



News Analysis (04 Feb, 2019)

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World Wetlands Day

- Recently World Wetlands Day was celebrated with a theme - '**Wetlands and climate change**'.
- World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on **2nd February**. This day marks the date of the adoption of the **Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971**, in the **Iranian city of Ramsar**.

Wetlands

- Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They include **mangroves, marshes, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains** and **flooded forests, rice-fields**, and even **coral reefs**.
- Wetlands are vital for human survival as they are among the world's most productive environments; cradles of biological diversity that provide water and productivity upon which countless species of plants and animals depend for survival.

Why are wetlands important?

- Wetlands are the vital link between land and water.
- Wetlands are a critical part of our natural environment. They **mitigate floods, protect coastlines** and **build community resilience to disasters, reduce the impacts of floods, absorb pollutants** and **improve water quality**.
- Wetlands are critical to human and planet life. More than one billion people depend on them for a living and 40% of the world's species live and breed in wetlands.
- They are a **vital source for food, raw materials, genetic resources for medicines**, and hydropower.
- They play an important role in **transport, tourism and the cultural and spiritual well-being** of people.
- They provide **habitat for animals and plants** and many contain a wide diversity of

life, supporting plants and animals that are found nowhere else.

- Many wetlands are areas of natural beauty and many are important to Aboriginal people.
- Wetlands also **provide important benefits for industry**. For example, they form nurseries for fish and other freshwater and marine life and are critical to commercial and recreational fishing industries.

Threats to Wetlands

- **Agriculture and Development:** Wetlands are often underappreciated because they are viewed as being more valuable for their water and undeveloped land than the ecosystem services they provide.
They are often drained to make room for agriculture or human settlements and any wetlands nearby left untouched may lose their own water to this development.
 - **Pollution:** Wetlands act as natural water filters. However, they can only clean up the fertilizers and pesticides from agricultural runoff but not mercury from industrial sources and other types of pollution.
There is growing concern about the effect of industrial pollution on drinking water supplies and the biological diversity of wetlands.
 - **Climate Change :** Climate change brings a variety of alterations to patterns of water and climate.
In some places, rising sea levels are swamping shallow wetlands and drowning some species of mangrove trees. In others, droughts are destroying estuaries, floodplains and marshes.
- According to **Global Wetland Outlook, released by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**, approximately **35 percent of the world's wetlands were lost between 1970-2015** with annual rates of loss accelerating from 2000, according to the first-ever Global Wetland Outlook.
 - In some places the pace of wetlands destruction occurs at incredible speeds. For example, In the **Philippines, 80% of coastal wetlands have been degraded**, drained or destroyed in the last 30 years.

'Wise Use' of Wetlands

According to Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, **'Wise use' of wetlands** is the **maintenance of their ecological character**, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the **spirit of sustainable development**. 'Wise Use' guidelines encourage Contracting Parties to:

- **adopt national wetland policies** with legislations and institutional arrangements to deal with wetland;

- **develop programmes of wetland inventory**, monitoring, research, training, education and public awareness; and
- **take actions involving the development of integrated management plans** covering every aspect of the wetlands and their relationships with their catchments.

Ramsar Convention

- The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, is the **intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands** and their resources.
- The Convention was adopted in the **Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971** and came into force in 1975. Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world's geographic regions, have acceded to become "Contracting Parties".
- **India** has **26 Ramsar Sites** which are the Wetlands of International importance.

Montreux Record

- Montreux Record under the Ramsar Convention is a **register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur** as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.
- It is maintained as part of the Ramsar List.
- Currently, two wetlands of India are in Montreux record : **Keoladeo National Park** (Rajasthan) and **Loktak Lake** (Manipur).

Note: Chilka lake (Odisha) was placed in the record but was later removed from it.

World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day is organized by the **Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)** and celebrated **each year on 4 February**.

- The theme for **2019-2021 is "I am and I will"** - all about individual stories and commitments to beat cancer.
- The objective of World Cancer Day is aligned with **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-3.4)**, i.e. to reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being by 2030.
- It is observed to rally the international community to end the injustice of preventable suffering from cancer.
- The Day aims to save millions of preventable deaths each year through education, raising awareness and by pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action.

Cancer

- Cancer is a generic term for a large group of diseases characterized by the **growth of abnormal cells beyond their usual boundaries** that can then invade adjoining parts of the body and/or spread to other organs.
- Other common terms used for cancer are **malignant tumours and neoplasms**.
- Cancer is the **second leading cause of death** globally and is estimated to account for 9.6 million death in 2018.

Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

- The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) is a **membership organisation** to help the global health community accelerate the fight against cancer.
- It was **founded in 1933 and is based in Geneva**.

