News Analysis (16 Apr, 2021)

World Population Report 2021: UNFPA

Why in News

Recently, the **United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA)** flagship **State of World Population Report** 2021 titled **'My Body is My Own'** was launched.

> This is the first time a **United Nations** report has focused on **bodily autonomy**, defined as the power and agency to make choices about your body without fear of violence or having someone else decide for you.

Key Points

- **Violation of Bodily Autonomy:**
  - **About:**
    - The principle of bodily integrity sums up the **right of each human being, including children, to autonomy and self-determination over their own body.** It considers an unconsented physical intrusion as a **human rights** violation.
    - While the principle has traditionally been raised in connection with practices such as torture, inhumane treatment and forced disappearance, **bodily integrity has the potential to apply to wide range of human rights violations, which also affect children's civil rights.**
    - Under its ambit also fall **people with disabilities** stripped of their rights to self-determination, to be free from violence and to enjoy a safe and satisfying sexual life.
  - **Some Examples:**
    - **Child marriage**.
    - Female genital mutilation.
    - Lack of contraceptive choices leading to unplanned pregnancy.
    - Unwanted **sex exchanged for a home and food.**
    - When **people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities cannot** walk down a street without fearing assault or humiliation.
- **Global Scenario:**
  - **Right to Make Decisions Regarding Own Body:**
    - Nearly **half the women from 57 developing countries** do not have the right to make decisions regarding their bodies, including using contraception, seeking healthcare or even on their sexuality.
    - Only **75% of countries legally ensure full and equal access to contraception.**
  - **Effect of Covid:**
      Women around the world are denied the fundamental right of bodily autonomy with the **Covid-19 pandemic** further exacerbating this situation.

- **Indian Scenario:**
  - In India, according to __National Family Health Survey__ (NFHS)-4 (2015-2016):
  - **Healthcare:**
    - **12%** of currently **married women** (15-49 years of age) **independently make decisions** about their own healthcare.
    - 63% decide in **consultation with their spouse.**
    - For **23%** it is the **spouse that mainly takes decisions** about healthcare.
  - **Contraceptives:**
    - **8%** of currently married women (15-49 years) **take decisions on the use of contraception independently.**
    - **83% decide jointly with their spouse.** Information provided to women about use of contraception is also limited.
    - **47% of women** using a contraceptive **were informed about the side effects of the method.**
    - **54%** women **were provided information** about other contraceptives.
  - Some __Women Related Data__ **from NFHS-5:**
    - **Contraception:**
      - **Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate** (CPR) has **increased substantially** in most States/UTs and it is the highest in HP and WB (74%).
    - **Domestic Violence:**
      - It has **generally declined** in most of the states and UTs.
      - However, it has witnessed an **increase in five states**, namely Sikkim, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Assam and Karnataka.
    - **Decision making related to health, major household purchases and visiting relatives:**
      - Bihar has reported the maximum increase from 75.2% in NFHS-4 (2015-2016) to 86.5% in **NFHS-5 (2019-2020).**
      - Almost **99% of women in Nagaland** participate in household decision-making, followed by Mizoram at 98.8%.
      - On the other hand, **Ladakh and Sikkim reported the biggest decrease in women's participation** in decision-making, with a 7-5% drop among married women.

- **Related Supreme Courts (SC) Judgement:**
  - ***Justice K S Puttaswamy v Union of India 2017:***
    - The **SC** held that reproductive rights include a woman's entitlement to carry a pregnancy to its full term, to give birth, and to subsequently raise children; and that these rights form part of a woman's right to privacy, dignity, and bodily integrity.
    - The judgement gave required impetus to resolve the potential constitutional challenges to **abortion** and **surrogacy.**
      - Recently, the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) (Amendment) Bill, 2020** was passed which seeks to **extend the termination of pregnancy period from 20 weeks to 24 weeks**, making it easier for women to safely and legally terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

