DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 30-11-2024

GS-1

1. Rejang Dewa

2. Ashtamudi Lake

GS-2

3. One Nation One Subscription (ONOS) scheme

4. The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty

GS-3

5. Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

Rejang Dewa

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture

Context

➢ Embracing Heritage: The Sacred Dance of Rejang Dewa in Bali.

About

➢ **Rejang Dewa** is a traditional sacred dance from Bali, Indonesia.
➢ It is performed during Hindu temple ceremonies as an offering to the deities.

Cultural and Religious Significance

➢ The dance is deeply rooted in Balinese Hindu rituals and symbolizes respect and devotion to the gods.
➢ The word "Rejang" means "offering dance," and "Dewa" translates to "god." Together, it signifies a dance offering to the divine.
➢ It is typically performed by young girls and women who are considered pure.

Performance Details

➢ **Venue**: Usually performed in the temple courtyard or near sacred areas.
➢ **Attire**: The dancers wear traditional costumes made of yellow or white cloth, symbolizing purity. They often adorn themselves with floral headpieces.

➢ **Movements**: The dance involves slow, graceful movements that align with traditional Balinese gamelan music.
➢ **Accompaniment**: Gamelan orchestras provide the music, enhancing the spiritual aura of the performance.

UNESCO Recognition

➢ The **Rejang Dewa Dance** is part of the Balinese traditional dances collectively recognized by UNESCO as an **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** in 2015.

Ashtamudi Lake

Syllabus: GS-1; Geography- Mapping, GS-3; Environmental Concern

Context

➢ Four locations in Ashtamudi Lake unfit for bathing: CPCB

About

➢ **Ashtamudi Lake** is a unique and significant wetland located in the state of Kerala, India, known for its ecological importance and scenic beauty. It is the second-largest lake in Kerala and holds a distinctive place in the state's environmental and cultural landscape.

Location and Size

➢ **Location**: Ashtamudi Lake is situated in the southern part of Kerala, near Kollam city.
➢ **Area**: It spans approximately 16 square kilometers, making it the second-largest lake in Kerala.
➢ **Name**: The name "Ashtamudi" is derived from the Malayalam words "Ashta" (eight) and "Mudi" (corner), referring to its eight arms or branches.

Ecological Importance

➢ **Biodiversity**: Ashtamudi Lake is known for its rich biodiversity. It is home to several species of fish, birds, and other wildlife. The lake's wetland ecosystem

supports a variety of flora and fauna, making it a significant spot for biodiversity conservation.

➢ **Mangrove Forests**: The surrounding area is home to mangrove forests, which play a crucial role in maintaining the ecological balance, providing habitats for marine life and acting as a buffer against coastal erosion.

➢ **Fishing Grounds**: The lake is a vital resource for the local community, particularly for the fishing industry. It supports a large number of fishermen who depend on it for their livelihood.

Cultural Significance

➢ **Traditional Boat Races**: The lake is associated with Kerala's cultural heritage, especially in relation to its boat races, which are a major attraction during festivals like Onam.

➢ **Backwater Tourism**: Ashtamudi Lake is a key component of Kerala's famous backwater tourism. Houseboat cruises on the lake provide tourists with an opportunity to explore the serene landscapes and village life.

Environmental Concerns

➢ **Pollution**: The lake has been facing environmental challenges such as water pollution, mainly due to domestic and industrial waste from nearby towns and villages. This has affected the water quality and the aquatic life in the lake.

➢ **Water Quality Issues**: **The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT)** that the water quality at four locations in Ashtamudi Lake was not complying with the norms prescribed under the Primary Water Quality Criteria for Bathing, as per the **Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986.**

  o The CPCB revealed the poor water quality at monitoring stations in the lake during the **National Water Quality Monitoring Programme for 2023**, including locations like Thoppilkadavu, near the KSRTC bus depot, Perumon, and near Kundara ceramics.

  o **Non-Compliant Criteria**: The faecal coliform count was higher than the permissible limit of 2,500 MPN/100 mL, and other parameters like faecal streptococci and dissolved oxygen were also found to be outside the prescribed limits.

  o The CPCB has requested the State authorities to identify pollution sources and take corrective measures, especially at non-complying locations, and submit action plans for improving water quality.

➢ **Microplastics Pollution**: A study conducted by the Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries at the University of Kerala, supported by the European Union's Erasmus Programme, found significant levels of microplastics in the brackish-water lake's fish, shellfish, sediment, and water.
  o The highest concentration of microplastics was found in macrofauna, with fish accounting for 19.6% and shellfish 40.9% of the total microplastic composition.

Ashtamudi Lake and Ramsar Site

➢ **Ramsar Wetland**: In 2002, Ashtamudi Lake was designated as a Ramsar Site, a recognition given to wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, which focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
➢ **Conservation Focus**: The Ramsar status brings international attention to the ecological value of Ashtamudi and promotes efforts to protect the lake's fragile ecosystem.

