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World Bank's Toolkit for support during Natural Disaster

Context: The World Bank Group has unveiled an extensive set of resources to aid nations in their efforts to address natural disasters and other emergencies.

Need of tool kit

- The toolkit is essential in enabling countries to respond effectively to the growing occurrence and magnitude of natural disasters and crises.
- It facilitates the development of resilience in nations, empowering them to better withstand and recover from such events.
- The toolkit promotes the sharing of knowledge and best practices, allowing countries to learn from each other's experiences and enhance their disaster response capabilities.
- It ensures a swift and efficient response to disasters and crises, minimizing the impact on affected populations and infrastructure.
- By supporting rapid recovery, the toolkit contributes to poverty reduction efforts, helping affected communities rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Toolkit Features and Their Impact on Disaster-Facing Countries:

- **Pause in debt repayments:**
 - Provides relief to countries by allowing them to focus on urgent needs instead of loan repayments during crises or catastrophes.
 - World Bank Group launching Climate Resilient Debt Clauses to facilitate this pause in debt repayments.
- **Redirecting financing:**
 - Offers countries the flexibility to quickly redirect funds for emergency response.
 - Ensures immediate access to cash for disaster management and recovery efforts.
- **Linking crisis preparedness and financing:**
 - Helps governments build advanced emergency systems.
 - Enhances preparedness to respond to crises effectively from day one.
- **Backstopping development projects with private-sector support:**
 - Supports development projects by providing private sector support in crisis preparedness and response.
 - Enables businesses to sustain operations, protect jobs, and promote long-term sustainability in disaster-struck areas.
- **Building enhanced catastrophe insurance without debt:**
 - Enhances catastrophe insurance options, such as Cat Bonds.
 - Integrates catastrophe insurance into lending products.
 - Provides resources for disaster-struck countries without adding to their debt burden.

World Bank:

- International financial institution for development projects and programs.
- Established in 1944, headquartered in Washington, D.C.
- Aims to reduce poverty and promote shared prosperity.
- Consists of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).
- Focuses on sectors like education, health, agriculture, infrastructure, and governance.

World Bank Group:

- Collection of five international organizations.
- Includes IBRD, IDA, IFC, MIGA, and ICSID.

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- Works together to achieve development goals.
- Promotes private sector investment, provides risk insurance, settles investment disputes.
- Addresses challenges like poverty, job creation, climate change, and sustainable development.

India Egypt Relations

Context: During talks between Prime Minister Modi and President El-Sisi, India and Egypt have signed an agreement on a strategic partnership.

- India and Egypt signed a strategic partnership agreement during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.
- The agreement is a result of their decision to elevate the bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership during El-Sisi's visit to India in January this year.
- Prime Minister Modi was honoured with Egypt's highest civilian honour, the Order of the Nile, by President El-Sisi.
- The Order of the Nile has been awarded to notable figures such as Nelson Mandela, Jimmy Carter, and Queen Elizabeth II in the past.

India-Egypt Relations

Historical:

- Contacts between India and Egypt date back to the time of Emperor Asoka, showcasing their ancient civilizations.
- Mahatma Gandhi and Egyptian revolutionary Saad Zaghloul shared common goals in their fight for independence from British colonial rule.

Geostrategic:

- Egypt occupies a crucial geostrategic location, with 12% of global trade passing through the Suez Canal.
- It serves as a major market for India and acts as a gateway to both Europe and Africa.
- Egypt has bilateral trade pacts with important nations in West Asia and Africa.

Political:

- Diplomatic relations between India and Egypt were established in 1947 at the ambassadorial level.
- The friendship treaty was signed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1955, playing a role in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
- High-level exchanges continued after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.
- Egypt is viewed by India as a moderate Islamic voice, actively participating in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Economic:

- The India-Egypt bilateral trade agreement has been in operation since 1978.
- Bilateral trade has increased significantly in the past decade.
- Agriculture cooperation is crucial as Egypt faces a food grain shortage due to the Ukraine-Russia war.
- Egypt aims to boost tourism from India for increased foreign exchange inflow.
- Plans are underway to establish an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Egypt.
- Egypt is interested in procuring defence equipment from India, including LCA Tejas, missiles, and radars.
- Egypt has been invited to participate in Aero-India 2023.

