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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MK Yadav Sir

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SWAMINATHAN COMMISSION
(Syllabus GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Nadda criticises Congress for sitting on Swaminathan report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

During the fourth day of debate in the Rajya Sabha on the Union Budget, members from the ruling coalition and the Opposition continued to exchange heated arguments regarding employment, farmers' distress, and price rises. The discussions frequently veered into social issues such as the caste census and the status of marginalised communities, prompting Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to intervene. He expressed pride in his Jat background.

Mr. Dhankhar recalled that he was part of the Jat Aarakshan Samiti (Committee for Reservation for Jats) and was its principal spokesperson. He said a six-member delegation met with then-Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and their demand was accepted immediately.

Union Minister J.P. Nadda speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

BJP president and Minister J.P. Nadda, who spoke for about an hour, took his time to counter charges levelled by the Opposition. On the Agniveer issue, he said the Congress has suddenly become a well-wisher of the Army. "I have been saying that there should be no politics on national issues. We should keep the Army out of politics. The [Agniveer] decision was taken after 400-500 consultations," Mr. Nadda said.

He said the erstwhile UPA government sat on the recommendations of the M.S. Swaminathan Commission and is now demanding an MSP based on its recommendations. "Today, you (Opposition) have become the champions of MSP. You changed your language as you changed sides. Prime Minister Narendra Modi accepted the recommendations," Mr. Nadda said, adding that the Union Budget is a forward-looking Budget.

Context: The president of the ruling party criticized the former former government for ignoring the MS Swaminathan Commission's recommendations and now demanding a Minimum Support Price (MSP) based on those same suggestions.

Swaminathan Commission

- **About:** The late MS Swaminathan, a renowned agriculturist recently honored with the Bharat Ratna, chaired the National Commission on Farmers.
- **Reports Submission:** The National Commission on Farmers (NCF) submitted five reports between December 2004 and 2006.
- **Government Approval:** Based on the draft National Policy for Farmers (NPF), the government approved the National Policy for Farmers in 2007.
- **Objective of the Policy:** The policy aimed to enhance the economic viability of farming and increase farmers' net income.
- **Key Policy Elements:** The policy included asset reforms related to natural resources, supply of quality seeds, timely institutional credit, comprehensive social security coverage, and effective implementation of Minimum Support Prices (MSP).

Key Recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee

- **Minimum Support Price (MSP) Formula**: The NCF recommended that MSP should be at least 50% more than the weighted average cost of production, known as the C2+50% formula, to ensure farmers receive adequate returns.
    - The former government did not incorporate the C2+50% MSP recommendation into the National Policy for Farmers finalized in 2007.
- **Addressing Agrarian Crisis:** The panel identified issues like incomplete land reforms, water quantity and quality, tech fatigue, and adverse meteorological factors as causes of farmers' suicides.
    - It recommended adding 'agriculture' to the Concurrent List of the Constitution.
- **Land Reform and Regulation**: The commission suggested prohibiting the diversion of prime agricultural land and forests to corporate sectors for non-agricultural purposes and proposed a regulatory mechanism for agricultural land sales.
- **Improving Credit Availability**: The commission recommended reducing crop loan rates to 4% simple interest with government support and issuing Kisan Credit Cards to female farmers to improve credit availability.
- **Rural Insurance Development:** The NCF proposed establishing a Rural Insurance Development Fund to support the expansion of rural insurance coverage and development efforts.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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DEMENTIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Dementia has 2 new risk factors — untreated vision loss, high cholesterol: Lancet study

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, JULY 30

UNTREATED VISION loss and high cholesterol contribute to 9% of all dementia cases, emerging as new risk factors, according to a new report from the 2024 Lancet Commission.

The report shows that about 7% of dementia cases can be linked to high levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL), commonly known as bad cholesterol, during midlife starting around age 40, while 2% of cases are linked to untreated vision loss in later life.

These findings, authored by 27 leading global dementia experts, highlight the importance of managing cholesterol levels and addressing vision issues to potentially reduce risk of developing dementia.

Prof of Neurology Suvarna Alladi at NIMHANS, Bengaluru, who is among the key authors, emphasises that the findings are significant for India given that its prevalence among people aged above 60 is 7.4% with an estimated 8.8 million living with dementia.

