

Daily News Decode

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Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of the Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) India Forum-2021



- Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of the Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) India Forum-2021 is being organised by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- India is one of the five countries taking part in this project – the other countries being Brazil, China, South Africa and Mexico.

The NCAVES Project

- The Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) project seeks to advance the theory and practice of environmental and ecosystem accounting in Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa.
- The project has been jointly implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).
- It aims to assist the five participating partner countries, to advance the knowledge agenda on environmental-economic accounting, in particular ecosystem accounting.
- The project will have a duration until the end of 2021.
- Funding: The project is funded by the European Union through its Partnership Instrument (PI).

Objectives:

- I. The objectives of the National Forum would be:
- II. To present India's achievements in the domain of Natural Capital Accounting (NCA);
- III. To prioritize the emerging opportunities for NCA in India;
- IV. To familiarize stakeholders with the work undertaken by the different international agencies in the area of NCA; and
- V. To provide a platform to selected Research Institutions to present their research conducted in the valuation of ecosystem services.

About NCAVES India Forum 2021

- In India, the NCAVES project is being implemented by the MoSPI with collaboration of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC).
- NCAVES India Forum 2021 is being organised in a virtual format.

Negative Yield Bonds



- China sold negative-yield debt for the first time, and this saw a high demand from investors across Europe.

What are Negative-yield Bonds?

- The NYBs are debt instruments that offer to pay the investor a maturity amount lower than the purchase price of the bond.
- The NYBs are generally issued by central banks or governments, and investors pay interest to the borrower to keep their money with them.

Relationship between Bond Price and Yield:

- A bond's price moves inversely with its yield or interest rate; the higher the price of a bond, the lower the yield.
- The reason for the inverse relationship between price and yield is due, in part, to bonds being fixed-rate investments.
- Investors might sell their bonds if it's expected that interest rates will rise in the coming months and opt for the higher-rate bonds later on.
- Conversely, bond investors might buy bonds, driving the prices higher, if they believe interest rates will fall in the future because existing fixed-rate bonds will have a higher rate or yield.

Why do investors buy them?

- Negative-yield bonds attract investments during times of stress and uncertainty as investors look to protect their capital from significant erosion.
- At a time when the world is battling the Covid-19 pandemic and interest rates in developed markets across Europe are much lower.
- Hence, investors are looking for relatively better-yielding debt instruments to safeguard their interests.

Chang e 5



- The manoeuvre part of the ambitious Chang'e-5 mission – named after a mythical Chinese Moon goddess – to bring back the first lunar samples in four decades.
- A successful landing in Inner Mongolia would make China only the third country to have retrieved lunar samples after the United States and the Soviet Union.
- Launch: The Long March-5 Y5 rocket, carrying the Chang'e-5 spacecraft, was launched from Wenchang Space Launch Center (China).
- The spacecraft is set to return to Earth around December 15, 2020.

- Key Task of the Mission: To drill 2 meters beneath the moon's surface and scoop up about 2 kilograms of rocks and other debris to be brought back to Earth.
- It will help scientists learn about:
- Moon's origins,
- Volcanic activity on its surface and its interior, and
- When its magnetic field, key to protecting any form of life from the sun's radiation dissipated.

About Chang'e-5 probe:

- I. It is an unmanned spacecraft by China.
- II. The probe is named after the mythical Chinese moon goddess.
- III. The rocket comprises four parts: an orbiter, a returner, an ascender and a lander.
- IV. The Chang'e-5 mission is expected to realize four "firsts" in China's space history:
- V. The first time for a probe to take off from the surface of the Moon.
- VI. The first time to automatically sample the lunar surface.
- VII. The first time to conduct unmanned rendezvous and docking in lunar orbit.
- VIII. The first time to return to Earth with lunar soil samples in escape velocity.

Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP)



- SCSP and TSP were initiated by the government to guarantee funds to SC/STs both at State and Centre in proportion to the size of their respective population.

Objectives

- The main objective of the scheme is to increase the income of the target population by way of various income generating schemes, skill development and infrastructure development.
- To reduce the poverty among the target population and bring them above the poverty lines.
- Eligibility Criteria
- The Scheduled Castes persons living below the poverty lines are eligible for getting benefits under the various Income Generating Schemes and Skill Development Programmes.
- In case of Infrastructure Development, the villages having 50% or more SC population are eligible for grants under the Scheme.

