DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 23-11-2024

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Birsa Munda

Syllabus: GS-1; Tribal Movement- Modern Indian History

Context

- Recently 150th birth anniversary of legendary tribal leader Birsa Munda was celebrated.

About

- Birsa Munda was a significant tribal leader and freedom fighter in India's struggle against British colonial rule.
- He led the Munda Rebellion (Ulgulan) against the exploitation and oppression of the tribal communities in the Chotanagpur region (now in Jharkhand) during the late 19th century.

Early Life

- **Birth:** November 15, 1875, in Ulihatu, Jharkhand (then Bihar).
- **Community:** Munda Tribe (an Adivasi community).
- **Education:** Attended German Mission School at Burj; exposed to Christian teachings but eventually developed a strong cultural and spiritual connection with traditional Munda beliefs.

Religious Reforms

- **Prophet of the Mundas:** Birsa promoted a monotheistic faith known as **'Birsait'**, urging tribals to return to their original customs and reject superstitions, alcoholism, and dependence on missionaries.
- **Cultural Revival:** Advocated for the restoration of tribal identity and culture while opposing the imposition of exploitative practices by landlords and Christian missionaries.

The Munda Rebellion (Ulgulan)

- **Cause:**
  - British policies disrupted the agrarian system, leading to the exploitation of Mundas by zamindars (landlords), moneylenders, and the British government.
  - Land alienation, bonded labor (beth begari), and the introduction of new revenue systems.
- **Movement:**
  - Began in the 1890s as a socio-religious and political uprising.
  - Aimed to establish the **'Munda Raj'** (Munda Kingdom) and abolish the feudal system imposed by the British.
  - Included armed resistance, mobilization of tribal masses, and symbolic attacks on British institutions.

Legacy and Death

- **Arrest and Death:**
  - Arrested by British forces in 1900 after intense resistance.
  - Died on June 9, 1900, in Ranchi Jail under suspicious circumstances, likely due to maltreatment or poisoning.
- **Legacy:**
  - Symbol of tribal resistance and a champion of social justice.
  - November 15, Birsa's birth anniversary, is celebrated as **Jharkhand Foundation Day** and **Tribal Pride Day (Janjatiya Gaurav Divas)** across India.

Key Contributions

- **Land Rights Movement:** Inspired tribal communities to reclaim their lands from the British and feudal landlords.

- **Religious and Social Awakening:** Advocated for tribal unity and cultural preservation.
- **Freedom Struggle:** Played a crucial role in early resistance against British colonialism in India.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Syllabus: GS-2; International Institutions

Context

- ICC issues arrest warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant and Hamas commander

About

- **Establishment:** The ICC was established on **1 July 2002** by the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**, adopted in 1998.
- **Purpose:** To prosecute individuals for the gravest offenses of international concern, including:
  - Genocide
  - Crimes against humanity
  - War crimes
  - Crime of aggression (added later via an amendment in 2010).
- **Headquarters: The Hague, Netherlands**.
- **Motto:** "Justice for all."

Structure

- **Judicial Divisions:**
  - Pre-Trial Division
  - Trial Division
  - Appeals Division
- **Office of the Prosecutor:**
  - Responsible for investigating and prosecuting crimes.
- **Registry:**
  - Provides administrative and operational support.

Membership

- **Total Members:** 123 countries are parties to the Rome Statute.
- **Non-Members:** Notable non-member states include the **USA, China, Russia, India, and Israel**.
- **India's Position:**
  - India has not signed or ratified the Rome Statute.
  - Reasons include concerns about **sovereignty**, **selective prosecution**, and the **definition of crimes**.

Jurisdiction

- ICC can prosecute crimes committed:
  - On the territory of a member state.
  - By a national of a member state.
  - Referred to it by the **UN Security Council** (e.g., Darfur and Libya cases).
- It operates on the principle of **complementarity**, meaning it acts only when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute.

Significant Cases

- **Omar al-Bashir:** Former Sudanese President indicted for genocide in Darfur.
- **Thomas Lubanga:** First person convicted by the ICC for using child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- **Joseph Kony:** Ugandan warlord and leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), indicted but still at large.

