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MK Yadav Sir

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PIB June 21

NATIONAL MONETISATION PIPELINE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

National Monetisation Pipeline monetised Rs 3.85 lakh crore of assets in 3 years

Context: The National Monetisation Pipeline successfully monetised assets worth Rs 3.85 lakh crore over a span of three years, contributing significantly to India's infrastructure funding goals.

National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)

- **About:** It has been formulated by NITI Aayog, in collaboration with infrastructure ministries, as mandated by the Union Budget 2021-22.
- **Monetisation Potential**: NMP aims to unlock Rs 6.0 lakh crores from the central government's core assets over FY 2022-2025, enhancing infrastructure development nationwide.
- **Implementation**: It focuses on leveraging private sector participation in brownfield projects, wherein revenue rights (not ownership) are transferred to private entities, ensuring continued public sector involvement.
- **Framework of the Pipeline**:
  - The pipeline's development involved extensive consultations with line ministries and departments, ensuring comprehensive coverage of available assets and infrastructure needs.
  - NMP excludes monetisation through disinvestment and non-core asset sales, focusing solely on unlocking value from core infrastructure assets.
- **Alignment with National Goals**: It complements the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), aligning its timeline with NIP's objectives to support Rs 111 trillion in infrastructure investments by FY25.

Monetisation

- **About:** It refers to a government transferring its revenue rights to private parties in exchange for upfront money, a revenue share, and commitments to invest in assets.
- **Purpose**: The primary objective of monetisation transactions is to raise funds within a specified period.
- **Calculation of Revenue Potential:** Private players involved in monetisation projects undertake detailed calculations to estimate potential earnings over the project's duration.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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HOOCH

(Syllabus GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

HOOCH

The name for cheap, homespun alcohol is derived from Hoochinoo, an Alaska tribe known for its potent liquor

AT LEAST 38 people have died, and around 100 others are hospitalised after consuming hooch in Tamil Nadu's Kallakurichi.

What is hooch?

Unlike branded liquor which is produced in factories with sophisticated equipment and rigorous quality control, hooch is made in more crude settings. It may be disagreeable to one's taste buds, and is simply meant to intoxicate. But when prepared improperly, it can kill.

How is hooch made?

All alcohol is produced using two basic processes: fermentation and distillation.

FERMENTATION: When heated, yeast reacts with sugar (from grain, fruits, sugarcane, etc.) to produce alcohol in a process called fermentation. Beverages like beer and wine are made using this process. But there is a basic limitation. The alcohol produced is toxic to the yeast. Thus, fermentation stops when the mixture is roughly 15% alcohol by volume.

DISTILLATION: This process physically separates alcohol from the fermented mixture by taking advantage of the differing boiling points of the mixture's various constituents. Distilled beverages, or spirits, are far more potent than fermented beverages.

Hooch is produced by distilling a fermented mixture, generally of locally available yeast, and sugar or fruit (often fruit waste). Most often, multiple rounds of distillation are carried out to produce more potent alcohol.

Why can hooch be dangerous?

Hooch producers use a very rudimentary distilling setup, often just a big vat to boil the mixture, a pipe that captures and carries the alcoholic fumes, and another pot where concentrated alcohol condenses. There is no temperature control mechanism, unlike in alcohol factories.

This comes with an inherent risk. Fermentation does not only produce consumable alcohol (ethanol). It also produces methanol, an industrial alcohol that is highly toxic for human beings. Distillation helps concentrate both ethanol and methanol.



A typical setup to produce hooch. *Wikimedia Commons*

Methanol has a boiling point of 64.7 degrees Celsius, lower than that of ethanol (78.37 degrees Celsius). This means that during distillation, methanol is first collected, which must be discarded. Only alcohol collected after the mixture reaches 78.37 degrees Celsius should eventually be consumed. At the same time, distillers need to also keep the temperature of the mixture under 100 degrees Celsius, or the boiling point of water, above which they will produce a very watered-down product.

There is no way hooch-makers can carry out this process with the degree of accuracy needed to make it safe. In fact, they often err on the side of caution (keep temperatures high), and then resort to adulteration to make their product potent. Adulterants such as organic waste and battery acid, however, are themselves very dangerous. They make hooch more intoxicating, and can also be deadly if present in high enough concentrations.

How does hooch impact the body?

Methanol can cause impaired vision, high toxicity, and metabolic acidosis, a condition in which the body produces excessive acid that cannot be flushed out by the kidneys.

