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**MADE EASY
WEEKLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WEEK-2

08th February - 14th February, 2021

**Targeted Examinations:
CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

8th FEBRUARY 2021

Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization Scheme

- In the Union budget 2021, Rs. 1050 Crore budget was allocated to the Submission for Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) for the financial year 2021-2022.

About SMAM Scheme

- The Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) was launched in April 2014 with the goal of achieving inclusive growth of farm mechanisation to improve productivity.
- The scheme was initiated by the Government of India with the goal of 'achieving the unreachable.' The programme aims to meet the unreachable by making farm equipment available and affordable to small and marginal farmers (SMFs).
- Subsidies for the purchase of machinery are also given to individual farmers under the programme.
- Agricultural mechanisation tends to improve productivity by timely farm activities and decreases operations by maintaining efficient handling of inputs.
- Mechanization often increases the production of natural capital and decreases the amount of drudgery involved with different farm operations.

Components of the scheme

- The scheme lets SMFs interact with hiring organisations that encourage SMFs to employ machines because the procurement of farm machines for SMFs is not financially feasible.
- It also raises awareness among stakeholders by demonstrating the computer operations and skills growth of farmers and young people.

Open Market Operations (OMOs)

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has declared that it will buy four government securities (G-Secs) worth 20,000 crore.

Key Highlights

- This move was announced in the wake of yields that have recently moved up to an intra-day high of 6.1634%. The RBI was nervous about higher government spending.
- Following the announcement of the acquisition of the OMO, the yield on the 10-year G-Sec benchmark slowed by 3-4 basis points.

About Open Market Operations

- Open Market Operations are the acquisition and selling by RBI of government securities (G-Secs) from and to the market.
- Open market operations are carried out with the goal of changing the conditions of the rupee's liquidity in the economy.
- In such operations, when RBI sells the government security in the market banks use to purchase them. When the banks purchase the Government securities, their ability to lend money to the industries, households and other commercial sectors gets reduced.

■ NOTE:

- Government securities are liability instruments issued by the government to borrow funds. It is divided into two categories, that is,
- Treasury bills that are short-term instruments. They become mature in 91 days, 182 days, or 364 days.
- Dated securities that are long-term instruments. They're getting mature in between 5 years and 40 years.

Ladakh to get India's first Geothermal Power Project

- India's first geothermal power plant will be set up in the eastern Ladakh village of Puga.
- This decision was made because the Puga village was established by the scientists as a hotspot of geothermal energy.

Key Highlights:

- The geothermal scheme is known as the Geothermal Field Production Project.
- It is to be commissioned by the end of 2022.
- The first phase of the project would result in the generation of one megawatt (MW) of electricity. The pilot project will be initiated by the NGOC-OEC in the first phase.
- ONGC-OEC will explore within the depth of 500 metres.

NOTE:

In the Puga Village, scientists have discovered a potential of more than 100 mw of geothermal energies. It lies in the south-eastern part of Ladakh. The village is a part of the Himalayan geothermal belt.

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Rajya Sabha has cleared The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 by voice vote.

Key Highlights:

- The bill aims to replace an order to combine the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) cadres and the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram Union Territory (AGMUT) cadres of civil service officers.
- This bill has just been passed in the Upper House of Parliament.
- The bill would also raise the strength of officers in the Jammu and Kashmir and Leh Union Territories.
- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was enacted in accordance with the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, in the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, following the repeal of Article 370 in the country. The Act of 2019 reconstituted the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories, namely Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, on 31 October 2019.

NOTE:

Voice Vote is a voting method in parliamentary procedure in which vote is taken on a topic or motion orally. It is the simplest and quickest of voting methods that are used by deliberative assemblies.

World Sustainable Development Summit 2021

- The Prime Minister of India opened the 2021 World Summit on Sustainable Development by video conferencing. The theme of the summit was 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'.

Key Highlights

- The year marks the 20th edition of the summit. This summit is being coordinated by the Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI).
- The summit will be held with the goal of putting together a wide spectrum of nations, scholars, corporate leaders, climate scientists, civil society and youth to combat climate change.
- The summit will be organised with the aim to bring together a wide number of governments, academicians, business leaders, climate scientists, civil society and youth to fight against climate change.
- The summit will hold discussions on topics ranging from Climate finance, circular economy, Energy & industry transition, adaptation & resilience, nature-based solutions, clean oceans and air pollution.
- The key partners of the summit are the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change and the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

About World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS):

- It is the annual flagship programme coordinated by the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). The summit is planned with the goal of offering long-term options for the good of the global community.

