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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Water Conservation by crop diversification

- The Haryana state government has announced an incentive of Rs. 7000 per acre to farmers for promoting crop diversification from paddy to alternate crops such as maize, cotton, millet, pulses, vegetable, gram etc.
- This initiative would incentivize farmers to shift from the water intensive paddy cultivation towards lesser water intensive crops and would **provide an impetus to water conservation attempts**. The shift to other crops would also be an **effective intervention to curtail the decreasing productivity of the fields owing to mono cropping**.

2. What is driving the second wave in India?

Context:

- Second wave of the pandemic in India.

Background:

- Interestingly no surge was seen between mid-September 2020 to end-February this year despite perfect conditions for the virus to spread.
- The onset of the festival season since the pandemic peaked in mid-September in India, winter, no restrictions on movement, large gatherings and not-so-good adherence of mask wearing and other non-pharmaceutical interventions did not cause any spike in cases across the country.

Details:

- There has been a steady increase in the daily fresh COVID-19 cases. The **rate of increase in cases** in India during March has been faster than at any other time during the pandemic.
- The seven-day average test **positivity rate** has been increasing.
- The **reproduction number (R0)** – how many people each infected person will infect on average – has risen to above 1.5 and has been steadily increasing over the last two–three weeks.
- Large cities including Mumbai and Pune, which had recorded large infection rates during the first wave, are witnessing a surge.

Possible reasons for the surge:

- **Three important factors – the virus, the host, and the environment – constitute the epidemiological triad for the surge** in cases in many States.

Virus:

- New variants of concern might be in circulation, which is probably more infectious, and some can be an immune escape as well.
- There has been the **introduction of other variants** due to international travel in some parts of the country, which can be more infectious than the earlier strain. **An imported variant (UK variant) has been identified in a few States.** A double mutant variant has also been identified in at least a few States.
- However, notably variants, imported and homegrown, are have so far not been linked epidemiologically to the surge

Host:

- The host factors include **waning antibodies, not following COVID-19 appropriate behaviour and incomplete vaccination.**

Environment:

- The environmental factors include **super-spreader events and poor compliance with preventive measures.** The misconception that vaccination prevents even infection might also be contributing to rising cases.
- The Health Ministry has cited the general laxity among people regarding COVID-19 appropriate behaviour, including mask wearing, and lack of containment and management strategy at the ground level as reasons for the surge in cases.

3. 'Gas firms hurt by low prices fixed by govt.'

- Rating agency ICRA has noted that the Natural gas production remains a loss-making proposition for most fields for the Indian upstream producers as government-dictated gas price remains at its lowest level since the acceptance of the Rangarajan panel recommendations on gas pricing.
- **The C. Rangarajan panel was constituted to propose a gas pricing formula in India**

4. How Asian desert dust enhances Indian summer monsoon

Context:

- Study on the role played by dust in influencing Indian summer Monsoon.

Background:

Critical role played by dust:

- Dust plays a very important role in influencing climatic events. Dust swarms can **influence moisture transport, increase precipitation and rainfall**. Dust is known to influence monsoons, and hurricanes.
- Dust are known to even **fertilize rainforests** and help in vegetation growth.

Relationship between desert and monsoon rainfall:

- Deserts across the globe play important roles in monsoons.
 - The dust aerosols from **deserts in West China such as the Taklamakan desert and the Gobi Desert** can be transported eastward to eastern China and can influence the East Asia summer monsoon.
 - The small **deserts in southwest United States** are known to influence the North African monsoon.

Details:

- The new study details how dust coming from the deserts in the West, Central and East Asia plays an important role in the Indian Summer Monsoon.
- The new study notes that it is not just the dust from the Middle East [West Asia], but the **Iranian Plateau also influences the Indian Summer Monsoon**. The hot air over the Iranian Plateau can heat the atmosphere over the plateau, strengthen the circulation over the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula and increase dust emission from the Middle East [West Asia].

Impact of dust on rainfall pattern:

- Dust swarms from the desert when lifted by strong winds can **absorb solar radiation and become hot**. This can cause heating of the atmosphere, change the air pressure, wind circulation patterns, influence moisture transport and increase precipitation and rainfall.

Reverse effect:

- The **Indian Summer Monsoon also has a reverse effect and can increase the winds in West Asia to produce yet more dust**.

