UPSC Daily Current Affairs 22 Jul 2021

UNESCO strips Liverpool of its world heritage status

(Topic- GS Paper I- Art and Culture, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- The English city of Liverpool has been removed from UNESCO's list of **world heritage sites.**

Reasons

- It has been done after the United Nations' cultural agency found new buildings, including a football stadium, undermined the attractiveness of its Victorian docks.

About the Liverpool

- Liverpool is a maritime city in northwest England, where the River Mersey meets the Irish Sea.
- Liverpool was named a World Heritage Site in 2004, joining cultural landmarks such as the Great Wall of China and the Taj Mahal.

Previously stripped sites

- **Oman's Arabian Oryx Sanctuary** holds the dubious distinction of being the first-ever site to be removed from UNESCO's World Heritage List.
- **The Dresden Elbe Valley in Germany in 2009** when a four-lane motorway bridge was built over the river.

About World Heritage Site

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites are designated specific locations such as forest areas, mountains, lakes, deserts, monuments, buildings, or cities, etc.
- These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO.
- The list of World Heritage sites is maintained by World Heritage Programme which is administered by the **UNESCO World Heritage Committee.**
- This committee oversees these sites with the help of UNESCO.
- The objective of this program is to select and preserve such places of the world which are -important for humanity in terms of world culture.
- UNESCO provides financial assistance to such sites under certain circumstances.

About UNESCO World Heritage Committee

- It is composed of 21 UNESCO member states which are elected by the UN General Assembly.
- These are areas of importance of cultural or natural heritage as described in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1972.

Criteria for Selection of World Heritage Sites

- These criteria are explained in the World Heritage Convention, 1972.
- These criteria are regularly revised by the World Heritage Committee to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept itself.
- Before the revised Operational Guidelines, World Heritage sites were selected based on six cultural and four natural criteria.
- With the adoption of the revised Operational Guidelines, only one set of ten criteria.

Tentative lists of Heritage Sites

- All countries are required to submit their Tentative Lists of places that they consider to be a cultural or natural heritage of outstanding universal value and therefore suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List.
- Tentative Lists is not considered exhaustive and need to submit one year before the submission of any nomination.
- Countries are required to re-examine and re-submit their Tentative List at least every ten years.
- If any site is listed in World Heritage Sites, then it must be removed from the tentative list. Related Information

Note:

- At present, India has 38 World Heritage Properties.
- Besides, India has 42(48 now) sites listed under Tentative List which is a prerequisite condition for inscription as World Heritage Site.
- Italy has the highest number of World Heritage Sites in the world.

3 monuments of Andhra Pradesh Identified as "Adarsh Smarak

(Topic- GS Paper I-Art and Culture, Source- PIB)

Why in the news?

- Recently, three monuments of Andhra Pradesh namely have been identified as Adarsh Smarak.

These three monuments are

a. Monuments at Nagarjunakonda, District Guntur
b. Budhhist Remains at Salihundam, District Srikakulam
c. Veerabhadra Temple at Lepakshi in District Anantapuram

Benefits

- These Adarsh Smarak provided additional facilities like Wi-Fi, Cafeteria, Interpretation centre, Brail signages, Illumination, etc.
- **Fort at Gandikota has been also included in the Adopt-a-Heritage scheme of the Ministry of Tourism.**

Related Information

About Adopt a Heritage Project

- The scheme has been launched by the Ministry of Tourism on World Tourism Day i.e. 27th September 2017.
- It is a key initiative of the Ministry of Tourism in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Archeological Survey of India (ASI), to develop the heritage sites/monuments and making them tourist-friendly to enhance the tourism potential and their cultural importance in a planned and phased manner.
- The project plans to entrust heritage sites/monuments and other tourist sites to private sector companies, public sector companies and individuals for the development of tourist amenities.

Eligibility

- Private and Public Sector Companies, Trusts, NGOs and Individuals are eligible for adopting heritage site (s)/ monument (s) under this project.

Key Features of the Project

- The sites/monuments are selected based on tourist footfall and visibility and can be adopted by private and public sector companies and individuals known as Monument Mitras for an initial period of five years.
- The Monument Mitras are selected by the 'oversight and vision committee,' co-chaired by the Tourism Secretary and the Culture Secretary based on the bidder's 'vision' for the development of all amenities at the heritage site.