Recent Strategic Partnership:

- The India-Egypt bilateral relationship was elevated to a "Strategic Partnership."
- Four main elements of the partnership are
 - political, defence and security,
 - economic engagement,
 - scientific and academic collaboration, and
 - cultural and people-to-people contacts.

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New Assistive Reproduction Technology (ART) Regulations, 2023

Context: The Health Ministry has introduced the Assisted Reproductive Technology Regulations (ART), 2023, with the objective of enhancing medical care and security for donors and patients involved in assisted reproductive procedures.

New Regulations:

- The new Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) provisions restrict the number of donations a donor can make in their lifetime and set age limits for donors.
- Oocyte donors should be married and have at least one living child of their own, and they can donate oocyte only once, with a maximum of seven oocytes retrieved.
- ART banks cannot supply reproductive cells from a single donor to more than one commissioning couple.
- Insurance coverage for oocyte donors is required, protecting against any loss, damage, or death.
- Offering a child of predetermined sex is prohibited, and genetic disease screening before embryo implantation is necessary.
- The restrictions in the new ART laws limit opportunities for ART couples to find suitable donors.
- The laws may increase costs and pose challenges for couples relying on assisted reproductive techniques.
- The decline in fertility rates in India and globally, coupled with limited donors, will bring further challenges.

Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)

- Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) encompasses various medical procedures and technologies used to facilitate conception and pregnancy.
- **Methods of ART:**
 - In Vitro Fertilization (IVF): The most common ART method where eggs are retrieved from the ovaries, fertilized with sperm in a laboratory, and then transferred to the uterus.
 - Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI): A technique where a single sperm is directly injected into an egg to facilitate fertilization.
 - Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer (GIFT): In this method, eggs and sperm are transferred into the fallopian tubes to allow fertilization to occur inside the woman's body.
 - Zygote Intrafallopian Transfer (ZIFT): Similar to GIFT, but the fertilized eggs (zygotes) are transferred to the fallopian tubes.
 - Artificial Insemination (AI): The process of directly placing sperm into a woman's reproductive tract to facilitate fertilization.
- **Types of ART:**
 - Intrauterine Insemination (IUI): A method where prepared sperm is placed directly into the uterus during ovulation to increase the chances of fertilization.
 - Donor Egg or Sperm: When eggs or sperm from a donor are used in the ART process.
 - Surrogacy: A process where another woman carries and gives birth to a baby for individuals or couples who are unable to conceive or carry a pregnancy themselves.

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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

INS Sunayna



Context: INS Sunayna, a Saryu class Offshore Patrol Vessel of the Indian Navy, recently visited Mombasa, Kenya from 20-23 June 2023.

INS Sunayna:

- INS Sunayna is a Saryu class Offshore Patrol Vessel that was commissioned at Kochi.
- It operates under the Southern Naval Command and was built at the Goa Shipyard Limited.
- It is capable of achieving speeds of up to 25 knots and is equipped with advanced navigation, communication and electronic support systems.
- It is fitted with the latest Navigation, Communication and Electronic Support Systems.
- The ship is named after the mythological character Sumitra, who was the wife of King Dasharatha and the mother of Lakshmana in the Indian epic, Ramayana.
- Other Sarayu class includes the INS Sumitra and INS Sumedha.

Passage Exercise (PASSEX):

- During the visit, a Maritime Partnership Exercise, commonly known as PASSEX, was conducted between the Indian Navy and the Kenyan Navy.
- This exercise aimed to enhance interoperability and operational coordination between the two naval forces.

Kedarnath Temple



Context: Recently, the Uttarakhand government has formed a high-level committee to investigate allegations of a Rs.1.25 billion scam related to the gold plating of the sanctum sanctorum at the Kedarnath Temple.