United Nations Population Fund

- **About:**
  - It is a subsidiary organ of the **UN General Assembly** and works as a sexual and reproductive health agency.
  - The **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** establishes its mandate.
- **Establishment:**
  - It was established as a trust fund in 1967 and began operations in 1969.
  - In **1987, it was officially renamed the United Nations Population Fund** but the original abbreviation, 'UNFPA' for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities was retained.
- **Objective:**
  - UNFPA works directly to tackle **Sustainable Development Goals** on health (SDG3), education (SDG4) and gender equality (SDG5).
- **Fund:**
  - UNFPA is not supported by the UN budget, instead, it is entirely **supported by voluntary contributions of donor governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, foundations and individuals.**

Way Forward

- Real, sustained progress largely depends on **uprooting gender inequality and all forms** of discrimination, and transforming the social and economic structures that maintain them.
- In this, **men must become allies**. Many more must commit to stepping away from patterns of privilege and dominance that profoundly undercut bodily autonomy, and move towards ways of living that are more fair and harmonious, benefiting all.

- Realising bodily autonomy is **essential to achieving the UNFPA's goals of ending the global unmet need** for contraception, preventable maternal deaths, gender-based violence and harmful practices by **2030.**

Source:TH

Reassessment of Regional Trading Agreements for India

Why in News

Recently, Singapore's Foreign Minister while addressing the **6th edition** of the **Raisina Dialogue** suggested India to reassess its stand on **Regional Trading Agreements (RTA)** such as **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** and **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).**

> The **Raisina Dialogue** is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics. The conference is **hosted by the Observer Research Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs,** Government of India.

Key Points

- **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership:**

15 Countries Sign World's Biggest Free Trade Deal

Key facts about the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership free trade deal

- **About:**

  Countries
  15

  Population
  2.2 billion

  Combined GDP
  $26.2 trillion

  Share of global trade
  28%

  Share of global economic output
  30%

    - **RCEP** is the **world's largest <u>Free Trade Agreement</u> (FTA)** and was signed by all 10 **<u>Association of Southeast Asian Nations is a regional organization (ASEAN)</u>** members and key partners including China, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand at the **4th <u>RCEP leaders' summit</u> in November 2020.**
    - It could be some time before any country sees the benefits, because **six ASEAN nations and three other nations have to ratify it before it takes effect.**
        - Ratification will likely be tricky in national parliaments, owing to both anti-trade and anti-China sentiments among the countries.
        - Recently, **Singapore became the first RCEP participating country (RPC) to complete the official ratification process** and deposit its ratification instrument.