- It aims to gain from assembling diverse parties on a common forum to facilitate a constructive action to resolve the problems of the future of mankind.
- With the successful launch of spacecraft in orbit, UAE scientists can now study the planet's atmosphere.

9th FEBRUARY 2021

United States to rejoin UNHRC

- The government of Joe Biden in the United States is all set to attend the UN Human Rights Council. The United States resigned from the Council in 2018 under the administration of Donald Trump.

About UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR)

- The UNHRC is an intergovernmental agency within the UN framework.
- The Organisation is committed to improving the promotion and defence of human rights around the world.
- It tracks and advises cases of human rights abuses.
- The Council was formed in 2006 by Resolution 60/251 of the UN General Assembly.
- The Department shall be active in the debate of all thematic human rights issues.
- The UNHRC was set up after replacing the United Nations Committee on Human Rights (UNCHR).
- The Council is made up of 47 UN Member Nations. Member States shall be elected by direct and secret ballot to the UNGA.

HOPE: UAE's Mars Mission

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has put a probe called Hope in the orbit around the MARS. By doing so, UAE has become the fifth country to launch the spacecraft into the orbit of MARS after the United States, Soviet Union, Europe and India.

Key Highlights:

- The spacecraft had left the Earth seven months ago.
- It then made a braking manoeuvre in order to be captured by Mars' gravity on February 9, 2021.

- The spacecraft carries three instruments with it to observe how neutral atoms of Oxygen and Hydrogen leak into space.

Emirates Mars Mission

- It is a UAE Space Agency space exploration mission to Mars. In the process UAE had launched the Hope orbiter 19 July 19, 2020. It was launched from the Tanegashima Space Center in Japan.

Shahtoot Dam

- India and Afghanistan have inked the deal to build a dam, called Shahtoot dam, in order to supply water to the Kabul City. It is a proposed dam in the Kabul river basin.

About Shahtoot Dam

- Construction of the dam will provide drinking, irrigation and Environmental water in the Kabul province of Afghanistan.
- The dam will be completed at the cost of about US\$120 to \$305 million.
- This dam will be constructed by India.
- The design of the dam will be completed by Iranian firm. For this, the ministry of water and power has inked an agreement with the Poyab Company of Iran.
- The dam will be constructed in order to provide potable water to around 2 million residents of Kabul.

India-Afghanistan Relation

- India and Afghanistan are close neighbours and strategic partners. Both the countries have committed for a region free from terrorism and extremism. India also supports the "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled" peace process to negotiate with the Taliban.

10th FEBRUARY 2021

Index-Linked Insurance Policies

- A committee has recently been set up by the Indian Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) at the behest of some insurers. The Committee proposed the adoption of index-linked insurance policies (ILIPs).

Index-linked insurance policies (ILIPs)

- Returns from ILIPs will be connected to the benchmark indices.
- ILIPs are insurance policies related to index indexes. This comprises the 10-year Sovereign Bond Index, Sensex or Nifty etc.
- ILIPs linked to government bonds are less volatile, while those linked to equity-based indexes can fluctuate in returns in line with the success of the stock market.
- ILIPs are the alternative or complementary option to the current conventional guaranteed products such as annuities and savings products.

Significance:

- The ILIPs offer more transparency. Index-linked products can match more transparently between conventional products with less clarity and unit-linked products.
- In the case of ILIPs, the investment costs would be met solely by the policyholders as in the case of Unit-Linked goods.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)

- This is an independent, statutory entity. It controls and supports the insurance and reinsurance sectors in India.
- The body was created pursuant to the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999. Its headquarters are situated in Hyderabad, Telangana.

Major Ports Authorities Bill, 2020

- The “Major Ports Authorities Bill, 2020” was passed in the Rajya Sabha on February 10, 2021. The bill was passed using the ballot votes. 84 votes were in favour while 44 votes were against it. The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha in September 2020.
- The bill will encourage good competition within the major private ports.