- A strong monsoon can also transport air to West Asia and again pick up a lot of dust, which the researchers have termed as a positive feedback loop.

Anthropogenic aerosols:

- With respect to the impact of anthropogenic dust from vehicles, mining, construction on monsoons, while some studies have found that the anthropogenic aerosols emitted from the Indian subcontinent can decrease summer monsoon precipitation, other studies have found that absorbing aerosols such as dust can strengthen the monsoon circulation.
- The concerned study used the carbon model to simulate the impact of anthropogenic aerosols on India and the results showed that **anthropogenic aerosol can strengthen Indian summer monsoon rainfall.**

Significance of studying dust:

- Many studies have shown that the dust emission scheme is extremely sensitive to climate change and the understanding of the concerned mechanisms and effects of dust will help understand the monsoon systems in the face of global climate change.

Way forward:

Need to study minor components:

- Different deserts have different chemical compositions and this can influence the dust's properties.
 - **Dust from the Middle East [West Asia] has more absorbing ability of solar radiation than dust from North Africa** and this difference in absorbing ability might influence monsoon systems.
- Given the emerging evidence of the unique characteristics of dust from different deserts as against the previous understanding that dust from deserts across the globe have the same components, there is the need to study the minor components of desert dust aerosols.
- This would involve the use of high spatial resolution remote sensing to identify source regions and create a better dust emission map.

Understanding the impact of anthropogenic activity:

- There is the need to study **new drying lakes** and understand how dust from them can play a role in the monsoons.

5. Researchers foresee trends in diphtheria incidence

- **Diphtheria is a serious infection caused by strains of bacteria called *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*** that make toxin (poison). It can lead to difficulty breathing, heart failure, paralysis, and even death.
- The diphtheria toxin causes inflammation of heart muscle (myocarditis) and this can lead to death if not treated with diphtheria antitoxin and proper antibiotics.
- **Diphtheria is a vaccine preventable disease** – the toxoid vaccine elicits an immune response against the toxin which is encoded by a tox gene of the pathogen.
- **The increasing diversity of the bacterium species, emergence of variant toxin genes and progression of antimicrobial resistance** may lead to an increase in the incidence of diphtheria.

6. 5 security men killed in Sukma encounter

- Five security personnel were killed and more than 12 injured in an encounter with Maoists in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh.
- The Maoist attacked the over 400 security personnel on combing operation in south Bastar. The region is said to be a **Maoist stronghold**.

7. Reversing a ban

Context:

- S. President Joe Biden has allowed a Trump-era H-1B visa rule to expire.

Background:

U.S. immigration policy under President Trump:

- In June 2020, the U.S. administration under former President Donald Trump, **halted the issuance of non-immigrant work visas of several types, including the skilled worker visa, or H-1B**. In a move aimed at **tightening immigration policy**, the stated aim of the policy was to stop foreign workers from cornering American jobs.
- Immigration reforms in favour of protecting U.S. jobs for Americans was a major policy thrust for the former U.S. President Donald Trump.
- S. under President Trump had also announced a 60-day halt on legal migration, effectively a ban on “green card” issuance.

Fallout of the visa ban:

- America Inc., employing around millions of non-immigrant foreign workers has been steadfast in its opposition to the skilled worker visa ban, given the **critical role played by the immigrant workforce in U.S. based companies.**
 - Google CEO Sundar Pichai had lashed out at the policy, noting that Immigration had contributed immensely to America's economic success, making it a global leader in tech. SpaceX founder and Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Apple CEO Tim Cook have also expressed similar anguish against the policy.
- Analysts have predicted that **around 2,19,000 workers around the world might have been prevented from taking up work in the U.S.** as a result of Mr. Trump's visa ban. Thus the skilled worker ban has had an **impact on the potential remittance flow to developing countries.**
- Experts have termed the policy measure to be driven more by politics rather than economics given the lack of any significant economic benefits arising from the skilled-worker visa ban.

Details:

- The original order was valid until December 31, 2020, it was extended by the Trump administration to be valid until March 31, 2021. Now, the current U.S. President, Joe Biden, has allowed the ban on H-1B visa issuance to expire.
- In allowing the H-1B visa ban to expire, Mr. Biden is walking a fine line between restoring the inflow of skilled workers into the U.S., a source of productivity-increase for its labour force, and not being seen as overly aggressive in unwinding Trump-era immigration crackdowns give the support for protectionist policies within the U.S. electorate.