"Age is the strongest and best-known risk factor for dementia. New evidence shows why screening for and treating vision loss and managing cholesterol levels should now be prioritised in older adults to potentially reduce the incidence of dementia," Prof Alladi told The Indian Express.

Dementia, ranked by WHO as the seventh leading cause of death globally, is not a single disease, but a group of symptoms that disrupt memory, thinking, and social skills, and its most prevalent form is Alzheimer's disease, accounting for 60-70% of cases. In 2020, the Lancet Commission had identified 12 risk factors for dementia: lower levels of education, hearing impairment, high blood pressure, smoking, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, diabetes, excessive alcohol consumption, traumatic brain injury, air pollution and social isolation.

HOW TO MINIMISE RISK

- Prevent or reduce hypertension and maintain systolic blood pressure of 130 mm Hg or less from age 40 years
- Detect and treat high LDL cholesterol from midlife
- Maintain a healthy weight and treat obesity as early as possible, which also helps to prevent diabetes
- Reduce high alcohol consumption through price control and increased awareness of levels and risks of overconsumption
- Make screening and treatment for vision loss accessible to all
- Reduce exposure to air pollution

Source: 2024 Lancet Commission Report

Untreated vision loss

The commission specifically highlighted it did not look at vision loss as a risk factor for dementia earlier but new research changed it. A key piece of evidence is a meta-analysis — a study combining results of multiple studies — of 14 long-term studies.

One of them tracked 62,04,827 older adults over a period of 3.7 to 14.5 years who did not have dementia at the start and of them, 1,71,888 developed dementia. Vision loss was linked to a higher risk of developing dementia, an analysis found. The study says the mechanism behind these associations could be related to illnesses such as diabetes, a known risk factor for dementia, but vision loss itself might play a role.

EXPLAINED

Ageing population, dementia

WITH THE world population ageing rapidly, the 2024 Lancet Commission report projected that the number of people living with dementia is expected to nearly triple by 2050, from 57 million in 2019 to 153 million. So managing untreated vision loss and high cholesterol is crucial. The surge will not only be driven by increased life expectancy but also affects low-income countries.

Bad Cholesterol

Previous Lancet Commissions found the link between high LDL cholesterol and dementia risk unclear but the recent study has shed light on this. A meta-analysis of three UK studies, with over 1.1 million participants aged under 65, showed that each 1 millimoles per litre (mmol/L) increase in LDL cholesterol increased dementia risk by 8%. Another study found that LDL cholesterol over 3 mmol/L increased dementia risk by 33%. A study of 1.8 million people confirmed that higher LDL cholesterol levels were associated with a greater risk of dementia.

Key Points of Report

- **LDL Cholesterol and Dementia Risk**: The report indicates that approximately 7% of dementia cases are associated with high levels of LDL cholesterol during midlife, starting around age 40.
- **Impact of Untreated Vision Loss:** Untreated vision loss in later life contributes to about 2% of dementia cases, emphasizing the importance of maintaining eye health.
- **Age and Dementia:** Age remains the strongest and most recognized risk factor for dementia, which is a group of symptoms affecting memory, thinking, and social skills.
- **Leading Cause and Prevalence**: Dementia is ranked as the seventh leading cause of death globally by WHO, with Alzheimer's disease being the most common form, making up 60-70% of cases.

Context: A new report from the 2024 Lancet Commission identifies untreated vision loss and high cholesterol as new risk factors, contributing to **9% of all dementia cases.**

Dementia:

- **About**: It describes a collection of symptoms affecting memory, thinking, and social abilities.
- **Impact on Daily Life:** The symptoms of dementia interfere with the daily lives of those affected.
- **Nature of Dementia**: It is not one specific disease but a syndrome caused by various conditions.
- **Common Symptom**: Memory loss is often an early symptom of dementia but does not alone indicate the condition.
  - Memory loss can result from a range of different causes.
- **Causes**: Dementia can be caused by various diseases or injuries that damage the brain.
- **Alzheimer's Disease**: The most common cause of dementia in older adults.
- **Treatment**: Currently, there is no cure for dementia.