Provisions of the bill

- The bill aims to provide more autonomy in decision-making.
- It will provide autonomy to the 12 major ports of India, Namely’:
 - Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla) port.
 - Mumbai port.
 - JNPT port.
 - Mormugao port.
 - New Mangalore port.
 - Cochin port.
 - Chennai port.
 - Kamarajar (erstwhile Ennore) port.
 - V O Chidambaranar port.
 - Visakhapatnam port.
 - Paradip port.
 - Kolkata (including Haldia) port.
- The bill would also professionalise the administration of the port with the establishment of boards.
- The bill would replace the 1963 Major Port Trusts Act.
- It contains arrangements for the creation of a Board of Major Port Authority for each major port to replace the current Port Trusts.

Composition of the board

- The Board shall consist of a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson. Both will be named by the central government on the advice of the selection committee. The Board would also have one delegate from each of the respective State Governments, the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of Defense and the Customs Service.

- It will also have two to four independent members. Further, it will include two members who will represent the interests of the employees from the Major Port Authority.

BioAsia 2021

- The 18th edition of BioAsia was held recently. It is organised under the theme: 'Move the Needle'.

Key Highlights

- The focus of this year's BioAsia event is on Covid-19, pharma, medtech and environmental health. The event consists of a wide variety of committees.
- The panel reflects on how the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a variety of shifts in the life sciences sector.

About BioAsia 2021

- The forum will offer a venue for debates on issues of interest to the life sciences industry.
- One of the sessions of the event will concentrate on the future of Medical Technology, which will become India's next great opportunity.
- Medical innovations have the ability to drive India's path from becoming an importer to being a major exporter.
- The event will also have analysis on the supply chain resilience, access to innovative medicines and innovation & research.

Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)

- The Government of India has initiated a new Central Sector Scheme named "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)."
- The scheme has been implemented since the agriculture sector plays a vital role in economic growth and nation building. The country is also at the forefront of global agricultural growth.

About FPOs Scheme

- This is a central sector scheme that receives funds from the Government of India.
- FPOs will be developed to create clusters.
- Agricultural and horticultural products can be grown and cultivated in the FPOs to exploit economies of scale.
- It would also boost access for members to the sector.
- Further, "One District One Product" cluster will be created to promote specialization.
- Under this scheme, the formation & Promotion of FPOs will be done with the help of Implementing Agencies (IAs).

Implementing Agencies (IAs)

- **There are presently nine implementing agencies namely:**
 - Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC),
 - National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD),
 - National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC),
 - North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC),
 - Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium Haryana (SFACH),
 - National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED),
 - Watershed Development Department (WDD)-Karnataka
 - Tamil Nadu-Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (TN-SFAC) and
 - Foundation for Development of Rural Value Chains (FDRVC)- Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).
- These IAs will engage the Cluster Based Business Organizations (CBBOs) to aggregate, register and provide the handholding support to each FPOs. The support will be provided for a period of 5 years.

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SAKSHAM portal and Seaweed Cultivation Mission

- The Technology Information, Forecasting and Evaluation Council (TIFAC) has launched a job portal named SAKSHAM to map the skills of employees needed by the MYMEs. A Seaweed Cultivation Mission was also introduced.

About SAKSHAM Portal

- TIFAC pointed out that the Saksham platform would help to remove middlemen and labour contractors.
- It would also help to determine the degree of expertise.
- The portal will also assist in the creation of 'shramics' skill cards (workers).
- This initiative would promote the recruitment of 10 lakh blue-collar workers across India.
- The platform would directly connect employees to small and medium-sized businesses and remove the need for middlemen or labour contractors.
- This portal would also reduce the difficulty of employees in seeking jobs in local small and medium-sized businesses.
- The platform is important because it will allow employees to find jobs forced to return to their native place in the middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Seaweed Cultivation

- Seaweed cultivation is sometimes referred to as kelp raising. It is the method of growing and extracting algae. The method requires handling spontaneously found batches in the simplest form. When in advanced form, the process requires the complete regulation of the algae life cycle.
- According to the Department's estimation, if seaweed is grown in 10 million hectares or 5 percent of India's Exclusive Economic Zone, it will help to provide jobs to 50 million people.

NOTE:

Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) is an autonomous organization. It was set up in the year 1988. It works under the Department of Science & Technology. The organisation works in the technology domain and assess technology trajectories.

Tianwen-1 Probe

- A Chinese spacecraft named Tianwen-1 entered the orbit around Mars.
- The probe entered the MARS Orbit after making the journey of 6 and a half months from the Earth.

