

1. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana

Topic: Government Schemes

In News: The Central Government has extended the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, which aims to provide free foodgrain to poor citizens, till September 2022.

More on the Topic:

- During the ongoing crisis owing to Covid-19 Pandemic, Union Government announced Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) providing free food grains to the affected population.
- PMGKAY is a part of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP) to help the poor fight the battle against Covid-19.
- The program is implemented by the **Department of Food and Public Distribution** under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- **Its nodal Ministry is the Ministry of Finance.**



Salient Features of the scheme:

- The scheme **aims to feed the poorest citizens of India** by providing grain through the Public Distribution System, to all the priority households (ration card holders and those identified by the Antyodaya Anna Yojana scheme).
- PMGKAY provides 5 kg of rice or wheat (according to regional dietary preferences) per person and 1 kg of dal to each family holding a ration card.
- 80 crore individuals, i.e, roughly two-thirds of India's population would be covered under this scheme.
- The scale of this welfare scheme makes it **the largest food security program in the world.**

Source: The Hindu

2. The Bucharest Nine Countries

Topic: International Relations

In News: The envoys to India of nine Eastern European countries jointly wrote an article in The Indian Express to “acquaint the Indian public with basic facts on the ground” about the “premeditated, unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression in Ukraine”.



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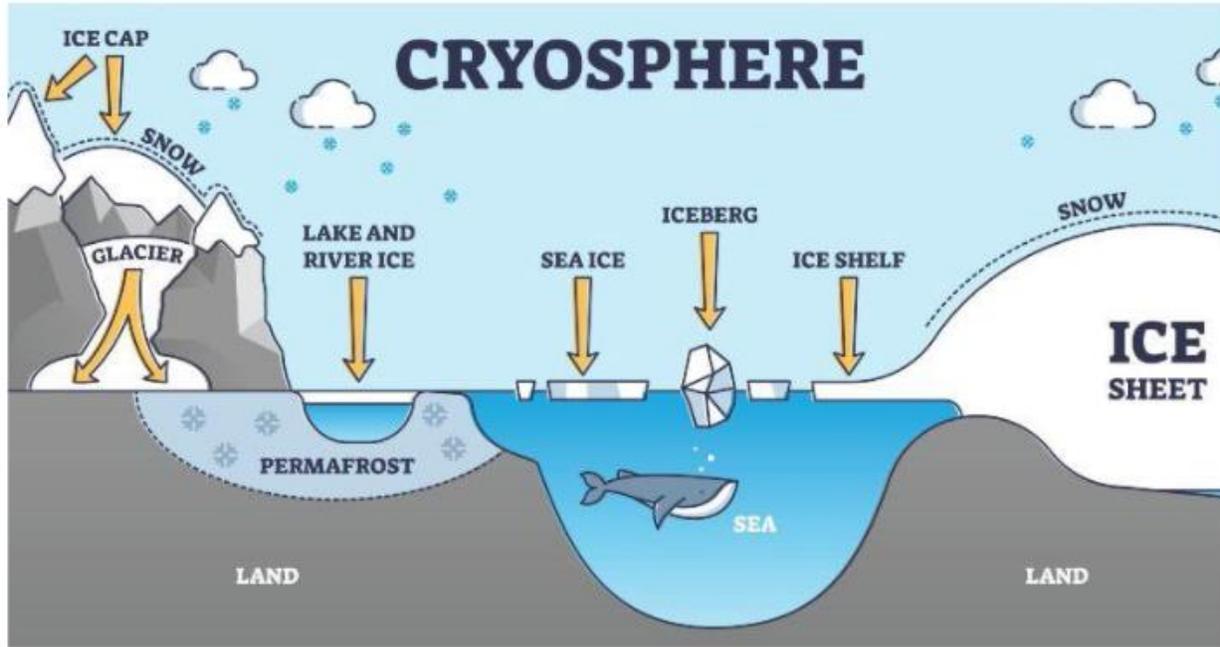
More on the Topic:

- The B9 countries have been critical of President Vladimir Putin’s aggression against Ukraine since 2014, when the war in the Donbas started and **Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula**.
- **About Bucharest Nine Countries:** The “Bucharest Nine” is a group of nine NATO countries in Eastern Europe that became part of the US-led military alliance after the end of the Cold War.
- “Bucharest Nine” is **abbreviated as The B9**.
- **The member countries are Romania, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.**
- All nine countries were once closely associated with the now dissolved Soviet Union, but later chose the path of democracy.
- All members of the B9 are part of **the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**.