DTE July 30

INDIAN AGARWOOD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Environment)

CITES notifies increase in annual export quota for Indian Agarwood

Context: India has successfully blocked the inclusion of Aquilaria malaccensis (agarwood) in the Review of Significant Trade (RST) under CITES, enabling the establishment of a new export quota.

Agarwood

- **About:** It is also known as oud, aloeswood, or gaharu, is a highly valuable and fragrant resinous wood formed in the heartwood of Aquilaria trees.
- **Characteristics:** The Aquilaria tree is an evergreen species that can grow up to 40 meters in height.
- **Resin Production**: Agarwood is produced when Aquilaria trees are infected by the mold Fusarium solani, which prompts the tree to produce a dark aromatic resin.
- **Geographical Distribution**: The tree is native to South and South-East Asia, including countries such as India , Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand.
- **Growth in India**: Agarwood grows wild primarily in protected areas of the Northeast. Export was banned until November 2021, but re-export has since been allowed.
- **Uses**: Agarwood is valued for its aromatic and medicinal properties and is used in making incense sticks, essential oils, and perfumes.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Threatened
  - **CITES**: Appendix II of CITES since 1995

WAQF BOARD PROPERTIES

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Governance)

MP HC: 3 Burhanpur monuments are not Waqf properties

ANAND MOHAN J

BHOPAL, JULY 30

THE MADHYA Pradesh High Court in a recent ruling held that the three ancient monuments located in Burhanpur, including the tomb of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's daughter-in-law Begum Bilqis, were not part of Wakf board property.

The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) filed a writ petition before the Jabalpur bench of Madhya Pradesh High court arguing that the CEO MP Waqf Board through an order passed in 2013 declared these sites as Waqf property and that "once the property in dispute is already declared as ancient and protected monument under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904, then the same cannot be declared as a waqf property."

Justice GS Ahluwalia, who passed the final order on July 26, observed the "property in question is an ancient and protected monument duly notified under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 and therefore, CEO, MP Waqf Board committed a material illegality by directing the petitioner to vacate the same."

The ASI argued that the three contested sites – Shah Shuja monument, Tomb of Nadir Shah and Bibi Sahiba's Masjid – located at the Fort of Burhanpur are also ancient and protected monuments. The Shah Shuja monument houses the tomb of Begum Bilqis, wife of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan's son, Shah Shuj.

The court ruled that the "property in question was already declared as an ancient monument and protected monument under sections 1(1) and 3(1) of Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904." "After the property is declared as an ancient monument and protected monument, the same comes under the guardianship of the Commissioner and property can be released from his guardianship only after following the procedure as laid down under Section 14 of Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904. There is nothing on record to show that the Commissioner had relinquished his guardianship over the property," the court said.

Context: Madhya Pradesh High Court in a recent ruling held that the three ancient monuments located in Burhanpur, including the tomb of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's daughter-in-law, Begum Bilqis were not part of Wakf board property.

Waqf Board Properties

- **About:** It is the property given in the name of God for religious and charitable purposes.
- **In legal terms:** Permanent dedication by a person professing Islam, of any movable or immovable property for any purpose recognised by the Muslim law as pious, religious or charitable.
- **Formation**: A waqf can be created through a deed or instrument, or by long-term use of a property for religious or charitable purposes.
- **Irrevocability**: Once created, a waqf cannot be revoked and continues as a legal entity.
- **Non-Muslim Participation**: A non-Muslim can create a waqf if they profess Islam and the waqf's objective is Islamic.
- **Waqf Governed**: Waqfs in India are governed by the Waqf Act, 1995.
  - **Management**: A mutawali manages the waqf, similar to a trustee under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882.
  - **Differences from Trusts**: Unlike trusts, waqfs are strictly for religious and charitable purposes and cannot be dissolved.
  - **Central Waqf Council:** It is a statutory body under the administrative control of the Ministry of Minority Affairs that was set up in 1964 as per the provision given in the Waqf Act, 1954 as Advisory Body to the Central Government on matters concerning the working of the Waqf Boards and the due administration of Auqaf.
- **Waqf Board**: It is a juristic person with the authority to acquire, hold, and transfer property.
  - **Composition**: Each state's Waqf Board includes a chairperson, state government nominees, Muslim legislators and parliamentarians, Muslim members of the state Bar Council, recognized Islamic scholars, and mutawalis of high-income waqfs.
  - **Powers:** The Waqf Board can manage waqf properties, recover lost properties, and sanction the transfer of immovable waqf property. Such transactions require the approval of at least two-thirds of the Board members.