- As regards definition of poverty line and selection of SC families living below poverty line is concerned, the guidelines issued by the erstwhile Planning Commission and the procedure laid down by the Ministry of Rural Development for selecting the beneficiaries through the Panchayati Raj institutions may be adopted.

Components of the Scheme

- Broadly, under the Scheme, funds can be utilized by the State Government/UTs Administration for the following activities:
- Income Generating Schemes
- Skill Development Programmes
- Infrastructure Development
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)

Objectives

- I. To reduce poverty and unemployment of the Tribal.
- II. To eradicate the exploitation and develop the remote areas.
- III. To improve the life there by providing adequate health and educational services.
- IV. To provide physical and financial security against any kind of oppression and exploitation

Key features

- The Tribal Sub Plan was proposed on the basis that no development is possible without the elimination of exploitation in any field.
- There are 30 Central Ministries / Departments, and 23 States and 4 UT, having specific fund allocation obligations for Tribal Sub Plan (TSP).
- State Governments are supposed to earmark TSP funds in proportion to ST population (Census 2011) in the State with respect to total State Plan.
- TSP is not applicable to states where tribals represent more than 60% of the population.
- Central Ministries and Departments are obligated for earmarking of TSP funds as per percentage prescribed by Ministry of Finance.
- Tribal Sub Plan funds are to be non-divertible and non-lapsable.
- Monitoring of TSP: Ministry of Tribal Affairs(MoTA) has been mandated for monitoring of Central TSP as per the framework and mechanism designed by NITI Aayog
- The sub plans have worked for the benefits of the SCs and STs in following ways
- Funds earmarked for the development of SC and ST communities exclusively Earmarking schemes and funds , thereby creating a target and drive to work towards their development, examples are stand up. India.

- Social pressure through the media – the recent cuts in these sections were highly criticised thus these were again increased .
- Every ministry now has to declare their SCSP and TSP compositions, which create an atmosphere of focus towards these sections.

Project 75



- The fifth Scorpene submarine of Project-75 named 'Vagir' has been launched at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai.
- "Project-75 India (P-75I)" is a submarine project approved by the defence ministry in 2007.
- Under this project, the Indian Navy intends to acquire six diesel-electric submarines.
- French Company DCNS (Naval Group) will provide design and technology to public sector Mazagon Docks to make six Scorpene diesel submarines by 2022.
- These will feature advanced air-independent propulsion systems to enable them to stay submerged for longer duration and substantially increase their operational range.
- They will be capable of anti-surface and anti-ship warfare missions equipped with a vertical launch system (VLS) to enable them to carry multiple Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles.
- They also have advanced stealth capabilities like noise and acoustic suppression. It is a follow-on of the Project 75 Kalvari-class submarines for the Indian Navy.
- The submarines are being constructed under the Strategic Partnership (SP) model that aims at providing a significant fillip to the 'Make in India' programme.

Tele Law



सत्यमेव जयते

Department of Justice

- Almost 4 Lakh beneficiaries having received legal advice under this through CSCs (Common Service Centres)
- It was launched by the Department of Justice in 2017 to address cases at the pre-litigation stage.
- Under this programme, smart technology of video conferencing, telephone /instant calling facilities available at the vast network of Common Service Centres at the Panchayat level are used to connect the vulnerable communities with the Panel Lawyers for seeking timely and valuable legal advice.
- It is proactively outreached to groups and communities through a cadre of frontline volunteers provided by NALSA and CSC- e Gov.

Eligibility and Procedure

- As per clause 12 under the Legal Services Authority 1987, free legal advice will be given to people belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes (including women and children) through the Tele-law program. People of other communities will have to pay a fee of Rs 30.
- Under this program, the vulnerable sections and poor people are joined by a group of advocates. These advocates are elected by the Department of Justice and CSC-E Governance Services, or they are registered with the State or District Legal Services Committee.
- It uses technology like video-conferencing, telephone calls.
- Tele-law app have been made to ensure this facility in remote areas.
- Information about this program is available in 22 languages on the web portal.
- Tele-law dashboard contains real-time data about registered cases and advice.

