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17th March 2021

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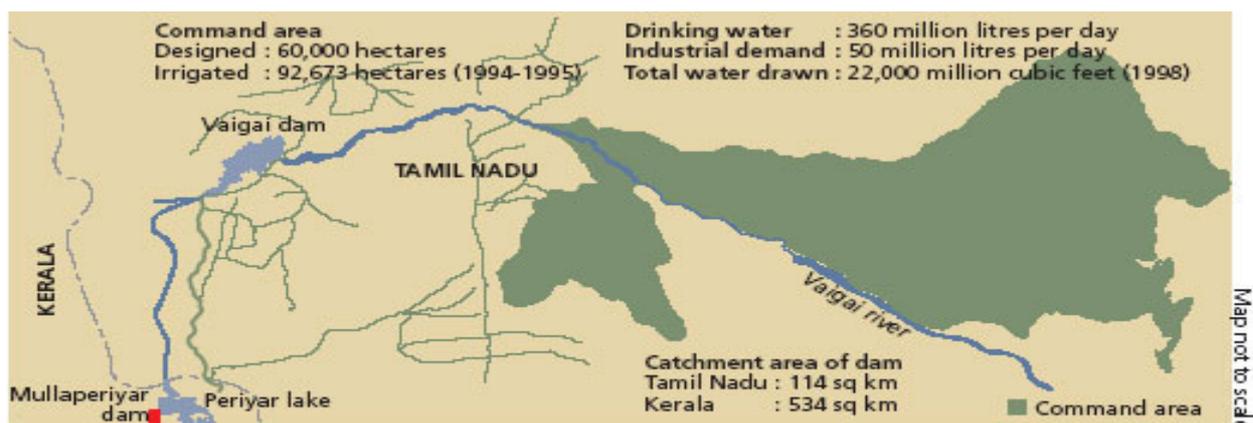
1. Geography

1.1. Mullaperiyar dam

- The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary will be “personally responsible” and “appropriate action” will be taken on failure to give information on the ‘rule curve’ for the Mullaperiyar dam to the Supreme Court-appointed Supervisory Committee.
- The ‘rule curve’ in a dam decides the fluctuating storage levels in a reservoir. The gate opening schedule of a dam is based on the ‘rule curve’. It is part of the “core safety” mechanism in a dam.

The Mullaperiyar dam

- located on the confluence of the Mullayar and Periyar rivers in Kerala’s Idukki district.
- Although the dam is located in Kerala, it is operated by Tamil Nadu following an 1886 lease indenture for 999 years (the Periyar Lake Lease Agreement) that was signed between the Maharaja of Travancore and the Secretary of State for India for the Periyar Irrigation works.
- The dam redirected the river to flow towards the Bay of Bengal, instead of the Arabian Sea and provide water to the arid rain region of Madurai in Madras Presidency.
- The lease agreement was renewed in the 1970s by both Tamil Nadu and Kerala giving the former rights to the land and water from the dam, besides the authority to develop hydropower projects at the site. In return, Kerala would receive rent from Tamil Nadu.
- The first cracks in this agreement surfaced in 1979 when a minor earthquake had resulted in cracks in the dam.
- The Central Water Commission, under the Government of India, conducted a study and recommended lowering the water stored in the dam’s reservoir to 136 feet from 142 feet.



Source: A Mohanakrishnan 1997, *History of the Periyar dam with century long performance*, Central Board of Irrigation and Power, New Delhi

Mullaperiyar dam is in Kerala, Tamil Nadu its main beneficiary

Tamil Nadu’s Claim

- It has undertaken measures to strengthen the dam, the Kerala government has blocked any attempt to raise the reservoir water level – resulting in losses for Madurai farmers.

Kerala's arguments

- Highlights fears of devastation by residents living downstream in the earthquake-prone district of Idukki.

Scientist's concern

- If there is an earthquake in the region measuring above six on the Richter scale, the lives of over three million people will come under grave danger.

Supreme Court verdict:

- In 2006, the Supreme court gave Tamil Nadu legal sanction to raise the water level to 142 feet.