BUSINESS STANDARD

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ENVIRONMENT RELIEF FUND

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

No compensation paid from Environment Relief Fund in 5 yrs

NITIN KUMAR
New Delhi, 30 July

No compensation has been paid from the Environment Relief Fund (ERF) since 2019, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh informed the Rajya Sabha last week.

Established in 2008 to assist individuals affected by hazardous substances, the ERF has remained inactive in recent years. "No funds have been released from the ERF in the past five years," Singh stated.

As of March 31, 2023, the fund had accumulated ₹1,062 crore. Instituted under the Public Liability Insurance Act (PLIA), 1991, following the Bhopal gas tragedy, the ERF's primary purpose is to offer immediate relief to victims of accidents involving hazardous substances. Despite its critical role, the fund has been left untapped, raising concerns about its effectiveness in aiding disaster victims.

The revelation coincided with the government's publication of draft guidelines aimed at enhancing transparency in the disbursement of the fund. Dated July 25, these draft regulations call for increased accountability and clarity in how the ERF is allocated to victims of major environmental disasters.

Singh explained that applications for claims are submitted to the respective collector, who instructs the fund manager to deposit the required amount into the collector's account. The collector subsequently disburses the funds to the claimant.

MINISTER SAID NO FUNDS WERE RELEASED FROM THE ERF IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS AS THERE WERE NO CLAIMS UNDER THESE PROVISIONS

"Since no claims have been made under these provisions, no funds have been released from the ERF in the past five years," Singh clarified.

Moreover, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has not issued specific directions for awarding compensation from the ERF.

Under PLIA, two types of compensation are expected to be disbursed from the ERF: relief awarded by NGT in environmental disputes and immediate relief to victims of accidents involving hazardous activities, as determined by the District Collector. This relief is only provided when the amount awarded by the Collector exceeds the coverage of the insurance policy under PLIA, explains Debadityo Sinha, lead for climate and ecosystems at Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy.

Reforms

The new draft guidelines direct fund managers to disburse all pay-ins to the Central and State Pollution Control Boards (PCBs). According to the draft regulations, the fund will also collect penalties under PLIA, along with the interest or returns earned on the investments of the ERF. These funds will be monitored separately by the fund manager, the proposal observed. This move is expected to streamline the process and ensure that the funds reach those in need more efficiently. However, experts caution that the effectiveness of these measures will depend on their implementation.

"The Jan Vishwas Bill revised the PLIA, giving the CPCB the power to demand compensation for restoring environmental damage from accidents involving hazardous substances from the ERF. This might lead to better utilisation of the fund," Sinha said.

Experts in the environmental sector emphasise that the primary goal of providing immediate compensation to victims of industrial disasters requires greater public awareness and further reforms to simplify the claims process.

The ministry is inviting comments from stakeholders for 60 days, starting July 25.

Context: No compensation has been paid from the Environment Relief Fund (ERF) since 2019, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change informed the Rajya Sabha.

Environment Relief Fund

- **Established:** 2008
- **Instituted under** the Public Liability Insurance Act (PLIA), 1991, following the Bhopal gas tragedy, the ERF's primary purpose is to offer immediate relief to victims of accidents involving hazardous substances.
    - **Under PLIA, two types of compensation are expected to be disbursed from the ERF:** relief awarded by NGT in environmental disputes and immediate relief to victims of accidents involving hazardous activities, as determined by the District Collector.
- **Criteria**: This relief is only provided when the amount awarded by the Collector exceeds the coverage of the insurance policy under PLIA, explains Debadityo Sinha, lead for climate and ecosystems at Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy.
- **Objective:** To assist individuals affected by hazardous substances.
- **Current Status:** As of March 31, 2023, the fund had accumulated Rs 1,062 crore.

Reforms

- **Direct Disbursement**: Fund managers are required to disburse all payments to the Central and State Pollution Control Boards (PCBs).
- **Penalty Collection**: The fund will collect penalties under the PLIA, along with interest or returns from ERF investments, monitored separately.
- **Efficiency Improvement**: This approach aims to streamline processes and enhance fund distribution effectiveness.
- **Revised PLIA Provisions**: The Jan Vishwas Bill revises PLIA, granting CPCB authority to demand compensation from the ERF for environmental damage caused by hazardous substances.