- **Significance:**
  - **Eliminate Tariffs:**
    - It is expected to **eliminate a range of tariffs** on imports within 20 years and also includes provisions on intellectual property, telecommunications, financial services, e-commerce and professional services.
  - **Equality:**
    - Under RCEP, parts from any **member nation would be treated equally,** which might give companies in RCEP countries an **incentive to look within the trade region for suppliers.**
      - Businesses with global supply chains might face tariffs even within an FTA because their products contain components that are made elsewhere.
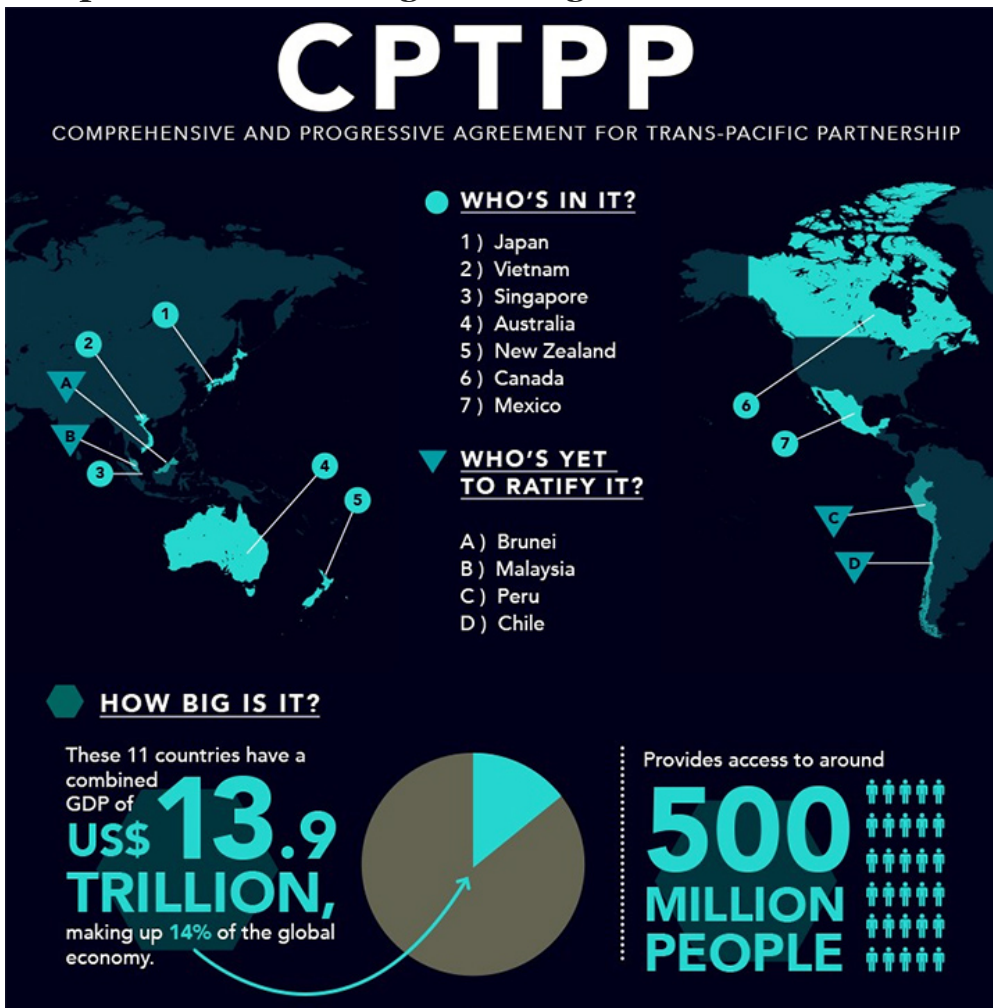 - **Increased Global Income:**
    - The deal could **increase global national income by USD 186 billion annually by 2030** and add 0.2% to the economy of its member states.
    - However, some analysts think the deal is likely to benefit China, Japan and South Korea more than other member states.
- **India's Stand:**
  - India **withdrew** from the RCEP largely because of **concerns it would open it up to Chinese goods amid an already wide trade imbalance with China,** and the failure of the agreement to adequately open up to services.

- **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership:**

- **About:**
  - The **CPTPP** is a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** between **11 countries** around the **Pacific Rim** which are :

    Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan.
  - After the US withdrew from negotiations of **Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP),** the remaining 11 participants scrambled to amend the text of the agreement, and the newly renamed **CPTPP was signed in March 2018.** It came into **force in December 2018.**

- Significance:
  - **Removes Tariffs:**
    - The CPTPP removes 99% of tariffs on goods and services, just like the original TPP did.
  - **Broad Coverage:**
    - The CPTPP covers a broad range of goods and services. These include financial services, telecommunications, and food safety standards.
  - **Reduces Environmental Abuses:**
    - All **countries agreed to cut down on wildlife trafficking.** That helps elephants, rhinoceroses, and marine species the most.
    - It **prevents environmental abuses,** such as unsustainable logging and fishing. Countries that don't comply will face trade penalties.
  - **India's Stand:**
    - India did not join CPTPP as **it seeks to place greater labor and environmental standards** on its other partners and **CPTPP draft includes narrowly detailed qualifications on standards for investment protection, provisions** to protect the host state's right to regulate, and the imposition of detailed transparency requirements.
- **Need for India to Reassess RCEP & CPTPP:**
  - **To Boost its Manufacturing Sector:**
    - The RCEP & CPTPP blocs represent a major portion of the world economy, which may present India the **possibility of being a manufacturing hub and export platform** for the Pacific region with access to duty-free, quota free trade.
  - **To Strengthen Individual Relations:**
    - India **already has steady trade relations** or is negotiating new agreements with various RCEP & CPTPP countries such as Canada, Mexico, and Chile.
  - **To be a Major Player in Regional Development:**
    - India has a **crucial role to play in helping the region** build an inclusive architecture at a time of increasing global instability.
    - Besides, rising US-China tensions are "deeply worrying" for the region with the **pandemic** resulting in "heightened tension".
  - **To Provide Indian Companies Better Platforms:**
    - Such trade pacts will also **give Indian companies a platform to showcase their strengths** across even larger markets.