Monument Mitras

- Successful bidders selected for adopting heritage sites/monuments by the Oversight and Vision Committee shall be called **Monument Mitras**.
- The basic and advanced amenities of the tourist destinations would be provided by them.
- They would also look after the operations and the maintenance of the amenities.
- The 'Monument Mitras' would associate pride with their CSR activities.

India signed 26 pacts to fight the drug menace

(Topic- GS Paper II-Governance and Polity Related Issue, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- India has recently signed 26 bilateral pacts, 15 memoranda of understanding and two agreements on security cooperation with different countries for combating illicit trafficking of narcotics, drugs and psychotropic substances, besides chemical precursors.
- The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) coordinated with various international organisations for sharing information and intelligence to combat transnational drug trafficking.

These include:

- The SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk;
- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa;
- Colombo Plan;
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations;
- ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters;
- Bay of Bengal Initiative For Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-Operation;
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,
- The International Narcotics Control Board

Related Information

'Magnitude of Substance use in India': Report

- National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi submitted its Report "Magnitude of Substance Use in India" sponsored by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment

Key finding of the report

Alcohol

- At the national level, about 14.6% of people (among 10-75-year-old) are current users of alcohol, i.e. about 16 Crore people.
- Prevalence is 17 times higher among men than women.
- States with a high prevalence of alcohol use are Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa.

Cannabis

- About 2.8% of Indians (3.1 Crore individuals) report having used any cannabis product within the past 12 months (Bhang – 2% or 2.2 crore people; Ganja/Charas – 1.2% or 1.3 Crore people).
- States with a higher than the national prevalence of cannabis use are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh and Delhi.

Opioids

- At the national level, the most common opioid used is Heroin, (current use is 1.14%) followed by Pharmaceutical opioids (current use 0.96%) and then Opium (current use 0.52%).
- In terms of the percentage of the population affected, the top states in the country are those in the northeast (Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur) along with Punjab, Haryana and Delhi.

Sedatives and Inhalants

- About 1.08% of 10-75-year-old Indians (approximately 1.18 crore people) are current users of sedatives (non-medical, non-prescription use).
- States with the highest prevalence of current Sedative use are Sikkim, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. However, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat are the top five states which house the largest populations of people using sedatives.

 Other Categories

- Cocaine (0.10%) Amphetamine Type Stimulants (0.18%) and Hallucinogens (0.12%) are the categories with the lowest prevalence of current use in India.

<u>Government Initiatives to Tackle Drug Addiction</u>

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, (NDPS) 1985

- It prohibits a person from producing, possessing, selling, purchasing, transporting, storing, and/or consuming any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.
- The NDPS Act has since been amended thrice – in 1988, 2001 and 2014.

- The Act extends to the whole of India and it applies also to all Indian citizens outside India and to all persons on ships and aircraft registered in India.

NCORD

- For coordination among various Central and State agencies, the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) mechanism was set up by the MHA in the year 2016 for effective drug law enforcement.
- This NCORD system has been restructured into a four-tier scheme up to district level on July 29, 2019, for better coordination,

SIMS' (Seizure Information Management System)

- "For digitisation of pan-India drug seizure data, the MHA has launched an e-portal called 'SIMS' (Seizure Information Management System) in 2019 for all the drug law enforcement agencies under the mandate of Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS).

'Project Sunrise'

- It was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016, to tackle the rising HIV prevalence in north-eastern states in India, especially among people injecting drugs.
- The government has also announced the launch of the 'Nasha Mukt Bharat', or Drug-Free India Campaign which focuses on community outreach programs.

Global initiative

India is a signatory of the following international treaties and conventions to combat the menace of Drug Abuse:

a. United Nations (UN) Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
b. UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971).
c. UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)
d. UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) 2000

SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise scheme

(Topic- GS Paper II-Scheme for Vulnerable Section, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated a scheme "SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise" scheme.

About SMILE Scheme

- It includes sub-scheme **central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging'.**

Focused on

- The focus of the scheme is extensively on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, basic documentation, education, skill development, economic linkages and so on.
- The scheme would be implemented with the support of State/UT Governments/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), institutions and others.
- The scheme provides for the use of the existing shelter homes available with the State/UT Governments and Urban local bodies for rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of Begging.
- In case of the non-availability of existing shelter homes, new dedicated shelter homes are to be set up by the implementing agencies.

IBBI amends insolvency rules to help improve transparency

(Topic- GS Paper III-Economics, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has amended the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations.

More in the news

- The amendments were aimed at enhancing "the discipline, transparency, and accountability in corporate insolvency proceedings".