PIB July 30

NATIONAL CULTURE FUND

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Art and Culture)

NATIONAL CULTURE FUND

Context: During a recent Lok Sabha session, the Union Minister for Culture discussed the operational aspects of the National Culture Fund.

National Culture Fund

- **About:** The NCF is a trust that facilitates donor institutions in supporting the protection, restoration, conservation, and development of India's cultural heritage in partnership with the government.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of Culture.
- **Establishment**: Formed as a Trust under the Charitable Endowment Act, 1890 in 1996.
- **Objectives**:
  - **Conservation and Preservation**: Manage and utilize the Fund for the conservation, maintenance, promotion, protection, preservation, and enhancement of monuments.
  - **Specialist Training**: Provide training and support for the development of specialists and cultural administrators.
  - **Museum Expansion**: Expand existing museums and build new ones to create or accommodate special galleries.
  - **Cultural Documentation**: Document cultural expressions and forms that are becoming obsolete or facing extinction.
- **Composition:**
  - **Governing Council**: Managed by a Governing Council chaired by the Minister of Culture, with up to 25 members setting policies.
  - **Executive Committee**: Led by the Secretary of Culture, with up to 11 members executing policies.
- **Role of NCF**:
  - **Partnerships**: Partners with Corporations, NGOs, etc., to implement heritage preservation projects, allowing donors to specify project details, locations, and implementing agencies.
  - **Project Monitoring**: Prevents delays in PPP projects through regular monitoring by the Project Implementation Committee, led by the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India or Ministry of Culture officials.
  - **Donations**: Accepts donations from Corporations, PSUs, Trusts, and Individuals for maintaining and preserving centrally protected monuments and cultural projects. Donors must comply with the terms and conditions of the MoU for each project.

DTE

July 30

SLOTH BEAR

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

How can people across the Indian Subcontinent prevent fatal encounters with sloth bears? Learn from species' behaviour towards tigers, advise scientists

Context: The sloth bear, one of the eight ursid species and among the most dangerous wild animals in the Indian subcontinent, has evolved to be highly aggressive towards humans due to its historical interactions with now-extinct predators and current Bengal tigers.

Sloth Bear

- **About:** Forest-dwelling bear that inhabits tropical or subtropical regions of India and Sri Lanka. Bengal tigers (P. t. tigris), the subspecies of the Indian subcontinent, may be twice the size and weight of a sloth bear, and represent a considerable threat. In some tiger parks in India, up to 2% of tiger scats include sloth bear remains.
  - **Also known as the:** Labiated bear because of its long lower lip and palate used for sucking up insects.
- **Scientific name**: Melursus ursinus
- **Nature:** Sloth bear mostly nocturnal.
- **Hibernate:** No hibernate.
- **The world's eight bear species**: The others include the brown bear, American black bear, Asiatic black bear, sun bear, polar bear, spectacled bear and the giant panda.
- **Food and diet:**
  - The bears are omnivorous with termites and ants the main constituents of their diet.
  - The bears use their claws to open the insects' mounds and nests, sucking them up through a gap in their front teeth.
  - They are also very fond of honey, hence their alternative name of "honey bear".
- **Longevity**: 20 to 25 years.
- **Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable, **Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**: Schedule 1, **CITES listing:** Appendix I
- **Threat:** Habitat loss and degradation.

INDIA TODAY July 30

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

President Murmu appoints new Governors for nine states: How is a Governor different from an LG?

Context: Recently, the President appointed new Governors for Rajasthan, Telangana, Maharashtra, Punjab, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Assam, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh.