Key Facts:

- This mission is China's first independent mission on the red planet.
- After reaching near to the orbit, a robotic probe initiated and completed its 15-minute burn of the thrusters.
- Burning of the thrusters slowed down the speed of the spacecraft so that it could be captured by the gravity pull of the MARS.
- The Tianwen-1 mission will attempt to send a landing capsule which is carrying a 240-kilogram rover in a rapid seven-minute descent. The rover will be sent to the northern hemisphere of Mars called Utopia Planitia.

About Tianwen-1:

- Tianwen-1 is an interplanetary mission by the China National Space Administration (CNSA). Under the mission, the CNSA sent a robotic spacecraft to Mars. The spacecraft consists of an orbiter, a deployable camera, a lander and a rover.
- The spacecraft was successfully launched on July 23, 2020 from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site.

Exercise TROPEX-21

- The biennial Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX 21) which is the largest wargame of the Indian Navy was started in January 2021.

About TROPEX-2021

- The exercise shall observe the involvement of all operating units of the Indian Navy, such as submarines, ships and aircraft.
- The Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard units also engage in the biennial exercise.
- The exercise is being performed in the Indian Ocean Area and its adjoining seas.
- The exercise is being looked at by the Naval Headquarters along with the participation of all three Commands of Indian Navy besides the Tri-Services Command.

'Specialty Steel' included under the PLI Scheme

- The Union Ministry for Steel gave its approval for inclusion of 'Specialty Steel' under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme.

Key Highlights:

- A 5-year financial outlay of Rs 6322 Cr has also been authorised for this reason.
- This move was made by the government to encourage the manufacture of 'Specialty Steel' within the boundaries of the world.
- Manufacturing can be encouraged by attracting foreign investment, by facilitating technological improvements and by creating jobs in the steel industry.
- This move by the government would help to improve the availability of 'Specialty Steel' in India by making the country Atmanirbhar with respect to the domestic demand.

About Specialty steels

- They're sometimes called alloy steels. They are composed of additional alloyed materials which result in the special properties of the final product. The steels are designed to provide superior performance under unique conditions.

12th FEBRUARY 2021

J&K-UK Space Agency

- The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and a United Kingdom based space agency have joined hands to work on a collaborative project on the impact-based flood forecasting.

Key facts

- The project is supported by the national space innovation programme (NSIP).
- The NSIP software is being introduced by HR Wallingford in collaboration with Oxford University, D-orbit and Sayers & Partners (SPL).
- This move would help forecast river flood hazards in terms of expected loss of life, infrastructure destruction, human casualties, construction failure, and other economic damage.

About the impact-based flood forecasting system

- It would also help to define the relationship between the expected flooding and the effects of the floods.
- The machine would forecast the effects on people, their homes and their crops and livestock.
- This will help to alleviate the problems that people face through the flooding.
- The framework would also be useful for efficient and reliable contingency preparation.
- This system uses the earth observation (EO) based information. This makes the system capable of being linked to any existing or future flood flow forecasting system.

Vijayanagara: 31st district of Karnataka

- The Karnataka Government notified that Vijayanagara has become the 31st district of Karnataka officially. The district has its headquarter at Hosapete.

About Vijayanagara District

- Vijayanagara is located in the Hyderabad-Karnataka area.
- The district is also home to UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the Hampi and Virupaksha Temples.
- The district of Vijayanagara was named after the capital of the Vijayanagar Empire.
- The district was created out of the ore-rich district of Ballari in compliance with the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, 1964.
- The district comprises six taluks namely the Hosapete, Kotturu, Kudligi, Hagaribommanahalli, Harapanahalli and Hoovina Hadagali.

About Hampi:

- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site situated in the middle of East Karnataka. The place is the pilgrimage centre of the Hindu faith.
- The Hampi area was once the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire in the 14th century. Hampi-Vijayanagara was the second largest mediaeval town in the world after Beijing.

'Jalabhishekam' Water Conservation Campaign

- The Union Defence Ministry inaugurated 57,000 water structures under the "Jalabhishekam Water Conservation Campaign" on February 11, 2021 virtually from New Delhi.

Key Highlights

- These water systems have been installed in Madhya Pradesh.
- Water conservation work is being carried out by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Madhya Pradesh, with the participation of the public.