Way Forward

Acknowledging India's economic heft and value as a market, the RCEP & CPTPP members have **left the door open for India.** Given the global economic scenario in present times and the near future, **it would be in India's interest to dispassionately review its**

position on RCEP & CPTPP and carry out structural reforms that will help India to mitigate some of the repercussions arising from the RCEP & CPTPP.

Source:TH

EatSmart Cities Challenge and Transport 4 All Challenge

Why in News

Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the **EatSmart Cities Challenge** and **Transport 4 All Challenge.**

> The challenges aim at creating an **environment of right food practices and habits** and to make **public transport safe, affordable, comfortable, and reliable.**

Key Points

- **EatSmart Cities Challenge:**
  - **About:**
    - The EatSmart Cities Challenge is envisioned as a competition among cities to recognize their efforts in adopting and scaling up various initiatives under **Eat Right India.**
    - The challenge is open to all **Smart Cities**, capital cities of States /UTs, and cities with a population of more than 5 lakh.
  - **Objective:**
    It aims to motivate Smart Cities to develop a plan that supports a healthy, safe and sustainable food environment supported by institutional, physical, social, and economic infrastructure along with the application of 'smart' solutions to combat food related issues.
  - **Significance**
    The challenge has a potential to create social and behavioural change towards food safety, hygiene and nutrition.

- **Other Related initiatives:**
  - **Limit TFA:** Recently, the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has capped the amount of trans fatty acids (TFA) in oils and fats to 3% for 2021 and 2% by 2022 from the current permissible limit of 5% through an amendment to the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations 2011.
  - **'Raman 1.0':** A new-age, hand-held battery operated device to perform rapid detection (in less than 1 minute) of economically driven adulteration in edible oils, fats and ghee.
  - **Food Safety Magic Box:** This do-it-yourself food testing kit comprises a manual and equipment to check for food adulterants, which school children can use in their classroom laboratories.
  - **Food Safety Mitra scheme:** It aims to support **small and medium-scale food businesses** so as to comply with the **food safety laws** and will facilitate them with the licensing and registration process, hygiene ratings and training programme.
  - **Eat Right Mela:** It is an outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right. It is organised to make citizens aware of the health and nutrition benefits of different types of food.
- **Transport 4 All Challenge:**
  - **About:**
    - The initiative has been launched in collaboration with **The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)** and aims to bring together cities, citizen groups, and start-ups to develop solutions that improve public transport.
    - ITDP is a non-governmental non-profit organization that focuses on developing bus rapid transit systems, promoting biking, walking, and non-motorized transport, and improving private bus operators margins.
- **Objective:**
  The Transport 4 All Digital Innovation Challenge Aims to develop digital solutions that will make public transport safe, affordable, comfortable, and reliable for all.
- **Significance**
  - COVID-19 has brought the entire world to a halt with transport being one of the worst-hit sectors. Transport 4 All Digital Innovation Challenge has the potential to support cities to recover from this mobility crisis.
  - It will support the cities and start-ups all over the country to move towards digital transformation in urban mobility.

- **Initiatives to Address Urban Transport Issues:**
  - **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP):** The plan aims to achieve national fuel security by promoting hybrid and electric vehicles in the country
  - **Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric vehicles in India (FAME India):** This scheme supports hybrid/electric vehicles market development and manufacturing ecosystem.
  - **Mass Rapid Transit/ Transport Systems (MRTS):** In 2017, the government introduced the new Metro Policy which aims to improve collaborations, standardising norms, financing and creating a procurement mechanism so that the projects can be implemented effectively.
  - **Personal Rapid Transit System (PRT):** It is a transport mode combining small automated vehicles, known as pods, operating on a network of specially built guideways.
  - **Green Urban Mobility Initiative:** The Indian government launched the Green Urban Mobility Initiative (GUMI) to boost green and sustainable alternatives under the Smart Cities Mission.

