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CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Growth Partnership

Context: In a statement at the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Growth Partnership, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar highlighted the imperative of Africa's rise for achieving global rebalancing.

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar emphasized the importance of Africa's rise for global rebalancing.
- India is committed to promoting capabilities and creating capacities in Africa for the long term.
- Dr. S. Jaishankar mentioned India's concessional loans of over \$12.37 billion provided to Africa.
- Numerous projects have been completed in Africa, including drinking water schemes, irrigation, rural solar electrification power plants, and transmission lines.
- These projects have not only improved lives but also generated local employment in Africa.
- India has aided and partnered with Africa, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- India encourages pharmaceutical and vaccine manufacturers to explore joint manufacturing facilities in African countries.
- The future of India-Africa partnership focuses on digitalization, green initiatives, healthcare, and food and water security.

India-Africa Trade Relationship

- The latest economic data confirms what was apprehended by experts: India-Africa trade is on a decline.
- Bilateral trade valued at \$55.9 billion in 2020- 21, fell by \$10.8 billion compared to 2019-20, and \$15.5 billion compared to the peak year of 2014-15.
- Total investments over 25 years, from 1996 to March 2021, are now just \$70.7 billion, which is about one-third of China's investment in Africa.
- COVID-19 has caused an adverse impact on the Indian and African economies.
- India's top five markets today are South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya and Togo. The countries from which India imports the most are South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Angola and Guinea.
- India's top three exports to Africa are mineral fuels and oils (processed petroleum products), pharmaceutical products vehicles. and
- Mineral fuels and oils, (essentially crude oil) and pearls, precious or semi-precious stones are the top two imports accounting for over 77% of our imports from Africa.

Confederation of Indian Industry

- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is a premier business association in India.
- It was formed in 1895 and is one of the oldest and largest industry associations in the country.
- CII works towards creating an enabling environment for Indian businesses and promoting competitiveness.
- It collaborates with industry, government, and society to drive economic growth and sustainable development.
- CII plays a crucial role in policy advocacy, industry research, and knowledge sharing among its diverse membership base.

EXIM Bank

- The EXIM Bank of India, also known as the Export-Import Bank of India, is the premier export finance institution in the country.
- Established in 1982, it operates under the purview of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- The bank aims to enhance India's international trade by providing financial assistance, export credit, and export-related services.
- EXIM Bank supports Indian exporters and importers through various products and services, such as pre-shipment and post-shipment financing, export credit insurance, and guarantees.
- It also facilitates foreign investment into India and offers lines of credit to support projects and initiatives abroad.

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- The bank plays a crucial role in promoting India's exports, facilitating trade, and contributing to the country's economic growth and development.

Various HADR Operations in Africa

- **Operation Sahayata 2019:**
 - It was an Indian operation to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to Mozambique in 2019. Cyclone IDAI had caused great loss to Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi.
 - INS Sujata, ICGS Sarathi and INS Shardul undertook HADR
 - India Navy was the first responder in the evolving humanitarian crises in the aftermath of Cyclone IDAI that hit Mozambique on 15 March 2019
- **Operation Vanilla 2020:**
 - It was an Indian operation to provide HADR to Mozambique in the wake of Cyclone Diane.
 - INS Airavat (amphibious ship) was sent with relief materials.

Transgenic Crops

Context: Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Telangana have postponed the testing of a genetically modified cotton seed, approved by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee, due to concerns over its effectiveness in combating pink bollworm, a significant cotton pest.

- Bioseed Research India has developed a genetically modified cotton seed containing the Cry2Ai gene to make it resistant to pink bollworm.
- The seed has passed confined trials and received a recommendation from the GEAC for field testing in Telangana, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Haryana.
- Only Haryana granted permission for the trials, while Telangana and Gujarat declined, with Gujarat not providing reasons.
- The GEAC has requested the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the ICAR to organize capacity-building activities to inform state governments about GM crop technology and regulatory frameworks.
- Activist groups raised objections to the GEAC's approach, considering it biased lobbying.