- Conservation work would help to accomplish the goal of water conservation and establish a self-reliant Madhya Pradesh.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

- It is an indicator of Indian labour law and social welfare. The act was passed with the intention of ensuring the 'freedom to live.'
- The act was passed by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2005. The Act aims to strengthen the protection of livelihoods in rural areas.
- It allows for a minimum of 100 days of salary work in the financial year. It offers jobs for any household in which adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- The Act provides for economic stability and generates rural properties. It also aims to protect the environment and inspire rural women. The Act provides 100 working days, which in turn lowers rural-urban migration.

Mandarin Duck spotted after 118 years in Assam

- The Mandarin duck which is a colourful duck from eastern Asia was spotted in Assam recently after 118 years.
- It makes a minimum of 100 days of wage job in the financial year. It provides opportunities for any household in which adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual labour.
- The Act provides for economic prosperity and creates agricultural properties. It also attempts to protect the environment and empower rural women. The Act accounts for 100 working days, which in turn decreases rural-urban migration.

Mandarin duck:

- The scientific name of the mandarin duck is *Aix galericulata*. It is a perching duck species native to the East Palearctic.

- The duck is medium in height with a length of 41–49 cm and a wingspan of 65–75 cm. The duck is closely associated with North American wood duck.
- The duck usually prefers the dense breeding grounds. It usually breeds into the shrubby forested edges of rivers and lakes in low-lying areas. It can also breed in valleys at altitudes of 1,500 m.
- It also breeds in marshes, flooded fields, and open rivers during winters. The duck prefers fresh water but are also seen wintering in the coastal lagoons and estuaries.

13th FEBRUARY 2021

7th Pay Commission

- The Union Minister of State for Prime Minister's Office and Personnel, Public Grievances & Pension stated that the upper ceiling for family pension has been increased from Rs 45,000 to Rs 1,25,000 per month.

Key Highlights

- This decision was made with a view to giving Ease of Life to the family members of the deceased staff.
- It would aim to provide the family members with sufficient financial support.
- The Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) has explained the qualifying number when the child is eligible to collect two family pensions after the death of the parents.
- The notification says that the amount of both the family pensions will be restricted to Rs 1,25,000 per month. This amounts to two and half times more than the earlier limit.

About Pay Commission

- The Commission is set up by the Government of India. It is set up in order to make recommendations about improvements in the pay system of workers. The first pay commission was established in 1947.

- The 7th Pay Commission was formed in September 2013. The Pay Commission submitted its recommendations with enforcement effect from 1 January 2016. It was led by A.K. Mathur, Justice.

Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2021

- The Lok Sabha passed the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2021. The bill was passed on February 12, 2021 by voice vote.
- The bill introduced the bill in the Lok Sabha on February 4, 2021.

Key Highlights:

- Arbitration and conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2021 deals with domestic and international arbitration.
- It further specifies the rule on the operation of conciliation hearings.
- It replaces an ordinance with the same provisions that was promulgated on 4 November 2020.
- The bill would amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996.
- The bill also omits the eighth schedule of the act, which is defined by the guidelines on the training, expertise and accreditation of arbitrators.
- A stay of the arbitral award can be issued by the Court in compliance with the amendments. It can be supported even during the length of the set-aside application.

■ NOTE:

Arbitration is a method of alternate dispute mediation (ADR). Disputes are handled beyond the judiciary through this mechanism. Disputes are determined by one or more individuals referred to as 'arbitrators.'

Earthquake hits Tajikistan

- An earthquake of magnitude 6.3 hit Tajikistan on February 12, 2020. The tremors were felt in Delhi-NCR, Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh.

What is an Earthquake?

- The shaking of the Earth's surface due to the sudden release of energy from the Earth's lithosphere is called an earthquake. This helps in the development of seismic waves.
- If the epicentre of the earthquakes is on the surface, the earth is shaken and displaced. If the epicentre is situated underwater, the displacement of the seabed creates a tsunami.
- Earthquakes are usually caused by rupture of geological faults. But it may also be caused due to volcanic activity, landslides, nuclear tests and mine blasts.