Economic Importance

➢ **Agriculture and Livelihood**: The lake's surrounding areas support agriculture, with coconut cultivation being prominent. The fertile lands around the lake contribute to the livelihood of thousands of people.
➢ **Tourism**: Ashtamudi Lake contributes significantly to Kerala's tourism industry. The lake's picturesque setting, along with the traditional Kerala houseboats, attracts tourists from around the world.

One Nation One Subscription (ONOS) scheme

Syllabus: GS-2; Government policies and Interventions

Context

➢ The Union cabinet recently gave its nod to 'One Nation One Subscription' scheme. The scheme is designed to help students and academicians in getting access to latest research articles and journals.

About

Key Features of ONOS

➢ **Free Access to Scientific Literature**: Under ONOS, the government negotiates subscriptions to major academic and scientific journals, e-books, and other publications, making them freely accessible to all.

➢ **Inclusive Coverage**: The scheme is intended for students, researchers, scientists, and the general public, enabling access to a wide range of resources.

➢ **Cost-Effective**: By consolidating subscriptions, ONOS eliminates the need for individual institutions to purchase separate subscriptions, significantly reducing costs.

➢ **Promotes Research and Innovation**: With seamless access to global research, the scheme encourages innovation, especially in fields like science, technology, medicine, and engineering.

Objectives of ONOS

➢ **Democratization of Knowledge**: Ensure equitable access to knowledge for all, irrespective of socio-economic status.

➢ **Boost Research Output**: Equip researchers and students with resources to enhance India's global research rankings.

➢ **Support NEP 2020 Goals**: Align with the National Education Policy's vision of making education and knowledge more accessible.

➢ **Reduce Duplication of Costs**: Prevent multiple institutions from paying for the same resources.

Implementation and Challenges

➢ **Implementation**: The scheme is to be rolled out through a centralized digital portal, providing a single-window platform for accessing subscribed resources.

➢ **Challenges**:
   o **Negotiations with Publishers**: Achieving agreements with international publishers for country-wide access.
   o **Budgetary Constraints**: High upfront costs for comprehensive subscription coverage.
   o **Digital Divide**: Ensuring accessibility for users in rural and remote areas with limited internet connectivity.

The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty

Syllabus: GS-2; International Institutions

Context

➢ The G20 Leaders' Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil was headlined by the official launch of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty (henceforth "the Alliance").

Context and Urgency

➢ **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**: In 2015, all 193 UN Member States adopted the **2030 Agenda**, with the goal of ending poverty and hunger, achieving food security, and improving nutrition by 2030. However, the **COVID-19 pandemic** significantly reversed progress, exacerbating poverty and malnutrition, especially in the **Global South**.

➢ **Slow Progress**: Current projections suggest that by 2030, **622 million people** will live below the extreme poverty line, and **582 million people** will face hunger. These figures are much higher than the targets set by the **2030 Agenda**.

➢ **Global Setbacks**: The pandemic, global conflicts, and climate change have slowed recovery efforts, pushing the world further away from achieving these goals.

Launch of the Alliance

➢ **Brazil's Leadership**: Under the leadership of **President Lula da Silva**, Brazil launched the **Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty** during the **2024 G20 summit**, highlighting the dire state of global hunger and poverty.

➢ **Key Quote by Lula**: "We have the highest number of armed conflicts since World War II, and the highest number of forced displacements ever recorded. Extreme weather events are having devastating effects on every corner of the planet. The ultimate symbol of our collective tragedy is hunger and poverty."

Function and Structure of the Alliance

➢ **Membership**: The Alliance has already garnered support from **81 countries**, **26 international organizations**, **9 financial institutions**, and **31 philanthropic foundations and NGOs**, including major contributors like **India**.

➢ **Platform for Cooperation**: The Alliance serves as a platform where countries can access proven best practices, connect with potential partners, and receive technical and financial assistance to tackle hunger and poverty.

➢ **No Exclusive Fund**: Unlike many international initiatives, the Alliance does not have an exclusive fund. Instead, it acts as a **matchmaking platform**, linking countries in need with motivated donors and technical support.

Key Focus Areas and Policy Basket

➢ The Alliance has outlined a comprehensive **policy basket**, including over **50 policy instruments** aimed at combating hunger and poverty. These focus on:
  o **School meals** to combat child malnutrition.
  o **Cash transfers** for immediate financial relief to vulnerable populations.
  o **Support for smallholder and family farming** to boost local food production.
  o **Socio-economic inclusion programs** targeting marginalized groups.
  o **Integrated maternal and early childhood interventions** to improve health and nutrition from birth.
  o **Water access solutions** for communities facing water scarcity.
➢ **Sprints 2030**: Six high-impact areas, referred to as **Sprints 2030**, will drive initiatives focused on the most vulnerable populations.

Operational Funding and Support

➢ **Annual Budget**: The operational budget of the Alliance will range from **$2-3 million** annually, funded by member countries and supporting institutions like the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, **UNICEF**, and the **World Bank**.
➢ **Support Mechanism**: The Alliance facilitates **technical expertise** and **financial support** for countries aiming to implement national policies addressing hunger and poverty.

