World Habitat Day 2020

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Why in News

The **United Nations** has designated the **first Monday of October every year** as **World Habitat Day** (5th October 2020).

Key Points

- **About the Day:** It focuses on the **state of human settlements and people's right to sufficient shelter.**
  - It also aims to remind people that they are responsible for the habitat of future generations.
  - The Global Observance of World Habitat Day 2020, is being co-hosted by **UN-Habitat and the Government of Indonesia.**
    - **UN-Habitat** is a **United Nations agency** for Urban development that promotes sustainable human settlements.
  - World Habitat Day was **first celebrated in 1986** with the theme **"Shelter is My Right".**
    - **Nairobi** (Kenya) was the host city for the observance that year.
- **Theme: "Housing for All-A better Urban Future".**
    - The **focus** is to promote **sustainable housing management** to achieve **Sustainable Development Goal 11.**
      - Sustainable Development Goal 11 aims to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- **Global Scenario:**
  - **Urban Population:** Currently, around 55% of the world population is living in cities, and the number is growing every day.
  - **Slum Dwellers:** Around 1.8 billion people are still living in the slums.
  - **Sanitation:** Around 3 billion lack basic hand washing and sanitation facilities.

- **Indian Scenario:**
  - **Challenges:** In a country of India's size, diversity, and population, it is a staggering challenge to implement an ambitious urban agenda.
    - **Lack of Basic Amenities:** Drinking Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Housing Condition, there is a shortage in slum areas especially.
    - **Public Health Infrastructure:** Despite the huge growth in urban population density during the last two decades, there has been no commensurate improvement in the healthcare infrastructure.
    - **High Level of Pollution:** The growing rate of air pollution due to vehicular traffic and huge construction and demolitions waste increase morbidity amongst the people living the cities.
    - The **large-scale migration from urban areas to the rural areas** in the time of Covid-19 pandemic was a major challenge.
  - **Measures:**
    - Major flagship Missions such as **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban**, **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban**, the **Smart Cities Mission**, the **AMRUT Mission** were in implementation mode in India well before the SDGs were adopted by the other Member States.
    - **Housing:** There is a huge focus on the use of new and environmentally safe construction technologies and techniques. Through a **global housing technology challenge (GHTC)**, the very best of national and international technologies are sought to be brought in.
      - GHTC aims to fast-track the construction of affordable housing and meet the target of constructing 1.2 crore houses by 2022.
      - GHTC focuses on identifying and mainstreaming proven demonstrable technologies for lighthouse projects and spotting potential future technologies for incubation and acceleration support through ASHA (Affordable Sustainable Housing Accelerators).
    - **Urban Poor:** The **PM SVANidhi scheme** targeting the **street vendors** who were affected by the lockdown that was imposed.
      - A **collateral free working capital of Rs.10,000** is made available to the street vendors immediately by the participating banks.
      - Simultaneously, they are being brought on to the formal economy and the formal, digital banking ecosystem.
    - **National urban policy framework 2018** seeks to rebuild Indian cities around clusters of human capital, instead of considering them simply as an agglomeration of land use.

Way Forward

- **Creation of a Database of Migrant Workers:** Recognition and identification of migrants is the first step towards a more enhanced framework to provide basic amenities.
- **Addressing Challenges:** The central and state governments need to continue their efforts to address the informality of the Indian economy, the rural-urban divide, the uneven growth within states and between regions in the country, and the social and economic inequalities associated with the poorest and vulnerable.
- **Unorganised Worker Index Number Cards** by the Labour Ministry would also help in formalisation of the workforce.
- **Focusing on Public Health Infrastructure:** Smart cities project does well by focusing on creation of hard infrastructure for urban renewal.

Source:PIB