

## Prelim Bits 24-12-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

### Regenerative Agriculture

*Regenerative agriculture has received much attention from all stakeholders, as it was emphasised in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on “Climate Change and Land.”*

- Regenerative agriculture is a holistic farming system that focuses on soil health, food quality, biodiversity improvement, water quality and air quality.
- It aims at
  - Improving soil health through practices that increase soil organic matter, biota and biodiversity.
  - Enhancing water-holding capacity and carbon sequestration.
- Regenerative agriculture aspires to improve the resources like soil and water but also them apart from maintaining them.
- Use of natural inputs, minimum-till, mulching, multi-cropping and sowing of diverse and native varieties can increase the soil’s water-holding capacity
- Regenerative agriculture employs - Reduced usage of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, cover crops, integration of livestock and reduced or zero tillage.
- The Union government is promoting regenerative agriculture with an aim to reduce application of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and to lower input costs.
- States like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Gujarat have also introduced schemes to promote it.

### References

1. [Down To Earth - Regenerative agriculture can help save water](#)
2. [WEF - What is regenerative agriculture?](#)

### Joynagar Moa

*Moa makers and IIT researchers are developing packaging material to increase shelf life of Moa to improve its exports.*

- Moa is a popular Bengal sweetmeat available only during the colder months of the year.
- The moa is a popped-rice (*khoi*) ball held together with fresh date-palm jaggery, extracted only in the winter.
- The popped rice is mixed with jaggery, sugar, cashew nuts and raisins.
- The sweet’s history date back to 1904 and its manufacture is so synonymous with Joynagar, a settlement on the outskirts of Kolkata.

- The Joynagar Moa earned the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2015 (till 2022) and now extended for another 10 years.
- The high perishability of this GI tagged sweet has prevented it from being shipped abroad.
- A packaging material to increase shelf life of Moa is being developed to improve Joynagar moa exports.

## References

1. [The Hindu - This winter turning out to be sweet for moa makers](#)
2. [Outlook - 5 GI Tag Gifts For Foodies To Bring Back From Kolkata](#)

## Merging PMGKAY with NFSA

*The Union Cabinet approved the extension of free food grain distribution scheme for 81.3 crore poor people for a period of one year from January 2023.*

- The Union government would provide free food grains to beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act, 2013, as per their entitlement, for a year beginning January 2023.
- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** - The persons belonging to eligible households received food grains at subsidised price under NFSA.
- There are two categories of beneficiary households under the [NFSA, 2013](#).
  1. Antyoday Anna Yojana (AAY)
  2. Priority Households
- The AAY households are entitled to 35 kg of food grains per month irrespective of the number of family members.
- The priority households get food grains depending on the number of family members (each member 5 kg per month).
- **PMGKAY** - The Union government has discontinued the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKY) was launched in April 2020 amid Covid-19.
- Under PMGKY 5 kg of free wheat and rice was provided free of cost to 80 crore poor per month.
- The free food grains were given on top of the NFSA entitlement of 5 kg food grains at subsidised rates.
- In September, the government had extended [PMGKAY](#) for three months till December 31.
- **Merging** - The government aims to subsume the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) under the NFSA Act.
- The free portion (5kg) of that scheme has been added to the NFSA (35 kg).

## References

1. [Indian Express - For 1 year from Jan, Govt makes food grains free](#)
2. [Economic Times - Cabinet approves extension of free food grain distribution scheme to poor](#)

## Monument Regulations

*Uttar Pradesh has the largest number of Centrally Protected Monuments which have been encroached upon, closely followed by Tamil Nadu.*

- India has a total of 3,695 Centrally Protected Monuments or Sites in the country, under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- Uttar Pradesh has the largest number of Centrally Protected monuments in the country at 743, followed by Tamil Nadu which has 412.
- While 75 protected monument sites have been trespassed in Uttar Pradesh, the corresponding number for Tamil Nadu is 74.
- Functions of ASI in protecting monuments
- The monuments are regularly inspected by the ASI officials to assess their present condition.
- Necessary conservation and preservation works are taken up as per the requirement.
- **Actions of ASI against encroachments**
  - Filing police complaints.
  - Issuing show cause notices to defaulters for the removal of the said encroachments.
  - Issuing demolition orders to the Collector requesting for the demolition or removal of the said encroachments.
- **Regulation of construction** - The ASI regulates construction around the protected monuments through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) (Amendment) Act, 2010.
- The Act prohibits any new construction within 100 metres around a protected monument.
- The next 300-metre radius around the protected monument is regulated.
- Any constructions in these protected areas have to be approved by the National Monument Authority.
- **National Monuments Authority** - National Monuments Authority (NMA) under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India has been setup as per the AMASR Act, 2010.
- NMA is constituted with a Chairperson and up to 5 Whole Time and 5 Part Time Members each and a Member Secretary.
- The Director General of ASI is an ex officio Member.

## References

1. [The Hindu - UP has largest number of Centrally Protected Monuments encroached upon](#)

## BF.7 Variant

*The current surge in Covid-19 infections in China is believed to be driven by the BF.7 sub-variant of Omicron that is circulating in that country.*

- When viruses mutate, they create lineages and sub-lineages.
- BF.7 is a sub-lineage of the Omicron variant BA.5.
- It has the strongest infection ability and a shorter incubation period.

- It has a higher capacity to cause reinfection or infect even those vaccinated.
- India saw very few cases of BF.7, as BA.5 variant was not as prevalent in India as they were in European countries.
- At present, a recombinant variant XBB is the most common variant in India.

### **XBB variant**

- XBB is a recombinant of two Omicron sub-variants, BA.2.10.1 and BA.2.75.
- XBB is more immune evasive and more likely to cause re-infection or breakthrough infections in people.
- Like any other Omicron variant XBB is known to affect the upper respiratory tract.
- The XBB variant is likely to lead to a fever, cough, and cold.

### **References**

1. [Indian Express - What is BF.7 which drives the new surge in China?](#)
2. [Indian Express - The XBB variant is not more dangerous than Delta](#)