Challenges

- **Non-Universality:** Key global powers are not members, limiting the court's effectiveness.
- **Enforcement:** ICC lacks an independent enforcement mechanism; it relies on member states for arrests and compliance.
- **Criticism of Bias:** Accusations of targeting African leaders disproportionately.
- **Limited Resources:** Financial and operational constraints hinder its activities.

BASIC countries

Syllabus: GS-2; International groupings

Context

- BASIC countries ask rich nations to honour commitments for climate finance rather than 'diluting obligations'

About

- The **BASIC countries** refer to a group of four major emerging economies: **Brazil, South Africa, India, and China**. The grouping was formed in **2009** during climate change negotiations and focuses on **environmental sustainability**, **climate finance**, and addressing the global challenges of climate change.

Origin and Objectives

- Established during the **Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP-15)** in 2009.
- Aimed at creating a **common negotiating platform** for climate talks, particularly under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**).
- Advocates for the principle of **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)**, emphasizing the historical responsibility of developed nations for global warming.

Member Countries and Key Contributions

1. **Brazil**
    - Known for its vast Amazon rainforest, a crucial global carbon sink.
    - Faces challenges like deforestation and forest fires.
    - Actively participates in promoting renewable energy and protecting biodiversity.
2. **South Africa**
    - Heavy reliance on coal, making the transition to green energy a priority.
    - Hosts initiatives like the **Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)** to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.
3. **India**
    - Promotes renewable energy under initiatives like the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
    - Committed to achieving **Net Zero by 2070**.

- Focuses on green energy through schemes like **PM-KUSUM** and **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**.

4. **China**
   - The largest greenhouse gas emitter globally but also the largest investor in renewable energy.
   - Committed to achieving **Carbon Neutrality by 2060**.
   - Active in developing electric vehicles and solar energy technologies.

Achievements of BASIC Countries

- Played a crucial role in shaping the **Paris Agreement (2015)** by ensuring CBDR principles were maintained.
- Actively demand climate finance from developed countries, emphasizing the $100 billion annual pledge under the UNFCCC framework.
- Collaborate on green technology development and renewable energy projects.

Challenges Faced

- Balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability.
- Dependence on fossil fuels for energy production in countries like India, South Africa, and China.
- Pressure from developed nations to take more aggressive climate actions.
- Internal challenges like deforestation in Brazil and urban pollution in China and India.

Significance in Global Climate Politics

- BASIC countries represent the interests of the **Global South**.
- Their cooperation highlights the role of emerging economies in addressing climate change.
- Act as a counterweight to developed nations, ensuring that their historical responsibility is not overlooked.

Way Forward

- Strengthen cooperation to develop affordable green technologies.
- Continue advocating for climate finance and equitable distribution of resources.
- Enhance domestic policies for sustainable development and renewable energy transition.

Urad and Tur

Syllabus: GS-3; Agriculture

Context

- India said Brazil has the potential to become a major source for the import of black gram (urad) and pigeon peas (tur) for the country. The issue was discussed by a Brazilian delegation led by senior Agriculture Ministry official Julio Cesar Ramos during a courtesy call to Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare.

General Overview

- **Urad (Black Gram):** A leguminous crop, scientifically known as *Vigna mungo*, grown primarily in India. It is a short-duration crop and a rich source of protein.
- **Tur (Pigeon Pea):** Scientifically known as *Cajanus cajan*, is a widely cultivated pulse crop in tropical and subtropical regions, known for its drought tolerance.

Importance

- **Nutritional Value:**
  - Both are rich in proteins, dietary fibers, vitamins, and essential amino acids, making them staple sources of vegetarian protein in India.
  - High iron and folate content contribute to combating anemia.
- **Economic Significance:**
  - Both contribute significantly to agricultural income in India.
  - Essential in reducing India's dependency on imported pulses.
- **Cultural and Dietary Importance:**
  - Commonly used in Indian cuisines, especially in dals, curries, and fermented products.
  - Used in festivals and religious ceremonies.

Major Producing States in India

- **Urad (Black Gram):** Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.
- **Tur (Pigeon Pea):** Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat.

