

Nearly 5 mn in India displaced due to climate change, disasters in 2021: UN (GS Paper 3, Environment)

Why in news?

- Recently, the annual **Global Trends Report by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** was released.
- As per it, nearly five million people in India were internally displaced due to climate change and disasters in 2021.

Global scenario:

- It highlighted that **globally 100 million people were forced to flee their homes** in 2021 due to violence, human rights abuses, food insecurity, the climate crisis, war in Ukraine and other emergencies from Africa to Afghanistan.



Internal displacement:

- According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), in 2021, there were **23.7 million new internal displacements globally due to disasters** (these are in addition to those internally displaced due to conflict and violence). This represented a decrease of seven million, or 23 per cent, compared to the previous year.
- The **largest displacements in the context of disasters in 2021** occurred in **China** (6.0 million), the **Philippines** (5.7 million) and **India** (4.9 million). Most disaster displacements during the year were temporary.
- The majority of the internally displaced persons returned to their home areas, but 5.9 million people worldwide remained displaced at the end of the year due to disasters.

Forcibly displaced people:

- At the end of 2021, **89.3 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide**, including 27.1 million refugees, 21.3 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate, 5.8 million Palestine refugees under United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East's (UNRWA) mandate, 53.2 million internally displaced people, 4.6 million asylum seekers and 4.4 million Venezuelans displaced abroad.
- Asylum seekers submitted 1.4 million new claims. The **United States of America was the world's largest recipient** of new individual applications (188,900), followed by Germany (148,200), Mexico (132,700), Costa Rica (108,500) and France (90,200).

- By May 2022, more than 100 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide by persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.

Climate crisis:

- The food scarcity, inflation and the climate crisis are adding to people's hardship. The number of refugees rose in 2021 to 27.1 million. Arrivals climbed in Uganda, Chad and Sudan among others.

Way Forward:

- The number of people forced to flee their homes has increased every year over the past decade and stands at the highest level since records began, a trend that can be only reversed by a new, concerted push towards peacemaking.

First-ever Balika Panchayat

(GS Paper 2, Governance)

Why in news?

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is planning to begin the girl panchayat across the country.

Aim:

- It aims to promote the social and political development of the girls and ensure their active participation of girls in politics.



Balika Panchayat:

- India's first-ever girl Panchayat, 'Balika Panchayat', which was started in several villages of Gujarat's Kutch district.
- This is a **unique initiative of the Women and Child Development Welfare department** of the Gujarat Government under the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign.
- It started in Kunaria, Maska, Motagua, and Vadsar villages of the Kutch district.

Administration:

- ‘Balika Panchayat’ is **managed by people in the 11-21 age group**.
- Its main objective is to promote the social and political development of the girl child and to remove the evil practices from the society such as child marriage, and the dowry system.
- In Balika panchayat, the member is nominated just like Gram panchayat."

Way Forward:

- The main objective of panchayat is that the girls should move forward in politics.

Bar contest from 2 seats or impose hefty fine: EC

(GS Paper 2, Governance)

Why in news?

- Recently, the Election Commission (EC) has made a fresh push for amending law to bar people from contesting from more than one seat.
- It has said that if it cannot be done, then a **hefty fine should be imposed on those vacating one of the constituencies and forcing a bypoll**.

Existing law:

- As per the existing electoral law, a candidate is allowed to **file nominations from two different constituencies in a general election** or a group of bye-elections or biennial elections.
- Since one individual is allowed to represent only one constituency in a legislative or parliamentary body, he/she has to vacate the other seat in case victories were registered on both seats.

Amendment of Section 33(7) of the Representation of People Act, 1951:

- The EC has sought an **amendment of Section 33(7) of the Representation of People Act, 1951** to restrict the number of seats a candidate can contest from.
- The Act currently allows a person to contest a general election or a group of by-elections or biennial elections from up to two constituencies.

Earlier Amendments to Section 33(7)

Way back in 1996, the government had amended the Representation of the People Act to bar a person from contesting elections from more than two seats.	Prior to the amendment, an individual was permitted to contest polls from as many seats as he wanted.	In 2004, the EC proposed an amendment of Section 33(7) to certain sections of the Act so that a person cannot fight elections from more than one constituency at a time.	The amount of fine then was proposed at Rs 5 lakh for state assembly and legislative council election and Rs 10 lakh for Lok Sabha election.	The poll panel believes the amount should be appropriately revised.
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Why EC sought amendment?

- The Commission believes that when a candidate contests from two seats, it is imperative that he has to vacate one of the two seats should he win both.
- This, apart from the consequent **unavoidable financial burden on the public exchequer** and the manpower and other resources for holding by-election against the resultant vacancy, would be an injustice to the voters of the constituency which the candidate is quitting from.

Response of Law Commission:

- The Law Commission, which advises government on complex legal issues, had supported the proposal of restricting candidates from more than one seat.
- However, it had not endorsed the Commission's alternative proposal to require winning candidates to deposit an appropriate amount of money being the expenditure for conducting the elections.

India backs China's plan for joint border activity

(GS Paper 2, International Relation)

Why in news?

- India has supported an initiative by China to conduct a **“joint border operation” in 2023 of all member countries of SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation).**
- The border operation called **“Solidarity-2023”** will be organised by China.

21st meeting of Experts' Group and Border Security Conference of SCO:

- The BSF hosted the 21st meeting of Experts' Group and Border Security Conference of SCO countries that was attended by China, Pakistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)-SCO.
- They exchanged information reflecting assessments of the situation on the State borders of the SCO member states, trends and forecasts of its development.
- They noted that the professional exchange of views and the development of common positions on countering new challenges and threats at the borders of the Organization will contribute to the further development of cooperation between the border services of the competent authorities of the SCO member states, strengthening security and confidence at the borders.

Member states



About Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organization.

- It's a Eurasian political, economic and military organization aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- It was created in 2001.
- The SCO Charter was signed in 2002 and entered into force in 2003.
- Prior to the creation of SCO in 2001, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were members of the Shanghai Five.
- Following the accession of Uzbekistan to the organization in 2001, the Shanghai Five was renamed the SCO.
- India and Pakistan became members in 2017.
- On 17th September, 2021, it was announced that Iran would become a full member of the SCO.
- Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan and Iran are its member.

China gets its third aircraft carrier **(GS Paper 2, International Relation)**

Why in news?

- Recently, China launched its biggest and most modern aircraft carrier.
- The new carrier, named **Fujian**, is the **first catapult aircraft carrier wholly designed and built by China**.

Why it matters?

- The announcement comes at a time of heightened tensions between China and the United States over China's sabre-rattling towards Taiwan, which it views as a breakaway province to be seized by force if necessary.
- China's carrier development programme is part of a massive overhaul of the People's Liberation Army under President Xi Jinping, who has vowed to build a "fully modern" force to rival the U.S. military by 2027.



Key features:

- It has significantly more advanced technology than China's two other carriers, including **electromagnetic catapults to launch aircraft off its deck**. The other carriers use a ski-jump-style ramp for takeoffs.
- And **with a displacement of more than 80,000 tonnes**, it is comparable in size to the supercarriers of the United States Navy.

- The conventional flight deck with (electromagnetic catapults) will at least in theory allow the carrier to launch aircraft faster and with heavier payloads which constitute key deciding factors during battle.

What's next?

- It will take years before the Fujian becomes operational.