**Current Affairs : 23 April 2023**

**INDIAN SPACE POLICY 2023**

**Why in news?**

* The Centre’s updated Space Policy, cleared by the Union Cabinet on April 6 but made public recently, has drawn measured optimism from the India’s budding private sector start-up space.

**Space Sector of India**

* ISRO has an exceptional success rate and is the 6th largest space agency globally.
* India has over 400 private space companies and ranks fifth globally in terms of the number of space companies.
* The satellite manufacturing capabilities are expected to reach USD 3.2 billion by 2025.
* ISRO also launched a student outreach program called SAMVAD to encourage space research among young minds.

**Indian Space Policy 2023**

* **About**
	+ The Indian Space Policy 2023 is a comprehensive set of guidelines that outlines the roles and responsibilities of different entities in the Indian space sector.
	+ The policy is expected to pave the way for much-needed clarity in space reforms and encourage private industry participation in the space economy.
	+ It aims to encourage and institutionalize private sector participation in India's space sector, with the ISRO primarily focusing on research and development of advanced space technologies.
* **Objectives**
	+ To augment space capabilities;
	+ Enable, encourage and develop a flourishing commercial presence in space;
	+ Use space as a driver of technology development and derive benefits in allied areas;
	+ Pursue international relations, and create an ecosystem for effective implementation of space applications among all stakeholders

**INTENSIFIED CRACKDOWN WITH AIM TO MAKE INDIA DRUG-FREE BY 2047**

**Why in news?**

* Aiming to make India drug-free by 2047, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) plans to link recovery and usage of narcotics and banned substances in a particular area to the annual appraisal report of a District Superintendent of Police.

**Drug menace in India**

**Reasons for Widespread Drug Abuse in India**

* **To escape from hard realities of life**
	+ The disintegration of the old joint family system, decline of old religious and moral values etc. lead to a rise in the number of drug addicts who take drugs to escape hard realities of life.
* **Loosening of the traditional methods of social control**
	+ The loosening of the traditional methods of social control left an individual vulnerable to the stresses and strains of modern life.
* **Peer pressure**
	+ Many youths start using drug under the pressure from their friends, seniors at educational institutions, or by members of their informal groupings.
* **Easy Availability**
	+ India is situated in the sense that on its west is the ‘Golden Crescent’ and on east is the ‘Golden Triangle’.
		- Golden Crescent - Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan
		- Golden Triangle - Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar
	+ The usage of drugs in India is increasing, particularly in the border areas due to their porous nature.
* **Economic prosperity**
	+ The agricultural reforms and other industrial activity have led to increase in income in regions like Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra etc.
	+ Increase in disposable money and easy availability of drugs has led to increase in its use.

**Steps taken**

* Article 47 of the Indian Constitution directs the State to endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption of intoxicating drugs injurious to health.
* India is a signatory to
	+ Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol,
	+ Conventions on Psychotropic Substances, 1971 and
	+ United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.
* **Legislative steps**:
	+ Enacted Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940,
	+ Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985 and
	+ The Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988.
* **Institutions involved**
	+ The Narcotics Control Bureau was created in 1986 as a nodal agency to fight against this menace.
	+ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) are involved with alcohol and drug demand reduction policies and drug de-addiction programme.

**BALLISTIC MISSILE INTERCEPTOR**

**Recently, The DRDO and Indian Navy successfully conducted a maiden flight trial of sea-based endo-atmospheric interceptor missile off the coast of Odisha.**



**Why in news?**

* **India entered an elite club of nations with the capability to fire a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) interceptor from a naval platform.**
* Prior to this, DRDO has successfully demonstrated land-based ballistic missile defence system with capability to neutralize ballistic missile threats, emerging from adversaries.

**India’s Ballistic Missile Defence Programme:**

* India launched the BMD program **after Kargil war in 1999** to counter the enemy nation’s widening spectrum of ballistic missiles that usually **delivered both conventional and nuclear warheads.**

**Two-tires of BMD system**

1. **Prithvi Air Defence missile**
* It was originally tested in 2006 and is capable of intercepting and destroying missiles at exo-atmospheric altitudes ranging from 50 to 180 kilometres.
* The Pradyumna interceptor has already replaced the Prithvi Air Defence BMD.
* Exo-atmospheric missiles are capable of completing missions in the Earth's upper atmosphere.
1. **Advanced Air Defence Missile**
	* The second layer is Advanced Air Defence (AAD) Missile for lower altitude interception.
	* It was first tested in 2007 and designed to knock down hostile missiles in the endo-atmosphere at **altitudes of 15-40 KM.**
	* The endo-atmospheric missiles are the ones that operate within the earth's atmosphere that covers an altitude below 100 KM.