Panel for Denotified, Semi-Nomadic Tribes



- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the constitution of Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Communities (DNCs).
- The Government has decided to set up a Development and Welfare Board under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- While most DNTs are spread across the SC, ST and OBC categories, some DNTs are not covered in any of these.
- These communities are hard to reach, less visible, and therefore frequently left out.
- It has, therefore, approved the setting up of a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog.
- It will complete the process of identification of the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DNCs) that have not yet been formally classified.

Denotified Tribes

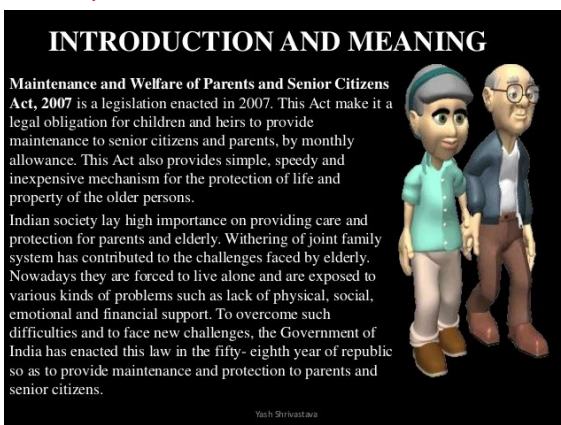
- The term stands for all those communities which were once notified under the Criminal Tribes Acts, enforced by the British Raj between 1871 and 1947.
- These Acts were repealed by the Independent Indian Government in 1952, and these communities were “De-Notified”.
- A few of these communities which were listed as de-notified were also nomadic. Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes
- Nomadic and semi-nomadic are social groups who undertook a fairly frequent, usually seasonal physical movement as part of their livelihood strategy in the recent past.

- The term semi-nomad is mostly used to describe those sections of nomads whose duration, distance and frequency of movement is comparatively less than others.
- On the other hand, Semi-nomadic groups tend to have a fixed abode for a part of the year and are itinerant in the rest of the year.

Status of these tribes in India

- It has been estimated that South Asia has the world's largest nomadic population. In India, roughly 10 percent of the population is Denotified and Nomadic. While the number of Denotified Tribes is about 150, the population of Nomadic Tribes consists of about 500 different communities.
- While the Denotified Tribes have almost settled in various States of the country, the Nomadic Communities continue to be largely nomadic in pursuit of their traditional professions'

Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007



- The Senior Citizens Act, officially called the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 was enacted in 2007 by the Indian Parliament.
- The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill, 2019.
- It seeks to amend The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Bill, 2007.

New in the bill

- Definition of 'children' and 'parents', 'maintenance' and 'welfare' has been expanded.
- Mode of submission of application for maintenance has been enlarged.
- Preference to dispose of applications of senior citizens, above eighty years of age, early has been included.
- Registration of Senior Citizens Care Homes/Homecare Service Agencies etc. have been included.
- Minimum standards for senior citizen care homes have been included in the Bill.
- Appointment of Nodal Police Officers for Senior Citizens in every Police Station and District level Special Police Unit for Senior Citizens has been included.
- Maintenance of Helpline for senior citizens has been included.

First rice, now wheat: India rides on global grain trade bandwagon



- After rice, India is set to turn a major exporter of wheat as well – thanks to surging international prices from Chinese stockpiling and ultra-low interest rate money increasingly finding its way into agri-commodity markets.
- The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) on Tuesday upped its forecast of Indian wheat exports for 2020-21 (July-June) to 1.8 million tonnes (mt), as against its earlier estimate of one mt. That would be the highest ever in the last six years (see chart).

Make-in-India mega deal: 83 Tejas fighters cleared for Air Force



- Approving the largest indigenous defence procurement as part of measures to strengthen the armed forces amid a standoff with China on the Line of Actual Control and tensions with Pakistan over its terror infrastructure, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) cleared Wednesday a deal worth nearly Rs 48,000 crore for the acquisition of 83 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft for the Indian Air Force.
- Designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency under the Department of Defence Research and Development, the Tejas Mk-1A multirole light fighters will be manufactured by state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- It will be an improvement over the Mk-1 version. The IAF acquired 40 of the earlier variant in two deals — 20 were Initial Operational Clearance standard aircraft (16 fighters and four trainers) while the next 20 were Final Operational Clearance standard aircraft

Cabinet Approves MoU Between India, UAE For Scientific And Technical Cooperation



- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on scientific and technical cooperation between the National Centre of Meteorology (NCM), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