Significance:

- The end of ban on work visa would potentially bring **relief to a large number of Indian nationals, especially IT workers.**
 - Until now, the U.S. issued 85,000 H-1B visas annually, of which 20,000 went to graduate students and 65,000 to private sector applicants, and **Indian nationals would garner approximately 70% of these.**
- The Indian corporations are also expected to benefit from the move given that the move would also ensure the availability of a large talent pool to IT companies with U.S. operations. This would also **benefit Indian IT companies with U.S. operations.**

8. New light

- **Bose-Einstein condensation (BEC) – the macroscopic ground-state accumulation of particles with integer spin (bosons) at low temperature**

and high density – has been observed in several physical systems, including cold atomic gases and solid-state quasiparticles.

- The optical Bose-Einstein condensate, is conceived as one large ‘super photon’ made up of many light particles.
- A new study has reported a hitherto unknown phase transition in an optical Bose-Einstein condensate called the overdamped phase. This study may be relevant for **encrypted quantum communication**.

9. Biden lifts Trump’s sanctions on international court officials

Context:

- U.S. President Joe Biden has lifted sanctions imposed by previous President Donald Trump on two top officials of the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**

Background:

- **ICC was probing alleged crimes by U.S. troops in Afghanistan.**
- The U.S. sanctions had targeted ICC officials for pressing with investigations into the U.S. for alleged war crimes. The U.S. sanctions had specifically targeted ICC chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda and the court’s head of jurisdiction, Phakiso Mochochoko.
- Sanctions included travel ban, freeze on assets of the concerned individuals. The subsequent round of sanctions also made giving the pair “material support” a potentially sanctionable offence.
- The Trump administration was openly hostile to the tribunal for pursuing prosecutions of Americans for actions in Afghanistan and Israelis for actions against the Palestinians.

Details:

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has stressed that the U.S. still strongly disagreed with some actions by the court and has stressed that the concerned cases would be better **addressed through diplomacy rather than through the imposition of sanctions**.

Significance:

- The move marks the undoing of the past administration’s aggressive moves targeting international institutions and officials.
- The removal of the sanctions is the **latest signal that the Biden administration is intent on returning to the multilateral fold**.

10. Centre praises Rajasthan's achievements in ration card scheme

- The Centre praised the achievements of Rajasthan in the implementation of the **“one nation, one ration card”** scheme to **enable migrant workers and their families to access the benefits of the public distribution system (PDS) from anywhere.**
- Rajasthan is the 12th State to successfully undertake the necessary reforms to implement **“one nation, one ration card”** scheme

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

11. The big push for digital currency in China

- China has been undertaking pilot trials of its new digital currency, with reported plans of a major roll-out by the end of the year. China is among a small group of countries that have begun pilot trials; others include Sweden, South Korea and Thailand.
- Officially titled the **Digital Currency Electronic Payment (DCEP), the digital RMB (or Renminbi, China's currency) is a digital version of China's currency.**
- The DCEP can be downloaded and exchanged via an application authorised by China's central bank.

Difference compared to e-wallets:

- Unlike the e-wallet platforms like Paytm in India, the Digital RMB does not involve a third party. This is legal tender guaranteed by the central bank, not a payment guaranteed by a third-party operator. There is no third-party transaction, and hence, no transaction fee.
- Unlike e-wallets, the **digital currency does not require Internet connectivity.** The payment is made through **Near-field Communication (NFC) technology.**
- Also, unlike non-bank payment platforms that require users to link bank accounts, this can be opened with a personal identification number.

12. Maintaining the inflation target at 4%

Context:

- The Finance Ministry's announcement that the **inflation target for the five years between April 2021 and March 2026 will remain unchanged at 4%**, with an upper tolerance level of 6% and a lower tolerance level of 2%.

Background:

Inflation targeting monetary policy framework:

- India had switched to an inflation target-based monetary policy framework in 2015, with the 4% target kicking in from 2016-17.

Inflation concerns:

- Moody's Analytics had recently termed **India's inflation trends "worrisome"**. It noted that the volatile food prices and rising oil prices had driven **India's consumer price index (CPI)-based inflation past the 6% tolerance threshold several times in 2020** and that core inflation trends were rising again.
- Though retail inflation has remained below 6% since December 2020, it accelerated from 4.1% in January 2021 to 5% in February.

