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MSME Emergency Response Programme

- World Bank and the Government of India signed an agreement for the MSME Emergency Response Programme.
- It involves \$750 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).
- The loan *has a maturity of 19 years including a 5-year grace period.*
- The programme aims to support increased flow of finance into the hands of MSMEs severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.
- It will support the government in providing targeted guarantees to *incentivize NBFCs and banks* to continue lending to viable MSMEs to help sustain them through the crisis.
- It will address the immediate liquidity and credit needs of some 1.5 million viable MSMEs to help them withstand the impact and protect millions of jobs.

Sakteng Wild life Sanctuary

- Sakteng is based in Eastern Bhutan, or Trashigang Dzongkhag (district) that borders Arunachal Pradesh.
 - It protects several endemic species including the *eastern blue pine and the black-rumped magpie.*
 - Bhutan's foreign ministry has issued a demarche to the Chinese embassy for china's claim over Sakteng Wildlife sanctuary.
 - The recent claim was made at the 58th meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council, by trying to "oppose" funding to a project for sanctuary saying that it was "disputed" territory.
 - Bhutan's western and middle sector have been in dispute with China, they are
1. Jakarlung,
 2. Pasamlung
 3. Chumbi Valley.
- However, the eastern sector has not been part of the boundary talks and China had not claimed rights over Sakteng wildlife sanctuary earlier.



Global Environment Facility (GEF)

- It is an international partnership of countries, international institutions, civil society organizations that addresses global environmental issues.
- It was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems.
- GEF funds are available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet the objectives of the international environmental conventions and agreements.
- The World Bank serves as the GEF Trustee, administering the GEF Trust Fund.

World Drug Report

- It is released by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- It is an annual publication that analyzes market trends, compiling detailed statistics on drug markets.
- According to recent report, in the last five years about 84% of the global opium production came from Afghanistan.
- The fourth highest seizure of opium in 2018 was reported from India, after Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- In terms of heroin seizure (1.3 tones), India was at the 12th position in the world.
- Again, Iran reported the highest seizure of heroin, followed by Turkey, United States, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- The main opiate trafficking flows originate from three key production areas - Afghanistan, Myanmar-Laos and Mexico-Colombia-Guatemala.

Opium and Heroin

- Opium (or poppy tears) is dried latex obtained from the seed capsules of

the opium poppy.

- Approximately 12 percent of opium is made up of the analgesic alkaloid morphine, which is processed chemically to produce heroin and other synthetic opioids for medicinal use and for illegal drug trade.
- For the illegal drug trade, the morphine is extracted from the opium latex, reducing the bulk weight by 88%.
- It is then converted to heroin which is almost twice as potent, the reduced weight and bulk make it easier to smuggle.
- The global area under opium poppy is at similar level of the global area under coca cultivation.
- Asia, which is host to more than 90% of global illicit opium production and the world's largest consumption market for opiates.

SDG Index

- SDG Index is prepared by teams of independent experts at the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).
- The SDG index frames the implementation of 17 SDG goals among UN member states in terms of six broad transformations:
 1. Education and skills,
 2. Health and wellbeing,
 3. Clean energy and industry,
 4. Sustainable land use,
 5. Sustainable cities,
 6. Digital technologies.
- According to recent report, Sweden is placed at the top of the index with an overall score of 84.7.
- Among 193 countries for which the SDG index was prepared, India stands at the 117th position with an overall score of 61.92.
- In south Asia, Maldives is ranked at 91, Sri Lanka at 94, Nepal at 96 Bangladesh at 109 and Pakistan at 134.
- Bangladesh moves 7 places up in latest SDG index for year 2020, with a score of 63.5.
- Bangladesh has remained on track in achieving goals relating to poverty alleviation, quality education, decent work and economic growth and climate action.

Eulophia obtusa

- After 100 years a rare orchid species Eulophia obtusa also known as

ground orchid has been *rediscovered from Dudhwa Tiger Reserve*.

- In India the species is listed as “*critically endangered*” in the IUCN Red List of endangered species.
- The species was originally described from Uttarakhand in the 19th century, it was last recorded in Pilibhit in 1902.
- Later in 2008, the plant species was sighted in Bangladesh for the first time.
- It was under serious threat due to habitat loss and reduction in the number of mature individuals in Bangladesh.



Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

- It is a protected area in Uttar Pradesh.
- It shares the north-eastern boundary with Nepal, which is defined to a *large extent by the Mohana River*.
- The area is a vast alluvial floodplain traversed by numerous rivers and streams flowing in south-easterly direction.
- In 1987, the Dudhwa National Park was brought under the purview of the ‘Project Tiger’ as Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.

Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)

- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, extends to the whole of India.
- Any person, who commits an offence beyond India, which is punishable under this Act, shall be dealt with according to the provisions of this Act in the same manner as if such act had been committed in India.
- The provisions of this Act apply also to
 1. Citizens of India outside India;
 2. Persons in the service of the Government, wherever they may be; and

3. Persons on ships and aircrafts, registered in India, wherever they I may be.
- In August 2019, the Central government had amended the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 to include the provision of designating an individual as a terrorist.
 - Prior to this amendment, only organizations could be designated as terrorist organizations.
 - Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) recently designated nine individuals associated with Khalistani extremist organisations as terrorists under the provisions of the UAPA.

Source: The Hindu, PIB, AIR, Times of India