SOURCE: PIB

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana

Why in News

Recently, alumni meets were organized across the country under **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)** to commemorate 75 years of Independence.

Key Points

- **About:**
  - The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** announced it on **Antyodaya Diwas in 2014.**
  - It is a demand-driven placement linked skill training initiative working under the **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).**
  - It **uses skill training and placement in wage employment as a tool** to diversify income and enable sustained upward movement out of poverty.
- **Beneficiaries:**
  DDU-GKY is uniquely focused on rural youth between the ages of 15 and 35 years from poor families.
- **Objective:**
  - Adding **diversity to the incomes** of rural poor families
  - Cater to the **career aspirations of rural youth.**

- **Alumni Meet:**
    - Alumni meet is an **important component of the scheme.**
    - The Alumni meets **provide healthy ground for experience sharing by the former trainees with their present counterparts** on topics like placements, career goals, challenges they faced in finding employment before undertaking the training and the benefits they reaped after.
    - Some of the **former trainees are also felicitated** at the events for their exemplary performances at their workplaces.
- **Coverage:**
    The program is currently being implemented in **27 States and 3 Union Territories** and has over **2198 Training Centres in 1822 projects**, in partnership with **839 Project Implementing Agencies** conducting **training across 56 sectors, and over 600 job-roles.**
- **Achievements:**
    Since inception of the scheme, a total **10.81 lakh candidates have been trained in 56 sectors and 600 Trades and 6.92 lakh placed.**
- **Significance:**
    - DDU-GKY and integrated farming initiatives for rural development across the country are important for greater success in **skilling** and placing the rural youth.
    - DDU-GKY has played a significant role in the context of **Atmanirbhar Bharat** through skilling.
    - As a part of the **Skill India campaign**, it plays an instrumental role in supporting the social and economic programs.

- **Some Other Initiatives Related to Skill Development:**
  - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0:**
    - It was launched in 2021 in a bid to empower India's youth with employable skills by making over 300 skill courses available to them.
    - It was launched by the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).**
  - **Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM):**
    - Launched in 2020 (by MSDE), it is a portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.
  - **Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS):**
    - The scheme is to provide industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS). It was launched by the **Ministry of Education.**
  - **Kaushal Acharya Awards:**
    - Launched (by MSDE) to recognize the contribution made by skill trainers and to motivate more trainers to join the Skill India Mission.
  - **Pradhan Mantri YUVA Yojana (Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan):**
    - Launched in the year 2016 (by MSDE), it aims at creating an enabling ecosystem for Entrepreneurship development through Entrepreneurship education and training; Advocacy and easy access to entrepreneurship support network and Promoting social enterprises for inclusive growth.

Antyodaya Diwas

- Every year, **25th September is observed as Antyodaya Diwas** to mark the birth anniversary of **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya**, one of the great thinkers and philosophers of the nationalist movement of the country.
- The Government of India announced it for the first time in 2014 along with the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana.**
- Antyodaya means **"uplifting the poorest of the poor"** and the day aims to reach the person in the last mile.

Source:PIB

Initiatives of National Internet Exchange of India

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has inaugurated **three new initiatives/services** of **National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI).**

IP Guru, NIXI Academy, NIXI-IP-INDEX have been launched to facilitate adoption of IPv6 and create an environment to ensure smooth transition from IPv4 to IPv6.

