1. Global Food Policy Report

Topic: Reports and Indices

In News: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has released its Global food policy report.

More on the Topic

- **Highlights from the Report:**
- In 2021, some 768 million people across the world were undernourished. his was well above the 572 million reported in 2014.
- **In 2022, the food insecurity was exacerbated by the Russia-Ukraine war** and related spikes in food and fertiliser prices.
- In fact, t**he fertiliser prices rose by 199 per cent** between May 2020 and the end of 2022, stated the World Economic Forum recently.
- As a result, there has been an increase in the number of people at risk due to food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition.
- In 2022, **as many as 205 million people in 45 countries experienced crisis-level acute food insecurity or worse,** nearly double the number in 2016.
- The crisis continues in 2023 too, and the hunger levels are higher than ever before.
- With climate change, as many as 72 million more people will be undernourished by 2050, as compared to a scenario without climate change. Climate crisis also affects conflict and displacement.

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Recommendations:

- An annual investment in the range of $300-400 billion is required to make food systems more resilient and sustainable.
- **Strengthening Agrifood value chains** to support livelihoods and food security during crises. It advised governments to maintain a business environment that fosters flexibility, technical and financial innovation.
- More proactive response to food system shocks with focus on three key areas: **Crisis prediction and preparation; building resilience before and during crises; and making crisis response supportive and inclusive of women, forced migrants and other vulnerable groups.**
- **Investing in early warning systems is essential** to save lives, livelihoods and money. This could enable anticipatory action before a shock turns into a crisis.

Indian Food Security Initiatives:

- National Food Security Act, 2013   covers 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population under:
- Antyodaya Anna Yojana: It constitute the poorest of-the-poor, are entitled to receive 35 kg of foodgrains per household per month.
- Priority Households (PHH): Households covered under PHH category are entitled to receive 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month.

Source: Indian Express

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2. Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik - Udan 5.0

Topic: Government Schemes

InNews: The civil aviation ministry has invited bids for the fifth phase of the regional connectivity scheme, Udan or Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik, to improve connectivity to the country's regional territories.

More on the Topic:

- **Highlights of the scheme:**
- This round of UDAN focuses on **Category-2 (20-80 seats) and Category-3 (>80 seats).**
- The earlier stage **length cap of 600 km is waived off** and there is no restriction on the distance between the origin and destination of the flight.
- **Viability gap funding (VGF) to be provided will be capped at 600 km** stage length for both Priority and Non-Priority areas which was earlier capped at 500 km.

Progress of Udan Scheme:

- The last round (Udan 4.0) of the regional connectivity scheme was held in August 2020 when 78 routes were awarded, about 40 from the North-East region.
- Under UDAN 3, seaplanes operations and concept of tourism routes were introduced.
- Under UDAN 2.0 In 2018, the Ministry of Civil Aviation announced 73 underserved and unserved airports. For the first time, helipads were also connected under phase 2 of UDAN scheme.
- UDAN 1.0phase, 5 airlines companies were awarded 128 flight routes to 70 airports (including 36 newly made operational airports)
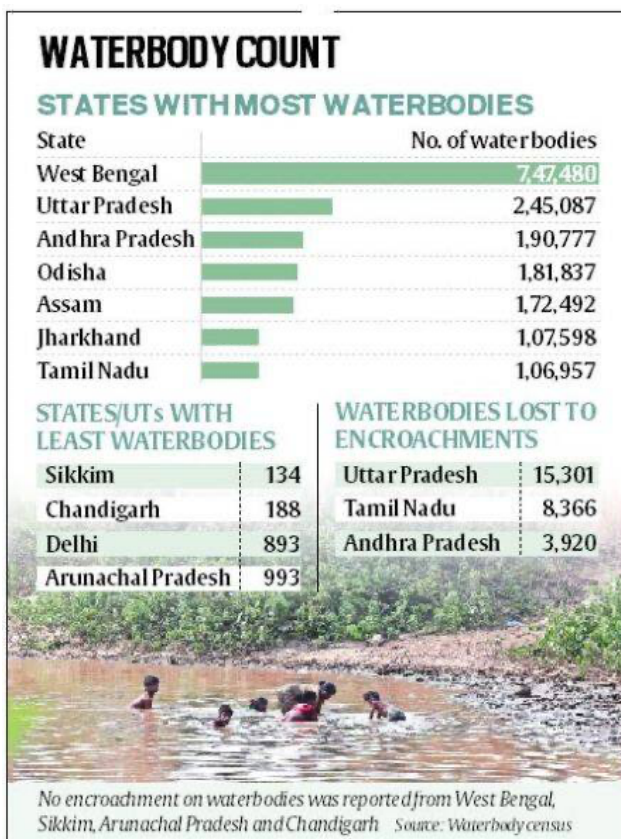
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About UDAN Scheme:

- UDAN is a regional connectivity scheme. It aims to develop smaller regional airports to allow common citizens easier access to aviation services.
- UDAN has a unique market-based model to develop regional connectivity.
- Interested airline and helicopter operators can start operations on hitherto un-connected routes by submitting proposals to the Implementing Agency.

Source: PIB

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3. First Ever Census on Water Bodies in India

Topic: Environment and Ecology

WATERBODY COUNT

STATES WITH MOST WATERBODIES

State	No. of water bodies
West Bengal	7,47,480
Uttar Pradesh	2,45,087
Andhra Pradesh	1,90,777
Odisha	1,81,837
Assam	1,72,492
Jharkhand	1,07,598
Tamil Nadu	1,06,957

STATES/UTs WITH LEAST WATERBODIES		WATERBODIES LOST TO ENCROACHMENTS	
Sikkim	134	Uttar Pradesh	15,301
Chandigarh	188	Tamil Nadu	8,366
Delhi	893	Andhra Pradesh	3,920
Arunachal Pradesh	993		

No encroachment on waterbodies was reported from West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Chandigarh   Source: Waterbody census

In News: Ministry of Jal Shakti has conducted the first-ever census of water bodies across the nation.

