangladesh.

# Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary

- Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary is a wildlife sanctuary and estuary situated in Andhra Pradesh.

- Coringa is a nominee for Ramsar Site.

- It is 18 km from the port city of Kakinada, nestling on the deltaic branches of Gouthami and Godavari Rivers at Kakinada Bay.

- The sanctuary is a part of the Godavari estuary.

- It has extensive mangrove and dry deciduous tropical forest. It is the second largest stretch of mangrove forests in India.

- It is home to the critically endangered white –backed vulture and the long – billed vulture.

- The sanctuary possesses a wide variety of birds, because of the feed available in the backwaters of the mangrove forest.

- During low tide, some of the areas are exposed (elevated mud flats) having small fishes, shrimps and mollusks. These attract avifauna for feeding.

- The sanctuary has an 18-km long sand pit where olive ridley sea turtles' nest from January to March every year.

# Wildlife Institute of India (WII)

- The Wildlife Institute of India (WII), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate change, Government of India, was established in 1982.

➢ WII carries out wildlife research in areas of study like Biodiversity, Endangered Species, Wildlife Policy, Wildlife Management, Wildlife Forensics, Spatial Modeling, and Eco development, Ecotoxicology, Habitat Ecology and Climate Change. WII has a research facility which includes Forensics, Remote Sensing and GIS, Laboratory, Herbarium, and an Electronic Library

➢ The national tiger census or the All-India Tiger Estimation, is done by WII along with NTCA and state forest departments.

➢ The institute is based in Dehradun, India. It is located in Chandrabani, which is close to the southern forests of Dehradun. The campus is 180 acre's, from which 100 acre's is in wilderness and 80 acre's is operational facilities.

➢ In 2015, the Union Government launched the GIB species recovery programme, under which the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Rajasthan forest department have jointly setup conservation breeding centres, where GIB eggs harvested from the wild are incubated artificially, and hatchings raised in a controlled environment.