**PRADHAN MANTRI URJA GANGA PROJECT**

**Recently, Prime Minister praised the completion of Bihar portion of Barauni- Guwahati pipeline under Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project.**



**About Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project:**

* The project is also known as Jagdishpur – Haldia & Bokaro – Dhamra Pipeline Project (JHBDPL) project.
* It was **launched in 2016** and will cater to the **energy requirements of five states** namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.
* This pipeline will **connect six districts in Bihar to the National Gas Grid**. The project will provide **access to clean natural gas for industries, CNG for vehicles and PNG for homes, promoting a sustainable lifestyle.**
* **Total length of pipeline** under Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Project is**3,384 km,** out of which 766 km of pipeline is in Odisha state and the balance 2,618 km is in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal & Assam.
* The **seven main station cities** include Varanasi, Patna, Bokaro, Jamshedpur, Kolkata, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack as the major beneficiaries of the project.
* The project is being **implemented by GAIL.**

**WHAT IS KOCHI WATER METRO?**

**Why in News?**

* Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate to the nation the Kochi water metro, a first-of-its-kind public boat service integrated with a metro rail network, on April 25th.

**About Kochi Water Metro:**

* Kochi, often referred as the commercial capital of Kerala, is one of the most densely populated districts in the state.
* Inland water transport was once the primary means of freight and passenger transport on the **Vembanadu lake**. Water transport is inherently more efficient than either rail or road transport.
	+ Kochi is abundantly blessed with waterways with over 1,100 kms of waterways available.
	+ However, only 40 kms out of these are considered navigable for motor boats.
* The system has been declining over the last few decades and has seen minimal investment and technology upgrade.
* The **Kochi Water Metro project envisages the development of 15 identified routes, connecting 10 islands along a network of routes that span 78 km**.
	+ This will be achieved through a fleet of 78 fast hybrid ferries plying to 38 jetties.
* Boats planned for the project are **electrically propelled**. However, they have the backup of diesel-powered generators.
* The Kochi Water Metro project is expected to reduce pollution and traffic congestions in the city and also ease access to business areas on the mainland for urban household situated along the Kochi lakeshore.
* It is also expected to give a **big boost to the tourism sector in the Kochi backwaters**, apart from giving a modern transport facility for people living on islands on the outskirts of Kochi.

**Various Components of the Project:**

* The various components involved in the Kochi Water Metro project are –
	+ Boat terminals and Access infrastructure
	+ Boats
	+ Boatyards
	+ Dredging along the identified routes and terminals
	+ Systems – navigation, CCTV, etc.
* All passenger facilities available in metro rail coaches will be offered on the boats. Besides, boat jetties have been designed similar to metro stations.

**Total Cost of the Project:**

* The Kochi Water Metro project has a total value of **Rs 819 crores**.
* Major part of this amount is financed under **Indo-German Financial Cooperation** with a long-term loan agreement.

**Key Facts for Prelims:**

* **Backwaters –**
	+ 
	+ Backwater is **water turned back in its course by an obstruction on opposing current or the flow of tide in a river channel**.
	+ The backwaters were formed by the action of waves and shore currents creating low barrier islands across the mouths of the many rivers flowing down from the Western Ghats range.
	+ The Kerala backwaters are a network of brackish lagoons and canals lying parallel to the Arabian Sea of the **Malabar coast** of Kerala.
	+ The backwaters have a unique ecosystem: **freshwater from the rivers meets the seawater from the Arabian Sea**.

**ISSUE OF STRAY DOGS IN INDIA: CENTRE ASKS STATES TO ENFORCE NEW RULES TO CHECK STRAY DOG NUMBERS**

**Why in News?**

* The Centre has decided to reach out to the States, local self-governments (LSGs) and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) on implementing **the new set of Animal Birth Control Rules**prepared by the **Ministry of Animal Husbandry**.
* The Rules, which came amid increasing instances of stray dog attacks, put the onus of maintaining and controlling the population of stray dogs on LSGs and RWAs.

**Population of Stray Dogs in India and Policies to Control them:**

* At present, there are over 10 million pet dogs in the country and**the stray dog population is about 35 million.**
	+ Dogs are **highly fertile animals**, and reproduce at a high rate if enough resources are available.
	+ **Nearly 90% of the dog population** needs to be sterilised over a short period of time to achieve a sustained population reduction over a 10-15-year period.
* **The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act 1960**mandates that every owner of an animal is responsible for its well-being, and it is illegal to abandon pets or allow them to become strays.
* **The Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules 2001,** based on **the PCA Act 1960**, were first notified by the Union Ministry of Culture.
	+ The Rules aimed to control the population of stray dogs through **sterilization and vaccination.**
	+ The program is implemented by **local municipalities and NGOs**, with the government providing financial assistance.
* However, the government has failed to implement effective measures to control the stray dog population and ensure their well-being.