Types of Earthquake

- **Fault Zones:** Fault means a sharp breakage in the crustal rock. Through this fault, energy releases. As a result, the rocks along the fault start moving in opposite directions. With time, the blocks get deformed and slide past each other abruptly. This in turn causes earthquakes.
- **Tectonic Earthquakes:** This is the most common earthquake. When a large & thin plate of the Earth's crust and upper mantle gets stuck while moving past each other, pressure builds up beneath the zone. When this pressure is released, earthquakes occur.
- **Volcanic Earthquake:** Special class of tectonic earthquake in the areas of active volcanoes are called volcanic earthquakes. It occurs because of injection or withdrawal of magma beneath the Earth's surface.
- **Induced Earthquakes:** Such earthquakes are caused as a result of intense mining activity, explosion of chemical or nuclear devices.

14th FEBRUARY 2021

Black Holes discovered in cluster NGC 6397

- The astronomers have discovered a concentration of smaller black holes in the cluster NGC 6397. Small black holes were discovered instead of one massive black hole at the heart of the cluster.

Key facts

- Globular clusters are a compact stellar system that hosts tightly clustered stars.
- Usually, those devices are very old. For example, the NGC 6397 cluster is as old as the universe.
- The NGC 6397 cluster is situated about 7,800 light-years distant.
- It is also one of the nearest globular clusters to the Planet.
- This cluster is also known as the Core-Collapsed Cluster owing to its very dense nucleus.

About NGC 6397

- The cluster is also known as Caldwell 86. It is a globular cluster lying in the constellation Ara. The cluster is located around 7,800 light-years from Earth. It comprises around 400,000 stars.

LANCET Modelling Study on Paris Climate Agreement

- The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change has published its new research in Lancet Planetary Health Journal recently. The report has highlighted the benefits of adoption of the Paris Agreement to health.
- It points out that the Nationally Defined Contributions (NDCs) are in accordance with the Paris Agreement.
- The goal of the Paris Agreement is to reduce the temperature to below 2°C.

Key findings:

- In the background of COP26 of 2021, the signatories of the Paris Agreement are reviewing and revising their NDCs.
- But the NDCs are not that powerful globally to meet the Paris Agreement. There is also a chance of a global temperature increase of more than 3°C.
- The report further highlights that the adoption of the policies which are in consistent with the aim of the Paris Agreement and with the prioritisation of the health can help in saving around

- 4 million lives as a result of better diet.
- 6 million lives as a result of cleaner air.
- 1 million lives as a result of increased exercise.
- The report mentioned that, though the direct benefits of carbon mitigation are long-term, the health co-benefits of climate policies have the immediate positive benefits.

India's First CNG Tractor

- India launched its first-ever diesel tractor that has been converted to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

Key Highlights:

- The CNG Tractor was officially unveiled by Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road and Highway Transport.
- The conversion of the Diesel tractor to the CNG tractor was carried out jointly by Rawmatt Techno Solutions and Tomasetto Achille India.
- The conversion of diesel to CNG would help farmers increase their profits.
- It will minimise costs and help build work opportunities for people living in rural India.
- The CNG tractor would also help the farmer save more than one lakh rupee per year on fuel costs.

■ NOTE:

CNG is a clean fuel. The carbon content in the CNG is the lowest among all the fuels. It is economical because of zero lead in it. It is non-corrosive, non-dilutive and non-contaminating in nature.

Urban Local Bodies reforms

- Goa has become the 6th State in the country that has successfully completed the Urban Local Bodies reforms.

Key Highlights

- These improvements of the Municipal Local Bodies have been set up by the Department of Spending.
- Finance Ministry stressed that the state of Goa will now be able to mobilise the additional financial capital of 223 Crore Rupees with the aid of Open Market Borrowings.
- Besides Goa, five other states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Manipur and Telangana, have already completed the reforms of the Urban Local Bodies.
- A cumulative additional loan of 10 thousand 435 Crore Rupees was also given to these five states.

Key Reforms:

- Under the amendments, Member States are expected to inform the floor rate of property tax in ULBs in compliance with the property transaction guide rates.
- States are also expected to inform the customer charges for the provision of water supply, sanitation and sewerage of the floor prices.
- The State would now implement a scheme of annual changes in the amount of property tax or usage charges in response to price increases.
- In addition to these changes, the Center has defined four citizen-centred areas for improvement, namely the introduction of One Nation Ration Card, Urban Municipal Organization or Service Reform, Market Reform Ease and Power Sector Reform.