The treatment for this is to intravenously administer fomepizole. However, fomepizole can be expensive and is unavailable in many parts of India. In such cases, doctors administer a mixture of ethanol and water (1:1 ratio). Ethanol inhibits methanol's conversion into toxins and helps in flushing it out of the body either naturally, or through dialysis.

ARJUN SENGUPTA

Context: Recently, at least 38 people have died and around 100 others have been hospitalized after consuming hooch in Tamil Nadu's Kallakurichi. Authorities are investigating the tragic incident to prevent further casualties.

Hooch

- **About**: It is a commonly used term for poor quality alcohol, derived from Hoochinoo, a native Alaskan tribe that was known to produce very strong liquor.
- **Production Environment:** Unlike branded liquor, which is produced in factories with sophisticated equipment and rigorous quality control, hooch is made in more crude settings.
- **Taste and Purpose**: Hooch may be disagreeable to one's taste buds and is simply meant to intoxicate.
- **Risks**: When improperly prepared, hooch can be deadly.
- **Processes**: All alcohol is produced using two basic processes: fermentation and distillation.
- **Fermentation**: When heated, yeast reacts with sugar (from grain, fruits, sugarcane, etc.) to produce alcohol in a process called fermentation. Beverages like beer and wine are made using this process. However, fermentation has a limitation: it stops when the mixture reaches roughly 15% alcohol by volume because the alcohol is toxic to the yeast.
- **Distillation**: This process physically separates alcohol from the fermented mixture by taking advantage of the differing boiling points of the mixture's various constituents. Distilled beverages, or spirits, are far more potent than fermented beverages.
- **Impact:** Methanol can cause impaired vision, high toxicity, and metabolic acidosis, a condition in which the body produces excessive acid that cannot be flushed out by the kidneys.
    - The treatment for methanol poisoning is to intravenously administer fomepizole.
    - Fomepizole can be expensive and is unavailable in many parts of India.
    - Ethanol inhibits methanol's conversion into toxins and helps in flushing it out of the body either naturally or through dialysis.

DTE June 20

IBERIAN LYNX

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Back from the brink: IUCN changes Iberian lynx's status to 'vulnerable' from 'endangered' in conservation success story

Context: Recently, the IUCN upgraded the conservation status of the Iberian Lynx (Lynx pardinus) from 'Endangered' to 'Vulnerable', marking a remarkable success story in conservation efforts.

Iberian Lynx

- **About:** It is one of two carnivore species native to Europe, alongside the European mink (Mustela lutreola).
- **Scientific name**: Lynx pardinus
- **Physical Characteristics**: Known for its pointed ears, long legs, and leopard-like spotted fur, the Iberian lynx holds the title of the world's most endangered cat species.
    - Similar to other cat species, the Iberian lynx exhibits sexual dimorphism, with males typically being heavier and longer than females.
- **Behavior:** The Iberian lynx is primarily nocturnal, and its activity patterns closely align with those of its primary prey, the rabbit.
- **Habitat**: This species thrives in varied terrain below 1300 meters, characterized by a mix of closed Mediterranean scrubland and open grassland patches, often near marshy areas.
- **Distribution**: Once widespread across the Iberian Peninsula, the Iberian lynx now faces sparse distribution, primarily limited to regions in Spain and Portugal.
    - The population of the lynx, found in Spain and Portugal, has increased exponentially from 62 mature individuals in 2001 to 648 in 2022. "Today, the total population, including young and mature lynx, is estimated to be more than 2,000,"
- **Threats**: The survival of the Iberian lynx is threatened by human activities such as poaching, habitat destruction, illegal hunting, and the depletion of its food sources.
- **Conservation status**:
    - **IUCN Red list**: Endangered
    - **CITES:** Appendix II

OECD

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – International Org.)

Thailand eyes BRICS membership, begins OECD application

Thailand hopes to become a member of the BRICS group of emerging economies at the organisation's next summit in Russia in October, a foreign ministry official said Thursday. The Southeast Asian nation submitted a formal request to join at a BRICS ministerial meeting a week ago, foreign ministry spokesperson Nikorndej Balankura said.

"We hope to receive positive feedback and be accepted as BRICS member as soon as the next summit to be held in Russia," he said.

The BRICS group originally consisted of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The acronym is derived from those countries' names.

Last year the group began expanding membership, looking to challenge a Western-dominated world order, with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, Argentina and the United Arab Emirates joining and more than 40 countries expressing interest. Thailand is also looking to join the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), after being invited by the Paris-based group to open accession discussions. REUTERS



Last year the group began expanding membership, looking to challenge a Western-dominated world order. REUTERS

Context: Thailand is exploring membership in BRICS and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) following an invitation from the Paris-based organization to commence accession talks.