Global Implications

➢ The **Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty** is a critical step toward achieving the **2030 SDGs** related to poverty and hunger.
➢ It provides a platform for collaboration and resource mobilization, crucial in a time when global setbacks like the pandemic and climate change threaten development gains.
➢ The launch of this initiative underscores the urgent need for concerted global action to **accelerate progress** toward a world without hunger or extreme poverty.

India's Role

➢ As a member of the Alliance, **India** plays an active role in sharing its expertise in areas like **food security**, **agriculture**, and **poverty alleviation programs**. India's participation highlights its commitment to both national and global efforts aimed at eradicating hunger and poverty.
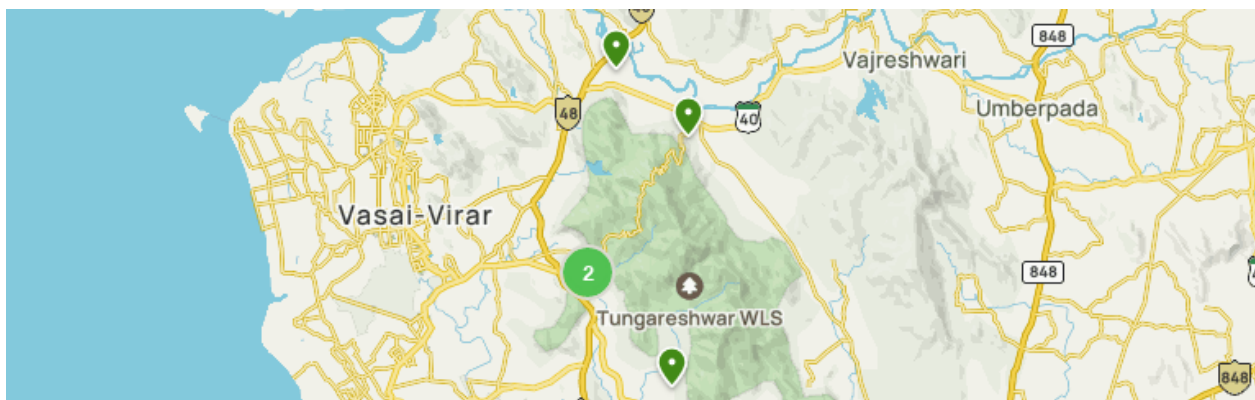
Conclusion

➢ The **Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty** is a strategic initiative aimed at addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges.
➢ Through collaboration, the Alliance seeks to bring together resources, expertise, and policies to help countries meet the **SDG targets** and ensure a more equitable future for vulnerable populations.

Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

➢ Authorities have told the National Green Tribunal that the claims made in a media report about wild animals disappearing from the Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary in Maharashtra due to encroachments were "inaccurate" and "sensationalised."

Location and Area

➢ **Location:** Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary is situated on the foothills of the Sahyadri mountain range, about 40 kilometers north of Mumbai, Maharashtra.

➢ **Area:** It spans an area of approximately **85 square kilometers**.

Flora and Fauna

➢ **Flora:** The sanctuary is home to a variety of flora, predominantly **tropical dry deciduous** and **semi-evergreen forests**. It features several species of trees, including **teak, bamboo, sal, and wild figs**, along with a wide variety of shrubs, herbs, and grasses.

➢ **Fauna:** Tungareshwar is famous for its diverse wildlife. Some key species include:
   o **Mammals:** Indian leopards, barking deer, wild boar, civet cats, Indian porcupine, and several species of monkeys.
   o **Birds:** The sanctuary is a haven for birdwatchers and is home to species such as the **Indian eagle owl, golden-backed woodpecker, Indian hornbill, and many other resident and migratory birds**.
   o **Reptiles:** Includes species like **Indian pythons, cobras, and various types of lizards**.
   o **Insects:** The sanctuary also harbors a variety of butterflies and other insects, contributing to the ecological balance.

Geographical Features

➢ The sanctuary is nestled between the **Tungabhadra River** and **Vaitarna River**. It is characterized by rolling hills, valleys, waterfalls, and lush green vegetation, making it an attractive destination for eco-tourism and nature enthusiasts.

➢ **Waterfalls:** The Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary has several seasonal waterfalls, which add to its charm during the monsoon season.

Conservation Status and Protection

➢ **Protected Area:** Tungareshwar is recognized as a **wildlife sanctuary** under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.

➢ The sanctuary faces threats from **urbanization, poaching, and illegal logging**, but conservation efforts by local authorities and NGOs aim to preserve its biodiversity.

➢ The sanctuary is also part of the **Tungareshwar – Sanjay Gandhi National Park wildlife corridor**, which is crucial for the movement of animals, especially tigers and leopards, between these two protected areas.

Ecological Significance

- ➢ Tungareshwar plays a vital role in maintaining ecological balance by supporting the local flora and fauna. It also helps in **water conservation** and acts as a **carbon sink**, providing a critical green space for the surrounding urban areas.
- ➢ The sanctuary's **forests act as a vital watershed** for surrounding areas, including urban regions, supplying water to both rural and metropolitan settlements.