Key Points

- **About the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI):**
  NIXI is a **not-for-profit organization** (section 8 of the Companies Act 2013) working **since 2003** for **spreading the internet infrastructure** to the citizens of India through the following activities:
    - **Internet Exchanges** through which the internet data is exchanged amongst Internet Service Providers (ISP's), Data Centers and Content Delivery Network (CDNs).
    - .IN Registry, **managing and operation of .IN country code domain** and .BHARAT IDN (Internationalized Domain Name) domain for India.
    - Indian Registry for Internet **Names and Numbers** (IRINN), managing and operating **Internet Protocol (IPv4/IPv6).**
- **About the Three New Initiatives:**
  IPv6 Expert Panel (IP Guru):
    - It is **a group to extend support to all the Indian entities** who are finding it technically challenging **to migrate and adopt IPv6.** It will be **offering its services free of cost.**
    - It's a joint effort of the Department of Telecom **(DOT), MeitY** and industry.
- **NIXI Academy:**
    - NIXI Academy is created **to educate technical/non-technical people** in India to learn and relearn technologies like IPv6 which are normally not taught in Educational Institutes.
    - Successful candidates (after passing examination) **can take a certificate from NIXI**, which will be useful to find/upgrade jobs in the Industry.
- **NIXI-IP-INDEX:**
    - NIXI has developed **an IPv6 index portal** for the Internet community.
    - NIXI-IP-INDEX portal will **showcase the IPv6 adoption rate in India and across the world.** It can be used to compare IPv6 Indian adoption rate with other economies in the world.
    - It will also include **details about web adoption in IPv6, IPv6 traffic etc.**

Transition from IPv4 to IPv6

- **IP:** 'IP' stands for 'Internet Protocol'. It is a **set of rules** that dictate how data should be delivered over the public network (Internet).
- **IPv4:**
    - IPv4 was the first major version of IP. It was deployed for production in the ARPANET in 1983.
    - It is the most widely used IP version. It is used to identify devices on a network using an addressing system.
    - The IPv4 **uses a 32-bit address scheme.** Till date, it is considered the primary Internet Protocol and carries 94% of Internet traffic.
    - It provides **an addressing capability of approximately 4.3 billion addresses.**
- **IPv6:**
    - It is the **most recent version of the Internet Protocol.** The Internet Engineer Task Force initiated it in early 1994. The design and development of that suite is now called IPv6.
    - This new IP address version is being deployed to fulfill the need for more Internet addresses.
    - IPv6 is **also called IPng (Internet Protocol next generation).**
    - It has the **capability to provide an infinite number of addresses.**
    - With **128-bit address space**, it allows 340 undecillion unique address space. It can easily accommodate the growing number of networks worldwide and help solve the IP address exhaustion problem.
- **Benefit of Transitioning to IPv6:**
    - The most well-known benefit that IPv6 offers is the **exponential address space**, practically inexhaustible in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it allows **simple, seamless, and cost-effective connectivity** for service providers, enterprises and end-users.
        > It is considered especially important with the impending move to **5G**, which will massively increase the total number of devices connecting to the Internet.
    - The IPv6 operating systems **automatically create two IPv6 addresses.** One IPv6 with randomised MAC address in the suffix to hide the device identity and another IPv6 with real MAC address which is only used for end-to-end encrypted applications.
    - IPv6 has **a privacy protocol** to protect end-user privacy. The current internet (v4) lacks effective privacy and effective authentication mechanisms.

- **Importance for India:**
  - The sustainable development and evolution of internet infrastructure is **essential to the global cyberspace and digital economy**, and IPv6 root server, which controls and manages the internet, can serve as a great tool.
  - Creating such critical infrastructure at the national level is important. As a critical internet resource, the IPv6 root server system is **pivotal to manage the security and stability of the internet.**
  - It will **contribute to in-country expertise building on critical information infrastructure** as well as promoting 'a major technological knowledge base within the country', and having a root server within the country would facilitate surveillance by Indian legal authorities.

Source: PIB

Monkeydactyl: Pterosaur Species

Why in News

The **new pterosaur fossil was discovered in the Tiaojishan Formation of Liaoning, China,** and is thought to be 160 million years old.

> It has been **named Kunpengopterus antipollicatus,** also **dubbed "Monkeydactyl".**

Tiaojishan Formation

- Geographically, the Tiaojishan Formation is **widely distributed in western Liaoning Province and the neighboring northern Hebei Province (China).**
- This formation is lithologically composed of intermediate lava and pyroclastic rocks, interlayered with basic volcanic rocks and sedimentary deposits.
- It **contains abundant and well-preserved fossil plants,** including leaves, seeds and fruits, permineralized rhizomes and wood.