More on the Topic:

- The census provides a comprehensive inventory of India's water resources, including natural and man-made water bodies like ponds, tanks, lakes, and more, and to collect data on the encroachment of water bodies.

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- The Census also highlighted disparities between rural and urban areas and varying levels of encroachment and revealed crucial insights into the country's water resources.

The key features/findings of the Census are as follows:

- Out of all the water bodies **97.1% (23,55,055) are in rural areas and only 2.9% (69,485) are in urban areas.**
- **Top 05 States in terms of number of water bodies are West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Assam** which constitute around 63% of the total water bodies in the country.
- **Top 05 States in terms of number of water bodies in urban areas are West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura,** whereas in rural areas, top 05 States are West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Assam.
- **59.5% of water bodies are ponds,** followed by tanks (15.7%), reservoirs (12.1%), Water conservation schemes/percolation tanks/check dams (9.3%), lakes (0.9%) and others (2.5%).
- **55.2% of water bodies are owned by private entities** whereas 44.8% of water bodies are in the domain of public ownership.
- Out of all public owned water bodies, **maximum water bodies are owned by Panchayats,** followed by State Irrigation/State WRD.
- Out of all private owned water bodies, **maximum water bodies are in hands of Individual owner/farmer** followed by group of individuals and other private bodies.
- Top 05 States which lead in the private owned water bodies are West Bengal, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand.
- Out of all 'in use' water bodies, major water bodies are reported to be used in pisciculture followed by Irrigation.
- Top 05 States wherein major use of water bodies is in pisciculture are West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh;
- Top 05 States wherein major use of water bodies is in irrigation are Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Gujarat.
- **78% water bodies are man-made water bodies whereas 22% are natural water bodies.** 1.6% (38,496) water bodies out of all the enumerated water bodies are reported to be encroached out of which 95.4% are in rural areas and remaining 4.6% in urban areas.
- The information on water spread area was reported in respect of 23,37,638 water bodies. Out of these water bodies, 72.4% have water spread area less than 0.5 hectare, 13.4% have water spread area between 0.5-1 hectare, 11.1% have water spread area between 1-5 hectares and remaining 3.1% of water bodies have water spread area more than 5 hectares.

Source: Indian Express

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4. PRAYAG
Topic: e-Governance

In News: The union Ministry for Jal Shakti has launched, Monitoring Centre – PRAYAG – which stands for Platform for Real-time Analysis of Yamuna, Ganga and their Tributaries at National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

More on the Topic:

- Prayag is a **Real Time Monitoring Centre for planning and monitoring of projects,** river water quality, etc. through various online dashboards such as Ganga Tarang Portal, Jajmau Plant through Online Drone Data, PMT Tool Dashboard, Ganga Districts Performance Monitoring System, etc.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) aims to rehabilitate and boost existing sewage treatment plants; curb pollution at exit points; maintain water flow without changing natural variations; restore surface and groundwater, etc. in Ganga and its tributary basins.
- It is being implemented by the National Ganga Council.

Source: Indian Express

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5.100 Food Streets in 100 Districts

Topic: Government Schemes

In News: Union Health Ministry in collaboration with Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has requested states/UTs to develop 100 food streets in 100 districts across the country.

More on the Topic:

- This initiative is being taken up **as a pilot project to create an example for other such streets to come up across the country for ensuring hygienic and safe food practices.**
- The aim of this project is **to encourage safe and healthy food practices** among food businesses and community members, thus, reducing food-borne illnesses and improving the overall health outcomes.
- This unique initiative will be **implemented through National Health Mission (NHM)** in convergence with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, with technical support from FSSAI.
- The financial assistance for the initiative to States/UTs in the form of Rs.1 crore per food street/districts will be given to fill up critical gaps, said the press release.
- 100 such food streets will be opened up in 100 districts across the country (List given below).
- This assistance will be provided under National Health Mission (NHM) in the ratio of 60:40 or 90: 10 with the condition that standard branding of these food streets will be done as per FSSAI guidelines.

Source: Business Standard

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6. Galapagos Islands

Topic: Geography

In News: Scientists have newly discovered a deep-sea coral reef in previously unexplored waters off Ecuador's Galapagos islands.

More on the Topic:

- The Galápagos Islands is a volcanic archipelago in the Pacific Ocean. It's considered one of the world's foremost destinations for wildlife-viewing.
- A province of Ecuador, Its isolated terrain shelters a diversity of plant and animal species, many found nowhere else.
- Charles Darwin visited in 1835, and his observation of Galápagos' species later inspired his theory of evolution.

Source: Business Standard

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7. SuperBIT

Topic: Science and Technology

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In News: The Super Pressure Balloon Imaging Telescope (SuperBIT) that launched on a scientific super pressure balloon captured its first research images.

More on the Topic:

- The advantage of balloon-based versus space telescopes is the reduced cost of not having to launch a large telescope on a rocket.
- A super pressure balloon can circumnavigate the globe for up to 100 days to gather scientific data.
- The balloon also floats at an altitude above most of the Earth's atmosphere, making it suitable for many astronomical observations.
- The SuperBIT telescope captures images of galaxies in the visible-to-near ultraviolet light spectrum, which is within the Hubble Space Telescope's capabilities, but with a wider field of view.
- The goal of the mission is to map dark matter around galaxy clusters by measuring the way these massive objects warp the space around them, also called "weak gravitational lensing."

Source: Business Standard

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