Source: Indian Express

3.Polar Science and Cryosphere Research (PACER) scheme

Topic: Government Scheme



In News: The Polar Science and Cryosphere (PACER) scheme has been approved for continuation.

More on the Topic:

- The PACER scheme is **implemented through National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)**, an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- Objective of the scheme is to improve our understanding of Polar Science and the cryosphere system.

PACER encompasses the following six components.

- Construction of a polar research vessel.
- Construction of the third research base in Antarctica.
- Indian scientific endeavours in the Arctic.
- Polar expeditions-Antarctica.
- Replacement of Maitri station.
- Southern Ocean.

Achievements of the scheme:

- Under this scheme, the Ministry of Earth Sciences has deployed **India's first multi-sensor moored sub-surface observatory (IndARC)** in the Arctic.
- It also established a **high altitude research station in Himalaya called HIMANSH** at a remote region in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh.
- **Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR)** surveys were conducted.

- **Two new Automatic Weather Station (AWS) systems were installed at Baralacha La**, a high elevation site in the arid Spiti region to strengthen infrastructure across the Chandra basin.

About Cryosphere:

- The areas of snow or ice, which are subject to **temperatures below 32°F for at least part of the year, compose the cryosphere.**
- **Ice and snow on land are one part of the cryosphere.** This includes the largest parts of the cryosphere, the continental ice sheets found in Greenland and Antarctica, as well as ice caps, glaciers, and areas of snow and permafrost. When continental ice flows out from land and to the sea surface, we get shelf ice.
- **The other part of the cryosphere is ice that is found in water.** This includes frozen parts of the ocean, such as waters surrounding Antarctica and the Arctic. It also includes frozen rivers and lakes, which mainly occur in polar areas.
- **The components of the cryosphere play an important role in the Earth's climate.** Snow and ice reflect heat from the sun, helping to regulate our planet's temperature.
- Because polar regions are some of the most sensitive to climate shifts, **the cryosphere may be one of the first places where scientists are able to identify global changes in climate.**

Source: PIB

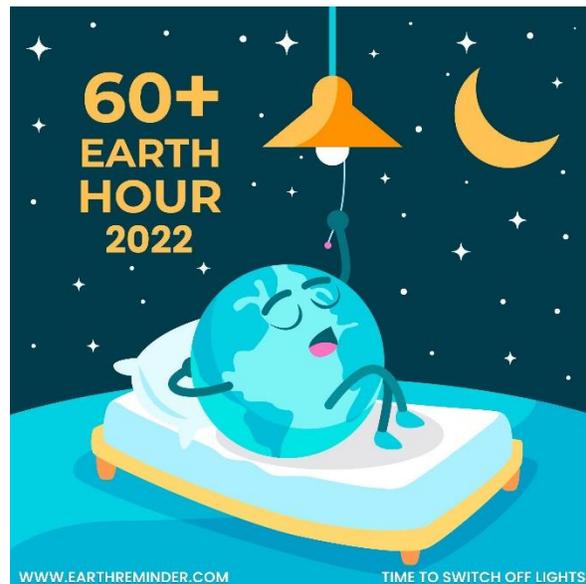
4. Earth Hour

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: Every year, on the last Saturday in March, Earth Hour is observed.

More on the Topic:

- On earth hour For one hour, everyone who took part turned off the lights in their homes and offices.
- The idea is to refrain from the use of non-essential lighting to save energy in a symbolic call for environmental protection.
- **The World Wide Fund for Nature** in Sydney was the first to establish it. It quickly grew into a global movement, with millions of people turning off lights every year to commemorate Earth Hour.



