



PLUTUS IAS

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Bird flu outbreak in India:



Context:

Many states have confirmed unusual deaths of huge numbers of birds — wild, migratory and also poultry. It's raised the fear of an epidemic of Bird flu or avian influenza.

What is Bird Flu?

- It is a viral infection that is found mostly in birds.
- Symptoms: tremors, diarrhoea, head tilt, and paralysis.
- Most common strain of the virus: Influenza Type-A virus, primarily H5N1, which is considered a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) variant.
- H5N1 is the worst as it can transfer from birds to mammals.

How does bird flu spread?

- The disease spreads quickly and has the potential to affect humans and other animals.
- It generally coincides with the season of arrival of migratory birds.
- The avian influenza virus can be easily transmitted from migratory species to domestic birds.

- Spread to poultry farm birds through fomites or infected surfaces with wild birds, migratory waterfowl species carrying H5N1 virus (bird flu).
- It can also spread to forests, triggering concerns about safety of endangered species.

Threat to humans beings:

- The H5N1 can mutate and pose a pandemic threat among humans.
- According to the WHO data, 862 cases of bird flu among humans have been recorded in 17 countries since 2003.
- The human cases of bird flu occur “occasionally” but when it happens, the mortality rate is about 60 percent, according to WHO.

Economic impact:

- The poultry sector of India is worth Rs 1.75 lakh crore. There is consumption of nearly 30 crore eggs and 900 crore chickens sourced from poultry farms per month in India.
- **Effect of Covid-19 outbreak:** The poultry industry in India has already seen a 10 to 15 percent slump in demands since the outbreak. It had lost out around \$1 billion due to speculation and rumours about birds being a possible carrier of coronavirus.
- **Fall in the demand and price of poultry products:** The livelihood of crores involved in the industry is set to be impacted as the bird flu scare will discourage more and more people from consuming poultry and poultry products.
- **Challenge to the growth of Poultry sector:** Pose a challenge to the poultry sector to achieve the target of projected annual growth of 16.2 percent between 2019 and 2024.
- **Loss of livelihood:** Around 3 crore farmers and farm workers are engaged in the unorganised sector of poultry. The outbreak can directly affect their livelihood. The compensations given by the government do not cover the profit that they could have earned from regular business.
- **Loss of India’s Export:** India exports processed poultry products such as egg powder, yolk powder, chicken products and also

pharmaceutical ingredients from the poultry sector worth hundreds of crores every year.

- **Fear of spread of another virus outbreak:** The people fear the consequences of yet another virus outbreak, avian influenza.

Government Initiatives:

- The central government has issued an alert to all states warning of the possibility of transmission to humans.
- The practice of building biosafety bubbles has been adopted around poultry farms to mitigate the chances of wild birds coming in close contact with reared birds.
- Several steps announced by the state government includes:
 - Mass culling of the birds in affected areas. Poultry farmers are compensated for the loss caused due to culling.
 - Ban on live birds markets to ensure that infection does not come from other states through poultry products.
 - Restriction on chicken and related food materials.
 - Arrangement of adequate stock of PPE kits and accessories required for culling operations.

Way Forward:

- Follow all the guidelines issued under the National Action Plan for Prevention, Control and Containment of Avian Influenza 2021.
- Strict vigil on the migratory birds including wetlands for any mortality or outbreak signs.
- Prepare action plans for monitoring migratory birds and for dealing with any emergency.
- Use protective gear like rubber gloves, eye gear, or face shield, and to disinfect hands and surfaces and take antiviral drugs.
- Involve other agencies like the department of fisheries involved in controlling the spread.
- Issue safety guidelines for eating eggs and chickens as it is safe to consume poultry products that are properly cooked at over 60-70 degree Celsius.

- Proper handling of dead birds with utmost caution.
- Checking the spread of rumours and misinformation regarding the transmission of bird flu to humans and consumers should not be scared.
- Precautions must be taken in zoos.
- Scientific supervision and surveillance should be extended to all the habitats where there is a possibility of interaction of migratory birds and poultry such as backyard poultry.

India at UN high table: Opportunities & challenges



Context:

India begins 8th term as a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council for the 2021-22 period. India has served in the UN Security Council seven times previously.

Some of the key contributions of India at UNSC:

- India always vowed for international peace and security. For example, In 1984-85, India played an active role in getting the UNSC resolution passed to resolve the conflicts in the Middle East.
- India has always been a strong voice for the developing and underdeveloped world. For instance, In 1977-78, India was a strong voice for Africa in the UNSC and taken an aggressive against apartheid.
- India promoted international cooperation against the pirates for international trade and security. For example, It was at India's initiative, the UNSC mandated international cooperation for release of hostages taken by pirates as well as their prosecution.