Appointment of Governor

- **Constitutional Provision**: Article 153 of the Indian Constitution mandates a Governor for each State.
- **Amendment**: A 1956 amendment allows the same person to be Governor for multiple States.
- **Appointment Procedure**: Article 155 specifies that the President appoints the Governor by warrant under their hand and seal.
- **Term of Office**: According to Article 156, the Governor serves at the President's pleasure, typically for five years.
- **Central Government Influence**: The President, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister and Union Council of Ministers, effectively appoints and can remove the Governor.
- **Eligibility Criteria**: Articles 157 and 158 require the Governor to be:
  - An Indian citizen,
  - At least 35 years old,
  - Not a member of Parliament or state legislature,
  - Not holding any other office of profit.
- **Relationship with State Government**
- **Advisory Role**: The Governor, as per Article 163, acts on the advice of the state's Council of Ministers, headed by the Chief Minister, except when exercising discretionary functions.
- **Powers and Significance**: The Governor has significant powers, including assent to state Bills, determining legislative majorities, and calling parties to prove their majority in case of a hung verdict.

Lieutenant Governor

- **About:** A Lieutenant Governor also has the same powers. Only three Union Territories — Andaman and Nicobar, Delhi and Puducherry have Lt. Governors.
- **Role of LG**:
  - **Representative of the President:** The Lieutenant Governor (L-G) acts as the President's representative, following the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.
  - **Discretionary Powers:** Under Section 41 of the GNCT Act, 1991, the L-G can act independently on matters outside the Legislative Assembly's jurisdiction.
  - **Authority on Specific Matters**: For issues related to Police, Public Order, and Land, the L-G exercises authority based on the delegation by the President.

PIB July 30

NATIONAL METALLURGIST AWARDS 2024

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Awards)

Ministry of Steel invites applications for National Metallurgist Awards -2024

Context: The Ministry of Steel, Government of India, has recently invited applications for the National Metallurgist Awards (NMA)-2024, open to individuals from industry, research, and academia.

National Metallurgist Awards (NMA)-2024

- **Institution Date**: The National Metallurgist Awards were instituted in 1962 by the Ministry of Steel & Mines.
- **Purpose**: The awards aim to recognize and honor outstanding contributions of metallurgists in the fields of operations, research, design, education, waste management, and energy conservation.
- Nomination Process
- **Submission Platforms**: Nominations are invited online via the Ministry of Steel's Portal or a centralized portal being developed by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Eligibility for Nomination**: Nominations can be submitted by companies, organizations, or through self-nomination by individuals.
- **Frequency**: 3rd February every year. (It was on 3rd Feb 1959 when the then President Dr Rajendra Parasad commissioned the first Blast Furnace of the country after independence, at Rourkela).
- **Eligibility**: Only Indian nationals are eligible to receive these awards.
- **Award Categories:**
  - **Lifetime Achievement Award:** For individuals with a lifetime of exceptional contributions.
  - **National Metallurgist Award**: For outstanding achievements in the metallurgical field.
  - **Young Metallurgist Award (Environment and Metal Science)**: For young professionals excelling in environmental aspects and metal science.
  - **Award for R&D in Iron & Steel Sector**: For significant research and development contributions in the iron and steel sector.
- **First Award**: The first National Metallurgist Award was given in 1963, with subsequent awards given annually.

DTE

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STURGEON

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Sturgeon, among the world's most endangered fish, are being heavily poached & trafficked in the Lower Danube, their last stronghold: WWF

Context: According to a new report, poaching and trafficking are jeopardizing the survival of four critically endangered sturgeon species in one of their last strongholds in the lower Danube River, southeastern Europe.

Sturgeon

- **About:** Sturgeons represent a natural heritage of the Danube River Basin and key indicator species for high ecological quality of rivers.
    - These species are among the most threatened fish globally.
- **Habitat**: 27 species of sturgeons and paddlefishes distributed across the Northern hemisphere.
- **Threats**: Blocked migration routes through dams, Loss or degradation of habitats, and Pollution.
- **IUCN Red list**: four sturgeon species in the Danube Basin are listed as Threatened by the IUCN Red List. The stellate sturgeon (A. stellatus), the Russian sturgeon (A. gueldenstaedtii) and beluga (Huso huso) are Critically Endangered; while the sterlet (A. ruthenus) was recently raised to a higher threat category and has been listed as Endangered since 2022.
- **CITES**: Appendix-II.

Danube River

- **About:** Danube River, the second longest in Europe after the Volga.
- **Origin**: It rises in the Black Forest mountains of western Germany and flows for some 1,770 miles (2,850 km) to its mouth on the Black Sea.
- **Passes**: 10 countries: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine.

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