Thailand

- **Location**: It is situated in the heart of Southeast Asia.
- **Historical Background**: A unified Thai kingdom was established in the mid-14th century, originally known as Siam. The country adopted the name Thailand, meaning "Land of the Free," in 1939.
- **Borders:** Thailand shares borders with Myanmar to the north and northwest, Lao PDR and Cambodia to the east, Malaysia and the Gulf of Thailand to the south, and the Andaman Sea to the southwest.
- **Mountains:** The highest peak in Thailand is Doi Inthanon.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

- **About:** OECD is an association of 38 member countries, most being rich developed nations that attract migrant workers and students.
- **India is not a member of OECD.**
- **Founded**: 1961, by 18 European nations, plus the United States and Canada.
- **Headquarters**: Paris, France.
- **Members**: The majority of OECD members are high-income economies with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries.
- **Aim:** Fostering economic development and cooperation and fighting poverty through the promotion of economic stability.
- **Objective:** To shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all.
- **Reports and Indices by OECD:**
  - Government at a Glance 2017 report.
  - International Migration Outlook.
  - OECD Better Life Index.

PIB June 20

INS SUNAYNA
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

INS SUNAYNA IN PORT VICTORIA, SEYCHELLES

Context: Recently, INS Sunayna visited Mombasa, Kenya from 20-23 Jun 23 towards strengthening bilateral ties with maritime neighbours on the theme of the Ocean Ring of Yoga.

INS Sunayna

- **About:** It is a Saryu class Offshore Patrol Vessel commissioned at Kochi.
- **Operational Command**: It operates under the Southern Naval Command and was built at Goa Shipyard Limited.
- **Features**:
  - The warship is designed for fleet support operations, coastal and offshore patrolling, ocean surveillance, monitoring of Sea Lines of Communications, and escort duties.
  - Capable of achieving speeds of 25 knots.
  - Equipped with an automatic power management system.
  - Fitted with the latest Navigation, Communication, and Electronic Support Systems.
- **Other Ships:** Other ships in the Saryu class include INS Sumitra and INS Sumedha.

Saryu Class

- **About:** The Saryu class offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) are sophisticated patrol ships constructed by the Goa Shipyard Limited for the Indian Navy.
  - It comprises advanced offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) commissioned by the Indian Navy and constructed at the Goa Shipyard Limited.
- **Capabilities**: These OPVs are equipped for ocean surveillance and monitoring, enhancing maritime domain awareness.
- **Role in Maritime Security**: They play a crucial role in maintaining control over shipping lanes and ensuring maritime security.

BUSINESS STANDARD June 20

OFFSHORE AREAS RULES, 2024

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Centre introduces rules for offshore minerals ahead of the auctions

Context: The Union government has introduced the Offshore Areas (Existence of Mineral Resources) Rules, 2024 to start offshore mineral auctions.

Offshore Areas (Existence of Mineral Resources) Rules, 2024

- **Introduced by:** Central government under the authority of the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002.
- **About:** Mandates rigorous exploration standards for accurate assessment and sustainable development of offshore mineral resources.
- **Exploration Requirements:** Minimum general exploration (G2) required for mining leases; general exploration (G4) necessary for composite licences.
- Features of Offshore Areas (Existence of Mineral Resources) Rules, 2024
- **Coverage**: Includes various minerals such as silica sand, rare earth elements, and hydrothermal minerals, with tailored exploration approaches.
- **Identified Mineral Blocks**: Ministry of Mines has identified 10 offshore mineral blocks for potential auction, undergoing inter-ministerial consultations for necessary approvals.
- **Specific Exploration Norms**: Sets norms for different deposits: construction-grade silica sand, non-construction-grade calcareous sand, calcareous mud, phosphatic sediments, deep sea minerals, rare earth elements, hydrothermal minerals, and nodules.
- **Stages of Exploration**: Defines exploration in four stages: reconnaissance survey (G4), preliminary exploration (G3), general exploration (G2), and detailed exploration (G1), reflecting increasing geological assurance.
- **Feasibility Studies**: Categorizes feasibility studies into geological study (F3), pre-feasibility study (F2), and feasibility study (F1).
- **Significance**
  - Represents a significant step towards responsible and efficient utilization of offshore mineral resources.
  - Ensures thorough assessment of each mineral deposit based on its unique characteristics and potential environmental impact.