LOCATION OF MONKEYDACTYL FOSSIL

Evidence of a sharp toothed tree climbing dinosaur with opposable thumbs has been discovered and experts are calling it the "Monkeydactyl"

Key Points

- **About Pterosaurs:**
    - The pterosaur species were **reptiles,** close cousins of dinosaurs and the **first animals after insects to evolve powered flight.**
    - They evolved into **various species,** while some were as large as an F-16 fighter jet, others were as small as paper airplanes.
    - They **flourished** during all periods **(Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous)** of the **Mesozoic Era** (252.2 million to 66 million years ago).

- **About the Monkeydactyl Fossil (Kunpengopterus antipollicatus):**
  - **"Antipollicatus"** in ancient Greek means **"opposite thumbs",** and it was attached to the name because the researchers' findings **could be the first discovery of a pterosaur with an opposed thumb.**
    It could **likely be the earliest-known instance of the limb.**
  - It is **far older than the one identified in 2019.**
    - Paleontologists had identified that species as **a pterosaur that lived over 77 million years ago** in what is **Western Canada** today.
    - Named **Cryodrakon boreas,** it was believed to be one of the largest flying animals, which "flew over the heads of dinosaurs", with a wingspan of **over 10 metres.**
- **Opposability of the Thumb:**
  - **About:**
    - Opposability of the thumb is defined as being able to **"simultaneously flex, abduct and medially rotate the thumb"** in a way that one is able to bring the tip of the thumb to touch the tips of the other fingers.
    - Along with humans, some ancient monkeys and apes also had opposable thumbs.
    - Humans, however, have a **relatively longer** and **distally placed thumb,** and larger **thumb muscles.**
      This means that humans' tip-to-tip precision grip when holding smaller objects is superior to non-human primates. This is the reason that humans are able to **hold a pen, unscrew an earring stopper, or put a thread through a needle hole.**
  - **Monkeydactyl and Opposability of the Thumb:**
    - The research team scanned the fossil of K. antipollicatus using micro-computed tomography (micro-CT), a technique making use of X-ray to image an object.
    - By studying its forelimb morphology and musculature, they suggest that K. antipollicatus could have used its hand for grasping, which is likely an adaptation for **arboreal life** (living in trees).
    - The grasping hands of primates developed as a result of their life in the trees — an opposable thumb made it easier for the common ancestor of all primates to cling on to tree branches.

Source:IE

Dolphin Population in Odisha

Why in News

Recently, Odisha has released the final data on the dolphin census, indicating a spectacular growth in numbers.

Key Points

- **Census Data:**
  - The **population of dolphins in <u>Chilika</u>,** India's largest brackish water lake, and along the Odisha coast has **doubled this year** (2021) compared with last year.
  - **Three species were recorded** during the census, with 544 **Irrawaddy, bottle-nose and humpback dolphins** sighted this year, compared with 233 last year.
  - The **rise in the Irrawaddy dolphin population in Chilika** can be attributed to the **eviction of illegal fish enclosures.**
- **About Irrawaddy Dolphins:**
  - **Habitat:** Irrawaddy dolphins are **found in coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia,** and in **three rivers:** the Ayeyarwady (Myanmar), the Mahakam (Indonesian Borneo) and the Mekong.
    > The Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphins inhabit a 118-mile stretch of the river between Cambodia and Lao PDR.
  - **Conservation Status:**
- **About Indo- Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins:**
  - **Habitat:** Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins generally occur in shallow coastal waters of the **Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and Australia.**
  - **Conservation Status:**
    - **IUCN Red List:** Near Threatened
    - **CITES:** Appendix II
- **About Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphins:**
  - **Habitat:** The Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin occurs within the Indian Ocean from South Africa to India.
  - **Conservation Status:**
    - **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
    - **CITES:** Appendix I
    - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I

Chilika Lake

- Chilika is **Asia's largest and world's second largest lagoon.**
- It **lies on the east coast of India in the state of Odisha,** separated from the mighty Bay of Bengal by a small strip of sand.
- It spreads over Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha on the east coast of India, at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 square kilometers.