- The MoU provides for sharing of knowledge, scientific data and operational products for meteorological, seismological and oceanic services, such as radar, satellite, tide gauges, seismic and meteorological stations.
- The agreement will facilitate the exchange of experience/visits in term of scientists, research scholars and specialists; exchange of scientific and technical information related to common interest activities, organisation of bilateral scientific and technical seminars/workshops/conferences and training courses on problems related to the fields of cooperation and deployment of Meteorological observation networks on the mutual agreement over Ocean waters.
- It will also promote cooperation in the development of special capacities of Tsunami models researches for faster and more reliable forecasts of Tsunamis propagating through the Oman Sea and the Arabian Sea which affect the coastal areas of India and northeast part of the UAE.
- The scientific activities being carried out by the respective Institutes in India and NCM-UAE were discussed during the UAE delegation visit at MoES on November 8, 2019, and found many common areas of research.

Bengaluru world's fastest growing tech hub, Mumbai 6th: Report



- Bengaluru has emerged as the world's fastest growing mature tech ecosystem since 2016, with Mumbai coming in at sixth place, according to Dealroom.co data analysed by London & Partners. Investment in Bengaluru grew 5.4 times from \$1.3 billion in 2016 to \$7.2 billion in 2020, the report said. Bengaluru also ranked sixth for the most tech venture capitalist investments globally.

World's oldest cave painting of an animal drawn 45,500 yrs ago found in Indonesia



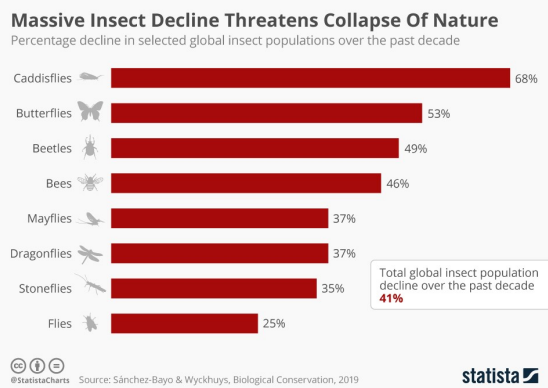
- Archaeologists have discovered the world's oldest known animal cave painting in Indonesia believed to be drawn at least 45,500 years ago
- The life-size painting of a wild pig also has two hand prints above the back of the animal. It was found in the Leang Tedongnge cave in a remote valley on Sulawesi island.

Which were the 10 cities with highest traffic congestion in the world in 2020?



- Moscow had the highest traffic congestion in the world in 2020, according to TomTom Traffic Index, a report detailing the traffic situation in over 400 cities in 57 countries
- Moscow was followed by Mumbai, Bogota, Manila, Istanbul, Bengaluru, Kyiv, New Delhi, Novosibirsk and Bangkok in traffic congestion.
- In 2019, the same index had found Bengaluru to be the most congested.

The world's insect population is declining



- In 2020, a global insect assessment report highlighted that the insect population has dropped by almost 25% in the last 30 years.
- The report added that terrestrial insects are declining at a rate of 1% a year. As per reports, the rate of extinction of insects is found to be eight times faster than that of other living creatures like birds, mammals and reptiles.
- The study stresses the fact that rapidly shifting patterns of temperature and precipitation are the novel challenges that insects face in today's time as they combine with the present anthropogenic stressors.
- Leading entomologists have also listed down some key actions that individuals can take to protect insects.
- The best is to provide adequate space, which supports a rich diversity of plants and animals.
- This can be done by cutting down the rampant use of chemicals and pesticides, limiting light pollution, planting native saplings, reducing water pollution and being an ambassador for insect conservation by spreading awareness.

Samsung's new robot can serve you a drink



- Samsung is creating a robot Bot Handy, which can pour wine into a glass and serve you the drink.
- The robot can also pick up plates after meals and load the dishwasher, set the table, keep groceries and laundry in their place.

- It will use advanced Artificial Intelligence to identify and pick up objects of varying sizes, shapes and weights, becoming an extension of you and helping you with work around the house, Samsung said in a release.
- It can differentiate between the material composition of various objects and use the appropriate amount of force to grab and move household objects.
- The robot is tall, thin, black-and-white in colour with a single arm. There are cameras mounted on top of its body and hand for recognising objects.

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