Kerala response

- Kerala amended the 2003 Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation Act, restricting the water level to 136 feet.

Appointment of committee

- In 2012, however, an Apex court-appointed committee stated that the dam was "structurally and hydrologically safe" and that the Tamil Nadu government could raise water levels up to 142 feet.

2014

- In 2014, the court event struck down the amendment to the 2003 Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation Act, calling it unconstitutional.

About Periyar River

- Longest river of Kerala popularly known as 'Lifeline of Kerala'.
- It is a perennial river and is used for supplying drinking water to the state.
- Originates from Sivagiri Hills of Western Ghats and flows through Periyar National Park and reaches the Periyar Lake, and then the water flows into Vembanad Lake and finally into Arabian Sea.
- Major tributaries of Periyar River are Muthirapuzha, Mullayar, Cheruthoni, Perinjankutti and Edamala rivers.
- The Idukki Dam on the Periyar generates a significant proportion of Kerala's electrical power.

Famous places on Periyar river

- There are many important places situated on the banks of the river such as the birthplace of Sankaracharya at kaladi, pilgrim centres at Malayattoor and Aluva, Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, Thekkad etc

Vaigai River

- It is an east-flowing river.
- The Vaigai river basin is an important basin among the 12 basins lying between the Cauvery and Kanyakumari.
- This basin is bounded by the Cardamom Hills and the Palani Hills on the West and by the Palk Strait and Palk Bay on the East

The rule curve

- It divides the storage volume of a reservoir in zones where different strategies for demand supply will be applied
- In general, the rule curve has been used as a limitation in the operation: in flood control, limiting the level of water stored at a maximum height, and to prevent collapse supply, by reducing the amount of water supplied to users.

Central Water Commission

- It was established in 1945 by the Government on the advice of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Member (Labour) in Viceroy's Executive Council.
- The CWC is headed by a Chairman, with the status of Ex-Officio Secretary to the Government of India.
- The organization currently functions as an office attached to the Ministry of Jal Shakti, under the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation.

Central Water Commission – Roles

- The Central Water Commission of India has the responsibility of initiation and coordination of schemes introduced by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- They include schemes that are founded to conserve as well as control the water resource usage in the country and the States.
- The schemes launched also help in the fields of flood management, irrigation activities, drinking water supply, hydroelectricity generation, etc.
- The CWC will consult the state government and central government where required

2. History

2.1. Kathakali maestro Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair dead

About Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair

- Born to Chadayankandy Chathukutty Nair and Kinattinkara Kunhamnakutty Amma on June 16, 1916
- Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair's tryst with Kathakali, the ancient dance drama of Kerala, began at the age of 14, when he left his home to join a kathakali troupe run by Guru Karunakaran Menon.
- Honoured with the Padma Shree in 2017 in recognition of his glorious contribution to the art form.
- His portrayal of Lord Krishna and Kuchela on stage always left the audience spellbound and his last notable public performance was at the age of 100.
- Famous for specialisation in "Kalladikodan" style in Kathakali.

Kathakali dance

- Dazzling classical dance of Kerala is Kathakali.
- 'Katha' = Story or tale, 'Kali' = Performance and Art.
- Its roots are in ancient 'Kutiyattam' (Classical Sanskrit Dance Drama) and 'Krishnattam' (Dance-Drama depicting Stories of Hindu God Krishna).
- Movements in Kathakali are influenced by ancient martial arts and athletic tradition.
- It is basically a Dance-Drama.
- Kathakali was traditionally a male-dominated dance and now females are too welcomed in this dance form.
- Kathakali is also famous for its huge elaborate costumes, amazing make-up style, face masks, and ornaments.
- Unlike other Classical Dances, Kathakali art form developed in the courts and theatres of Hindu principalities.
- The traditional performances were used to be as long from Dusk to dawn. Modern day presentations are short as per the time limit of the program.
- The Kerala Kalamandalam is the main center for Kathakali Artists.
- Kathakali has similarities with other dance forms like that of the Japanese 'Noh' and 'Kabuki' dance forms have similarities with Kathakali

Kathakali Make-up

- The costume is elaborate and the face is painted in vivid hues. The Vesham or make-up is of five types - Pacha, Kathi, Thadi, Kari and Minukku.
- The pomp and magnificence of Kathakali is partly due to its décor, part of which is the kireetam (huge ornamental headgear) and the kanchukam (over sized jackets), and a long skirt worn over a thick padding of cushions. The artists completely immerse themselves and the audience into the story they're describing.