- It is the **largest wintering ground for migratory birds** on the Indian sub-continent and is home to a number of threatened species of plants and animals.
- In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the **first Indian wetland of international importance** under the **Ramsar Convention.**
- Major attraction at Chilika is **Irrawaddy dolphins** which are often spotted off Satapada Island.
- The **large Nalabana Island (Forest of Reeds)** covering about 16 sq km in the lagoon area was declared **a bird sanctuary** in 1987.
- **Kalijai Temple -** Located on an island in the Chilika Lake.

Source:TH

Aahaar Kranti Mission

Why in News

The Government has launched 'Aahaar Kranti', a **mission dedicated to spread awareness about nutrition.**

Key Points

- **About:**
    - The initiative 'Aahaar Kranti' will focus on **addressing the problem of hunger and diseases in abundance** across India and the world.
    - The initiative will shine a light on the **richness and value of India's traditional diet**, the miracles of **local fruits and vegetables**, and the healing powers of a **balanced diet.**
    - **Organisations Involved:** Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (PRABHASS), Global Indian Scientists and Technocrats' Forum (GIST), **Vijnana Bharati (Vibha)** and Vigyan Prasar (an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology) have come together to launch the mission 'Aahaar Kranti'.
    - The **motto** of the Mission is **"Uttam Aahaar- Uttam Vichaar or Good Diet-Good Cognition".**

- **Implementation Strategy:**
    - The messages **will be imparted through the curriculum** in the form of `what's and `why's of nutrition, or through the forms of games or as instructions such as `how to'.
    - The content will be provided both online and offline, in all vernacular languages besides English and Hindi.
    - The programme **will focus on training teachers**, who, in turn, will pass on the message to the multitudes of students, and through them to their families and finally the society at large.
- **Significance:**
    - The United Nations (UN) has also declared **2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables**, which vibes very well with Aahaar Kranti.
    - Further, it is in line with the **UN sustainable goal 3** that emphasizes human well-being.
    - It will **help in applying the rich knowledge of Ayurveda-based nutrition** to practice.

Performance of India on Global Hunger Index 2020

India has been **ranked at 94** among 107 countries in the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020.**
With a score of 27.2, India has a level of hunger that is **"serious".**

Performance on the Indicators:
- **Undernourishment:** 14% of India's population is undernourished (2017-19). It was 16.3% during 2011-13.
- **Child Wasting:** 17.3% (2015-19), it was 15.1% in 2010-14.
- **Child Stunting:** 34.7%, it has improved significantly, from 54% in 2000 to less than 35% now.
- **Child Mortality:** 3.7%, it was 5.2% in 2012.

Source: PIB

India Restores E-Visa for 156 Countries

Why in News

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has restored **electronic visa (e-visa)** facility for **foreigners** from **156 countries**, who intend to visit India for the purposes of **business, conferences, and for medical reasons**, including in the case of medical attendants.

E-visa for tourists is yet to be restored.

Key Points

- **E-Visa:**
  - **Launch:** The e-visa system is an **innovation introduced by the government in 2014.** The facility was expanded in 2017-2018.
    - The process has its **roots in the 2010 Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVOA) scheme** for Japan, Singapore, Finland, Luxembourg and New Zealand.
    - The government **merged the TVOA with Electronic Travel Authorisation**, thereby creating the e-visa.
  - **Five Categories:** An e-visa also called **Electronic Visa** is provided in five categories—**tourist, business, conference, medical, and medical attendant.**
  - **Process:**
    - Under the arrangement, a foreigner can apply online four days prior to travel.
    - After the details are verified, an **electronic travel authorisation (ETA)** is generated, which has to be presented at the immigration check post on arrival.
    - Entry through e-visas is **allowed only at 28 designated international airports and 5 major seaports in India.**
  - **Nodal Ministry:** The **Ministry of Home Affairs** is the nodal ministry that issues visas to foreigners.
  - The facility is **not available for the citizens of Pakistan** and they are expected to apply for regular visas from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.
  - E-visas are **not valid for foreign diplomats** which are dealt separately.
- **Current Status:**
  - Though the **facility is available to 171 countries**, after restrictions were announced in 2020, it has been **restored only for 156 countries.**
  - China, the UK, Canada, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia are **excluded** from the current restoration.

Source TH