What are Transgenic Crops?

- Transgenic plants are genetically modified through the use of genetic engineering techniques.
- The objective is to introduce new traits that are not naturally occurring in the plant species.
- Transgenic plants contain artificially inserted genes, known as transgenes, which can come from unrelated plants or different species.
- The purpose of gene insertion is to enhance the usefulness and productivity of the plant.
- Advantages of transgenic plants include improved shelf life, higher yield, enhanced quality, resistance to pests, and tolerance to various environmental stresses such as heat, cold, and drought.
- Transgenic plants can also be engineered to produce foreign proteins with industrial and pharmaceutical applications.
- Plants can be used to generate vaccines or antibodies, known as plantibodies, which are advantageous as they are free from human diseases, reducing screening costs for viruses and bacterial toxins.

Status of Genetically Modified (Transgenic) Crops in India

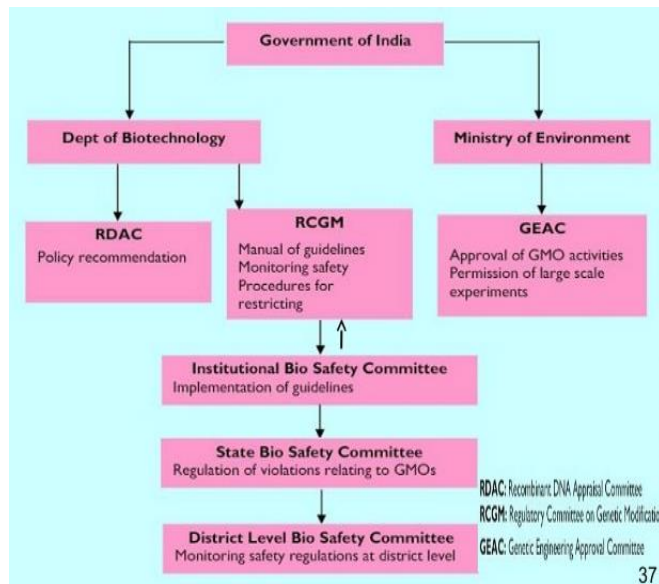
- Transgenic technology is being used in trials for various crops such as brinjal, tomato, maize, and chickpea.
- Cotton is the only transgenic crop currently commercially cultivated in India.
- The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) is responsible for evaluating proposals for testing genetically modified (GM) seeds.
- After a significant gap, the GEAC approved the environmental release of Mustard hybrid DMH-11 and its parental lines during its 147th meeting on October 18, 2022.

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- The approval allows for seed production and testing, bringing the crop one step closer to full commercial cultivation.



Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)

- The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) operates under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
- Its role involves evaluating proposals regarding the release of genetically engineered organisms and products into the environment, including experimental field trials.
- The GEAC, or authorized individuals, hold the power to enforce punitive actions under the Environment Protection Act.
- The committee is chaired by the Special Secretary/Additional Secretary of MoEF&CC and co-chaired by a representative from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- Currently, the GEAC consists of 24 members and convenes monthly to review applications in the designated areas.
- The members comprise experts from various ministries and institutions, including ICAR, ICMR, CCMB, among others.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

G20 Agriculture Ministerial Meeting



Context: Recently, the G20 Agriculture Ministerial Meeting is set to take place in Hyderabad, spanning three days from 15th to 17th June 2023.

Key Highlights:

- Over 200 delegates from G20 member countries, invitee countries, and International Organizations will attend.
- Discussions on sustainable agriculture, food security, women-led agriculture, biodiversity, and climate solutions.
- Side events focusing on agribusiness management and the power of digital technologies in agriculture.
- Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Kailash Choudhary, to inaugurate the grand exhibition.

What is G20?

The G20, also known as the Group of Twenty, is an international forum composed of 19 countries and the European Union. It brings together the world's major economies to discuss and coordinate policies on global economic and financial issues. The G20 member countries represent around 80% of the world's GDP and two-thirds of its population.

