

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs 16 AUG 2021

### Taiwan Strait

(Topic- GS Paper II–International Relation, Source-The Tribune)

#### Why in the news?

- Recently, Taiwan irked China further by publicly thanking the members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) for including peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait during the virtual discussions between their senior officials.

#### Background

##### China made the largest-ever aerial incursion in Taiwan

- The Biden administration is focusing on developing the Taiwan Strait as a friction point with China after decades.
- The US has been successful in mentioning Taiwan Strait in its joint statements with Japan and South Korea.
- More importantly, it found mention in the recent G-7 summit that was also virtually attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Tensions have also risen after Taiwan was mentioned in the G-7 communiqué. In one of the largest Chinese aerial incursions a few days later, 28 military aircraft flew into Taiwan's air defence identification zone.

#### About Taiwan Strait



- It is also known as the Formosa Strait, which is a 180 km wide strait separating Taiwan and mainland China.
- The strait is currently part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north.

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- The narrowest part is 130 km wide.
- **The entire strait is on Asia’s continental shelf.**
- Historically both the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan espoused a One-China Policy that considered the strait part of the exclusive economic zone of a single “China”.

### About Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)

- In December 2012, Shinzo Abe floated the concept of Asia’s Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) involving Australia, India, Japan and the US to safeguard the maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific.
- In November 2017, India, the US, Australia and Japan gave shape to the long-pending (Quad) Coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.

### Greater Adjutant Storks

#### (Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- Down To Earth)

#### Why in the news?

- Recently, Bihar has decided to tag Greater adjutant storks (*Leptoptilos dubius*) with GPS trackers to monitor their movement as a part of efforts to conserve them.

#### About Greater Adjutant Storks



- These are locally known as ‘Garuda’,
- The greater adjutant is one of the most threatened stork species of the world and is widely considered to be a rare bird.

## Breeding Center

- Bhagalpur's Kadwa Diara floodplains area is the third-most-popular breeding centre for the greater adjutant stork in the world after Assam and Cambodia.

## Conservation status

- The greater adjutant stork is classified as '**endangered**' on the IUCN's Red List 2004 of threatened species.
- These are listed under **Schedule IV of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.**

## Whale shark

(Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- Down To Earth)

## Why in the news?

- Recently, a female whale shark died after getting trapped in a fishing net at Odisha's Paradip coast.

## About Whale Shark

- The whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is a slow-moving, filter-feeding carpet shark and the largest known extant fish species.
- The whale shark is found in open waters of the tropical oceans and is rarely found in water below 21 °C (70 °F).
- They are mostly found in the **Gulf of Mannar and Gujarat coast.**



## Conservations Status

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- The whale shark is an **endangered** species as per the IUCN Red List.
- These are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

## Ramsar Site

(Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- The Hindu)

### Why in the news?

- Recently, **four more wetlands from India have been added** to the Ramsar list and have been recognized as wetlands of global importance under the Ramsar Convention.

### These are

- **Thol and Wadhvana from Gujarat**
- **Sultanpur and Bhindawas from Haryana**

### About the Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is the largest wetland in Haryana which is a human-made freshwater wetland.
- **Threatened Species:**
  - **Endangered** Egyptian Vulture, Steppe Eagle, Pallas’s Fish Eagle, and Black-bellied Tern.

### About Sultanpur National Park

- It supports more than 220 species of resident, winter migratory and local migratory waterbirds at critical stages of their life cycles.
- **Threatened Species:**
  - **critically endangered** Sociable Lapwing, and the **endangered** Egyptian Vulture, Saker Falcon, Pallas’s Fish Eagle and Black-bellied Tern.

### About Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary

- It lies on the Central Asian Flyway and more than 320 bird species can be found here.
- **Threatened Species:**
  - **Critically endangered** white-rumped vulture and Sociable Lapwing, and the **vulnerable** Sarus Crane, Common Pochard and Lesser White-fronted Goose.

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### About Wadhwana Wetland

- It is wintering ground to migratory waterbirds, including over 80 species that migrate on the Central Asian Flyway.
- **Threatened Species:**
  - **Endangered** Pallas's fish-Eagle, the vulnerable Common Pochard, and the **near-threatened** Dalmatian Pelican, Grey-headed Fish-eagle and Ferruginous Duck.

### Number of Ramsar Sites in India

- The number of Ramsar sites in India has reached **46**.
- **These 46 sites** cover a surface area of **1,083,322 hectares**.

### Pradhan Mantri Gatishakti National Master Plan

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

#### Why in the news?

- On India's 75th Independence Day, Prime Minister announced that the Centre will launch 'PM Gati Shakti Master Plan'.

#### About Pradhan Mantri Gatishakti National Master Plan

- It is an Rs. 100 lakh-crore project for developing 'holistic infrastructure'.
- The scheme will provide a holistic infrastructure master plan to make a foundation for an integrated pathway to the country.
- The project will become a source of employment opportunities for the youth in future.
- It will make a foundation for holistic infrastructure and give an integrated pathway to our economy.

#### The focus areas of the project

- It will help raise the global profile of local manufacturers and help them compete with their counterparts worldwide.
- It also raises possibilities of new future economic zones.

### Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021

(Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- The Hindu)

#### Why in the news?

- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021.

#### About the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021

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- The rules aim to prohibit the use of specific single-use plastic items which have “low utility and high littering potential” by 2022.

#### Key Provisions of the Rules:

- The Central Pollution Control Board, along with state pollution bodies, will monitor the ban, identify violations, and impose penalties already prescribed under the Environmental Protection Act, 1986.

#### Range of Plastics Banned

- The manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of the following single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene, commodities shall be prohibited with effect from the 1st July 2022:-
  - Earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene [Thermocol] for decoration;
  - Plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straw, trays, wrapping or packing films around sweet boxes, invitation cards, and cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners **less than 100 micron, stirrers.**

#### Thickness of plastic

- The thickness was increased from **50 microns to 75 microns** and **120 microns** with effect from the 31st December 2022.
- This will also allow the reuse of plastic carry due to an increase in thickness.

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- The plastic packaging waste, which is not covered under the phase-out of identified single-use plastic items, shall be collected and managed in an environmentally sustainable way through the Extended Producer Responsibility of the Producer, importer and Brand owner (PIBO), as per Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- For effective implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility, the Guidelines for Extended Producer Responsibility being brought out have been given legal force through Plastic Waste **Management Amendment Rules, 2021.**

### ‘SonChiraiya’ - for Urban SHG products

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

#### Why in the news?

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has recently launched ‘**SonChiraiya**’ – (A brand and logo) - for marketing of urban Self-Help Group (SHG) products.

#### About ‘SonChiraiya’



#### Objective

- It will provide women to become financially empowered and live a dignified life is one of the priority areas of the Government.
- This initiative will certainly prove as a step towards increased visibility and global access for the products made by urban SHG women.
- DAY-NULM, under the aegis of MoHUA, has focussed on equipping the urban poor women with adequate skills and opportunities, and enabling them to promote sustainable micro-enterprises.

### Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

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

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### Why in the news?

- The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry has recently chaired a meeting for the review of the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) initiative of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.

### About Open Network for Digital Commerce

- ONDC shall take all measures to ensure confidentiality & privacy of data in the network.
- OONDC shall not mandate sharing of any transaction-level data by participants with ONDC.
- OONDC will work with its participants to publish anonymised aggregate metrics on network performance without compromising on confidentiality and privacy.
- ONDC will enable, buyers and sellers, to be digitally visible and transact through an open network.

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