

sea cucumber

GS Paper - 3 -Conservation



CONTEXT

The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** has seized two tonnes of sea cucumber, a banned marine species, in the **Gulf of Mannar** and Palk Bay areas in Tamil Nadu.

WHAT IS SEA CUCUMBER

Sea cucumbers are marine **invertebrates that live on the seafloor** found generally in **tropical regions**. They're named for their unusual oblong shape that **resembles a fat cucumber**. There are about 1,250 species of sea cucumber, all of which belong to the **taxonomic class Holothuroidea**.

Major Significance:

- They are an integral part of the **coral ecosystem as one of the main by-products** of the sea cucumbers digestion of sand is calcium carbonate and this is essential for the survival of the coral reefs.
- They **act like garbage collectors of the ocean world**, and they recycle nutrients, thus playing an important role in keeping coral reefs in good condition.

Threats

- Illegal Trading and smuggling since the species is high in demand across south-east Asia, mainly China, for food and traditional medicine.

What are the Protection:

- **IUCN Red List:** Brown Sea Cucumber (Endangered), Blackspotted Sea Cucumber (Least Concern), Blue Sea Cucumber (Data Deficient), etc.
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I.
- **Conservation Efforts:**
 - In 2020, the **Lakshadweep Islands administration** created the world's first conservation area - 239 sq. km - for sea cucumbers.

Source: PIB

Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.



Context

the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways concluded the two-day review of the work progress on the eight-lane **Delhi-Mumbai Expressway**. It will be the **world's longest highway once completed**. It is expected to be completed by **March 2023**.

About the project

- It is a **1380-km** eight-lane expressway that can be **expanded to a 12-lane expressway** depending on the volume of traffic.
- It will start from **Haryana's Sohna** and will end around **Mira Bhayander near Mumbai**.

Importance Features:

- It will have **wayside amenities** – resorts, restaurants, food courts, fuel stations, facilities for truckers, logistics parks.
- A **helicopter ambulance service** for accident victims and a heliport, which will use drone services for business as well.
- The expressway is the **first in Asia and only the second in the world to feature animal overpasses** to facilitate unrestricted movement of wildlife.
- It will also include two iconic 8-lane tunnels, one tunneling through **Mukundra sanctuary, Rajasthan** and the second will pass through the **Matheran eco-sensitive zone, Maharashtra**.

Major Significance:

- It will **improve connectivity** to economic hubs like Jaipur, Kishangarh, Ajmer, Kota, Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Bhopal, Ujjain, Indore, Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Surat.
- It will result in **annual fuel savings of more than 320 million litres and reduce CO₂ emissions.** The project has also **created employment for thousands.**

Source: IE

How the 9/11 wars changed the world

Context

The bombing by IS Khorasan Province outside Kabul airport that killed around 13 Americans at a time when the U.S. was scrambling to evacuate its citizens from Afghanistan was a tragic testimony to everything that went wrong with America's war on terror.

What is the role of the U.S. in changing regimes around the world?

- **Afghanistan** - After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the U.S. went to Afghanistan to defeat al-Qaeda and topple the Taliban regime.

- **Iraq** - The invasion of Iraq based on false intelligence that President Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction created conditions inside Iraq for al-Qaeda to establish a new branch.
- **Libya** - In 2011, NATO launched another regime change war in Libya that led to different militias and governments fighting each other for control spreading terror to spread to other parts of Africa.
- **Syria** - The U.S. indirectly backed the armed rebels against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad that led to the rise of Islamic State.

What was the impact of the regime changing wars?

- Helped terrorist outfits proliferate in many countries
- Strengthened both Islamist and Islamophobic politics across the world
- Repeated attacks on Muslim-majority countries strengthen the jihadist narrative referring all westerners as “crusaders”
- Led to the emergence of Anti-Americanism as a dominant political theme across Muslim-majority countries
- Triggered a massive outflow of refugees from the affected countries to neighbouring nations
- Geopolitical setback to the U.S. with the rise of China when U.S. was busy with regime changing wars
- U.S. lost the war in Afghanistan and has withdrawn its troops

Does this mean that the global hegemony of the U.S. is over?

- The U.S. has suffered setbacks in the past as it had to withdraw from Vietnam in 1975, allowing the communists to win but it has bounced back.
- The U.S. which seeks to return to realism from neoconservatism, might wait for its rivals, especially China to commit blunders or it might grab other strategic opportunities.
- Afghanistan might not be the end of American power, it might be the beginning of the new U.S.-China cold war.

Source: The Hindu

Boost to Man-Made Fibre Sector (MMF)

Context

Indian policy makers who had preferred cotton based textile policy over the decades are significantly moving towards man-made fibre sector (MMF)

How is the textile market of India?

- India is the largest producer of cotton in the world accounting for 25% of global output
- But, cotton yarn's share in the nation's export basket has halved since the turn of the century because of the shift from natural fibres like cotton to man-made fibres (MMF) such as polyester, viscose and Kevlar.
- India's share in MMF based readymade garment trade is a mere 2 per cent despite the fact that it is the second largest producer of MMF.

What steps have been taken to push the textile sector?

- The government removed the anti-dumping duty levied on purified terephthalic acid (PTA), a key raw material to make Polyester Staple Fibre .
- **Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA) policy , 2021-** Under which seven large integrated textile parks, each spread over 1,000 acres, will be set up in the next three years benefitting both cotton and MMF segments.
- Recently, the government scrapped the anti-dumping duty on viscose staple fibre (VSF), a critical input for MMF textiles.
- **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) scheme** – Introduced to reduce the tax burden on exporters and make them more competitive.