- India worked for enhancing international cooperation in counter-terrorism. For example, India chaired the UNSC 1373 Committee concerning Counter-Terrorism, the 1566 Working Group concerning threat to international peace and security by terrorist acts.
- India has been vocal in campaigns to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors.
- India contributed immensely in strengthening the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Currency Scenario:

- The US is going through a chaotic change in leadership.
- China is hoping to become the preeminent global power, and
- Pakistan always tries to rake up Kashmir and the human rights situation in India.
- Internal political crises like polarization, communal riots, poverty etc. give opportunity to our rivals in criticising India especially on human rights issues.

Issues before India

- **UN Reform:**
 - India has long been campaigning for the reform in the UN to make it relevant for the 21st Century.
 - India wants more members to be accommodated in the permanent and non-permanent categories.
 - India along with G4 countries (Germany, Japan, Brazil and South Africa) want permanent membership at the UN. India has contributed immensely at the UN and has been providing huge support in peacekeeping operations, taking initiatives on larger global issues like environmental issues.
- **Terrorism:**
 - India has been one of the biggest victim of state sponsored terrorism. India has taken consistent stand against terrorism and led the organization in the fight against terrorism.

- India drafted Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in 1996 with the objective of providing a comprehensive legal framework to combat terrorism.
- India also worked with like minded countries to get the global terrorist listed under the UNSC's 1267 Sanctions Committee.
- **The China challenge:**
 - China has been aggressive and assertive at the global stage much more than earlier.
 - India-China relations have been deteriorating since the Doklam standoff in 2017 and the more recent deadlock at Pangong Tso and Galwan.
 - India finds both challenges and opportunities in supporting western countries in raising the issues of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Tibet at the UNSC, thus irritating China.
 - China keeps poking India at the behest of Pakistan by raising the issue of Kashmir at the UNSC despite no support from other permanent members.
 - China always supports Pakistan at multilateral platforms to undermine Indian interests.
- **Existence of two camps at UNSC:**
 - Two camps exist at UNSC characterised by three western permanent members of the United States, United Kingdom and France on one side and the non-western permanent members of Russia and China on the other.
 - There is a change in the geopolitical scenario due the intense trade war between the United States and China.
 - Russia-India relationship has undergone change due to the tilt of India more towards western countries especially in the defence ties.
 - India faces criticism from western countries for taking sides with either Russia and China or abstaining from voting on them altogether as the three shared commonalities in their regional objectives.

- Thus, India has a challenge of preserving and maintaining a balanced relationship with both Russia and the US on the issues affecting them.
- **Other Challenges:**
 - Non-permanent members face challenges in taking stands in issues which affect any of the permanent members or their partners. They are expected to tow their lines and do not stand in the way of major resolutions.
 - Most non-permanent members normally get influenced by the P-5 members as a result India may have to fight a lonely battle on issues affecting the developing countries..

Opportunities:

- India and western countries find themselves on the same side and have a similar strategic interest in dealing with aggressive and expansionist policies of China at UNSC especially in Indo-Pacific region.
- India's vote at UNSC is taken based on pragmatic considerations. India takes issue based stands on various issues thus giving a wider acceptance of India among the global community.

Way Forward:

- India can further strengthen herself by becoming the voice for the developing world at the UN highest table.
- India can effectively utilize the opportunities to build a new framework for the development agenda.
- New Delhi should carefully engage with allies and play its cards at the UNSC in the best interest of India and the global community.
- India can further get the strategic support from the western countries by taking a stronger stance in the transnational quest to establish a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

Indo- France Annual Strategic Dialogue

Context-

India and France are going to conduct an annual strategic dialogue. Indian side will be led by NSA Ajit Doval and French side by Emmanuel Bonne. This is an annual affair.

The key focus areas for this year will be:

- COVID pandemic,
- Defence cooperation and
- Space cooperation



About France:

- It is an European country and its capital is Paris.
- It shares its borders with Spain, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Germany.
- In the west of France, Bay of Biscay is present, in the south there is mediterranean sea and in the north there is English Channel.

Historical Background:

- It goes back to the 17th century when France was the last country to get into trade with India.
- It held the territories of Mahe, Yanam, Karaikal and Chandranagar.
- A Treaty was signed between India and France in 1956 according to which the places occupied by french were handed over to India.

Strategic Dialogue:

This is an annual affair and it is hosted alternatively by France and India. Last year dialogue was organised by France in Paris in 2019. Strategic

Dialogue deals with various segments. It is ministerial level dialogue. India and France have shared value of democracy, both supports multi-polarity, like India France is also a big victim of terrorism .

India- France Relations:

- After Independence our diplomatic relation has been started from 1950.
- The breakthrough came when French president visited India in 1998.
- India and France have been long term partners in the defence arena since 1953.
- India has acquired Dassault MD450 Ouragan from France.
- India has close strategic ties with France, especially on issue of mutual interest such as counter terrorism, defence and space technology.
- Both countries support 'No money for Terror'.
- Both have decided for space cooperation and are developing satellites Megha and Krishna.
- In France "The Namaste France" festival showcased India. Both Countries have built a platform i.e, International Solar Alliance.