Details:

- With inflation headwinds remaining a concern, especially with oil prices staying high, there was some speculation that the Central government, whose topmost priority now is to revive growth in the COVID-19 pandemic-battered economy, may ease up on the inflation target by a percentage point or two thus **allowing the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to cut interest rates even if inflation was a tad higher with an aim to revive growth**.
- However, the government has desisted from increasing the retail inflation target and has left the inflation target untouched.
- The set retail inflation target will drive the country's monetary policy framework and influence its decision to raise, hold or lower interest rates.

Significance:

- **The inflation targeting monetary policy framework has worked reasonably well** in keeping inflation in check over the last five years. Experts have attributed the few recent instances when the upper target was breached to the exceptional nature of the COVID-19 shock.
- The RBI has also previously sought a continuance of the 4% target with the flexible tolerance limits of 2%. **The Central bank has asserted that accepting inflation levels beyond 6% would hurt the country's growth prospects.**

- The inflation target **helps ensure consumer friendly policies** given that appropriate measures would be taken to keep retail prices within acceptable levels.
- The move marks a continuance of the policy adopted by many developed countries which have adopted an inflation-rate focus as an anchor for policy formulation for interest rates rather than past fixations with metrics like the currency exchange rate or controlling money supply growth. Emerging economies have also been gradually adopting this approach.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021

Context:

Caregivers to patients with 'rare diseases' and affiliated organisations are dissatisfied with **the National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021**.

What's the issue?

- The policy specifies increasing the government support for treating patients with a 'rare disease' – from ₹15 lakh to ₹20 lakh. But, caregivers say this doesn't reflect actual costs of treatment.
- Advocacy groups, however, have expressed concerns about the lack of funding support in the policy for patients diagnosed with life-threatening rare, genetic disorders.

Highlights of the National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021:

Patients of rare diseases will soon be eligible for a one-time treatment under **the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**.

Beneficiaries for financial assistance would not be limited to below poverty line (BPL) families, but extended to about 40% of the population, who are eligible as per 23 norms of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), for their treatment in Government tertiary hospitals only.

The policy has categorised rare diseases in three groups – disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment; those requiring long term or lifelong treatment; and diseases for which definitive treatment is available but challenges are to make optimal patient selection for benefit.

What is a rare disease?

- A rare disease, also referred to as an orphan disease, is any disease that affects a small percentage of the population.
- Most rare diseases are genetic, and are present throughout a person's entire life, even if symptoms do not immediately appear.

The commonly reported rare diseases, include:

Primary immunodeficiency disorders, Lysosomal storage disorders (Gaucher's disease, Mucopolysaccharidoses, Pompe disease, fabry disease etc.) small molecule inborn errors of metabolism (Maple Syrup urine disease, organic acidemias, etc.), cystic fibrosis, osteogenesis imperfecta, certain forms of muscular dystrophies, and spinal muscular atrophy.

2. Increase in maternal deaths and stillbirth due to COVID-19

In news

- According to a study published in The Lancet Global Health journal, the failure of the health system to cope with **COVID-19** pandemic resulted in an increase in maternal deaths and stillbirths,

Key takeaways

- Overall, there was a 28% increase in the odds of stillbirth.
- The risk of mothers dying during pregnancy or childbirth increased by about one-third.
- There was also a rise in maternal depression.
- **COVID-19** impact on pregnancy outcomes was disproportionately high on poorer countries.
- The report is an analysis of 40 studies across 17 countries
- Inefficiency of the healthcare system instead of strict lockdown measures resulted in reduced access to care.

3. Judicial Vacancies in High Courts

In news

- The SC has asked the government to clarify on the status of 55 recommendations made by the Collegium for judicial appointments to High Courts

Appointment of Judges

- **Article 124(2):** President of India Shall appoint the judges after consultation with such number of Judges of the SC/HC as he deems necessary. For appointment of any Judge of SC (other than CJI), the CJI must be consulted.
- The three Judges case of 1981, 1993 & 1998 has formalised the collegium system for the purpose of consultation.
- The collegium for appointing SC judge consists of the CJI and 4 senior-most judges of SC.
- Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) was set up after the Third Judge Case of 1998 to provide the process of how the Collegium would recommend names to the Executive.
- The President of India can either accept the recommendation or send it back for reconsideration. The reconsidered advice must be accepted by the President.

GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

4. Haryana's quota law:

Context:

Haryana's private job reservation law which provides 75 per cent employment opportunities in private sector for people belonging to the state will come into force from May 1.

About Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2020:

1. It requires private companies to set aside for domiciles 75% of jobs up to a monthly salary of Rs 50,000 or as may be notified by the government from time to time.
2. The law is applicable to all the companies, societies, trusts, limited liability partnership firms, partnership firms and any person employing 10 or more

persons and an entity, as may be notified by the government from time to time shall come under the ambit of this Act.

What are the legal issues in such laws?

1. **The question of domicile reservation in jobs:** While domicile quotas in education are fairly common, courts have been reluctant in expanding this to public employment. It raises questions relating to **the fundamental right to equality of citizens.**
2. The issue of **forcing the private sector to comply with reservations in employment.** For mandating reservation in public employment, the state draws its power from Article 16(4) of the Constitution. But, the Constitution has no manifest provision for private employment from which the state draws the power to make laws mandating reservation.
3. It may not be able to withstand judicial scrutiny on the touchstone of **Article 19(1)(g).**

What is the government's rationale in bringing such laws? ★

1. **Public sector jobs constitute only a minuscule proportion of all jobs.** Therefore, talks about extending the legal protections to the private sector to really achieve the constitutional mandate of equality for all citizens has been on.
2. Since **private industries use public infrastructure in many ways** – from accessing land through subsidised allotment to receiving credit from public banks, tax exemptions and in many cases subsidies for fuel etc, the state has a legitimate right to require them to comply with the reservation policy.

Do other countries take such affirmative action in employment?

Affirmative action is adopted in many countries in the context of race and gender.

1. For example, in the US, although there is no statutory requirement for employers to have quotas, courts can order monetary damages and injunctive relief, including “such affirmative action as may be appropriate”, for victims of discrimination.
2. The Employment Equity Act in Canada also protects minority groups, especially aboriginals from discrimination in federally regulated industries, even in the private sector.

Concerns and challenges ahead:

1. It poses challenges for industrial development and private investment in Haryana.

2. It could also provide a shield to some firms indulging in unethical practices to retrench the existing workforce.
3. Investors and businesses may start moving out of the state in search for best human resources.
4. Against the spirit of the Constitution, which gives citizens of India the freedom to work anywhere in the country.

5. Nasa's InSight lander:

Context:

Nasa's InSight lander has recorded over 500 quakes to date on Mars since its touch down on the Red Planet in November 2018.

- The two recent quakes of magnitude 3.3 and 3.1 originated in a region called **Cerberus Fossae**.
- These findings support the idea that the planet is seismically active.

About InSight Mission:

- InSight is part of **NASA's Discovery Program**.
- It will be **the first mission to peer deep beneath the Martian surface**, studying the planet's interior by measuring its heat output and listening for marsquakes, which are seismic events similar to earthquakes on Earth.
- It will **use the seismic waves generated by marsquakes to develop a map of the planet's deep interior**.

Significance of the mission:

- The findings of Mars' formation will help better understand how other rocky planets, including Earth, were and are created.
- InSight would delve deep beneath the surface of Mars, detecting the fingerprints of the processes of terrestrial planet formation, as well as measuring the planet's "vital signs": Its "pulse" (seismology), "temperature" (heat flow probe), and "reflexes" (precision tracking).

6. New Emission Norms for Coal-Fired power Plants

In news

- The Central government has pushed back deadlines for coal-fired power plants to adopt new emission norms by up to three years.
- It has also allowed utilities that miss the new target to continue operating after paying a penalty.
- India had initially set a 2017 deadline for thermal power plants to install Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) units that cut emissions of sulphur dioxides.
- But that was postponed to varying deadlines for different regions, ending in 2022.
- According to the new order, plants near populous regions and New Delhi will have to comply by 2022, while utilities in less polluting areas have up to 2025 to comply or retire units.
- A task force will be constituted by the Central Pollution Control Board to categorise plants in three categories “on the basis of their location to comply with the emission norms”.
- In case of non-compliance, a penalty of up to ₹0.20 will be levied for every unit of electricity produced.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. Consider the following statements. BASIC group countries put together account for about

1. One-third of the World’s geographical area (land based)
2. Two-third of World’s human population

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

Answer : A

Explanation:

The BASIC group was formed as the result of an agreement signed by the four countries on November 28, 2009. They are a bloc of four large newly industrialized countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China.