**India's Stray Dog Menace:**

* The increasing population of stray dogs deprives people of their right to **life, free movement, and a safe environment.**
	+ According to the NCRB, there were 4,146 reported cases of dog bites leading to human deaths in India in 2019.
	+ According to a study, dogs were the **second leading cause of road accidents** in urban areas.
* **Creates huge conflict between feeders and ordinary residents** who have to deal with packs of dogs roaming around their neighbourhoods.
* Dogs are also leading causes of **harm to wildlife, and cause immense loss of biodiversity.**

**What Needs to be Done?**

* Solving this problem requires a**multi-pronged approach** and some difficult decisions.
* The government needs to **implement effective animal control measures and waste management**to eliminate open litter from the roads.
* **Strict pet ownership laws**, a ban on irresponsible feeding in public places, and encouraging adoption and long-term sheltering of homeless dogs will result in win-win solutions.
* **Individuals**also have a role to play in solving this problem.
* Cities such as**Ooty, Chennai and parts of Uttarakhand, Goa and Delhi**can be showcased as better models in managing stray dogs.
* We shouldn't be turning our best friends into our deadliest foes if the "**greatness of our nation and its moral progress**" is to be assessed by how we treat animals.

**LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE INDEX (LPI) 2023**

**India's rank in the recently released World Bank's Logistics Performance Index 2023 has improved by six places.**



**About Logistics Performance Index (LPI):**

* It is **released by World Bank.**
* It is an interactive benchmarking tool created to **help countries identify the challenges and opportunities they face in their performance on trade logistics** and what they can do to improve their performance.
* It **measures the ease of establishing reliable supply chain** connections and structural factors that make it possible, such as the quality of logistics services, trade and transport-related infrastructure, as well as border controls.
* **Highlights of LPI 2023:**
	+ The LPI 2023 allows for**comparisons across 139 countries**.
	+ The LPI 2023, for **the first time, measures the speed of trade with indicators derived from big datasets tracking shipments.**
	+ **Singapore and Finland** are the most efficient and **highest-ranked** LPI countries as per the 2023 LPI.
	+ India is ranked 38 out of 139 **countries**, **climbing six places** from the previous index.
	+ **Two major factors** for India's jump in the index could be **modernisation and digitalisation,** which the report quotes as a reason for emerging economies like India to leapfrog advanced countries

**INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)**

**IFAD President recently said that IFAD will set up a new framework to facilitate cooperation between small agricultural producers in developing nations and businesses in Japan and elsewhere**



**Why in News?**

* The **Enhanced Linkages between Private Sector and Small-Scale Producers (ELPS) initiative will be set up** with an aim of strengthening developing nations’ agriculture and food systems according to the IFAD President.

**About International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD):**

* It is an **international financial institution and a specialized agency of the United Nations** dedicated to eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries.
* IFAD seeks to **empower rural people to increase their food security, improve the nutrition** of their families and **increase their incomes** **through funding of grants and low-interest loans to several projects.**
* **Its projects** and programmes **are carried out in** **remote and environmentally fragile locations**, including least-developed countries and small island developing States.
* IFAD is the only **multilateral development institution that focuses exclusively on transforming rural economies and food systems**.
* It is a **member of the United Nations Development Group** **(UNDP).**
* It was **established** as an international financial institution in **1977 through United Nations General Assembly Resolution.**
* **Headquarters: Rome, Italy.**
* **Membership**: Currently, IFAD has **177 Member States, including India**.
* The **highest decision-making body** is the **Governing Council** which **meets every three years**.
* **Enhanced Linkages between Private Sector and Small-Scale Producers (ELPS) Initiative:**
	+ It is an initiative By **IFAD in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan.**
	+ It aims to **connect small-scale food producers and marginalised farmer groups in developing countries with larger agrifood companie**s to facilitate investment, capacity building and trade.
	+ Small-scale producers can greatly benefit from the expertise, knowledge, and technologies of the private sector.

**Other Initiatives of IFAD:**

* + Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP).
	+ Agri-Business Capital (ABC) Fund.
	+ Pacific Islands Rural and Agriculture Stimulus Facility.
	+ Platform for Agricultural Risk Management.