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## 1. IDEAthon on 'The Future of River Management'

### Why in News?

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) organized an IDEAthon on “The future of River Management’ to explore how the COVID-19 crisis can shape River Management strategies for the future.

### Highlights:

- While the general narrative around this crisis has been that of anxiety and concern, the crisis has also thrown up some positive developments.
- One of these is the visible improvement in the natural environment.
- Rivers have become cleaner. The air has become fresher. There has been a significant drop in GHG emissions.
- Animals and birds are returning to and enjoying their habitats.

### The Future of River Management:

- Purely from a river management point of view, in India there has been a noticeable improvement in the water quality of the Ganga and the Yamuna.
- During the last year or so, the Gangetic Dolphin, an indicator species, has been showing improvements with sightings at several stretches of the river.
- The IDEAthon examined the response mechanisms that are needed in the event of a river crisis and how the social angle of rivers can be leveraged on to address other crises based on the lessons for river management that the pandemic has taught.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga had initiated this IDEAthon to garner more attention towards river management and also highlight the interconnectivity of Cities with the River.
- A different perspective than traditional urban planning methods, the River cities need a special focus to capitalize on not only the socio-cultural significance of the river but also the ecological importance and economic potential which can help the city, if properly planned. With intent to mainstream River Management in a city’s Urban Planning framework, NMCG has been developing a template for an Urban River Management Plan with the National Institute of Urban Affairs.
- NMCG is also working with GIZ (Germany’s leading development agency) in developing the River Basin Organization and also River Basin Planning and Management Cycle to develop an adaptive framework under Namami Gange for Ganga river basin management.

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## **2. Algal Bloom**

### **Why in News?**

- New study, entitled Ecosystem state change in the Arabian Sea shows that Algal Blooms in the Arabian sea threatens our food chain.

### **Highlights:**

- The study, fuelled by the recent loss of snow over the Himalayan-Tibetan plateau region, is an unusually all-encompassing snapshot of the interconnected impacts of climate change India continues to grapple with the coronavirus emergency, but another grave threat to public health is the focus of a dramatic Nature Scientific Reports study released recently.
- Algal bloom, almost unknown in these waters, is now growing thick, malodorous green swirls and filaments that are visible even from space.
- They occupy an area that is almost three times the size of the state of Texas.
- And since they are not a preferred food for most higher trophic organisms, they mostly attract only slaps, jellyfish and turtles, thereby short-circuiting the food chain in the Arabian Sea.
- At least 120 million people along these coasts are now at risk.

### **Algal Bloom:**

- An algal bloom or algae bloom is a rapid increase or accumulation in the population of algae in freshwater or marine water systems, and is often recognized by the discoloration in the water from their pigments.
- The term algae encompass many types of aquatic photosynthetic organisms, both macroscopic, multicellular organisms like seaweed and microscopic, unicellular organisms like cyanobacteria.
- Algal bloom commonly refers to rapid growth of microscopic, unicellular algae, not macroscopic algae. An example of a macroscopic algal bloom is a kelp forest.
- Algal blooms are the result of a nutrient, like nitrogen or phosphorus from fertilizer runoff, entering the aquatic system and causing excessive growth of algae.
- The process of the oversupply of nutrients leading to algae growth and oxygen depletion is called eutrophication.
- Blooms that can injure animals or the ecology are called "harmful algal blooms" (HAB), and can lead to fish die-offs, cities cutting off water to residents, or states having to close fisheries.

### 3. International Whaling Commission (IWC)

#### Why in News?

- Iceland will not be hunting any whales in 2020. Iceland, alongside Norway and Japan, has frequently broken the International Whaling Commission's 1986 worldwide moratorium, which indefinitely "paused" commercial whaling.

#### International Whaling Commission (IWC):

- The IWC is an Inter-Governmental Organisation set up by the terms of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) signed in Washington, D.C in 1946.
- It aims to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry.
- The main duty of the IWC is to keep under review and revise as necessary the measures laid down in the Schedule to the Convention which governs the conduct of whaling throughout the world. The body is the first piece of International Environmental Legislation established in 1946.
- Commercial whaling was banned by the IWC in 1986 after some species were almost driven to extinction. 89 countries have the membership of in IWC and all the member countries are signatories to this convention.
- **India is a Member State of the IWC.**

### 4. Bengaluru Bannerghatta Biological Park

#### Why in News?

- Bengaluru's Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBBP), Karnataka has recently come out with the Animal Adoption Programme to conserve wildlife and allow people to adopt animals at the zoo during the lockdown period.

#### About Bengaluru's Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBBP):

- It was carved out of the Bannerghatta National Park (BNP) and brought under the Zoo Authority of Karnataka (ZAK). BNP which was declared a national park in 1974.
- It has four divisions: the zoo, the safari, the butterfly park and the rescue centre.
- It is one among the few places in the world where wilderness is preserved so close to a big city.
- The valley of **Champakadhama Hills** is inside the park.

- It provides an opportunity to get involved with the feeding and veterinary care expenses for zoo animals with a provision for Income Tax rebate under 80G.
- It has released a list of animals that can be adopted: King cobra, Indian rock python, Black buck, Sambar, Emu, Golden jackal, Indian leopard, Sloth bear, Hippopotamus, Bengal tiger, Giraffe, etc.

### Its Main Objectives Include:

- To complement and strengthen national efforts in ex-situ conservation of biodiversity.
- To support the conservation of endangered species.
- To provide opportunities for scientific studies, research and documentation on conservation and creation databases.
- To bring awareness to the public and provide recreational opportunity to the visitors.
  - ✓ Its flora consists of Scrub type (Dry Deciduous Forests), southern tropical dry deciduous forests, southern tropical moist mixed forests.
  - ✓ Its fauna consists of Elephant, Chital, Barking Deer, Striped Hyena, Porcupine, Peafowl, Grey Jungle Fowl, Partridges, crocodiles, tortoise, python, varieties of Butterflies, etc.

