



Daily current affairs

Posted at: 11/08/2018

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal or Iran deal, is an agreement on the nuclear program of Iran reached in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany) and the European Union.
- Formal negotiations toward the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program began with the adoption of the Joint Plan of Action, an interim agreement signed between Iran and the P5+1 countries in November 2013.

In July 2015, Iran and the P5+1 confirmed agreement on the plan along with the "Roadmap Agreement" made between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve enters UNESCO list-Eleven Indian reserves now listed in World Network of Biosphere Reserves

- The Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve (KBR) of Sikkim, the **highest biosphere reserve in the country** that includes the third highest mountain peak in the world, Kanchenjunga (8,586 m), has been included in the UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).
- The decision was taken at the International Coordinating Council of Man and Biosphere Reserve Programme, UNESCO, in its 30th Session held at Palembang, Indonesia, last month, a press release by Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change said.
- With the inclusion of the KBR, one of the highest ecosystems in the world, reaching elevations of 1,220 m to 8,586 m above sea level, the number of biosphere reserves from the country included in **World Network of Biosphere Reserves has increased to 11**.
- The **last biosphere** reserve to be included was the **Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve** in Kerala in 2016. The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve was the first reserve from the country to be included in the WNBR.
- India has 18 biospheres reserves, of which 11 have been included in the WNBR.
- The Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP), which comprises the core area of the KBR,

was inscribed as **India's first "Mixed World Heritage Site"** on July 17, 2016. Eighty six per cent of the core lies in the Alpine zone and the remaining portions are located in the Himalayan **wet temperate and sub tropical moist deciduous forest**.

Biosphere reserve

A biosphere reserve is an ecosystem with plants and animals of unusual scientific and natural interest. It is a label given by UNESCO to help protect the sites. The plan is to promote management, research and education in ecosystem conservation. This includes the 'sustainable use of natural resources'.

- The program is run by UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.
- It has started a World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- The MAB programme built up the World Network of Biosphere Reserves since 1971.
- Biosphere reserves exchange knowledge and experiences on new ideas for sustainable development.
- The objective is to get a balanced relationship between mankind and nature.

Biodiversity hotspot

A biodiversity hotspot is a biogeographic region (Biogeography is the study of the distribution of species and ecosystems in geographic space and through geological time) with significant levels of biodiversity that is threatened with destruction. For example forests are considered as biodiversity hotspots.

Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016

The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016 designed to curb black money was passed by parliament in August 2016, came into effect in November 2016. The new law amended the Benami Transactions Act, 1988 and renamed the same as Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions (PBPT) Act, 1988. The amendment act strengthens the parent Act in terms of legal and administrative procedure. The aim of the act is to redirect the unaccounted money into the financial system.

Highlights

- The act provides for establishment of an Adjudicating Authority by the Central Government. It shall be consisting of a Chairperson and at least two other members.
- A person who has been member of Income Tax or Revenue Service only can become member or chairperson of adjudicating authority.
- The case shall be decided in a year's time, once it is referred by the initiator to the adjudicating authority
- Appeals against the adjudicating authority's decision can be taken to the Appellate Tribunal at New Delhi.
- Once an order is finalized, the Benami properties will be confiscated. The designated officers appointed from among the income-tax officers will manage and disposed-off these properties.
- Benamidar or any person who abets other person to enter into such transactions will face rigorous imprisonment ranging from one to seven years in jail.

- The person may also be liable to pay a fine of upto 25% of the fair market value of such Benami property.
-

Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959

- The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 criminalizes begging.
- Its aim is to remove beggars from their current illegal profession so that they may be detained, trained and eventually employed elsewhere.
- The act was adopted by the Union Territory of Delhi in 1960.
- The third offence onwards, a person may be sentenced to 10 years in an institution as provided for by the state, including two years in jail.

It is considered a violation of rights amongst activists and advocates of homeless people. Anti-begging laws in most part of the country are more punitive than remedial—they treat begging as a cognisable and non-bailable offence, with the provision that a summary inquiry may be enough to ascertain guilt and hand out punishment.