- Pacha (Green)
 - ✓ Pacha Vesham or the green make-up portrays noble protagonists.
- Kathi (Knife)
 - ✓ Kathi Vesham portrays villainous characters.
- Thadi (Beard)
 - ✓ There are three types of beards or Thadi Veshams. VellaThadi or White beard for superhuman monkeys like Hanuman. ChuvannaThadi or Red beard meant for evil characters. KaruthaThadi or Black beard for the hunter.
- Kari (Black)
 - ✓ Kari Vesham is used for she-demons.
- Minukku (Prettying Up)
 - ✓ The "Minukku Vesham" is used for female characters and sages.
- Mudra
 - ✓ Mudra is a stylised sign language used to depict an idea, a situation or a state of being. A Kathakali actor enacts his ideas through mudras. For this the actor follows a systematic sign language based on Hastalakshana Deepika, a treatise on the language of hand gestures.
- Kathakali Music
 - ✓ Kathakali orchestra is formed of two varieties of drums - the maddalam and chenda; the chengila which is a bell metal gong and the ilathalam or cymbals.
- Kathakali Training
 - ✓ Students of Kathakali have to undergo rigorous training replete with oil massages and separate exercises for eyes, lips, cheeks, mouth and neck. Abhinaya or expression is of prime importance as is nritya or dance and geetham or singing.

3. Polity

3.1. Allocation of symbols to political parties

- The Supreme Court had upheld Kerala High Court's confirmation of an Election Commission order declaring a group led by Jose K. Mani as the official Kerala Congress (Mani) and granting it the official election symbol of 'Two Leaves'.

Election Commission's powers

- The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 empowers the EC to recognise political parties and allot symbols.
- Under Paragraph 15 of the Order, it can decide disputes among rival groups or sections of a recognised political party staking claim to its name and symbol.
- The EC is also the only authority to decide issues on a dispute or a merger. The Supreme Court upheld its validity in Sadiq Ali and another vs. ECI in 1971.

How many types of symbols are there?

- As per the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) (Amendment) Order, 2017, party symbols are either:
 - ✓ Reserved: Eight national parties and 64 state parties across the country have "reserved" symbols.
 - ✓ Free: The Election Commission also has a pool of nearly 200 "free" symbols that are allotted to the thousands of unrecognised regional parties that pop up before elections

Can two political parties in India have same election symbol

- Parties having same symbol
 - ✓ Federal Party of Manipur and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) use 'Rising Sun' as their symbol.
 - ✓ Bahujan Samaj Party and Asom Gana Parishad have 'Elephant' as their party symbol.
 - ✓ Samajwadi Party and Jammu and Kashmir Panthers Party contest on 'Cycle' symbol in their respective states.
 - ✓ Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and Shiv Sena have 'Bow and Arrow' as their election symbol in Jharkhand and Maharashtra respectively.

How EC deals with such situations

- If the candidates of two parties having the same symbol are pitted against each other in the same constituency then, as per provisions of Para 12 of the Symbols Order, 1968, "free symbols" will be allotted to both the contestants.
- While national parties are free to use their 'reserved symbol' across India, the recognised state parties can use their symbols in their states. To use the symbol outside their state, they have to seek the EC's permission.
- In the 2015 Bihar Assembly election, Samajwadi Party, Panthers Party, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and Shiv Sena decided to field their candidates. The EC allowed them to use their symbols except when the two parties having the same symbol chose to contest from the same constituency.

3.2.Changes to NCT Act revive power tussle

- The Union cabinet earlier this week approved some proposed amendments to the Government of NCT of Delhi Act that sought to give more powers to the Lieutenant Governor, prompting the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government to call it “a murder of constitutional democracy”.