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	Member Countries: The G20 consists of 19 individual countries plus the European Union. The 19 member countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Objective: The main objective of the G20 is to promote global economic stability and sustainable growth. It serves as a platform for member countries to discuss and coordinate policies on international financial and economic issues. The G20 aims to strengthen global financial architecture, enhance cooperation among countries, and address challenges related to economic development, trade, investment, and financial regulations. Establishment: The G20 was established in 1999 in response to the financial crises of the late 1990s. It replaced the previous G7/G8 format to include emerging economies and reflect the changing global economic landscape. Significance: The G20 meetings provide an opportunity for countries to discuss issues such as trade, investment, fiscal policies, monetary policies, financial regulations, and other economic matters of global When and where was the first G20 Summit held? The first G20 Summit was held on December 15-16, 1999, in Berlin, Germany. It was initially established in response to the financial crises of the late 1990s. Associated International Organizations with the G20: The International Organizations which are associated with the G20 are: The International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organization (WTO), Financial Stability Board (FSB) and the United Nations (UN).
The Uniform Civil Code 	Context: Recently, the 22nd Law Commission of India has initiated a process to gather public views and ideas on the Uniform Civil Code. Key Highlights: ➤ Interested individuals and recognized religious organizations are invited to contribute their perspectives. ➤ A 30-day period has been allocated for submitting views and ideas. ➤ Views can be submitted online or via mail to the Commission at membersecretary-lci@gov.in. What is Uniform Civil Code? The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is a proposal to create a common set of civil laws applicable to all citizens of India, irrespective of their religious beliefs or personal laws. It aims to replace the existing personal laws that govern matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, and succession, which are specific to different religious communities. The Concept of the Uniform Civil Code: The concept of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) refers to the idea of having a common set of civil laws for all citizens of India, irrespective of their religious or personal beliefs. Article 44 of the Indian Constitution mentions the Uniform Civil Code. It is one of the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in Part IV of the Constitution. Article 44 states that the state shall endeavor to secure a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens throughout the territory of India. Aim: It aims to replace the existing personal laws that are specific to different religious communities and establish a uniform code that governs matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, and succession. Objective of Implementing a Uniform Civil Code in India: The objective of implementing a Uniform Civil Code in India is to promote gender equality, social justice, and national integration. It aims to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their religious affiliation, are subject to the same civil laws. The UCC intends to remove disparities and discriminatory practices prevalent in personal laws and establish a common framework that upholds constitutional principles.

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HDI for Vulnerable Tribal



Context: Recently, the Union government is embarking on an initiative to develop a Human Development Index (HDI) specifically for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) residing in over 22,000 villages across India.

Key Highlights:

- The Union government plans to design a survey to collect information and document the changes in the lives of PVTGs at the village level.
- The objective is to create an HDI for primitive tribal groups and quantify the effects of government policies on their lives.
- The Pradhan Mantri Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PM-PVTG) Development Mission, with a budget of ₹15,000 crore, aims to provide basic government services to all 22,544 PVTG villages.

What is PVTGs?

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) refer to specific tribal communities in India that are characterized by a distinct cultural, social, and economic identity, as well as certain vulnerabilities and marginalization.

What is the Human Development Index (HDI)?

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measure used to assess and compare the development levels of countries. It takes into account multiple indicators related to health, education, and standard of living to provide a broader understanding of human well-being and progress.

Which organization publishes HDI?

The Human Development Index is published annually by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is a part of the UNDP's Human Development Report (HDR), which analyzes various aspects of human development globally.

Dimensions in HDI Calculation:

The three main dimensions considered in the calculation of the HDI are:

1. Life expectancy at birth, which reflects the health component.
2. Mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling, which reflect the education component.
3. Gross national income (GNI) per capita, which reflects the standard of living component.

Country with Highest HDI Ranking:

According to the latest available data, Norway has consistently ranked among the countries with the highest HDI. However, rankings can vary over time as countries make progress or face challenges in different aspects of development.