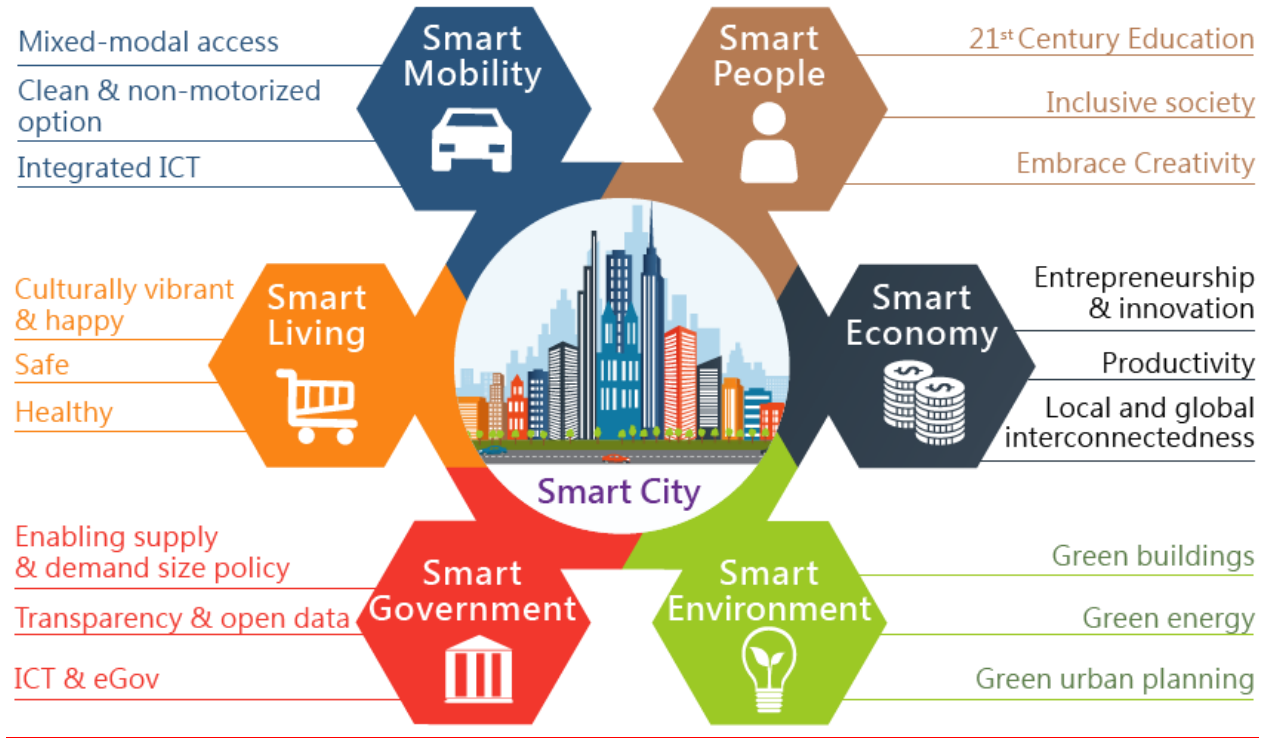
- **PLI scheme for textiles** - Focussing on MMF and technical textiles was announced involving incentives worth Rs.10,683 crore.
- To know more about PLI scheme for textile sector, click [here](#)

What measures will help India regain its dominance in textile exports?

- The GST structure of MMF (GST on fibre is 18%, on yarn is 12 % and on fabric is 5 %) is inverted whereas GST for cotton is uniformly 5 % .
- A **fibre neutral policy** is required as MMF manufacturers are unable to take input credit in full.
- More reforms and investment in infrastructure are needed to bring the high logistics and labour costs.
- Automation, especially in readymade garments, will help increase productivity and reduce costs.
- To promote competitiveness among Indian exporters , government needs to incentivise them as like Bangladesh and Vietnam.
- There is a need to sign preferential trade agreements with importing countries. **Vietnam's FTA model** can be used for this purpose.

Source: The Hindu Businessline

Need For Good Urbanisation



Context

The Covid situation has reinforced that good urbanisation is the most powerful technology for poverty reduction.

What are the causes of urbanisation?

- Poor infrastructure
- Lack of productivity - 50% of our population in rural areas generate only 18% of the GDP
- Poverty
- Poor quality of education without bilingual possibilities
- Poor quality of healthcare

- Caste discrimination in villages

What are the issues with urbanisation?

- **Inadequate planning** – Causes congestion , pollution and aggravates the problems during disasters like flood
- **Non-scalable infrastructure** – Pressure on resources such as land, capital limits the scope of scaling the infrastructure
- **Unaffordable housing** – Leads to unhygienic living conditions and multiplication of slums
- **Poor public transport** – Tokyo has one-third of Japan's population but planning has ensured that essential workers don't commute more than two hours
- **Dependence of local governments** - only 13 per cent and 44 per cent of the budget of rural and urban bodies was raised themselves
- **Policy distortion** – Separate central rural and urban ministries hampers the continuity and efficiency of policies
- **Lack of power and resources** with the local governments
- **Men-only migration** - leaves women with the burden of farm work, taking care of children and elderly , having no access to health services and no emotional support from the spouse
- **Pollution** – Noise pollution and air pollution are serious issues in cities especially in Delhi

- 21 of the world's 30 cities with the worst air pollution are in India, according to 2019 World Air Quality Report
- **Water scarcity** - In four metros (Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai & Mumbai) only 30% of dirty water is treated

How can a good urbanisation promoted?

- More devolution of powers and resources by the states to the local governments is in need.
- Instead of debating on whether cities are hostile to migrants and infection hotspots they must be empowered to deliver economic justice for women, children and vulnerable.

Source: The Indian Express