New rules of the game

Salient provisions in the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The expression “Government” referred to in any law to be made by the Legislative Assembly shall mean the Lieutenant-Governor

- The Assembly shall not make any rule to enable itself or its committees to consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the Capital or conduct inquiries in relation to administrative decisions



Arvind Kejriwal and Anil Baijal

- Before taking any executive action in pursuance of the decision of the Council of Ministers or a Minister, to exercise powers of government, State government, appropriate government, Lieutenant-Governor, administrator or Chief Commissioner, as the case may be, under any law in force in the Capital, the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor in term of proviso to Clause (4) of Article 239AA of the Constitution shall be obtained on all such matters as may be specified, by a general or special order, by the Lieutenant-Governor

- When a Bill is passed by the Assembly, it shall be presented to the Lieutenant-Governor for his assent. He shall either approve the Bill or withhold it or he may reserve the Bill for the President's consideration

- All executive action of the Lieutenant-Governor whether taken on the advice of his Ministers or otherwise shall be expressed to be taken in the name of the Lieutenant Governor.

About Union territory of Delhi

- The Union Territory of Delhi with a Legislative Assembly came into being in 1991 under Article 239AA of the Constitution inserted by ‘the Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991

Article 239AA

- Public Order, Police & Land in NCT of Delhi fall within the domain and control of Central Government which shall have the power to make laws on these matters.
- For remaining matters of State List or Concurrent List, in so far as any such matter is applicable to UTs, the Legislative Assembly shall have power to make laws for NCT of Delhi.
- Further, for Offences against laws, Jurisdiction & powers of Courts (except SC) and Fees (except court fees) so far as they relate to Public Order, Police & Land in NCT of Delhi; Central Government would have power to make laws

Issues (239 Vs 239AA)

- Union government
 - ✓ New Delhi being a Union Territory Article 239 empowers the Lieutenant Governor to act independently of his Council of Ministers.
- Delhi government
 - ✓ Article 239AA of the Constitution bestows special status to Delhi of having its own legislatively elected government.

- Supreme Court judgment (2018)

- ✓ Held that the L-G was bound by the “aid and advice” of the Delhi government and both had to work harmoniously with each other.

Lack of clarity

- Article 239AA (4):

- ✓ The court did not very clearly delineate the issues in respect of which the LG can refer a decision taken by the Council of Ministers to the President in the event of a difference of opinion between the LG and the State government.

- Interpretation:

- ✓ In the event of referring any matter to the President, the Court enunciated that LG must adhere to the constitutional principles of collaborative federalism, constitutional balance and the concept of constitutional governance. However, these terms are very wide and open-ended. They are subject to different interpretations.

4. Economy

4.1.CPI Vs WPI

- Retail inflation growth across the country eased to 6.69 per cent in the month of August, the data released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) showed.

Retail inflation

- The retail inflation is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month of July was also revised to 6.73 per cent from 6.93 per cent.
- It has grown beyond the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) upper margin of 6 per cent. The government has mandated the Indian central bank to keep inflation within the range of 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Reasons for growth in retail inflation

- The growth in retail inflation was primarily due to a rise in meat and fish prices that saw a 16.50 per cent on-year rise in August.
- The pulses and products segment saw a rise of 14.44 per cent,
- Oils and fats rose 12.45 per cent and spices prices gained 12.34 per cent.
- The vegetables segment also witnessed a rise of 11.41 per cent.

WPI and CPI

- In India, inflation is primarily measured by two main indices – WPI (Wholesale Price Index) and CPI (Consumer Price Index) which measure wholesale and retail-level price changes, respectively.

Wholesale Price Index

- It measures the changes in the prices of goods sold and traded in bulk by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- It is the most widely used inflation indicator in India.
- Published by the Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- The base year of All-India WPI has been revised from 2004-05 to 2011-12 in 2017.