Kedarnath Temple:

- Kedarnath Temple is a revered Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- It is situated at an elevation of 3,584 meters in the Garhwal Himalayan range near the Mandakini River, the temple is located in the Rudrapur District of Uttarakhand.

Chota Char Dham:

Kedarnath forms one of the four pilgrimage sites known as Chota Char Dham which includes Yamunotri Dham, Gangotri Dham, Badrinath Dham and Kedarnath Dham.

Construction and Architecture:

- Legend has it that the Pandavas built the original Kedarnath Temple which was later reconstructed by Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th century A.D.
- The temple boasts remarkable architecture with large and evenly shaped grey stone slabs, interlocked with iron clamps. Notably, no mortar was used in its construction.

Jyotirlingas:

- Kedarnath Temple is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas in India, which are shrines where Lord Shiva is worshipped in the form of a Jyotirlingam.
- Each Jyotirlinga represents a different manifestation of Lord Shiva.

Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Context: The Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary recently conducted a pre-monsoon sign survey, revealing a prey density of 46 animals per square kilometer within the sanctuary.

The Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary:

- The Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the state of Odisha, is a significant protected area known for its diverse flora and fauna.
- The sanctuary was established in 1985 and is situated between the Hirakud Dam and Reservoir.
- The area holds historical importance as it was a base for the renowned freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai during his rebellion against the British.

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Prey density survey:

- A recent pre-monsoon survey conducted in the Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary recorded a prey density of 46 animals per square kilometer.
- This indicates the presence of a healthy ecosystem supporting a diverse range of wildlife within the sanctuary.

Flora and Fauna:

- The sanctuary is known for its diverse wildlife. Some notable species found in the sanctuary include the Indian Bison, Wild Boars and Sambhar.
- The dry deciduous forest supports a rich variety of plant life, attracting numerous bird species during the winter months.

Debrigarh 48 Initiative:

- The 'Debrigarh 48' initiative was launched by the wildlife division to address various concerns.
- One of the objectives of this initiative is to prevent villagers from harming wildlife.
- Its aims to gather intelligence about the sanctuary's periphery landscape by engaging with the local community.

Hirakud Dam:

- The Hirakud Dam is a notable structure located near the Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary.
- It is a composite dam constructed using earth, concrete and masonry.
- The dam holds the distinction of being the longest major earthen dam in India.
- It is one of the first multipurpose river valley projects initiated after India gained independence and started functioning in 1957.
- The dam serves various purposes including irrigation, hydroelectric power generation and flood control in the Mahanadi River basin.

Guwahati (Assam)

Context: Recently, the Ambubachi Mela, a significant festival lasting four days, commenced at the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati, Assam.

Ambubachi Mela:

- The Ambubachi Mela is a religious festival observed at the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati.
- The Kamakhya Temple is one of the 51 Shakti Peethas, representing a body part of Sati, the companion of Lord Shiva.

Geographical Location:

Guwahati:

- Guwahati is the largest city in the state of Assam, situated in northeastern India.
- It serves as the gateway to the region and is known for its cultural heritage, ancient temples and natural beauty.
- It is located on the banks of the Brahmaputra River and is surrounded by hills.

Assam:

- Assam is a state in northeastern India known for its diverse natural landscapes, including wildlife, archaeological sites and tea plantations.
- It is bordered by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh to the north, Nagaland and Manipur to the east, Meghalaya and Bangladesh to the south and West Bengal to the west.

Umananda Temple:

- Umananda Temple is a significant shrine located on Peacock Island in the Brahmaputra River.
- It is dedicated to Lord Shiva and attracts devotees and tourists alike.

Hajo:

- Hajo is an ancient pilgrimage site near the capital city of Dispur.
- It holds religious significance for Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists with various temples, mosques and Buddhist monasteries located in the area.

Madan Kamdev:

- Madan Kamdev is a historical site near Dispur known for its ruins of a temple complex.
- It is an important archaeological site and a place of interest for history enthusiasts.



Places in News

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