Challenges:

- After Brexit India has to redraw its relation with European countries due to geo-political unfolding in Europe.
- Trade is very less between both countries.
- The FDI from France has been kicked up in the recent years but still it is below 1% of the total FDI coming in India.

Way Forward:

- India and France both need to work very efficiently and coherently to build infrastructure important for socio- economic progress.
- Both countries can work in emerging technologies such as 3d printing, Artificial Intelligence etc.

Bureau of Indian Standards(BIS)



Bureau of Indian Standards
The National Standards Body of India

Context-

BIS celebrated its 74th foundation day on January 6.

About the body:

- This body is working under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Food Processing Development.
- It was formed on 23 december 1986.
- It maintains standards for goods, services and processes.
- If a product is imported in India then it is applicable also for that product.
- It gives certification for the product.
- The BIS Act has been implemented since 12 october 2017. Its Headquarter is in New Delhi.

Objective:

It is responsible for the harmonious development of the activities of standardizing and making quality certification of Goods and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

National Internet exchange of India

Context:

Free Internationalised Domain Names(IDN)will be provided in **22 Indian languages** by the **National Internet exchange of India(NIXI)**.

What is Domain name?

- The domain name acts like a link to the IP address. Links do not contain actual information, but they point towards the location of the IP address information.
- Domain names are used in many networking contexts and for application-particular naming and addressing objectives.

IP Address:

It communicates the original information of the address in a way that is useful to the computer but makes no sense to human beings.

About National Internet Exchange of India:

- NIXI is a non profit Organisation under the Companies act of 2013, and was registered in 2003.
- It was set up to facilitate exchange of domestic Internet traffic between the peering Internet Service Provider (ISP).
- Earlier it was taken all the way to the USA and other abroad countries.
- It is working to spread internet technology to the Indian citizens through the following activities:



- a) Internet Exchange means, the Internet data is exchanged amongst ISPs(Internet Service Provider)
- b) Managing and operation of IN country code domain and IDN domain for India.
- c) Management and operation of Internet Protocol and its address.

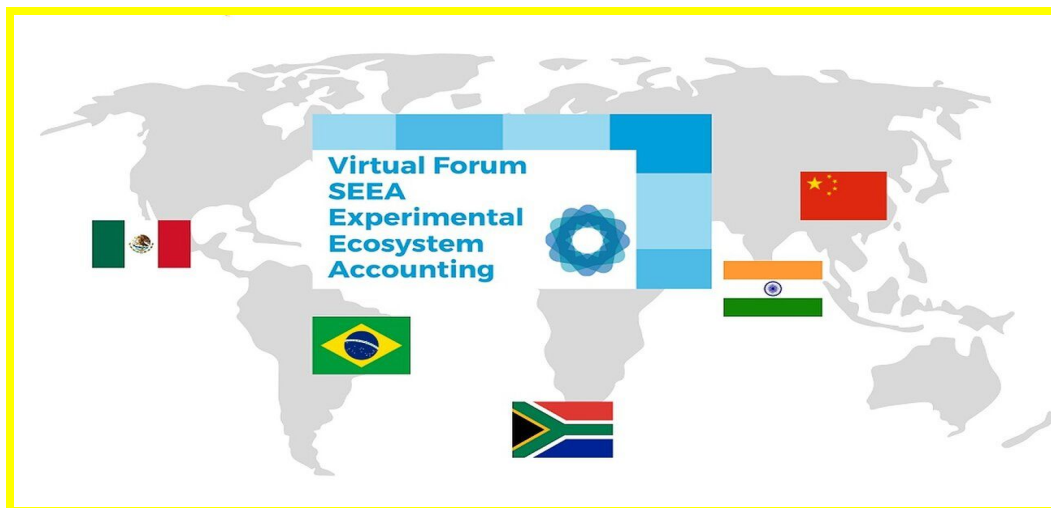
NCAVES India Forum 2021

Context:

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is organising National Capital Accounting and Valuation of the Ecosystem Services (**NCAVES**) India Forum 2021.

Objective:

To assist the participating countries to advance the knowledge on environment economic accounting.



About the Project:

- NCAVES project seeks to advance the theory and practice of environmental and ecosystem accounting in **Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa.**
- Example: Rain water comes to the ground and then goes through the soil, that adds minerals to the water and makes purified groundwater. The same thing to be done in the industry will cost huge, therefore Environment has a value for its services.
- It will be implemented jointly by the United Nations Statistics Division(UNSD), The United Nations Environment Programme(UNEP), and the secretariat of the Convention Of Biological Diversity(CBD)

- Its duration is end of 2021.
- The funding will be done by European Union through its partnership Instruments.
- In India it will be implemented by the Ministry of Statistics and programme implementation along with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and National Remote Sensing Centre.

Conclusion:

- This programme will increase Research and Development for Environmental Services.
- It will also increase the awareness among the people about the importance of Environment and Ecology among the people.