Significance of the grouping:

Objectives: The signatory nations have a broadly common position on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and raising the massive funds that are needed to fight climate change. The BASIC countries constituted one of the parties in the Copenhagen Accord reached with the US led grouping; the Accord, was, however, not legally binding. The BASIC group wields considerable heft purely because of the size of the economies and populations of the member countries. Brazil, South Africa, India and China put together has one-third of the world's geographical area and nearly 40% of the world's population, and when they unitedly speak in one voice this shows their determination. BASIC is one of several groups of nations working together to fight climate change and carry out negotiations within the UNFCCC.

2. Which of the following Indian state/s share a physical border with Myanmar and Bangladesh?

1. Nagaland
2. Mizoram
3. Manipur
4. Tripura

Select the correct answer.

- a. 1 and 2.
- b. 2 only
- c. 3 only
- d. 1 and 4

Answer: b

Explanation:

3. Which among the following belong to Snow Leopard range countries.

1. Russia

2. Mongolia
3. India
4. Iran
5. Kyrgyzstan

Select the correct answer.

- a. 1,3 and 4.
- b. 2,3 and 4.
- c. 1,2,3 and 5.
- d. 1,2,3,4,5.

Answer: c

Explanation:

The elusive snow leopard inhabits parts of 12 countries:

Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

4. Sahrawi tribe is associated with which of the following countries?

- a. Botswana
- b. Kenya
- c. Mauritania
- d. Democratic Republic of Congo

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Sahrawi tribe are people living in the western part of the Sahara desert.
- It includes **Western Sahara**, southern Morocco, much of Mauritania and the extreme southwest of Algeria.

5. Consider the following statements. Ecomark is a certification mark issued

1. By the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)
2. for both electronic products and appliances

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

Answer : C

Explanation:

Ecomark is issued by the BIS to products (not just appliances) conforming to a set of standards aimed at the least impact on the ecosystem. One of the purposes of the mark is increasing awareness among the consumers towards reducing environment impact. A wide variety of criteria are taken into account: Production process including source of raw material; Case of Natural Resources; Likely impact on the environment; Energy conservation in the production of the product etc.

Learning: For the implementation of the scheme, BIS is responsible for the following functions:

- i) Assessment of the product for ECO Mark, certification of the product for award of ECO Mark.
- ii) Renewal, suspension and cancellation of the licence.
- iii) Products certified as eligible for the ECO Mark shall also carry the ISI Mark (except for leather) for quality, safety and performance of the product and shall be licensed to carry the ECO Mark for a prescribed time period after which it shall be reassessed.
- iv) Undertaking inspections and taking samples for analysis of any material or substance in relation to which the BIS – ECO Mark has been used as may be necessary for proper implementation of ECO Mark. For this purpose the Standard Mark of Bureau would be a single mark having a combination of the ISI Mark and the ECO Logo

6. Consider the following statements about Bhitarkanika protected area.

- 1. It has one of the largest populations of endangered saltwater crocodile in India.
- 2. It hosts the second largest mangrove ecosystem in India.

Which of the above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

Answer : C

Explanation:

Bhitarkanika National Park is a national park located in Kendrapara district of Odisha in eastern India. Gahirmatha Beach and Marine Sanctuary lies to the east, and separates swamp region cover with canopy of mangroves from the Bay of Bengal. The national park is home to Saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), Indian python, King cobra, black ibis, darters and many other species of flora and fauna. It hosts a large number of mangrove species, and is the second largest mangrove ecosystem in India. The national park and wildlife sanctuary is inundated by the rivers Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra, Pathsala. Bhitarkanika has one of the largest populations of endangered saltwater crocodile in India and is globally unique in that, 10% of the adults exceed 6 m length.

Mains Practice Questions

1Q. Discuss the term heat budget and how it impacts the temperature in the earth's atmosphere.

Approach

- Start the answer by defining what is the heat budget of the earth.
- Discuss the mechanism of the heat budget with a suitable diagram and how it impacts the temperature of the earth.
- Conclude Suitably.

2Q. Examine the potential of PM Kisan Yojana along with its shortcomings. Also compare it with other direct cash transfer schemes being implemented by State governments. (250 words)

Approach

- Write a brief about the PM-Kisan scheme in the introduction part.
- Discuss its potential and shortcomings.
- Compare it with other direct cash transfer schemes of State governments.