For effective monitoring

- A resolution professional was duty-bound to find out if a corporate debtor (CD) had been subject to avoidance transactions, namely, preferential transactions, undervalued transactions, extortionate credit transactions, fraudulent trading and wrongful trading, and file applications with the adjudicating authority seeking appropriate relief.
- This not only claws back the value lost in such transactions increasing the possibility of reorganisation of the corporate debtor through a resolution plan, but also disincentives such transactions preventing stress to the corporate debtor.

- For effective monitoring, the amendment requires the resolution professional (IRP) to file Form CIRP 8 on the electronic platform of the Board, intimating details of his opinion and determination in respect of avoidance transactions.

About Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India

- It is the regulating authority for insolvency and bankruptcy proceedings in the country.
- It also oversees the activities of bodies such as the Insolvency Professional Agencies (IPA), Insolvency Professionals (IP) and Information Utilities (IU), Registered Valuers, and Registered Valuer Organisations.
- **It was established as a statutory body in 2016 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.**
- The IBBI makes and implements rules governing the corporate insolvency resolution process, individual insolvency, corporate liquidation and individual bankruptcy under the IBC.
- It plays as a major pillar in the implementation of the IBC that implements the insolvency and reorganisation resolution process of corporates, individuals and partnerships in a time-bound manner for all the stakeholders.
- The IBBI is a unique regulator in that it regulates both a profession and the processes.

Further Reading: **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Cod ordinance 2020**

AMLEX

(Topic- GS Paper III-Science and Technology, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Ropar) scientists has recently developed the country's first of its kind oxygen rationing device "AMLEX" which will increase the life of an oxygen cylinder by three times.

About AMLEX

- It is a system developed specifically for oxygen cylinders synchronising the flow of oxygen with inhalation and exhalation of the patient, thus conserving a large amount of oxygen in the reservoir for a long-lasting operation.

Significance

- It supplies a required volume of oxygen to the patient during inhalation and trips when the patient exhales CO2, it saves the flow of oxygen at that time.
- It helps to reduce the wastage of oxygen because previously during exhalation, the oxygen in the oxygen cylinder/pipe is pushed out along with the exhaled CO2 by the user.
- This leads to the wastage of a large volume of oxygen in the long run.
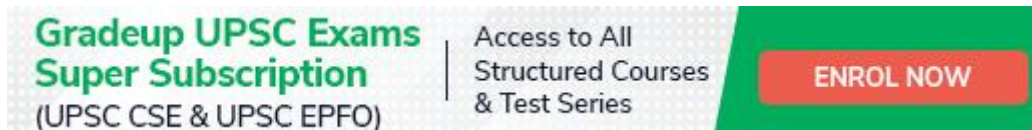
Akash-NG weapon system

(Topic- GS Paper III-Defence, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, a new generation of Akash surface-to-air missiles was successfully flight-tested by the DRDO from an integrated test range off the Odisha coast in a boost to air defence capabilities.
- The DRDO also successfully flight-tested an indigenously developed low weight **man-portable anti-tank guided missile,** paving the way for its production for the Army.

Significance

- Once deployed, the Akash-NG weapon system will prove to be a force multiplier for the air defence capability of the IAF.
- The new variant of the Akash missile (Akash-NG) has a slightly better range compared to the original version that can strike targets at a distance of around 25 km.

About Akash NG Missile

- It is a medium-range mobile surface to surface air missile defence system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organization, DRDO and produced by Bharat Dynamics Limited for Missile Systems.
- It can neutralize aerial targets such as fighter jets, cruise missiles and air to surface missiles and ballistic missiles.
- It has been deployed as an operational service with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.

Variants of Akash Missile

Akash 1S

- This missile has a strike range of 30 kilometres and is capable to carry a warhead of 60 kilograms.

Mark II

- This has an intercept range of 40 kilometres and the accuracy has been increased for the missile guidance system.

Akash NG

- The range of the missile is 80 kilometres and has an active electronically scanned array MultiFunction Radar (MFR) and Optical Proximity Fuze system.

About Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)

- It is a third-generation anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) indigenously developed by DRDO.
- It has a strike range of 2.5 km.
- It is capable of being fired from the shoulder and can be used during day and night.
- It has a minimum lateral centre and gravity offset.
- It works on fire and forgets principle and is known for its top attack capabilities.
- It is effective against both stationary and moving targets.
- It will be deployed in infantry and parachute battalions of the Indian Army