Non-Communicable Diseases Burden in India

- According to recently released data by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**, **nearly 61% of deaths in India** are now attributed to **non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**.
 - Cardiovascular diseases (coronary heart disease, stroke, andm hypertension) contribute to 45% of all NCD deaths, followed by chronic respiratory disease (22 %), cancer (12 %) and diabetes (3%).
 - NCDs are also a major **cause and consequence of poverty**.
 - Although, the percentage of deaths from NCDs is still lower in India compared to many other countries across the world but the burden is **rapidly increasing because of changing lifestyle and factors like pollution**.
 - Four risk factors responsible are **tobacco, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol**.
 - Major metabolic risk factors are **obesity, and raised blood pressure, blood glucose and blood cholesterol levels**.
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Endosulfan in Kerala

The representatives of the victims of endosulfan poisoning in **Kasaragod district of Kerala** called off sit-in in front of the state Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram.

What is EndoSulfan?

Endosulfan is an **organochlorine insecticide** which was first introduced in the 1950s and is commonly known by its **trade name Thiodan**.

Use of Endosulfan

Sprayed on crops like **cotton, cashew, fruits, tea, paddy, tobacco etc.** for control of pests such as whiteflies, aphids, beetles, worms etc.

Impact of Endosulfan

- Environment
 - Endosulfan in the environment **gets accumulated in food chains** leading to higher doses causing problems.
 - If Endosulfan is **released to water**, it is expected to absorb to the sediment and may **bioconcentrate in aquatic organisms**.
- Humans And Animals
 - The endosulfan ingestion results in **diseases ranging from physical deformities, cancer, birth disorders** and **damage to the brain and nervous**

system.

Ban on Endosulfan

- The **Supreme Court in India has banned the manufacture, sale, use, and export of endosulfan throughout the country**, citing its harmful health effects in **2015**.
- Endosulfan is listed under both **Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent** and the **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants**.

Rotterdam convention 1998

- The convention aims to **promote cooperation and responsibility** sharing measures amongst different countries dealing with trade in hazardous chemicals and pesticides.
- PIC, Prior Informed Consent is the main feature of the convention and is **legally binding on the party members**.
- PIC facilitates information exchange about nature and trade-related information amongst the party members.
- The Convention creates obligations for the implementation of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.

Stockholm convention 2001

- The convention aims to reduce the concentration of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) which are chemical substances that not only remain in the atmosphere for longer periods but also possess the ability to bio-accumulate.
- The convention listed 12 POPs as **'dirty dozen'**.

Important Facts for Prelims (4th February 2019)

Indus River Dolphin

- Recently the **Punjab Government** declared the Indus River dolphin, as the **state's aquatic animal**.
- Indus river dolphin is found **only in the main channel of the Indus River** in Pakistan and in the **Beas river in India**.
- Indus river dolphins also known as **Bhulan** are one of the **only four river dolphin species** and subspecies in the world that are found in freshwater. Others include the **Chinese river dolphin, Ganges river dolphin and Amazon river dolphin**.
- The Indus river dolphin is a **marine mammal** which means it's **warm-blooded, breathes air, gives birth and produces milk to feed its young**.
- It is listed endangered in the **IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species** and its International trade is prohibited by virtue of it being listed under **Appendix I of the**

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

- Indus dolphin like Ganges River dolphin is **functionally blind** and relies on **echolocation to navigate**, communicate and hunt prey in muddy river water.

NASA Discovers Dwarf Galaxy

- **NASA's Hubble telescope has discovered a dwarf galaxy** in the neighborhood of Milky Way galaxy.
- The dwarf galaxy is discovered only 30 million light years away within the **globular cluster NGC 6752**.
- The dwarf galaxy, **nicknamed as Bedin 1**, is a modestly sized, elongated galaxy. It measures only around 3000 light-years at its greatest extent which is a fraction of the size of the Milky Way.

Significance

- From the properties of its stars, scientists are able to infer that the galaxy is around 13 billion years old — nearly as old as the Universe itself.
- Due to its isolation, Bedin 1 is will be helpful in **understanding the early Universe**.

Globular Cluster:

- A Globular cluster is a large group of **old stars** that are closely packed in a symmetrical and somewhat spherical form.
- Globular clusters are **extremely luminous objects** and may contain thousands to millions of stars.

Dwarf Galaxy

“Dwarf galaxies” is a general term for galaxies that are faint and **small in size and have low-luminosity**, lack of dust and old stellar populations.

Kerala's Village Millet Scheme

- Kerala government has decided to expand millet village scheme to other districts in the state.
- The Millet Village scheme was first launched in Attappady in Palakkad district of **Kerala**.
- Under the Millet Village scheme, the government promoted the harvest of ragi (finger millet), thina (foxtail millet), cholam (sorghum) and kuthiravaali (barnyard millet).
- The project aimed at protecting seeds of traditional varieties of millets and ensures food security and livelihood for tribals.
- The scheme also provides financial assistance to farmers for cultivation of millets

crops.

Millets Production in India

Millets are cultivated in low-fertile land, mountainous, tribal and rain-fed areas. These areas include Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.

Advantages of Millets

Millets also are known as 'nutri-cereals' and have a high protein content, short growing season, climate change resilience and low water requirement.

International Year of Millets