Purpose of HDI as a Measure of Development:

The purpose of using the HDI is to move beyond a narrow focus on economic growth (as measured by GDP) and provide a more comprehensive assessment of a country's development. It emphasizes the well-being of individuals, including their health, education, and living standards, and helps to highlight disparities and gaps in development.

W20 Engagement Group



Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the inaugural address at the W20 engagement group in Mahabalipuram, near Chennai.

Key Highlights:

- Union Minister Smriti Irani to deliver the keynote address and release the Communique.
- The two-day Women 20 meet focuses on promoting women's empowerment and discussing key issues related to gender equality and women's economic inclusion.
- The Jan Bhagidari event highlighted success stories of development and showcased the impact of initiatives on individuals' lives.

What are the key objectives of the Women 20 (W20) meet?

The key objectives of the Women 20 (W20) meet are as follows:

- Promoting Women's Empowerment
- Advocating for Gender-Inclusive Policies
- Enhancing Women's Economic Inclusion
- Addressing Gender Disparities
- Engaging in Policy Dialogue
- Influencing G20 Agendas

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	What is W20? The W20 (Women 20) is an engagement group within the G20 framework that focuses on promoting women's economic empowerment and gender equality. It is a platform where representatives from civil society organizations, women's rights advocates and experts come together to discuss key issues related to women's economic inclusion and provide policy recommendations to G20 leaders. Establishment of W20: The W20 engagement group was established in 2015 under the Turkish G20 Presidency and has continued its activities in subsequent G20 summits.
Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve 	Context: The recently established Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve (RVTR) in Rajasthan's Bundi district is set to inaugurate a wildlife safari within its buffer zone. Location: Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve is situated in Bundi district, Rajasthan. It extends from the buffer area of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve to the Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve. Tiger Reserve Status: RVTR was officially designated as a tiger reserve on May 16, 2022, recognizing its importance for tiger conservation. River and Vegetation: The Mez River, a tributary of the Chambal River, flows through the tiger reserve. The dominant vegetation is dry deciduous forest, with Dhok trees being the prominent species. Other flora include Khair, Ronj, Amaltas, Gurjan, and Saler. Topography: The reserve's topography varies from gentle slopes to steep rocky cliffs, featuring a mix of Vindhyan hills and Aravalli ridges. Fauna: RVTR is home to a diverse range of wildlife. It supports a population of leopards and sloth bears, alongside species such as jungle cat, golden jackal, hyena, crested porcupine, Indian hedgehog, rhesus macaque, hanuman langur and the Indian star tortoise. Conservation Efforts: The establishment of RVTR aims to safeguard the biodiversity of the region and promote the conservation of flagship species, particularly tigers and their habitats. Rivers Passes Through RVTR: The Mez River, a tributary of the Chambal River, passes through the Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve. Adjacent Well-Known Tiger Reserves: The two well-known tiger reserves adjacent to RVTR are: 1. Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and, 2. Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve.
International Green Apple Awards 	Context: Recently, five buildings and structures from Telangana have been recognized and selected for the prestigious International Green Apple Awards for Beautiful Buildings. Key Highlights: ➤ The selected buildings include Mozzam-Jahi Market, Durgam Cheruvu Cable Bridge, B. R Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat Building, Integrated Command Control Centre of Telangana Police and Yadadri Temple. ➤ Mozzam-Jahi Market has been acknowledged for its excellent restoration and reuse in the Heritage category. ➤ Durgam Cheruvu Cable Bridge has been recognized for its unique design in the bridge category. ➤ B R Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat Building has received the award in the aesthetically designed office and workspace building category. ➤ The Integrated Command Control Centre of Telangana Police has been honored in the unique office category. ➤ Yadadri Temple, the abode of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy, has been recognized in the excellent religious structures category. ➤ The awards ceremony will take place in London on the 16th of the month, with Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar representing the state government to receive the awards. What is International Green Apple Award? The International Green Apple Awards for Beautiful Buildings is an annual recognition program that honors outstanding buildings and structures for their architectural beauty, environmental sustainability and positive impact on the community. Organised by: The International Green Apple Awards are organized by a London-based independent non-profit organization called "The Green Organisation."

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