Major components of WPI

- Primary articles is a major component of WPI, further subdivided into Food Articles and Non-Food Articles.
- Food Articles include items such as Cereals, Paddy, Wheat, Pulses, Vegetables, Fruits, Milk, Eggs, Meat & Fish, etc.
- Non-Food Articles include Oil Seeds, Minerals and Crude Petroleum
- The next major basket in WPI is Fuel & Power, which tracks price movements in Petrol, Diesel and LPG
- The biggest basket is Manufactured Goods. It spans across a variety of manufactured products such as Textiles, Apparels, Paper, Chemicals, Plastic, Cement, Metals, and more.

- Manufactured Goods basket also includes manufactured food products such as Sugar, Tobacco Products, Vegetable and Animal Oils, and Fats.

Consumer Price Index

- It measures price changes from the perspective of a retail buyer
- The CPI calculates the difference in the price of commodities and services such as food, medical care, education, electronics etc, which Indian consumers buy for use.
- The CPI has several sub-groups including food and beverages, fuel and light, housing and clothing, bedding and footwear
- It is released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- Base Year for CPI is 2012

Types of CPI

- Compiled by Labour Bureau in the Ministry of Labour and Employment
 - ✓ CPI for Industrial Workers (IW).
 - ✓ CPI for Agricultural Labourer (AL).
 - ✓ CPI for Rural Labourer (RL).
- Compiled by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
 - ✓ CPI (Rural/Urban/Combined).
- CPI vs. WPI
 - ✓ WPI, tracks inflation at the producer level and CPI captures changes in prices levels at the consumer level.
 - ✓ WPI does not capture changes in the prices of services, which CPI does.
 - ✓ In April 2014, the RBI had adopted the CPI as its key measure of inflation
 - ✓ Inflation measure in the first stage in WPI and the final stage in CPI.
 - ✓ The price paid by manufacturer and whole seller in WPI and in CPI it is paid by the consumer
 - ✓ Item covered in WPI is fuel, power and manufacturing products and in CPI education, food, transport, communication, recreation, apparel, housing, and medical care are covered.
 - ✓ WPI is used by very few countries whereas CPI is used by 157 countries.

5. Environment

5.1. Install transponders in all fishing vehicles to save Olive Ridleys in Odisha, says HC

- The Orissa High Court directed the state government March 16, 2021 to install transponders in all mechanised fishing vessels to track their movements and save Olive Ridley sea turtles from fishing nets..

Reason

- 800 Olive Ridley turtles had died since January this year due to negligence of the state's forest and fisheries department

Efforts

- The court directed that the following measures suggested in the report of the panel constituted to look into the issue should be immediately put in place by the state:
 - ✓ The prohibition of fishing activities by trawlers in the area of the Devi river mouth
 - ✓ The Coast Guard must enforce the ban stringently
 - ✓ No-fishing zones should be clearly demarcated.
 - ✓ The boundary of Gahiramatha Marine Sanctuary, with its geo-coordinates, should be uploaded in GSP systems of all fishing boats by the fisheries and animal resources department

Olive Ridley Turtles

- The Olive ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world, inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
- They are best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada.
 - ✓ An arribada is a mass-nesting event when thousands of turtles come ashore at the same time to lay eggs on the same.
- The enormous number of Olive ridleys nest in Odisha (namely at three river mouths: Dhamara, Devi and Rushikulya) in India.
- The species is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, Appendix 1 in CITES, and Schedule 1 in Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Dhamara River Mouth

- The Brahmani river (second largest river in Odisha) enters into the Bay of Bengal along with a combined mouth with the Mahanadi (the largest river in Odisha) known as the Dhamara.

Devi River

- Devi river is one of the principal distributaries of Mahanadhi.
- It flows through Jagatsinghpur district and Puri district across Odisha state in India and joins the Bay of Bengal.

Rushikulya River

- It originates from Rushikulya hills of the Eastern Ghats in Phulbani district.
- It is 165 kms. long with 8900 sq.kms of catchment areas.
- It covers entire catchment area in the districts of Kandhamal and Ganjam district of Odisha.

5.2. New method for efficient removal of heavy metals from water

- A research team at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi has developed a fibrous membrane filter using a biopolymer-based material that helps to separate out the heavy metals from water samples.