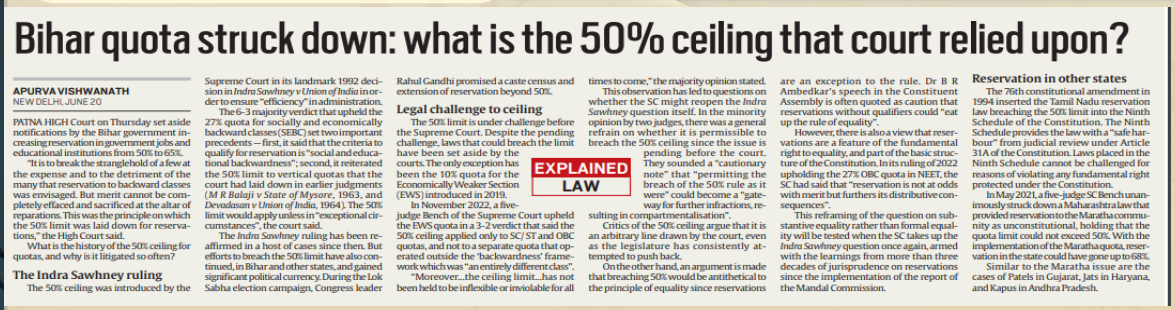
Offshore Mining

- **About:** This refers to the retrieval of mineral deposits from the deep seabed, typically below depths of 200 meters.
- **Importance:** India's offshore mineral reserves encompass essential resources such as gold, diamonds, copper, nickel, cobalt, manganese, and rare earth elements crucial for development.
- India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) spans over two million square kilometers and hosts substantial recoverable resources.
- Offshore mineral extraction aims to boost mineral availability domestically and lessen reliance on imports.

INDIA TODAY June 19

RESERVATION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)



Bihar quota struck down: what is the 50% ceiling that court relied upon?

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 20

PATNA HIGH Court on Thursday set aside notifications by the Bihar government increasing reservation in government jobs and educational institutions from 50% to 65%.

"It is to break the stranglehold of a few at the expense and to the detriment of the many that reservation to backward classes was envisaged. But merit cannot be completely effaced and sacrificed at the altar of reparations. This was the principle on which the 50% limit was laid down for reservations," the High Court said.

What is the history of the 50% ceiling for quotas, and why is it litigated so often?

The Indra Sawhney ruling

The 50% ceiling was introduced by the Supreme Court in its landmark 1992 decision in *Indra Sawhney v Union of India* in order to ensure "efficiency" in administration.

The 6-3 majority verdict that upheld the 27% quota for socially and economically backward classes (SEBC) set two important precedents — first, it said that the criteria to qualify for reservation is "social and educational backwardness"; second, it reiterated the 50% limit to vertical quotas that the court had laid down in earlier judgments (*M R Balaji v State of Mysore*, 1963, and *Devadasan v Union of India*, 1964). The 50% limit would apply unless in "exceptional circumstances", the court said.

The *Indra Sawhney* ruling has been reaffirmed in a host of cases since then. But efforts to breach the 50% limit have also continued, in Bihar and other states, and gained significant political currency. During the Lok Sabha election campaign, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi promised a caste census and extension of reservation beyond 50%.

Legal challenge to ceiling

The 50% limit is under challenge before the Supreme Court. Despite the pending challenge, laws that could breach the limit have been set aside by the courts. The only exception has been the 10% quota for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) introduced in 2019.

EXPLAINED LAW

In November 2022, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the EWS quota in a 3-2 verdict that said the 50% ceiling applied only to SC/ ST and OBC quotas, and not to a separate quota that operated outside the 'backwardness' framework which was "an entirely different class".

"Moreover...the ceiling limit...has not been held to be inflexible or inviolable for all times to come," the majority opinion stated.

This observation has led to questions on whether the SC might reopen the *Indra Sawhney* question itself. In the minority opinion by two judges, there was a general refrain on whether it is permissible to breach the 50% ceiling since the issue is pending before the court. They sounded a "cautionary note" that "permitting the breach of the 50% rule as it were" could become a "gateway for further infractions, resulting in compartmentalisation".

Critics of the 50% ceiling argue that it is an arbitrary line drawn by the court, even as the legislature has consistently attempted to push back.

On the other hand, an argument is made that breaching 50% would be antithetical to the principle of equality since reservations are an exception to the rule. Dr B R Ambedkar's speech in the Constituent Assembly is often quoted as caution that reservations without qualifiers could "eat up the rule of equality".