Crop Characteristics

- **Urad:**

- **Climate:** Requires warm weather; grown in tropical and subtropical regions.
- **Soil:** Thrives in loamy to clayey soil with good drainage.
- **Season:** Kharif crop but also grown as a Rabi crop in some areas.
- **Duration:** Matures in about 70–90 days.

- **Tur:**
  - **Climate:** Grows well in semi-arid climates with annual rainfall of 600–1000 mm.
  - **Soil:** Prefers light, well-drained soils; tolerant to alkaline and saline soils.
  - **Season:** Kharif crop.
  - **Duration:** Matures in about 150–180 days.

Challenges in Cultivation

- **Pests and Diseases:** Pod borer in Tur and leaf spot in Urad affect yield.
- **Climate Vulnerability:** Dependence on monsoon makes them prone to drought and erratic rainfall.
- **Low Yield:** Traditional farming practices and lack of improved seeds impact productivity.

Government Initiatives

- **National Food Security Mission (NFSM):** Promotes the cultivation of pulses like Urad and Tur to enhance productivity and reduce dependency on imports.
- **Minimum Support Price (MSP):** Ensures fair prices for farmers, encouraging pulse cultivation.
- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):** Promotes irrigation facilities for better water management in pulse-growing areas.

Recent Developments

- **Import Dependency:** India is the largest producer of pulses, yet imports a significant amount, especially Tur, to meet domestic demand.
- **Pulse Revolution:** Efforts are underway to increase self-sufficiency in pulses through improved farming techniques and better seed varieties.
- **Promotion of Biofortified Varieties:** Development of nutrient-rich and climate-resilient varieties to address malnutrition and climate challenges.

Sustainable Practices

- Intercropping with cereals (e.g., wheat, maize) and oilseeds (e.g., mustard) improves soil fertility by nitrogen fixation.

- Encouraging organic farming practices and pest-resistant seed varieties to boost production sustainably.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

Syllabus: GS-3; Environmental Legislation- mitigating global carbon emissions

Context

- China, India, and other BASIC country partners Brazil and South Africa have been complaining against the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) introduced by the EU in 2023.

About

- The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is a policy tool introduced by the European Union (EU) to address the issue of "carbon leakage."
- It ensures that imported goods comply with the EU's climate objectives by applying a carbon cost equivalent to what EU producers pay under the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS).

Key Features of CBAM

- **Objective:**
  - Prevent carbon leakage by leveling the playing field for EU companies paying carbon prices under the EU ETS.
  - Encourage non-EU countries to adopt similar carbon pricing mechanisms.
- **Mechanism:**
  - Importers in the EU must purchase CBAM certificates for goods imported from countries without equivalent carbon pricing systems.
  - The cost is calculated based on the embedded carbon emissions of the imported goods.
- **Scope:**
  - Initially applies to carbon-intensive sectors such as steel, cement, aluminum, fertilizers, electricity, and hydrogen.
  - Gradual expansion to other sectors is anticipated.

- **Implementation Timeline:**
  - **2023**: Transitional phase with reporting obligations but no financial adjustments.
  - **2026**: Full implementation with importers required to buy CBAM certificates.
- **Alignment with EU ETS:**
  - CBAM is designed to complement the EU ETS, which imposes carbon costs on domestic industries.

Implications

- **Global Trade:**
  - May lead to disputes in the World Trade Organization (WTO) as it could be seen as a trade barrier.
  - Encourages trading partners to adopt similar carbon pricing mechanisms.
- **Developing Countries:**
  - Potential economic impacts on developing countries reliant on exports to the EU.
  - Pressure to adopt green technologies and reduce carbon intensity.
- **Environmental Benefits:**
  - Reduces global carbon emissions by incentivizing cleaner production practices globally.
  - Mitigates the risk of carbon leakage, ensuring that emissions reduction efforts are not undermined.

India and CBAM

- **Impact on Indian Exports:**
  - Sectors like steel, aluminum, and cement, which have significant exports to the EU, may face challenges.
  - Increased costs due to CBAM certificates might reduce competitiveness in the EU market.
- **Opportunities:**
  - Accelerates India's transition to cleaner technologies and renewable energy.
  - Boosts investments in green hydrogen and low-carbon production processes.
- **Policy Response:**
  - India can negotiate for a fair transition period.
  - Emphasize the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) under international climate negotiations.