About Fibrous membrane (IIT)

- Membranes contain adsorbents – materials that attract and hold the metals.
- It also contains a large amount of a biopolymer, Chitosan, derived from crab shells that is mixed with a well-known polymer, Nylon

Benefits

- While normally, the fibres used to make regular cartridge filter-assemblies are processed by a method called melt blowing, the IIT Mandi researchers have used a process called “solution blowing”.
- Solution blowing produces fibres that are nanometres in diameter – a hundred thousand times thinner than a single human hair. When the fibres get finer, their surface area increases tremendously, which results in better adsorption of heavy metals.
- Solution blowing processes can enable blending of natural polymers like chitosan and lignin with synthetic polymers like Nylon,
- The replacement of synthetic polymers with natural polymers is a welcome move in this era of environmental consciousness
- While normally absorbent fibres bind to the target metal only at their surface, in their nanofibre membranes, the adsorption was seen to happen at the sub-surface scale as well, which translates to higher metal removal efficiency.
- The membranes could be reused at least eight times before there was considerable reduction in the efficiency of metal adsorption. Recovery of the adsorbed metal in a metal-hydroxyl nitrate form was also easy, which is a value-addition to the membrane filter.

Melt blown Vs Solution blown

- Melt blown is a special technique for manufacturing nonwovens with very fine fibers, down to 0.5 μm . The fibers are elongated by blowing hot air at high speed concentrically along the fibers
- Nonwovens are currently manufactured nearly exclusively of fossil-based raw materials, which is not long-term sustainable.
- By using solution blown, which is a technique similar to melt blown but where the polymers are dissolved instead of melted, it is possible to manufacture nonwovens also from renewable resources, such as cellulose.

Heavy Metals (NCBI)

- Heavy metals are naturally occurring elements that have a high atomic weight and a density at least 5 times greater than that of water.



- Their multiple industrial, domestic, agricultural, medical and technological applications have led to their wide distribution in the environment; raising concerns over their potential effects on human health and the environment.
- Their toxicity depends on several factors including the dose, route of exposure, and chemical species, as well as the age, gender, genetics, and nutritional status of exposed individuals.
- Because of their high degree of toxicity, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, and mercury rank among the priority metals that are of public health significance.

6. Science and Technology

6.1.COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, ACT Accelerator face cash crunch

- ACT-Accelerator, a global coalition formed in April 2020 to fight the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic with new vaccines, tests and treatments, is facing a severe fund crunch to meet its goals for 2020-21
- WHO COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund March 16 – on completing a year – launched a renewed call for action for funds to contribute \$1.96 billion required in 2021 to respond to the new challenges in the fight against the pandemic. More than 60 per cent of this will go towards requirements for the access to COVID-19 tools, including diagnostics, treatments and vaccines

ACT-Accelerator

- ACT-Accelerator from a broad coalition of public (87 per cent), private (6 per cent) and multilateral (7 per cent) donors
- The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, is a groundbreaking global collaboration to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines.
- Launched at the end of April 2020, at an event co-hosted by the Director-General of the World Health Organization, the President of France, the President of the European Commission, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator brings together governments, scientists, businesses, civil society, and philanthropists and global health organizations
- Germany contributed the most (23.9 per cent) to the contribution, followed by the United States (22.8 per cent) and United Kingdom (10.1 per cent).

The COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund

- was established by the World Health Organization(WHO) with the help of the United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation.
- Aim: To raise money from a wide range of donors to support the work of the World Health Organization(WHO) and partners to help countries respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

UN Foundation

- It was founded in 1998 by entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner to support the UN and serve as a strategic partner and resource for the UN in solving global problem

Current affairs Worksheet (17 March 2021)

Factual sheet for Quick revision

Topic	Description	Update
Environ ment	Northern river terrapin Red crowned roof turtle Black softshell turtle Black softshell turtle Olive ridley sea Turtle Heavy metals Bioconcentration Vs Bioaccumulation Vs Biomagnification	
SnT	ACT Accelerator Solidarity response fund	
Geog	Mullaperiyar dam Periyar River Vaigai river Central Water Commission	
Polity	Allocation of party symbols 69th Amendment	
Econom y	WPI Vs CPI	