However, there is also a view that reservations are a feature of the fundamental right to equality, and part of the basic structure of the Constitution. In its ruling of 2022 upholding the 27% OBC quota in NEET, the SC had said that "reservation is not at odds with merit but furthers its distributive consequences".

This reframing of the question on substantive equality rather than formal equality will be tested when the SC takes up the *Indra Sawhney* question once again, armed with the learnings from more than three decades of jurisprudence on reservations since the implementation of the report of the Mandal Commission.

Reservation in other states

The 76th constitutional amendment in 1994 inserted the Tamil Nadu reservation law breaching the 50% limit into the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. The Ninth Schedule provides the law with a "safe harbour" from judicial review under Article 31A of the Constitution. Laws placed in the Ninth Schedule cannot be challenged for reasons of violating any fundamental right protected under the Constitution.

In May 2021, a five-judge SC Bench unanimously struck down a Maharashtra law that provided reservation to the Maratha community as unconstitutional, holding that the quota limit could not exceed 50%. With the implementation of the Maratha quota, reservation in the state could have gone up to 68%.

Similar to the Maratha issue are the cases of Patels in Gujarat, Jats in Haryana, and Kapus in Andhra Pradesh.

Context: Recently, Patna High Court overturned Bihar government notifications that raised reservation quotas in government jobs and educational institutions from 50% to 65%, emphasizing the importance of balancing merit with equitable opportunities for backward classes.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Reservation

- **77th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1995:** The Indra Sawhney verdict established that reservation would apply only to initial appointments and not promotions.
  - Despite this, Article 16(4A) added by the 77th Amendment empowered states to provide reservations in promotions for SC/ST employees if they are deemed inadequately represented.
- **81st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2000**: The 81st Amendment introduced Article 16(4B), stipulating that unfilled SC/ST quotas from one year will be carried forward separately to the next, distinct from regular vacancies.
- **85th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001:** It enabled reservation in promotions for SCs and STs with 'consequential seniority,' retroactively from June 1995.
- **Recent Amendments**: The 102nd, 103rd, and 104th have further shaped reservation policies.
  - The 103rd Amendment notably introduced a 10% reservation for economically weaker sections (EWS).
- **Article 335:** It Article 335 mandates that while considering claims of SCs and STs for reservation, the efficiency of administration must also be maintained.

50% Cap of Reservation

- **Origin**: The 50% cap originated from the M.R. Balaji case in 1962, where the court suggested the necessity of such a limit. In the T. Devadasan case, the court further extended this limit to include government jobs, emphasizing its commitment to preserving equality of opportunity as guaranteed by the Constitution.
- **Introduction of the 50% Ceiling**: In its landmark 1992 decision in Indra Sawhney v Union of India, the Supreme Court introduced the 50% ceiling to ensure "efficiency" in administration.
- **Verdict:** The 6-3 majority verdict upheld the 27% quota for socially and economically backward classes (SEBC), setting two crucial precedents: emphasizing "social and educational backwardness" as criteria for reservation and reiterating the 50% limit to vertical quotas established in earlier judgments.
- **Re-affirmation of the Indra Sawhney Ruling**: Since the Indra Sawhney ruling, subsequent cases have consistently upheld the 50% ceiling on reservations.
- **Challenges to the 50% Limit**: Despite reaffirmations, efforts to breach the 50% limit have persisted, gaining traction in states like Bihar and becoming a significant political issue.

THE HINDU

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STRIPED CAECILIAN

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

Limbless amphibian found in Kaziranga for first time

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A limbless amphibian has been added to the fauna in the 1,307.49 sq. km Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Assam's wildlife officials said a team of herpetologists recorded the striped caecilian (*Ichthyophis spp*) in the tiger reserve for the first time during a rapid herpetofauna survey conducted from June 14-17.



The striped caecilian. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The survey was conducted with support from Saibal Sengupta of Assam Don Bosco University; Abhijit Das of the Wildlife Institute of India; Rajeev Basumatary and Samrat Sengupta of D.R. College in eastern Assam's Golaghat; Jaydev Mandal of Madhab Choudhury College in western Assam's Barpeta; Jayaditya Purkayastha of Guwahati-based Help Earth; Jayanta Kumar Roy of Aaranyak; and Sushmita Kar of the Turtle Survival Alliance.