- **The topic for Earth Hour 2022 will be “Shape Our Future.”** This is a pivotal year for everyone and our world. It is up to us to #ShapeOurFuture by raising awareness about the serious issues impacting our world today.

About World Wildlife Fund for Nature:

- It was established in 1961 and is headquartered at Gland, Switzerland.
- It is the world’s leading conservation organization and works in more than 100 countries.
- It aims to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth.
- **Living Planet Report** is published by WWF

Source: PIB

5. Ketti Valley

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: The Ketti stream, which flows through the Ketti valley, is getting choked with plastic waste and glass bottles being thrown into it.

More on the Topic:

- The stream, which flows into the Kattery Dam, from where it flows through the Kattery falls and eventually drains into **Bhavani River** ownstream is facing a number of threats.
- Apart from the **enormous amount of agricultural runoff** that makes its way into the stream, plastic and glass bottles are also thrown into it from the villages and human settlements that are located along its course.
- One of the largest valleys in the world, **the 7,000-ft-deep Ketti Valley extends from the plains of Coimbatore to the Mysore Plateau.**
- Also known as **Switzerland of Nilgiris**, the Ketti Valley is the largest valley in the Nilgiris.



Source: Hindu

6. C40 Cities Network

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: Maharashtra has launched the Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP) in partnership with the C40 Cities Network.

More on the Topic:

- Found in 2005, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group is an association of 97 cities from around the world C40.
- It has 96 members at present, representing over 70 crore people, and one-quarter of the global economy.
- **It connects the world's largest cities to deliver urgent and essential climate action** needed to secure a sustainable future for urban citizens worldwide.
- The group is committed to delivering on climate targets set under the 2016 Paris Agreement, and sets the bar for cities to develop and implement local level plans that comply with those targets.
- Membership to the group comes from **performance-based requirements**, not membership fees.
- Five Indian cities are currently a part of the C40 network. These are Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Mumbai.



Source: Hindu

7. Australia's Defence Space Command Agency

Topic: International Affairs

In News: Australia's new Defence Space Command Agency began functioning.

More on the Topic:

- This agency brings members of Air Force, Army, Navy and the Australian Public Service together under an integrated headquarters reporting to the Chief of Air Force, as the Space Domain Lead.
- Australia's new Defence Space Command was **set up to achieve strategic space ambitions and lead the effort to assure Australia's access to space.**
- The agency will help Australia in **developing and advocating space-specific priorities** within the government, industry, allies and even international partners.
- Mainly, this Agency was set up **to counter the growing influence of Russia and China** in space.

Source: Hindu

7. Demand for the Ahir Regiment

Topic: Modern Indian History

In News: The demand for a full-fledged Infantry Regiment named after Ahir has been rejected by the Indian Army.

More on the Topic:

- Ahirwal region includes the southern Haryana districts of Rewari, Mahendragarh, and Gurgaon.
- This region is associated with Rao Tula Ram, the Ahir hero of the 1857 revolt, and has traditionally contributed soldiers to the Indian Army in large numbers.
- Ahirs community was brought into national limelight after the story of the bravery of the Ahir troops of Haryana in the Battle of Rezang La in 1962 (India-China war) was widely known.

“ Indian Army has rejected the demand saying that the older regiments based on castes and regions will continue, but no new demands on these lines would be entertained. ”



Indian Army's Response:

- The Army has **rejected the demand for any new class or caste based regiment.**
- It has said that while the older regiments based on castes and regions like the Dogra Regiment, Sikh Regiment, Rajput Regiment, and Punjab Regiment will continue, **no new demands on the lines of an Ahir Regiment, Himachal Regiment, Kalinga Regiment, Gujarat Regiment or any tribal regiment would be entertained.**
- It is stated that The Army is doing well with the present composition and therefore there is no need to add new regiments based on class or caste.

Source: Hindu