Reptiles and amphibians, collectively called herpetofauna, are the least studied but most vulnerable to climate change. "Caecilians are limbless amphibians that spend most of their lives burrowed under soil. They are, therefore, the least studied of the amphibian species. As they are an ancient species, their presence holds critical linkages to evolution and intercontinental speciation," a statement issued by the Kaziranga authorities said.

The diverse ecosystem of Kaziranga, comprising flood plains, wetlands, grasslands, and hill tracts on the periphery, provides an ideal habitat for herpetofauna. The tiger reserve houses 24 species of amphibians and 74 species of reptiles. It is also home to 21 of the 29 species of tortoises and freshwater turtles found in India.

Kaziranga's Director, Sonali Ghosh, said, "a training and sensitisation programme was held to enhance the skills of forest personnel in herpetofauna identification and conservation for ensuring better management and protection of these vital species."

Context: A limbless amphibian has been added to the fauna in the 1,307.49 sq. km Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Striped Caecilian

- **About:** It is a species of caecilian in the family Ichthyophiidae.
- **Habitat:** It is subterranean, found in leaf-litter, humus, and soil substrates.
- **Distribution**: Widely in the Western Ghats in southern India.
- **Preferred Environments:** It inhabits wet evergreen tropical forests, and adapts to low-intensity agricultural areas and plantations.
- **Range**: Found up to 1,000 m (3,300 ft) above sea level in the Western Ghats.
- **Conservation Status**: While locally abundant, habitat destruction poses a significant threat. It likely occurs in several protected areas, providing some conservation hope.
- **Herpetofauna Vitality**: Reptiles and amphibians, collectively known as herpetofauna, are crucial yet understudied organisms highly susceptible to climate change and serve as environmental indicators.
- **Caecilian Characteristics**: Caecilians, limbless amphibians residing mostly underground, are among the least studied amphibians, holding significant evolutionary and ecological importance.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2024
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

World Refugee Day Being Observed On June 20

Context: World Refugee Day is observed worldwide every June 20th to raise awareness about the plight of refugees and celebrate their resilience and contributions to society.

World Refugee Day 2024

- **About:** It is dedicated to the millions of people who have been forced to escape their homes due to war, persecution, or natural catastrophes.
- **History**: The first ever World Refugee Day was celebrated on June 20, 2001.
  - It commemorates the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.
  - Previously known as Africa Refugee Day, it was officially declared an International Day for Refugees by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2000.
- **Theme 2024:** 'For a World Where Refugees Are Welcomed.'

Refugee

- **Definition**: According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is someone who cannot return to their homeland due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.
- Refugees often flee their homes because of conflict, persecution, violence, or other human rights violations.
- They arrive in host countries with little to no belongings, seeking safety and a new beginning.
- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**: UNHCR is a worldwide organization committed to saving lives, protecting rights, and fostering a brighter future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless individuals.
- **Refugee Convention 1951**: It is relating to the Status of Refugees, is the main international treaty concerning refugee protection.
- It was adopted in July 1951 and was initially drafted to meet the needs of refugees in the aftermath of World War II.
  - India has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol.

THE PRINT June 20

ECONOMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE PM

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

Should we have a new poverty line? asks Bibek Debroy EAC-PM chairman

Context: The Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister highlighted the urgency for establishing a new poverty line during a data user conference hosted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister

- **About**: EAC-PM was established in 2017 as an independent body tasked with advising the Government of India, specifically the Prime Minister, on economic matters.
- **Terms of Reference:** It encompass analyzing economic and other pertinent issues referred by the Prime Minister, offering advice, and addressing macroeconomic concerns of national significance.
  - It operates both on suo-motu basis and upon request from the Prime Minister or others, attending to diverse tasks as directed.
- **Monthly Economic Reports**: A significant function of the EAC-PM involves preparing monthly reports on economic developments, both domestic and global, for the Prime Minister's consideration.
  - It monitors economic trends regularly and recommends suitable policy responses based on emerging developments.
- **Engagement and Communication:** The council maintains regular interaction with stakeholders and the public, disseminating its findings and recommendations through comprehensive reports, presentations, and public engagements.
- **Composition**: Headed by a Chairman, the EAC-PM comprises a blend of economists and experts drawn from academia, research institutions, and the private sector.
  - The council's membership structure is flexible, with varying compositions over time, often featuring internationally recognized economists.
- **Administrative Framework**: For administrative, logistical, and budgetary purposes, the NITI Aayog serves as the coordinating agency for the EAC-PM, ensuring efficient planning and support.
- **Functions:** Analyzing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister and advising him thereon; Addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting views thereon to the Prime Minister.

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